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Record Sponsors Chapel Panel on Comprehensives

The Pembroke Record will sponsor a panel discussion on the topic: "Are comprehensive examinations effective as they are now given at Brown, should they be changed, or should an alternative be substituted?" next Thursday noon at SGA chapel.

Professors William A. McClelland, Psychology Department; Gilbert E. Case, chairman of the Education Department; Chester H. Kirby, History Department; and Mr. William C. Loerke, Jr., Art Department, will be the speakers. Jeanne R. Silver, News Editor of the Record, will be the moderator.

The panel discussion is being presented in conjunction with the editorial survey on comprehensives appearing in this issue of the Record. The idea was introduced to the editorial board by Polly A. Welts, editor, last November. It was decided then to conduct the survey on the topic: "Should a Senior thesis replace the comprehensive examination?" The topic was later enlarged to include the whole question of comprehensives.

Margaret M. Roll, managing editor, and Patricia A. Kelsey, business manager, headed the survey. They wrote to sixty colleges finding that twenty-four use comprehensives. The staff contacted fifty members of the faculty who gave their opinions which are printed on pages two and three of this issue.

SGA to Hold Chapel Vote On Key Award

SGA met on Jan. 11 to rediscuss a proposal previously passed by the board that automatically awarded Pembroke Keys to all members of Question Club. The discussion was begun by a Pembroke Record editorial appearing on December 8 condemning the action.

The board decided to hold a chapel to discuss the problem and to let the student body choose one of three proposals to be offered. The proposals are: 1. the elimination of Pembroke Keys, 2. the redefinition of them so that no member of Question Club will receive a key, and 3. reducing the number of keys awarded to less than the number of members of Question Club.

These keys have been awarded annually to members of the Senior Class who have done outstanding service to the college on the basis of "initiative, fulfillment of responsibilities, and general interest in extra-curricular activities", as stated by the SGA constitution.

The following votes were recorded for proposals 1, 2, and 3.

Jase Black, 2
Lois Black, 2
Dorothy Blair, 2
Patricia Crabtree, 2
Sally Donaldson, 2
M. Lee Fletcher, 3
Patricia Kelsey, 1
Cynthia Kirk, 3
Asoong Len, 1
Mary Loudenslager, 2
Helen MacBride, 1
Marylynn Monk, 1
Tekla Torell, 3
Patricia Wandelt, 2
Polly Welts, 3
Jane Black, 2

Priscilla Wright voted for the former proposal that Question Club members automatically are awarded Pembroke

Thirteen Students Are Elected to Phi Beta Kappa

Thirteen Pembroke students have been chosen members of Phi Beta Kappa for scholastic achievement as announced last Thursday by William T. Hastings, secretary of the Rhode Island Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa.

Six Seniors Chosen

Seniors who were chosen are: Yolande Bernice Bailey, Apponaug; Harriet Ruth Barry, London, England; Martha Powell Davis, Brooklyn, N.Y.; Ann Lea Fletcher, Malvern, Penn.; Joan Theresa Lamoreux, Norwood, R. I.; and (Mrs.) Helene Rice Ruben, Wilmington, Del.

R. I. Leads in '52

Juniors are: (Mrs.) Barbara Kirk Andrews of White Plains, N. Y.; Claire Louise Matthews of Rumford, R. I.; Beverly Mae Partridge of Providence; Marcia Reid Ring of Framingham Center, Mass.; Jeanne Richie Silver of Westport, Conn.; Eleanor Sally Simons of Providence; and Blossom Love Yasnoff of Providence.

Pres. Wriston Condemns U. S. Self-assertive Foreign Policy

Henry M. Wriston, on the occasion of his 15th anniversary as president of Brown University, spoke at Dean's Chapel in Alumnae Hall last Thursday.

He stated that when Mr. Malik, Lebanon's U.N. delegate, proposed a bill to declare the Chinese Communists aggressors, several of our allies voted against it or abstained. The Philippine delegate said that the bill was two months too late due to Nehru's blindness to the worldwide danger of communism; Arab dislike of U.S. policy toward Palestine; and the smaller countries' fear of Russia. However, the underlying cause is in our foreign policy.

President Wriston declared that the United States should show less self-assertiveness and more self-confidence in its dealings with other nations. Other countries distrust our foreign policy, which is formulated by an impulsive and belligerent president and a seemingly intransigent Secretary of State. Acheson's plan for a limited war is considered impracticable, and there is fear of the anti-Com-

Leaders Discuss Typing Courses, Freshman Lates

by Beverley F. Flather



Margaret Jolly, SGA President and chairman of Leaders' Conference

? Club Holds 3rd Coffee Hour Today

The Question Club is holding its third informal coffee hour of the year in the East Andrews Fireside Lounge between 4 and 5:30 p.m. today.

Professor Arlan Coolidge, Music Department; Prof. Charles Smiley, Astronomy Department; Prof. Albert Salvan, Modern Language Department; and Mrs. Sara MacLaine of the English Department will be the faculty guests.

Invitations have been sent for the tea, but everyone is welcome. Margaret Jolly and Polly Welts are the co-chairmen.

Leaders' Conference for the current semester met in three sessions last week in the City Girls' Lounge and featured a discussion with the staff of Pembroke College in the second session on Thursday night.

The question, "Why does the administration offer only a straight liberal arts course when it could include business training, particularly typing" was the first topic. Miss Waltemeyer, speaking for the faculty stated, "The question is one of the purposes of a liberal arts education. If a liberal arts college is to be a good one, it must retain only one type of education." A majority voted that a committee from Leaders' Conference approach the extension school with the idea of setting up a typing course as an experiment.

The second problem was that of Freshman lates. This year, despite the new ruling that closed the Freshman dormitories at 8 p.m., marks were even lower. The final recommendation was that Freshman houses remain open until 10 p.m. as in 1949.

The sessions officially opened Wednesday afternoon with welcomes from Margaret Jolly, SGA president and chairman of the conference, and Miss Emily Lacey.

Kay Cauchon, president of the City Girls reported that there is a good possibility of gaining West House in September.

Margaret Jolly announced that an honor system and a council on academic dishonesty are under consideration in SGA. Cynthia Kirk, who reported on both Dormitory Council and Question Club, reported that the former organization is revising its constitution.

Reporting for the classes were Mary Jane Black, president of the Senior Class, Patricia Wandelt, president of the Junior Class, and Sally Donaldson, president of the Freshman Class. Mary Loudenslager, Sophomore Class president, brought up the question of Sophomore Class sponsored cigarette and candy machines for discussion. It was recommended by the Conference that two cigarette machines be placed in Andrews Hall as an experiment.

Dr. Morgan Given New Appointment

Dr. Edmund S. Morgan, associate professor of history, has been appointed Associate Dean of the Graduate School. This appointment has been made in the event that Dean Barnaby C. Keeney returns to active military service sometime this year.

Professor Morgan came to Brown in 1946 as an assistant professor of colonial history and was appointed associate professor in 1949. He is Chairman of the American Civilization Interdepartmental Committee and the author of "The Puritan Family" and "Virginians at Home".

Marcia Ring, on behalf of the Junior Counselors, recommended that something be done to make English 1 more specific and practical, and that the Freshman houses be open until 10 p.m.

Sally Gates, president of AA, announced their plans and Tekla Torell, reporting for Brownies, said that Ivy Night will be held on May 29.

Brun Mael was represented by Jane Black. Polly Welts, editor of the Pembroke Record, announced that an editorial survey on fields of concentration and a special issue on World Affairs Week are planned.

Priscilla Wright, president of the Glee Club, announced concerts with Wesleyan on April 6 and Worcester Polytech on April 28. She also announced the spring program for the Chorus.

Religious Union's activities, presented by Frances Wexler, president, will accent social work.

On Friday afternoon, Asoong Len, chairman of the Campus Chest Drive, reported that pledges have passed the \$4000 mark.

Sally Hill, president of CA, said that CA will coordinate World Affairs Week with the campus organizations.

Mickey Rosenbaum, from the Brownbrokers board, said that this year's script, written by Bill Dyer, is called "Lackaday". Maxine Israel announced that "Alice-sit-by-the-Fire" will be presented in February.

Five History of Science Talks Now in Process

A series of five lectures on "The Use of the History of Science" was opened last Thursday night in the Crystal Room in Alumnae Hall by Dr. Bernard J. Stern of the Department of Sociology at Columbia University who spoke on "Medical History: Mirror of Social Strains and Culture."

Prof. Donald H. Fleming of the History Department is chairman of the lectures which are being held to establish closer relations between the teachers and students of science and those of other fields. The next four lectures are to be on the succeeding Thursdays in the Crystal Room at 8:30 P.M.

The other lecturers and topics are: Prof. Bernard Cohen of the Department of the History of Medicine at Harvard, "Unitary Concepts of Physics: an Early 18th Century Bequest to the 19th"; Prof. Richard H. Shyrock, leading medical historian from Johns Hopkins University, "Medical Progress: Key to American Urbanization"; Prof. Douglas Bush, "English Poetry: Mirror of Science"; and Dr. Rene J. Dubos of the Rockefeller Institute of Medical Research, "Changing Conceptions of Disease: Their Relevance for the Practicing Research Man".

50 Professors Express Ideas On Comprehensives

directed by Margaret M. Roll

Art Department

George E. Downing, chairman: Ideas for a good comprehensive exam are not fully lined up in this department. What they want is a really meaningful exam—one that will be of great value in helping the student to clearly understand his field—not one simply of routine performance. The department is, therefore, considering more outside problems for the exam and less hour-exam types of tests. These would be difficult in the Art Department.

William C. Loerke, Jr.: Comprehensives are necessary for a fusion. In other words, individual courses are aimed at a certain area of knowledge and tend to give the student an intelligence exercise. All of these courses must be fixed in the student's mind as an integrated whole—not as a series—and it is this task that comprehensives fulfill. It is the preparation required on the part of the student that supplies the comprehensive outlook on one's subject. These are ideally good from the student's point of view. For the administration, however, they would be unworkable here at Brown because of the vast amounts of money that such a program requires for additional faculty members, etc.

Thomas L. Reed: Comprehensives are good in theory, but a more practicable system is needed in Brown's Art Department. Better would be some method for a summation and tying up of all courses; our present system is not satisfactory. It is unfair to require a restudy of all courses in one's major when the material for restudying is not available. A different exam will, therefore, be tried this year.

Will S. Taylor: A revision in the Art comprehensives is needed in order to give the feeling that the department has given the student a real foundation in the subject. In regard to Professor Taylor's particular section of the exams, he doesn't like the way they are conducted, because of the results they get: the student, under pressure, tends to copy instead of intelligently interpreting and being creative in his drawing. It must be realized that drawing is, of course, a creative subject.

Astronomy Department

Charles H. Smiley, chairman: The object of comprehensives is to determine the amount of useful knowledge a student has gained from his college work. This could not be accomplished by a thesis.

Biblical Literature Department

William J. Robbins, chairman: Comprehensives are a good way to cover the whole field and break down semesters and courses. The Biblical Literature Department makes out individual comprehensives for each senior and these comprehensives take into account what the student has taken in the major. Since the comprehensives are made out in this way, the concentration courses can be very fluid. In a large field the concentration can't be so fluid since comprehensives aren't individual, and therefore a large variety of courses can't be covered. The comprehensives are really comprehensive since they are individual and cover each individual's courses.

Biology Department

Mac V. Edds, Jr.: Comprehensives make the students integrate their work. Here at Brown, the provisions for helping students effect this integration could be improved.

William Montagna: Comprehensives are good if they are truly comprehensive. However, at Brown they are not.

Charles A. Stuart: Comprehensives, as given at Brown are not comprehensive enough.

Chemistry Department

James S. Coles: In the ScB. degree for which most chemistry majors work there are no comprehensives. Only students preparing for A.B. degrees are required to take them. It is better to judge the student on several hours of exams in her various required courses than by a single comprehensive examination.

Robert M. Sherman: Comprehensives do not seem necessary in this department as they do not prove anything or seem to help the student. It would be better to base the decision of whether a student graduates or not wholly on the course work he has done during his four years, since this is cumulative. As far as a substitute is concerned, Chemistry 97, 98 are unsuitable because they are research projects. Why need a substitute be sought anyway?

Classics Department

Herbert N. Couch, chairman: The purpose of the comprehensives is to enable the student to show a grasp of his field of concentration and is primarily an effort toward greater maturity. The idea of a thesis is good as it gives an opportunity for independent work, but it is not a substitute for comprehensive examinations. A thesis program based on a tutorial system which offered a chance for an exchange of student ideas would be good.

Charles Alexander Robinson, Jr.: Brown and Pembroke students are of a high caliber. The comprehensive exam is valuable in making the students draw material together. Most students like comprehensives because they are proud to be in a school that has high standards. This is a university with the faculty and facilities for a high standard of work. The high stand-

ards should be maintained and increased including the continuation of comprehensive examinations.

John R. Workman: Favors a system similar to Princeton; a preliminary comprehensive in the junior year followed by a senior thesis and senior comprehensives. The material of the exams should be definite material, not related to any specific concentration course but supplementary and should require imagination on the part of the student instead of being a super-course exam.

Economics Department

Philip Taft, chairman: A thesis is of benefit to the students; however, the average student may not have sufficient interest in his major to devote enough time to writing a thesis. Therefore, only a superior student is likely to derive profit from a thesis. If a thesis were required of all undergraduates, it would entail much more supervision on the part of the department, and perhaps reduce the time spent on superior students. Comprehensives do not add anything of value to the student's education. They do provide added grading which may sharpen the faculty's judgment.

George H. Borts: It is unfair to seniors to require a thesis. A thesis requires greater specialization than is implied by the departmental concentration programs. It is not fair to seniors as a group to impose upon them the standards expected of their most advanced members. Those seniors who are now carrying on honors work voluntarily would also suffer were the thesis made general, because of the reduction in supervision which they could expect from the faculty.

Chelcie C. Bosland: A comprehensive test is better than a thesis, for a thesis is too specialized and covers a limited area. Also, there is always the question of how far the thesis is the product of the individual student. If a comprehensive exam is well organized, it is much better than a thesis because it shows how well a student can attack a variety of new problems. However, it is hard to give a comprehensive exam unless all the students are taking the same courses. Thus, to have a good comprehensive, the students ought to take at least a large number of core courses with few alternatives.

Hyman P. Minsky: An unsupervised thesis is useless, and it would be too expensive to supervise theses for all students. Also, not enough people are failed on their comprehensives, but comprehensives on the whole are beneficial since they make the student think of the subject matter in its entirety.

Merton P. Stoltz: The comprehensives as a whole can be made to serve their purpose.

Education Department

Gilbert E. Case, chairman: The comprehensives ought to be devised more nearly like the honors examinations at Oxford and Cambridge. In these examinations the students apply what they have learned in the solution of significant problems. Less emphasis is placed on memory and recall. Comprehensives are difficult to construct and few American institutions thus far have had much success with them. All honors could be based on these examinations, if they were genuinely comprehensive. Any educational program which centers around a major examination like that suggested above becomes good, bad, or indifferent in so far as the type of examination itself is good, bad, or indifferent. About two-thirds of those now getting honors distinctions would probably still get them under such a system but about one-third probably would not since they have been "coupon collecting"—i.e. memorizing and pigeon-holing their work.

English Department

George K. Anderson, chairman: Believes in the principle of the comprehensive examination because it obliges the student to show that he has a general knowledge of his field in addition to his knowledge of special courses in the field. Unless he can manage somehow to coordinate or integrate his knowledge of the special courses in his concentration program, the concentration program itself means very little. To make his education amount to something, he has got to learn to make a synthesis as well as an analysis. The present comprehensive in the English Department serves the purpose intended, but Mr. Anderson wishes that the examination books were of better quality. He does not believe that this is the fault of the examination itself, for the questions asked are both fair and comprehensive. The fault lies in the preparation of the student—not in the individual courses taken in his major, but in the building up of an overall picture of the field. The habit of reading and the habit of intellectual curiosity in one's field are both getting to be lost arts.

These usually are compounded of all kinds of secondary sources, run together; sometimes the mixture is skillful, sometimes it is very poorly done. The Honor Thesis is a little different; it is usually a kind of preview of what the student might do in Graduate School. If the Senior Thesis is a completely original piece of work, it is likely to make great demands on the student's time and still will run into the objections already stated. Moreover, the Senior Thesis offers enormous opportunities for the ghost writer; the same thing can hardly be said of the comprehensive examination. As to telling us what we want to know about the student, the comprehensive examination has one advantage that accrues to all examinations: it not only

reveals what the student may or may not know, but also shows what he can do in a limited time under pressure.

William T. Hastings: Comprehensives should be abolished in favor of more year courses with temporary grades at midyear and June examinations covering the whole year's work in the course. He writes:

"I think comprehensive examinations one of those educational 'ideas' that swept the country. (Some colleges never adopted them, some have dropped them.) Their supposed function was to compel retention and 'integration' of knowledge. The operation when there is no tutorial system is ineffective and largely mechanical. In 'discursive' departments no truly comprehensive examination can be set. The result of an attempt to secure a reasonable examination is an undue restriction of a student's choice of subjects of study in narrow 'concentration patterns.' I think that in another generation we (or our descendants) will have a laugh at the whole business."

"Meanwhile, we do the best we can."

Israel J. Kapstein: Comprehensives are necessary, but they could be better. As they stand now, they are not "comprehensive" enough. They should be so designed as to let the student discover his grasp of the basic ideas and concepts in the field of his major; they certainly should not merely repeat the same sort of questions asked for in course examinations.

For the most part, senior theses would merely present at secondhand the conclusions of other writers on the subject.

Randall Stewart: The comprehensive examination serves a very useful purpose. It encourages the student to remember the courses in his or her major subject, to compare the various branches of the subject, and to strive for an integration of the whole field.

Professor Stewart likes the English comprehensive as it is now given. It is not a re-examination in the separate courses, but contains questions which cut through two or more courses. He would also like to see better examination papers written by some of the students. He is doubtful of the wisdom of the senior thesis. If the thesis is unoriginal, and consists largely of a compilation drawn from secondary sources, it will have little value. If it is original work, it may consume too much of the student's time.

Geology Department

Alonzo W. Quinn, chairman: Comprehensives are satisfactory on the whole, and are a valuable addition to education at Brown. Those who have done well in their courses right along should find no need to study frantically for their comprehensives. The Geology Department has students write on the more theoretical aspects of their subject for the comprehensive, and, in addition, takes the student on a field trip where he is expected to put his knowledge to practical use. Theses are too specialized and do not serve the purpose of comprehensives—that of bringing all the courses together.

History Department

James B. Hedges, chairman: The most comprehensive examination is not completely satisfactory. Although a comprehensive paper might be better for the superior student, the average and inferior students would not greatly profit from it. Therefore, as between the two, the comprehensive examination is the better for the bulk of the students.

William F. Church: The difficulty with comprehensives is the fact that they are rarely comprehensive in the genuine sense of the word, particularly in a field that is as broad as history. If properly handled the thesis would be preferable. But to establish a system of theses on the undergraduate level, extensive study and work would be necessary to solve such problems as personal direction of each student's work and to clarify the scope and intended value of the thesis.

Donald H. Fleming: Comprehensives are generally unsuccessful as far as the History Department is concerned. Often results do not line up with the student's known ability. Through preparation for comprehensives, the student may gain a unified picture of his subject. However, the value lies in the preparation rather than the examinations themselves.

Professor Fleming would substitute the thesis in the History Department because it would be a basis for a real idea of the student's intelligence.

Chester H. Kirby: No system can completely satisfy everyone. Although the thesis might be better for some, the very people who have trouble with comprehensives would also have trouble with a thesis. The History honors program requires a thesis as well as an examination and it appears that some students do not like the thesis. Some have dropped out of the honors program primarily on this account.

The possibility of a thesis is not the only alternative to unsatisfactory comprehensives. Theoretically, the comprehensives might be abolished, which is not feasible, or made more comprehensive so that students need not rely on cramming to pull them through. Formerly there was a special Senior course preparatory to comprehensives. However, then there were not so many required distribution courses. Today, one of the concentration courses might have to be dropped to make a review period possible and this would have obvious disadvantages. An added course might involve planning difficulties. The comprehen-

Editorial:**The Problem of Comprehensives**

The object of this editorial survey on comprehensives, is not to prove that comprehensives have no value whatsoever, or to state that nobody wants them and therefore we should not have them, but rather to show that there is a certain amount of dissatisfaction in the way they are currently being administered, and that this dissatisfaction has produced some ideas that may come near to being solutions to the problem.

The value of a good comprehensive is clear to most of us. Both while preparing for it and taking it, the student is forced to correlate the eight courses in his field of concentration. Perhaps for the first time he begins to understand his field as a unified whole, not as eight separate and unrelated courses.

However, in practice, a good comprehensive is not given by every department at Brown. The prevailing attitude seems to be to test the student on separate courses and not on the field as a whole. It must be admitted that some concentration patterns do not lend themselves to a good general examination. For example, a history major often takes in addition to D1 and D2, four courses in American History, and the year courses: Europe since 1870 and Medieval History. The only time the history major studies the history of Europe during the centuries between the latter two courses is in History D1, D2 which he took in his Freshman or Sophomore year.

The most obvious solution is to require at least ten semester courses in the field of concentration, but, with the present Distribution requirements this would allow the undergraduate little time for electives, and it is questionable as to whether two or more courses would alleviate the problem to any extent.

Another solution is more feasible and is already being used to a certain extent in the departments of American Civilization, Music, Physics, Psychology, and Sociology. This is to require a course for all eighth semester students which would not only help correlate

sives now cover only the subjects of the particular student instead of the entire field but a thesis might be even more narrow, less comprehensive.

Edmund S. Morgan: It is very difficult to prepare a truly comprehensive examination in History when students who take the examination have had only eight semester courses beyond D1, D2. In the field of American Civilization, which is much more limited in point of time, a comprehensive examination on the basis of eight courses is possible and desirable.

The writing of a thesis is a more valuable experience than preparation for a comprehensive examination, but it should be borne in mind that the substitution of theses for comprehensive examinations would require an increase in the testing staff.

International Relations

Sinclair W. Armstrong: In any interdepartmental concentration, the examination must be comprehensive if it is to mean anything in terms of the concentration as a whole. The purpose of the concentration in International Relations, for example, is to study the problems in this field from various angles, those of Economics, History, Political Science and Sociology. The concentration fails unless the students synthesize the different methods of approach presented by the participating departments. A comprehensive examination appears to be the best all-around method of inducing the students to achieve this synthesis, aided by a series of conferences in the spring of senior year. So far, the comprehensive examination has worked reasonably well in this interdepartmental concentration. Doubtless the result would be improved if students also wrote concentration theses, but as between comprehensive examination and thesis, the former appears to be preferable.

Mathematics Department

C. Raymond Adams, chairman: A basic principle of our present curriculum calls for comprehensives. The student should be able to gather together and integrate the knowledge derived from the various courses included in his pattern of concentration at the end of his period of study in his particular field.

The thesis would not achieve the same purpose.

Professor Adams thinks that the question is not, "Shall we change from comprehensives to theses?" but "Shall we change an underlying principle of our present curriculum?"

Ray E. Gilman: It is true that many students are not able to do even their approximate best under the tensions of a comprehensive examination. However, it is common human experience to have to perform under emergency conditions. While the student may not be necessarily tested on his knowledge, he is tested on his ability to perform in an emergency on a subject he is supposed to have grasped.

Modern Languages Department

Hunter Kellenberger, chairman: Comprehensives are desirable for they test the student's ability to handle larger amounts of material and to rise above it.

However, the tendency towards limiting the comprehensives to course work is wrong. The comprehensives should go outside the courses and reveal those students who have broadened their view with extensive independent reading.

In the event of war, comprehensives should not be abandoned except, perhaps, if the college should go on a three semester schedule.

the courses in the fields of concentration, but would also attempt, in a general manner, to fill in the gaps which are found in a regular concentration pattern.

A final plan to help fit general examinations to Brown's concentration pattern is the requirement of a Senior thesis. This would be far too expensive to administer if all Seniors were involved because every student would need a great deal of personal supervision. However, if only Seniors recommended by their departments were allowed to write one, and, if these Seniors were given a choice of a thesis or comprehensive, the number could be greatly reduced. Perhaps a half course on the general problems of a thesis might be required of these Seniors. This would cut down professorial supervision to a minimum with the advisor concentrating on the special problems in the special field.

A thesis would be the culmination of what is perhaps the most important reason for an undergraduate to concentrate in one field. The major is not merely supposed to train the student to learn more facts about a special field, but is more generally supposed to teach the methods used in learning a more advanced subject in greater detail. It should teach the undergraduate where to look for things he wants to know and how to apply and understand what he finds. The facts and theories will soon be forgotten, but the method will not, and thus the facts and theories will still be readily obtainable. The thesis achieves this goal by making the student do some original research and by forcing him to do his own thinking and draw his own conclusions. It is true that this opportunity is offered to honor students in some departments, but many students qualified and interested in writing a thesis do not have the ability or exclusive interest to keep the necessary average required of an honors student.

The problem of comprehensives is a complicated one and the solutions could conceivably vary from department to department. Perhaps the decision should be a departmental one and not standardized for the entire university.

(Professor Kellenberger gave his opinion in the capacity of a professor in the Modern Languages Department and not as its chairman.)

Alan Holske: Comprehensives contradict the liberal arts idea with its qualitative emphasis on judgment and breadth of sympathy and interest. Seniors study for comprehensives as if preparing for an advanced specialist's degree. Necessarily, comprehensives measure mainly the technical and factual command of a specialty and provide slight opportunity for the expression of ideas formed by courses or the unrehearsed exercise of judgment and synthesis. The courses in one's major should integrate themselves fundamentally without comprehensives. Professor Holske suggests as a substitute the tutorial system which collates course work and permits informal contact between teachers and students. However, this method is practicable only in a small, wealthy institution.

David James: Comprehensives serve an excellent purpose as a legitimate means of testing all the work a student has done in the department.

Comprehensives do, however, lose part of their function in a department which has relatively few majors since the close contact between student and professor provides the latter with more accurate knowledge of each student's ability. In general, however, comprehensives give the professors a wider basis for their judgment of students.

Professor James also believes that seniors should have a much longer reading and review period to prepare for comprehensives.

Karl S. Weimar: There is no real need for comprehensives. However, it is difficult to think of an alternative. Orals, which would be possible only in a department which has a small number of majors might be a solution, or perhaps still better a special survey course as we have in our 198.

Music Department

Arlan R. Coolidge, chairman: The comprehensives help to integrate the whole of the concentration courses; and, in this sense, the student is trained to remember more about his major and accordingly carries more away with him upon graduation. A combination of both a comprehensive and thesis would be favorable in that the student would not only have the benefit of integration, but would also get the experience of applying some of his knowledge.

A thesis alone, however, would only cover one section of the major. Also one difficulty in thesis writing is that the average student needs individual instruction in learning how to write one, and under the present curriculum at Brown this seems impossible.

William Dineen: The comprehensives are the most favorable solution. Applying the problem particularly to the music majors, comprehensives are an exercise in music in that they cover the historical development and the theoretical matters of music, whereas a thesis would be more of a literary exercise. In general, the comprehensives are a first hand correlation of all the information gained during the period of concentration, and the thesis would not be this original.

Mildred R. Pansy: The research done in writing a thesis would be good exercise, but under the present curriculum comprehensives are more favorable because they aid the student in getting an over-all survey, and help to "tie-up any loose ends."

Comprehensive Comm. Formed Last Year Stresses Integration

"The one valuable aim and purpose of comprehensives," says Prof. R. Gale Noyes of the English Department, "is integration." Chairman of the committee formed last year to study the subject and recommend improvements, Professor Noyes adds that the purpose of the Comprehensive Committee is to achieve such integration and to make the examinations truly comprehensive and not mere reviews.

Professor Noyes, who taught at Harvard before coming to Brown, points, for example, to the Harvard tutorial system in its role of facilitating student coordination of all the material in any field. The tutor, he says, helps the student to fill in the gaps left by specialization in particular areas of his major. A student concentrating in English Literature, for example, attains an over-all knowledge and understanding of the field by doing extra reading in the literature of periods in which he has not specialized. His comprehensive can then include at least one section with questions that cut laterally across the whole field. The Harvard English comprehensive assumes both depth—in six hours of specific course questions—and breadth—in topics such as: "The development of the Critical Essay" or "In the novel from Fielding to James Joyce", increasing emphasis has been placed on what characters think, as opposed to what they do."

The tutorial system is far too expensive to be inaugurated at Brown. This, however, should not influence the principle of Brown's comprehensives. "Without the tutors, students must think for themselves, and this," maintains Professor Noyes, "is truly an education. Students must learn to think in comprehensive terms and must be trained and train themselves in how to analyze."

"Comprehensives based on this principle, concludes Professor Noyes, are wonderful." To make them so at Brown will be an evolutionary process, in which the committee will have to "make haste slowly."

Philosophy Department

Curt J. Ducasse, chairman: Comprehensives have more value in some departments than others owing to the nature of their subject matter. There is a difficulty in drawing up a comprehensive so that it will not merely duplicate course examinations and will fulfill its stated purpose.

Professor Ducasse is not convinced of their value in the Philosophy Department and is personally inclined to a senior thesis from which he feels more value might be obtained.

Physics Department

R. Bruce Lindsay, chairman: Statistically speaking, if comprehensives are really searching, failures are inevitable. Comprehensives can be made useful by being more searching than an hour examination.

Theses are given in the Physics Department as part of the concentration for both the ScB. and AB. students. It has been voted that comprehensives be given to ScB. Physics majors starting sometime in the vicinity of June, 1952. A thesis could work and be adaptable in any science department, but possibly not in a humanities department. In the Physics Department theses are thought of in terms of a supplement to comprehensives rather than as substitutes.

Political Science Department

Guy H. Dodge, chairman: Comprehensives integrate and synthesize the knowledge of a particular course. They allow the student to see the interrelation among the courses in his field of concentration and find that they do form a pattern.

There is something to be said for a thesis—it has many virtues. However, it would be harder and more demanding of the student.

John L. Chase: Favors the comprehensives, for a thesis, in his opinion, is not an acceptable substitute, but might be acceptable as an additional requirement.

Matthew C. Mitchell: The comprehensive examination is better than the thesis for the purpose of enabling the students to coordinate the courses in the field of their concentration.

Psychology Department

William A. McClelland: The comprehensive is an evaluation of what stuck in the two years work. It doesn't stress sufficiently the integration of material. One trouble with comprehensives is that they tend to reward the wrong thing. The student merely recommits to memory what he already has learned. However, they have only been given five times and cannot be judged fairly on such a small number of trials. There is every reason to believe that they will improve as time goes on.

Comprehensives and theses are not alternatives in evaluating knowledge in the concentration but supplement one another. They are merely two different directions of achieving a similar goal. The thesis does not achieve the same goal as the comprehensive—it contributes to achieving depth of knowledge in the major. The thesis could work—it is not impractical.

Carl Pfaffman: Comprehensives should not be done away with since they are the exams which test the student's mastery of his one specific field. They test his over-all knowledge.

Lorrie A. Riggs: The comprehensive exam should be one which covers very general topics. The ideal form of a comprehensive would be an essay form, **COMPREHENSIVES**

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Comprehensives
Continued from Page 3
and certainly, in the field of psychology, it should be on the most general topics. Comprehensives should be used primarily as a device for excluding the poorest of the group. The better students need not be tested in this way, since they already have a good general knowledge of the field. The thesis would be of greatest value to the most capable students.

Harold Schlosberg: There are many advantages to comprehensives. In the first place they encourage the student to integrate

his knowledge of his field and secondly, they encourage him to retain this knowledge "for keeps". Even if the department disregarded the marks from the comprehensives, they would be valuable for the motivation they give the student. But of course the comprehensives give the department a final look at the student.

In the Psychology Department, the two hours of specific objective questions require much thought while the hour essay questions demand integration of the field—one backstops the other. The department has found that students usually do roughly the same on each part. The Honor Program should be expanded, thereby allowing more students to write a thesis.

Sociology Department
The Sociology department ap-

proves of the idea of comprehensives if these require real integration of subject materials and do not merely duplicate exams in individual courses. This demand upon the student to integrate his understanding places responsibility upon the department to emphasize in individual courses the principles which constitute the unity of the discipline. It also appears desirable to present a Senior seminar designed not to review for the comprehensives, but to handle advanced material in a manner commensurate with the aims of the comprehensives.

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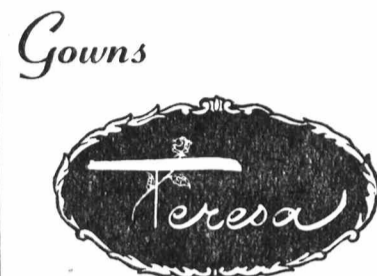
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