Message from Dean LeBaron

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Message from Dean LeBaron

WELCOME to a new college year on the Iowa State College campus! October is truly the “new year” for college students—a time of beginning for each one, for seniors as well as for freshmen. It is a time for turning one’s back on the triumphs and disappointments of the year before; and it is a time for looking squarely at the potentialities of a full year of college, and what these might mean in leading into new and exciting pathways, and in widening the horizons of the mind.

How wonderful to have an opportunity to begin again each fall! To set fresh goals, just for this year, and then to plan for ways of attaining them in the three quarters that lie ahead. If one’s aims for the four years have been thoughtfully formulated, selecting those for particular emphasis in this one year becomes a simple task.

Perhaps academic achievement should be considered first. So many things depend on one’s scholastic record: peace of mind is preeminent, of course; eligibility for scholarship assistance, and for possible selection as a member of an honorary depend on grade point average. Later on, recommendations for jobs from faculty members will reflect one’s willingness to work hard on the job at hand (course assignments!) and one’s ability to perform well.

Educational opportunities may be found outside the curriculum and classroom, too. The college community offers a larger number and wider variety of special programs than one can expect to find in after-college living. Presented with such a feast one is tempted to sample everything or decide it is too much and refuse it all. It is wiser to make a list of all these “extra” possibilities for learning and then choose one or two for emphasis during these three quarters. Will this be the year that you will decide to learn more about political and social problems? If it is, you will plan now to attend the college lecture series, and to watch for special programs and lectures that may be scheduled from time to time by various organizations and departments. Or will this be the year for you to concentrate on literature and become a faithful attendant of the Union’s Books and Cokes? Or will it be music, and the college concerts?

Activities can have an educational value too, if one seeks for new kinds of experiences through them, and if one limits participation to those one can do well without detriment to scholastic attainment. The selection of the specific activities of any one year is difficult, with so many from which to select. Perhaps a safe rule is to choose those which provide an opportunity for assuming more or new kinds of responsibilities. And how many activities? One’s good judgment of what is sensible and practicable must provide the answer to this question. Perhaps it is reasonable to suggest a minimum of two for each student, with one of the two a professional club.

It’s all here—a vast array of possibilities for making this new college year one rich in new learnings and glorious in achievement. May it be so for each of you.

October, 1956