THE REASON FOR THE "A" FRAMES

Enrollment continued to increase, putting heavy pressure on the University and making it necessary to add many professors and to increase the physical facilities for housing and feeding of the students.

This was particularly true in the summer of 1969. Vice President Smith informed me that there seemed to be a very unprecedented number of freshmen students applying and the normal attrition for other returning students was not apparent. In other words, the students were eager to return to live on the campus and we found ourselves with 184 more students than we had room to house. We were particularly vulnerable because there were 30-40 freshmen girls.

Mrs. Curran, the Dean of Women, had written to them telling them they were admitted but they would have to be on a waiting list for housing. This was after we had made the recreation room in Anderson-Langdon into a dormitory for twelve girls and those residents were called the "Golden Dozen". They seemed to have a very interesting time and enjoyed this room very much.

Vice President Smith had asked some of the student leaders to make a house-to-house canvas to find out if more homes in the area would make rooms available for students. However, because it was 1969 and there had been so much unrest at Berkeley and Columbia and at many of the other 2600 schools and colleges in the country, homeowners were reluctant to rent to students. This was unfortunate because our student body, while caught up in the fervor of the general unrest, had not been overt in their protests.

It was obvious that the unusual academic excellence of the University
of Puget Sound had caused students to return and also had drawn many new freshmen students. This was due to the excellent reputation of the University for student counseling, for the personal interest of the administration and faculty in student lives and careers, and it was a very interesting by-product on the excellence in education which attracted these students to the University.

As a special committee, Vice President Smith, Dean Curran, Larry Stenberg and Dale Bailey, along with several others, appraised the various alternatives. One, of course, was to ask the homeowners near the campus to help us, and we had 20 per cent less response on this than we had had previously. The second alternative was to see whether or not dormitory trailers could be secured, such as Boise College was using at that time. The third was to see if we could rent a wing on Annie Wright Seminary because Annie Wright was losing its boarding students. A fourth alternative was to see if we could rent one of the wings of the Polynesian Apartment complex. Another one was to see if the City Motel would allow us to put students there. It was located on Sixth Avenue and had not been used as a motel for many years but was used as a tax write-off for the owner. None of these alternatives seemed to materialize, so Dean Curran suggested that we build "A" frames on the campus. These A frames were to be 20x48 feet, two-stories, and would provide housing for twelve students. Since five were proposed, this would provide housing for 60 additional students.

The committee contacted Pacific Fabricators and their bid, including
carpeting and furniture, came to a total of $10,500 for each A frame.

With these facts in hand, we considered the various alternatives. It appeared the committee had planned very well. I was somewhat concerned, though, because I remembered in our University Presidents' meetings for many years one of the agenda items was the discussion of war surplus buildings. I recalled how one president told us, "Gentlemen, if it gives you any encouragement, last year I was able to get rid of the World War I surplus buildings."

We, of course, had had surplus buildings from World War II in units A-B-C-D, which had been the hospital units from Paine Field and which were moved to our campus at government expense to help accommodate the G.I. enrollment. Later, we decided to make them permanent and we put siding on them and spent considerable money in refinishing the interior.

I was not eager to have a second set of temporary buildings that would look less than the best in a few short years of use. However, the pressure was so severe that we decided we must go ahead with the A frames. I talked to the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and we called a meeting of the Board on July 21, 1969 at which time the buildings were authorized by the Board at a cost not to exceed $154,000.

The buildings were constructed in time to alleviate the housing shortage for the freshmen that year. The freshmen seemed to enjoy living in these A frames and these units soon became a part of the campus life.

In retrospect, I have often thought that, inasmuch as we owned a number of houses around the campus, it might have been better if we had asked the renters
to move immediately so we could use the houses for students, although I am sure we would have had very great difficulty taking care of 60 students that quickly. We have found since that time that housing in homes is much preferred over dormitory living by many students because they have the amenities of refrigerators, stoves, and other things which are so much a part of home-like living.

The critical housing situation was relieved in 1970 when a dormitory housing 118 students was finished. This made it possible for us to take care of the rapid expansion, both from the standpoint of those who came in 1969 and those who came in 1970 and later.

When this housing pressure was eased up, of course, there was a great call for use of the A frame space. They had been located among the trees so they would not be too conspicuous on the campus. They were also purchased with the idea that they could be sold to individuals and moved to a beach or mountain site. About this time, there were all kinds of people asking for them. Pressure came from the Black Student Union for one to be used for its headquarters and permission was given to them for several years. Later, one was used for headquarters for minority students, which worked into the total University administration without too much problem.

More recently, one of the A frames has been used for Safety and Security offices of the University.

Some years after they were built, when housing was less acute, only six students were housed in one A frame, rather than 12. This fall, four of the units are housing students, three of which will take care of Sigma Chi Fraternity.

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