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## *The Social Emphasis*

### **Introduction**

Rules and regulations have always been two things that have changed over a period of time based on what was occurring in society and its surroundings. New regulations were created as a result of new technology and the addition of social entertainment. The acquisition of new rules as well as the deletion of old ones and why this occurs can be analyzed through Duke University's dormitory life. During the time of the Woman's College, rules and regulations were set by bodies of government within the college in order to mold women into the kind of students the college wanted them to be. However, it can be argued that these rules were used in order to emphasize social success within the college and paid very little attention to outlining how a woman was to achieve educational success.

The way in which the dormitory rules restricted a student is quite obvious in the early times of the Woman's College when it was still Duke's coordinate college. It can be debated that in the 1930's the prime concern of the administration was to keep women within certain social and living regulations in order to maintain their status and image. This time period is essential to analyze because it is the beginning of women being able to get an education at Duke. The first Woman's College Handbook sets the precedents

for others to come. It also does not change very much from year to year in the 30's through the 50's. As time progresses rules and regulations minimally change, yet the main theme throughout every handbook stays the same. The next time period that is essential to analyze is that of the 1960s and early 1970s at the end of the Woman's college. The rules have changed since the 30's; however, it seems that status and image are still very important to the Duke environment and the ladies that are engaged in it.

Overall, this topic is specifically interesting because it comments on the way in which women were portrayed throughout society and the social stigmas and stereotypes played throughout their entire educational experience. Because women were women, there was more of an emphasis on social regulations as well as keeping up a respective image, rather than what women were going to do as a career or how they were going to expand their intellectual minds. This is apparent during the 1930's. However, even though it is not as apparent towards the end of the Woman's College era (circa 1970), it is still present and emphasizes the double standard that follows women and men even today.

### **Methods**

In order to analyze how strict regulations of dormitory life emphasize social success and downplay academic achievement, it is best to look at two different time periods where both Duke and the nation were going through and dealing with different experiences. The most useful documents to look at is that of the "Woman's College Handbook" and the regular Handbook (which was essentially for men) during two different time periods. The "Woman's College Handbook" is very conducive to the

analysis for the time first time period, that of the 1930s, and also is effective for the second time period, that of the late 1960's and early 1970s with the end of the Woman's College and initiation of a coeducational system.

The Woman's College handbook outlines in full detail every move a girl should, and should not, make when it concerns dormitory life. These rules usually extend to social events by linking dormitory hours and staying within respectable times to be mingling, especially with men. The regular Duke Handbook, which was for men, is a great tool to use in order to compare how women were treated and how men were treated and what was expected of each respected sex when it came to dormitory rules and socializing. Surprisingly, "The Peer" which was a comedic magazine also displayed insight into the ramifications of dormitory life. The last pieces of information in the Duke University Archives that were helpful for my analysis were the "Design for a Duchess" pamphlets and the "It's Not in the Handbook" pamphlets, which were given to incoming freshman girls. For the second time period, the late 1960's and the early 1970's, the Handbooks, Design for a Duchess, The Peer, and It's Not in the Handbook are great venues for information as well. Also, analyzing letters home to parents about changing policies and various debates between administration and students during this time period over dormitory life are also effective in expressing the emphasis on social regulations rather than educational success.

Finally, interviews that took place in class were especially helpful in deciphering how select students viewed these dormitory policies. Two women, specifically, were helpful in portraying the differences and similarities between the two time periods (30's

and late 60's early 70's) as well as further emphasizing the manipulation of the students by the faculty in regards to social and educational experiences.

Within the Woman's College Handbook there are strict rules and regulations concerning dormitory life. These rules consist of curfews, signing in and out, guests, where a girl could go when leaving the dorm, what should be included in a girl's room, quiet hours, senior privileges, and others. Through specific language used while outlining these conventionalities, I intend to prove that when concerning women, most emphasis was placed on social education rather than the academic kind.

What is most restrictive about the information at hand is the fact that there goes from being defined pages in a handbook concerning what a woman can and cannot do in and outside of her dorm, to no documentation as to what rules were (if any) after the Woman's College is combined with Duke University. By the end of the analysis, however, this becomes evidence in itself as we will see.

### *Analysis*

#### ***Brief Outline of Woman's College Rules***

During the early time period, specifically to this paper the 1930's, the women accepted to go to school at Duke University were accepted to the "Woman's College," which was the coordinate college to all male Duke University. The women lived on an entirely separate campus where there were single sex (female) dorms and had very little contact with today's "West Campus," which was inhabited by all male students. The Woman's College Handbook was the guide to success for women during the 1930's. It was distributed by the Women's Student Government Association which, although run by

a committee of Students, was advised by a faculty member. This is important to note because, while students had a say in what rules were being made, it was ultimately going to have to be approved by a faculty member.

The rules enforced within the dormitories included, but were not limited to: singing in and out of the house and specific hours, necessary permission in order to come in any time later than curfew times stated (otherwise there was a fee to be paid along with other consequences), quiet hours, study hours, instrument hours, lack of permission to sleep in other girl dormitories unless there was an extra bed as well as overnight-ing in Durham, rules for when visitors came to see them, as well as many others. Just by observing the inordinate amount of rules placed on these women it could be deduced that the women writing this handbook believed that: a) the incoming freshman needed a clear cut outline as to what was expected from them, b) that all members of the dormitory should be reminded of what their actions or lack of action will result in, and c) that each woman needed to follow these rules in order to be accepted by the College and the other women attending it. In the 1930's these rules were thought to be created in order to keep women on a steady track towards academic and in some ways social success, however it can be argued that this is not the only case.

### *Sexual Safety*

While these most obvious conclusions can be drawn from the simple rules placed on the enrolled women of The Woman's college, it is interesting to look at the language and way in which the rules were stated that is most essential to understanding the

emphasis on social rather than educational success. Let us take, for example, the Signing In-and-Out Policy of the 1930s.

“Signing Out

Since for reasons of convenience and safety the College must know the whereabouts of all students who are off the college campus, registration is required as follows:

On the “In and Out” file in her dormitory she shall sign on her card giving date and hour of her departure and specific destination (as Mrs. R.L. Smith, Watts Street), before leaving the campus at any time except when going to the West campus during the day. At night she must sign out for West campus also. Upon her return, she shall sign again, giving the hour of return. This must be done in addition to any special permission that may have been secured from the Social Director, head of house, or college government official. A girl should sign out in her dormitory when she goes to the infirmary”<sup>1</sup> (53-55).

While on one level this policy can be seen as in the best interest of the girls in order to protect their study time, looking at specific words chosen by those who printed the book poses a different answer. The word “safety” is used in twofold ways. At first it is implying that this rule is necessary so that if something bad happens to one of the girls on or off campus, the administration can be alerted to it. However, the second reason for this word is in order to emphasize “social” safety. If a woman is being fined for coming in late or not adhering to the in-and-out rules it is because she was possibly partaking in questionable social engagements. This “safety” is that of making sure a woman is not tainting her image by mingling with men at unwarranted times. Because permission to bend any of these rules must come from the Social Director it is apparent that dorm restrictions are placed on women for social reasons, rather than educational ones.

In accordance with these Signing out policies come the West Campus restrictions on women. Like previously stated, West Campus was strictly for men inhabitants of dorms.

“Except at certain specified times when the fraternity in question has secured approval for “Open House” from the proper authorities on West Campus, no woman student may go to any fraternity or dormitory room” <sup>1</sup> (71).

This rule and restriction on women has no educational component to it. For the simple reason that women should not have excessive contact with men, this rule was made. The use of the words “in question” gives an unwarranted negative connotation on the men at hand. It can be argued that this passage implies that every interaction between men and women will have harmful results to the women partaking in the social activity. The rule could also imply that the only reason a woman would want to go see a man is for social interaction with the opposite sex. The administration does not take into account that a woman might want academic help from a male peer and deem every interaction between men and women as sexual. Therefore proving that, this specific handbook rule concerning dormitory life was created in order to keep control over social interactions rather than educational ones. By stressing the necessity to keep a woman’s image in a positive light by keeping her away from the male sex social success was taking priority over all else.

### ***Lack of Educational Rules Incorporated***

While dormitory rules seemed to be straightforward, they also included social rules mixed throughout these elementary rules. What is interesting to note is that while social rules were intermingled within dormitory rules, academic ones were not.

#### **“Blanket Permission**

One girl appointed as the chairman for a particular function of any East Campus organization may secure a blanket permission from the Social Director. It is, however, necessary for each individual girl to sign her in-and-out card.

Nevertheless, in the case of overnight functions it is necessary that individual special permission be secured from the Head of the House”  
 “From the President of the Women’s Student Government Association

1. to break ‘closed nights’

2. to break ‘campus’

From the House President

3. to have extra ‘dates’ (as out of town dates)”<sup>2</sup> (58).

By making the Heads of the Houses and Social Directors the deciding factor of social engagements between men and women, dormitory regulations coincided with social ones, thus linking many dormitory rules to what a woman could and could not do during her social rendezvous. There are few, if any, rules within the section of the dormitory regulations that have to do with a girl’s GPA, studying practices, class necessities, etc. which thus underlines the fact that the Woman’s College was more concerned with women maintaining a positive social appearance first and worrying about their academic success later.

### ***Freedom of the Male***

While the 1930’s Woman’s College Handbook seems to emphasize social success through dormitory regulations, one has to wonder whether or not this is true for the men’s handbook. Was it just as important for men to be socially successful rather than academically? Was this apparent in men’s dormitory regulations? After analyzing the types of rules and regulations placed on men concerning dormitory, social, and academic life we find the answers to these questions are quite shocking.

The men’s handbook was put together quite differently from the woman’s handbook. The rules, for example, were usually explained and addressed in paragraph form. This paragraph form gave off a more positive connotation than that of the



numbered outline the Woman's College Handbook had. Within these paragraphs there were only brief discussions of dormitories.

“Trinity College, that division of the University occupied by the men, is a dream of architectural art brought into reality in the past five years. The architecture is Tudor Gothic, carried out in thirty-one buildings constructed of stone brought from the University's own quarry fifteen miles away. These buildings are arranged systematically in the form of a cross.

There are three groups of residence houses bordering on the left end of the main quadrangle each forming a smaller quadrangle enclosing a court. These groups are designated as Craven, Crowell, and Kilgo Quadrangles”<sup>3</sup> (10).

By analyzing this section of the handbook we see that there is no discussion of what a man can and cannot do in regards to entering or leaving their dorms, but rather how mighty the structure they are living in is. The only mention of residence houses is briefly stated to annotate where these dormitories are located and how they are designed. As opposed to the Women's College stressing every minute detail of living life within the dormitory, it appears that men were free to roam.

*Emphasis on Academics rather than social aspects for males*

In addition to these brief paragraphs describing the location and architectural beauty these dormitories epitomize, there is a brief discussion about what a man should bring to make his living situation more comfortable. While it does discuss ways in which to make the room more attractive, there is another point that is stressed that is not stressed in the Woman's College Handbook in the dormitory life section.

“A rug or so for the floor, curtains for the windows, and a small floor or table lamp, though not necessary, will make the room more attractive. Any books that prove useful to you should be brought along and among these do not forget to include a Webster's Collegiate Dictionary. Bring all your athletic equipment and a typewriter if you have one”<sup>3</sup> (12-13).

We see here that books, a dictionary, and a typewriter are highlighted as important necessities for a man's success at college. Academic success triumphs over social success and is even more emphasized because it is at the end; it is the final statement and could be argued that it is portrayed as the most important idea of what is being expressed in this paragraph. It seems that because the handbook made certain references to social aspects of a dormitory, it was necessary to follow it up with something academic so as to drive home the idea that academics was the most important. To further this idea, in case men did not know that this was the case, there was another small "hint" in the handbook, after listing educational policies such as grades and absence policies, towards social policy.

"It is a good idea not to make visits to the woman's College too often. Some lovely girl's are there, but they sometimes make us forget our studies. The best way to overcome that weakness we all have is to stay away from them" <sup>3</sup> (14).

While on one level this passage is seen as a way to keep a man focused on his work, it can be argued that this passage shows how academics, for men, were much more important for the male students than was social engagements, which was quite the opposite of what was emphasized for women. The word "studies" reminds the student to be scholarly and remember that they are at Duke to learn. The passage also refers to women as "lovely girls" and also as a "weakness" to men, clearly insinuating that women were either good looking or had a good personality and were only at the coordinate college to entertain the boys, rather than addressing the fact that these women were very

intelligent. It can be argued that this passage indirectly shows how women's social lives were more talked about and thus more emphasized rather than their academic ones.

By comparing the dormitory rules in the Women's College Handbook and those of the men's handbook we find drastic differences. While the latter stresses academic achievement, the former implies that of social achievement. It is possible that women were expected to get more of a social education than an academic one for reasons that are linked to what was going on nationally in regards to women.

### ***1930 Background Information and Links to Duke***

The 1930s was an interesting time for the United States. The Depression had hit and many people were poor. Because of this, it can be deducted that only the extremely wealthy were sending their children to college. Thus, it makes sense that Duke was emphasizing to those men that were able to participate and get a college degree would stay focused on their studies and pay more attention to their academics than their social lives. Men, at that time, were the ones who worked and supported a family and if you were successful academically, you could be successful in the working world and therefore bring in an income for your family.

Women, at this time, were expected to take care of everyone at home and maintain a good reputation for the family by raising the children up "right" and looking the part of an upper-class woman. Because of this, it is not completely unreasonable that a college would want to stress social achievement for women first and worry about their academic success later. The lower to middle class were the only ones that had to send their women out into the workforce. This workforce usually entailed working in a

factory of some sorts. No education was required for such labor, as opposed to women who were wealthy and were going to school to get an education to either say she got an education or become a teacher or nurse of some sort. There were very few avenues of actual jobs women could obtain after graduating from college, and usually their degree was “wasted” on becoming a housewife and never using the information and knowledge she gained from her college experience.

By placing more emphasis on social regulations and how a lady should behave The Woman’s College was, in essence, educating women for the upper-class world of which they were going to enter. Because of this social education, academic performance could be argued as being limited because so much emphasis was placed on social grace.

### *Interview proves social aspects were stressed*

An interview was very helpful in determining what the students were thinking and how they were reacting in the early time period. While the oldest person we interviewed was from the 1950s, her experiences can be linked to that of the 1930’s because not much had changed in dormitory handbook rules or other Woman’s College regulations. I was very much interested in the woman that was first interviewed. Her name was Mary Paterson and she had graduated from the woman’s school in 1953. Being that she was our oldest living visitor, her interview carried a lot of weight and gave real life insight into a time we as young adults know very little about. While Mary claimed she was very shy as a young girl, she certainly told many stories about her dorm life that would make one believe quite the contrary. She talked of how she and her hall mates would “smuggle” boys in and out of their dorms so that the Heads of the Houses would not

catch on. She also learned how to sneak in and out of end doors in order to break curfew or meet up with men in the gardens. This, she explained, was risky business being that if you were caught you would not be allowed to graduate with your class.

Just from Mary's quick anecdotes about her life at Duke, I was able to learn a lot about dorm life. Clearly, having boys in the dorm was a serious offense as well as breaking curfew. But, if almost every girl broke these rules, as Mary indicated, why is it that almost nobody was every really caught? In Gail B. Griffin's book Calling: Essays on Teaching in the Mother Tongue we see somewhat of an explanation for this inconsistency. Griffin states "I remind myself that adolescence is as rigid, judgmental, and intolerant as it is passionate, rebellious, and imaginative"<sup>4</sup> (152). These wise words lend a helping hand to understanding why such dorm rules were made for women which were inevitably broken. If a girl was going to break the dorm rules she was rebelling against what was socially acceptable.

One wonders that if a woman was able to come and go with free will at this time, would there be as much emphasis on breaking the dormitory and thus social regulations? It seems that much time was wasted on figuring out how to get men in and out of the dorm without being detected. This time spent on dodging negative repercussions from going against social regulations was time wasted that could have possibly be spent on academics. It can be argued that by placing so many social rules, social aspects of school were being underlined for the women and cared more about how women were behaving outside the classroom than inside.

The most interesting part of Mary's interview I found was her answer to the question "did you ever care that men didn't have the same restrictions women had," to which she responded "[that's just the way it was]." In the 1950's, and inferably, in the 1930's, women did not question how they were being treated or why they had restrictions placed on them, to them it was just how the world worked. Women knew that in order to be accepted by society as a lady they must follow certain rules. Again, this idea goes along with the fact that image and learning how to portray yourself as a proper woman was most important for this time period.

### ***1960-1970 Background and Links to Duke***

By the time the 1960s came around, the nation had experienced a lot as we have seen. However, not much had changed for women. "in the United States between 1960 and 1990 women are overrepresented in less prestigious schools and among part time workers in non-tenure-track jobs" <sup>5</sup> (160). According to this, women that were in paying jobs were that of the lower to middle class and were most likely attending universities with less status than that of Duke. Because of this, social standards for the upper class were still highly important.

Nationally, the 1960's and early 1970's were chaotic times for the United States as well. It was around this time that the United States decided to enter the Vietnam War and women acquired a lot of responsibility. Women did all kinds of services including nurses, air traffic controllers, intelligence and language specialists, etc. Clearly the women in service had to have a great educational background and this only led to the necessity of meshing the Woman's College and Duke together to admit to the fact that

women were just as important and justly equal to men. While women were proving their intelligence and usefulness equality during the Vietnam War (circa 1961-1972), it was not until that final year that women were allowed to be in the same college as men at Duke. So, while women were able to be bandaging up men's naked bodies and dealing with all their emotional issues and physical issues during all hours of the night as well as forming relationships with these men and completely self-sufficient women, they still had to adhere to a curfew and had to be chaperoned when with a man during her time at college.

Again, what was socially accepted outside of the war did not reflect the progress and respect women were gaining in the outside world. It does not make much sense, but then again "that was the way it was." Women that were still in college during the time of the war had the tenacity to speak up against a national war and to speak against what their country was doing, yet they rarely spoke up against the fact that they could not decide when and with who they wanted to come back to their dorm. Our country seems to give women freedoms when they see fit and when it is beneficial and then place social restrictions on them when they must act like "ladies."

### ***Maintaining a Certain Image in Regards to Men***

One might believe that because women were gaining respect, as a result of their help in the war, there would be a new set of social freedoms, rather than restrictions to be placed on them. In addition the thought of academic success was not too far off. Was it possible that academic life was going to be put ahead of social success in the eyes of The Woman's College? To analyze this we will look at the updated Woman's College

Handbook and the new rules and regulations that were imparted to the female student body.

“A woman student may go *only* to the social rooms of the men’s dormitories on West Campus and there only when visiting hours have been formally approved and posted in East Campus dormitories. Failure to observe this regulation may be grounds for suspension or expulsion”<sup>6</sup> (51).

While in one aspect this rule is making sure women are within boundaries that are comfortable for them there is another way to look at this passage. It can be argued that according to this passage, social success was still a factor when considering what a woman should and should not do in terms of dormitory life. Again, men and women relationships were viewed as not being able to ever be plutonic. In some cases, the restrictions on dormitory life, concerning men, can even be seen as pushing religious beliefs on women as well. Clearly if dorm restrictions were placed on women in the fears that they would be having sex if they were not bound by the walls they were secluded to, then this is placing the views of Christianity on all women students.

Considering what was the perception of women after World War II these fears were not too far off. “Whether through ads or in the World War II photos of pinup girls, the postwar boom in pornographic magazines, or the lyrics to rock and rap songs, eroticized images of women sold products”<sup>5</sup> (209). If women’s products and women were going to be objectifying themselves nationally, it is not too hard to believe that a respected southern school would want to overcome these risqué obstacles. While making such rules is understandable, not all women agreed with it and sought out change. Issues started off small in the beginnings of women trying to gain equal treatment for both women and men. Open-Open Houses in the 1960’s were like today’s Common



Rooms. They were “living area[s] of the dormitories [which were] closed to men visitors unless the plan to open them [was] duly approved by the residents of the particular house and by the House counselor, and [was] registered in the office of the Dean of Women”<sup>12</sup>. Surveys were taken and petitions were written in order to change the way in which open-opens were run, and after a long debate there was somewhat of a middle ground. After hearing the plea to keep open-opens open for longer periods of time and on weekends the administration gave the students a two week trial period. During this period there were rules and regulations which had to be followed, including signing a guest in and out and other nuances such as that. In addition, there were surveys sent out to see how each person reacted to the new policy being tested.

After the two week test period it was decided that the old rules would stay in effect. Apparently, more girls than others did not like the new policy and wanted to go back to the old rules of open-opens. This seemed to be taking a step back from the forward progression women were having towards becoming equal to men in all aspects, freedom to do as you please included. However, this only proves that women have been taught to feel like they should be living differently from men simply because they are women. Also it proved that the social standards the women have had engrained in them for so long were proving to dictate how they wanted to keep their image as “ladies.”

It did not help that articles such as the one in the Durham Morning Herald were being published either. In a specific article in 1968 an editorial was written about how visiting policies for dormitories, the fact that a woman could visit a man’s dorm, was preposterous. The author goes on to explain that allowing women to visit men makes

them the “courtier” and demolishes the idea of the woman being courted by a man. For one, this author is automatically assuming that every male-female relationship is sexual and resulting in courtship. In another part of the editorial, the author proceeds to say that institutions that allow this type of behavior are “damaging” these young women and compromising the man’s respect and attitude towards a lady. So, while there still are many females fighting for the right to be free, there are still those that wish to stick to the old, closed minded views that all women should be courted and treated much differently than men. And, while that is all nice and respectful, it could be argued that it also impedes a woman to explore her options and let herself be free as a man is. Again, because courtship was part of the social education process for women, going outside of these lines was to go against what leads to social success for a woman.

Through this, we see that dorm restrictions not only placed physical restrictions on a woman, but emotional ones as well. Women were told how to act at the ages of 18, 19, 20, and 21 by an administration. And by keeping them within the confines of the four walls they inhabited, they restricted the lives in which these women could lead and relationships (sexual or non-sexual) they could be having and learning from with the opposite sex.

Dorm regulations, from the tiniest regulation such as when you could take a bath and turn on your radio to when your curfew was, were each building blocks to one big chastity belt on each woman in the dorm. While on one hand the rules were seen as ways to make a girls life easier, it can be argued that the message is, if a woman wanted to be socially successful, she should not be having premarital sex, further stressing the social

implications of her actions and paying little attention to whatever, if any, academic repercussions would result.

The Peer, which is a student comedic magazine, actually brings to the forefront this push towards social excellence, for women, rather than academic success. “It is the general opinion of the Duke Male that the Duke Woman is: a beast or pig, incapable of an original thought, dull, stupid, a brown-noser, husband happy, snobbish, either cold or perverted, and simply not worth bothering with”<sup>10</sup> (11). While the magazine is a joke in its entirety, it is funny because it is in many ways true. Because women had such restrictions and were groomed to behave a certain way and taught what social regulations they had to abide by, men perceived that they were attending college in order to find a husband and become “snobbish” women that would only settle for a class of the socially elite. A woman’s intelligence is also poked fun at in this passage which makes it even more apparent that even men viewed the education women were getting as a social one and that they were learning nothing else to increase their intelligence.

It is not hard to understand why men had this skewed view of women and their educational environment. In the men’s handbook in the 1930s right up until the 1960s and ‘70s very little attention was paid to a man succeeding socially at school. Everything in the handbook was academically focused. However, when the handbook did say things about how a man should act in public or what he should do in order to make his dorm acceptable, it was brief and open to interpretation.

“The Colleges of Duke University are particularly concerned that you have an enjoyable and creative house life and have endeavored to provide buildings and facilities in line with this ideal. In return, the colleges hope that you consider this your home, that you will arrange your belongings in an orderly

manner and take pride in the buildings and furniture. The student should observe a code based on gentlemanly behavior in an educational environment which demands respect for all residents and a recognition of the purpose for which he is here” 11 (18).

What is most interesting to note about this certain passage is that while it does highlight the fact that a male student should be creative in making his room comfortable and suitable to live in, it stresses adequate behavior in a very open-ended way. “Gentlemanly behavior” can be interpreted any way a man would like. He still does not have the outlined agenda and rules that women have and can decide what is “gentlemanly” in his own mind. What is also interesting is that the passage does not fail to address and drive home the issue of an “educational environment” which implies academic achievement. This academic achievement is the “purpose for which he is here” and thus reinforces the fact that while women were being berated and forced to adhere to social standards in order to achieve excellence in their own social educational environment, men were reminded to do just the opposite and even somewhat turned away from worrying about social acceptance and accomplishment.

### ***Maintaining a Certain Image in the Eyes of Other Women***

Social aspects of life were not only limited to how a woman should act around men or when it is appropriate for her to be with a man. There were also rules or “hints” for women strictly based on acceptance from other women and how they were to be perceived in their own dormitories as well as on campus.

“Hints. One of every freshman’s first concerns is making her dormitory room as convenient and attractive as possible. Curtains, bedspreads, rugs, and other decorative items can be bought after arrival in Durham. A few useful things to remember to bring are lamps extension cords, ashtrays, a laundry bag, and an

alarm clock. A record player, space-saving skirt and blouse hangers, and plastic pail for taking toilet articles to the bathroom, a pillow, sewing kit, a can opener, and a radio will also come in handy” 7 (12).

While, on one hand, it does say that these “hints” were there to make preparing a freshman girl’s room either and make the room “convenient”, the other hand poses a different possibility. The passage does not fail to mention “attractive” as well. It can be argued that the passage was implying that all aspects of a woman’s life should be attractive, including her sleeping quarters. If a woman’s sleeping quarters are presentable then it can be inferred that later in life she will know how to run her own house and make it socially presentable and acceptable. Also, the fact that they mention this is a “concern” for “every” freshman it can be argued that these words imply that all women want to be socially accepted and believe one step to achieving this goal is to make her dormitory room appealing to the other girls on the hall and in the rest of her dorm.

In addition to how to behave in a socially acceptable ways from the viewpoints of other women, there were rules placed on the women in order to keep their guests in line. A person that has overnight guests had to “*assume full responsibility for her conforming to college regulations*” 7 (58-59). The woman’s guest was a reflection of herself, and thus, if the guest behaved inappropriately or did not follow the rules placed on everyone that was enrolled in the Woman’s College, this would be a bad reflection on the girl the guest was staying with and therefore taint her image. What is interesting to note is that, while the passage does say all “college regulations,” it does not say anything about what the rules are in regards to attending class with the girl the guest is staying with or

anything about the educational process. It merely implies that she must follow the dormitory and other social regulations that are instilling social values for the women in the college.

The Woman's College Handbook was not the only place dormitory rules or "hints" were instilled into women. For a brief period, in this specific case in 1962, along with the handbook came a pamphlet called "Design for a Duchess." This pamphlet was a girl's ticket to social acceptance and success. It told women what to wear and what they could do (or not do) to be popular. "Design's for Your Room" was a passage in this pamphlet that outlined how to make your dormitory room look presentable. "That part of the Duke Design which calls for the most originality is your room... With a little ingenuity, imagination, and no time at all your room will become your favorite haven at Duke, your own special part of Duke Design" 8 (13). While this passage can be seen as a way for the administration to get the girls excited about being in her own dorm, it can be argued that this section of "Design for a Duchess" further drives home the fact that social acceptance and maintaining a certain "girly" image was the most important of a woman's education.

First, the context within which the word "originality" is placed is in regards to decorating a room. It does not imply that a woman should be "original" when it comes to writing a paper or doing her work. The insinuation that women can only be original when decorating a room is apparent here and further exemplifies how academic success was pushed aside in order to make sure woman was keeping up her image by making her dormitory look presentable.

A similar pamphlet was handed out in 1933 called “It’s not in the Handbook” which was like “Design for a Duchess” but tells more about traditions and is less about how to become a popular girl. However, an interesting aspect in this pamphlet is the part that is entitled “Room Tips,” having to do with dormitory aspects of a woman’s time at Duke. Many parts of this passage belittle how much women know and make it seem as if even the simplest of things they need to be taught. “In college you learn to make wise use of every available inch” 9 (10). On one hand this statement is just saying that a student will learn how to manage her belongings better; however, it can be debated that according to this passage, women needed to be educated as to how to use the room they were given at college. While this may be true for many female incoming freshmen, it is comical that the administration that put out this pamphlet decided to insinuate that part of a woman’s education is to learn out to make a room pretty and presentable with very little space.

Many parts of this passage make women seem to be infatuated with the way their room appears and care more about that than anything else.

“Individuality is a keyword in your fling at interior decorating. You have much freedom, for your room at Duke can be as frilly and feminine or as collegiate as you and your roommate decide. But no matter how your room turns out, let it be *you*—not a reflection of your best friends’ tastes or a magazine’s idea of what a college room should be, but an extension of your own unique personalities” 9 (11).

This passage spends a lot of time trying to get a woman to be excited about decorating her room. According to this, her “individuality” will be expressed through the way in which she decorates her room. Thus it can be argued that the passage is implying

her dormitory will be a reflection of who she is. It insinuates that her “unique personality” will be expressed by how she is in real life. Whichever way she wants to be socially accepted by society that is the way in which she should decorate her room. The passage makes no mention of how to store books or what is best for study habits or anything to do with succeeding academically; it is strictly based on social aspects of a girl’s room.

The passage also could also imply that a woman is given freedoms by being able to decorate her own room. In many ways, decorating ones room is similar to a test. If a woman decorates her room correctly and it is socially accepted by others on the hall and in the dorm, than she passed the test and succeeded in exercising her freedom to decorate her own room in a positive way. Once again, social education is being stressed through dormitory regulations and very little emphasis is placed on academics.

### ***Interview Linked to 1970’s***

One would think that things would have changed between the 1930s and the 1970s. While some rules were bent, and some extended, the underlying theme remains the same. The second interview that pertained to my topic was when Beth Berman came to speak with us. Beth was at Duke from 1971 to 1975 which was at a time when Duke was drastically being changed. Duke finally became a co-educational University (there was no longer a separate women’s college) and Terry Sanford was the new President of the University. Beth spoke a lot about her time working on *The Chronicle* and helped students address major topics in reference to social change, protest against war, as well as other national concerns. Clearly, from these facts alone, her experience at Duke was



much different from Mary's. Women had more of a say in things and we able to speak up about things they strongly believed in.

Beth's first major dorm life difference from Mary's was the fact that she lived on West Campus her freshman year. This is very different from the small Woman's College environment Mary lived in. However, even though Beth lived in an entirely different time period where women were able to speak up more, there were still many dormitory rules placed on her. Men had to be escorted upstairs if they wanted to visit and were ordered to leave at a certain time. Women also still had curfews to abide by. It seems that even though women had all this "political freedom" they were still caged in by society telling them how they should behave when in the company of the opposite sex.

Social success and achievement for women was not overlooked and the belief that women needed rules in order to regulate that they were staying on the right path of being a "lady" was done through dormitory conventions. When asking Beth what she thought about her dorm life looking back on it now, to our surprise she also responded with a similar response to Mary's that "[that was just the way it was!]" Two women from two completely different time periods, who had completely different experiences at Duke, still believed that their dorm life was just how things worked and never really paid much attention to question it. Women still stayed within the confines of learning how to succeed socially even in the 1970's.

### ***Social Emphasis over Academics***

In the later years, the Handbook continues to link dormitories with community aspects of college and pays little attention to how living in a dorm will effect their academic education.

“Gilbert-Addoms, situated on a gentle grassy slope, stands sentinel over the picturesque drive between campuses. As the newest residence on East, G-A boasts many special features: a sun-deck, side parlors decorated with the girls’ original art work, and rooms graced with much built-in, space-saving furniture. Perhaps G-A’s most appreciated asset, however, is the convenient cafeteria located on the lower level. This pleasant, airy dining room is often the site of special union dinners such as the Freshman Luau and alumnae banquets” 7 (20).

While on one level this passage is included in order to get the students to be excited about coming to campus, it can be argued that from this passage we can deduce that in order for a woman to want to come to a college and live in a dormitory it would have to be extremely beautiful. Here it lists different places girls can socialize in the dorm and describes how much fun and relaxing it is to be part of this Gilbert-Addoms dormitory. However, it makes no mention of whether the sun-decks are great for study areas and makes the best asset of the dormitory the cafeteria: a loud, busy, socially buzzing area. Not once does this passage describe this dormitory in having a great study room or place you can go with other students to do projects. Clearly, socializing was more important to portray to the incoming freshman than what they were going to accomplish academically.

A major difference between the 1930’s and the 1960’s is that the administration begins to realize that as the women get older they should be able to have more privileges in order to better prepare them for a life on their own once they leave the confines of college. However, by stretching these rules the Handbook is clearly insinuating that social success is much more important than academic success.

“As Seniors approach life in the larger community, their assumption of greater responsibility is an important part of the educational program. Senior Privileges represent this extension of personal responsibility. In exercising these privileges Senior women will continue at all times to live under the broad basic policies and standards of The Woman’s College. Certain changes, largely a matter of procedure, apply to students who are fully accredited members of this class”

- take actions for behavior with Blanket Permission
- House closes at midnight Sunday – Friday, Saturday 1 am (don’t need to sign in-and-out)
- Written approval of parents to take non-commercial flights
- Beach parties/group activities must have chaperons and approved by Dean” 6 (55-56)

All these privileges given to seniors are in regards to social behavior and restrictions. It even states that by extending social privileges the administration is enhancing the students’ “educational program.” Education is therefore seen in a social light and underlined as an important aspect of college life for women. By listing how rules were going to be bent in regards to “behavior” and “activities,” social achievement is reinforced. This all revolves around dormitory life and further links the social educational process to dormitory rules rather than an academic and studying environment.

It is upsetting to see that as years went on not much changed in how the University viewed what kind of education a woman should be getting. From the 30s to the 70s a social education rather than an academic was emphasized for women attending Duke. This was expressed not only through dormitory regulations for women, but also the contrasting advice that was given to men attending Duke.

### Conclusion

I did research on the topic of dormitory life at Duke because I thought it would answer a lot of questions in regards to how life has changed at Duke since the Woman's College days. However, this research only opened a series of other questions. I found myself wondering why things have not changed very much in the ideals of Duke University in regards to women.

In current times of Duke University there are little if any dorm regulations women and men must follow. Women and men are actually even living together in coed dorms. The social balance that is thus created by this kind of dormitory life is much different from that of the earlier times in Duke's history. However, a common term "the walk of shame" seems to still hold the previous "social acceptance" notions that were held in the 1930s through the 70s. "The Walk of Shame" is college lingo for when a girl walks back to her dorm from another dorm in the previous clothes she was wearing from the night before. While this is an exceedingly different matter from just breaking curfew or visiting a male's dormitory without a chaperone, it does still seem to hold that undertone of social acceptance.

Walking home in your clothes from the previous night seemingly implies that some sort of sexual relations took place the night before. While this happens quite often in every day life, dormitory life makes this extremely awkward and not typically socially accepted on campus. Because Duke has prided itself for many years on social standards for women and engraining in a woman's mind what is socially accepted and what is not, it is not surprising that a walk home from a male's room or another dorm room has the negative connotation and key word "shame." The act of not being in your own dorm

room after a certain hour somehow implies that what the girl is doing is shameful and not socially accepted.

Because women throughout history have so often been pushed to strive for social acceptance, certain traditions have carried on throughout the years. Now we place our own social standards on what is deemed acceptable for a woman to do in today's college atmosphere and that dictates whether a woman will have social success. And, even now that women are able to hold important jobs and pursue lucrative careers, they are still held to different social standards than men and must abide to different unwritten rules as a result.

Another part of the whole puzzle I found interesting was that in the school year 2006-2007 there is a Woman's Handbook handed out to freshman girls that attend Duke. While this handbook does not tell a girl how to dress or how to decorate her room, it addresses other social aspects of a woman's life including: eating disorders, sexual encounters, contraceptives, being a social and healthy person, and other such topics. There is no such handbook for men at this time, which leads me to another question. If the administration is still making separate handbooks for women in regards to social and emotional aspects of life, can it be argued that in today's society social success is still emphasized more than educational success for women as opposed to men?

Another aspect of this paper that brings up other questions is the link of Duke University's policies to national occurrences in the world. Does a university's policies reflect what is going on in the nation or does the nation get changed by what is going on in respected Universities throughout the country? It is hard to decide which is actually

the case because both are so intertwined. From the research I have done for this paper I would say that it is more the University changing its policies as a result of what is going on nationally, but there is clearly not enough of an argument in this paper and would make for a different research project.

The final question that encompasses all other questions is that regarding women in general in the world today. Why is it that in the 1930s, the 1960s, and even in the year 2007 we, as a society, still relate social and emotional aspects of college life, as well as all parts of life, with women? Why must there be the double standard of it being socially acceptable for a girl to walk back from a guys room and get criticized for it while no such thing would happen to a man? Or why is there no Men's Handbook to deal with social and emotional issues or sexual safety issues? And, after all the progress we've made as a society, why are women still fighting to get jobs they deserve when there are men in the picture and working harder for higher wages than men make easier? These questions could all be pondered and discussed in other research papers and reflect that our society still has a long way to go before women and men are on an equal playing field all around the nation.

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