

APPENDIX K

BLUFFTON COLLEGE  
Bluffton, Ohio

April 27, 1960

Dr. James T. Jeremiah  
Cedarville College  
Cedarville, Ohio

Dear Dr. Jeremiah:

I thought it might be best if I would write out some of my observations of last week, so that they will be in black and white for you. Naturally, there are many things that one cannot see in a few hours, and if some of these observations do not seem to be justified, please be tolerant toward them.

On the whole, it seemed to me that there was evidence of much progress and much thought and devotion. It is quite a task to take a college which had run down due to lack of finances and rebuild it. Everywhere there was evidence of repairs, new construction, and material improvements.

Library. In number of volumes, it seems that the library meets minimum Ohio College Association requirements. Of the 16,000 volumes reported, about 4,000 are in the field of Bible. This means that some of the other liberal arts areas should be given attention. You will of course look forward to regional accreditation, and the total number of volumes will need to be increased. Rather casual observation seemed to indicate to me a rather large proportion of old books, but that might not prove to be true with more careful analysis. It seems to me that you had the major reference materials. You will need a professionally trained librarian, but you have plans for that. You will also need additional table space as your enrollment increases. The amount budgeted annually for books and periodicals is below the median for schools of your size.

Finances. It would seem that your income from churches and individuals over the past five years is equal to minimum OCA requirements. However, it was quite evident that more funds are needed to do the work you would like to do. Salaries are low, and by your own statements, low salaries have prevented you from securing the kind of faculty you would like to have. That is an important test of adequacy of financial income.

Several sources for additional income might be considered. Your tuition is very low. It has been the experience of colleges that increasing tuition rates does not decrease applications for admission. There are very few independent schools in the state, if any, with a rate as low as yours. An increase of \$100 per year would still leave you with a very low tuition rate, and the added \$35,000 you would receive from the estimated enrollment for next year could find very important uses in the improvement of your program.

Another possibility might be a list of individuals who would give a specified amount per year to the operating budget. It would seem that quite a few such donors might be found in the town of Cedarville, and in addition, some of your church people might be willing to make such donations. We have used such a system successfully over a twenty year period.

Some system for securing annuities and remembrance in wills could, over a period of years, mean much to the college. This could be done by putting some

one in the field for that purpose, and/or by securing the assistance of interested individuals in various parts of your constituency to use their influence on prospective donors of this type.

Academic and personnel records. I found records well kept, and it seemed to me that you have a record of the important facts concerning your students. The building, however, is far from fireproof and the fire resistant file in which the records are kept would not be likely to withstand a fire which destroyed the building. We have been using the facilities of a friendly bank to microfilm our records. These films are then stored in a bank vault. I hope we will never need them, but if needed they could be invaluable.

Laboratories. I was pleased with what I saw. You are apparently securing the needed equipment and have plans for improvement of your facilities.

Financial accounting. I had little opportunity to make any study of this. It seems to me imperative, however, that you secure someone who can give his full time to business management as soon as possible. To have this combined with the presidency seems to me to be an impossible situation for any long period of time.

You commented that you expected to close the current fiscal year in the black. I did not, however, discover your past record in this respect. This will be important to any accrediting agency. I assume you have a carefully prepared budget as a guide to fiscal planning and expenditures.

Testing. You might want to consider a more thorough system of testing at the end of the sophomore and senior years. This gives a small school some opportunity to compare its product with other institutions.

Student load. I was told that a large number of students take as much as an eighteen hour load. This would be seriously questioned. This, I understand, is done because of the need to take education work at Central State. There is grave danger that these excessive loads will result in a lowering of the standards of achievement. It would be better to require those who must take extra hours to attend a summer session somewhere to secure this, or in some way absorb the Central State work in the normal graduation requirements.

Course offerings. From some comments which I picked up it seemed that little attention had been given to general education. More careful study might reveal that you really have it, without having said much about it. Some study of this might be advisable.

I was glad to see that you are using a system of alternation of courses to increase class size and thus increase efficiency. Care must be exercised not to offer too many courses. It is better for a small school to grow vertically rather than horizontally.

More attention might well be given to provision for stimulating your best students. I am thinking of such things as honors courses and independent study. These should, however, not be instituted without careful study and safeguards to guarantee that freedom will not be abused.

Institutional study. Many institutions have found affiliation with the North Central

April 27, 1960

Association Committee on Liberal Arts Education to be a very good thing. As I explained while there, this gives an opportunity to one faculty member each summer to become acquainted with the current trends and to get information on what is happening in other institutions. The study of campus problems which goes on throughout the year is also helpful, as well as the visit from a coordinator. This has nothing to do with accreditation, but it does help a college to improve itself, ultimately leading to accreditation. I do not know just what the requirements are for acceptance as a member of this group. We have been connected with it for nearly fifteen years.

Faculty preparation. This seems to me to be without question the area of your greatest weakness. Accreditation will be out of the question until there is improvement in this area. It seems that you have only one Ph.D. currently on your staff, and he will soon retire. In addition, you have a number of teachers without master's degrees. A minimum requirement would be a third to 40% with Ph.D. degrees, and very little work offered for credit by teachers without the master's degree. In addition, teachers should be teaching in their areas of specialization.

Your plan of faculty leaves for graduate work sounds interesting. I would like, however, to caution you on two points. First, there is danger that other teachers would be over-loaded in taking over the work of the one on leave. The other caution is that it seems unlikely in a school and faculty of that size that other present teachers could be found who would have the necessary specialized preparation to take over the work of the ones on leave.

I would like to suggest the plan which we have found successful, that is, cash subsidies for those in graduate school, with the provision that the funds be considered a loan rather than a grant if for any reason the individual does not return for a certain minimum period of service. We have been able to upgrade our staff considerably by the use of this plan over a period of some twelve or fifteen years.

These are the chief things that come to mind as a result of my visit last week. I trust that they will be of some help. If I can be of any further assistance, I will be glad to do what I can. I am sure that a number of other men in Ohio would also be willing to help in any way they can. The state and your church need Cedarville College. All of our institutions must do everything possible to do their work better from year to year.

Sincerely yours,

Lloyd L. Ramseyer  
President

cc: K. H. McFall, Bowling Green State University