1923

Letter to Dr. H.A. Morgan from George B. Shaeffer Jr.

George B. Shaeffer, Jr.
Dear Dr. Morgan:—

I doubt whether or not you can find time to read this entire communication but I feel like it should be in your hands and I adopt this method of placing it there for I feel that the subjects herein discussed must be expressed with more thought than can be given them in conversation.

The University of Tennessee never had a more loyal student than myself. I realize that the publicity which it is receiving is hurting it very much, being mailed out over the entire country to both political and educational leaders. I also realize that this movement is really and truly backed by ninety-five per cent of the student body and might say many others, and let their classification go unnamed. I know that the unauthorized student publication has funds and brain sufficient behind it to be published indefinitely. I will make oath further that I am not the editor of "The Truth" nor do I know who that individual is. However I will tell you that I an of Gordon restrictive fraternity ruling was in the hands of the Pan-Hellenic Council in definite written form before it was placed before the Administrative Council and altered. Let the source remain unknown. The Sprowles overdraft bank business has been in the hands of the students for more time in a more or less mixed-up form. The Mulvania letter to the President was known to the students before it was in the hands of the President. Bear in mind that none of these things have been disclosed by the Faculty. This is absolutely not the case. The details of every dismissal in a more or less muddled state have been placed in the hands of the students. The proposed fee for next year, regardless of its name, has also leaked out and certainly not through any Y.M.C.A. official. I mentioned to you at one time before anything came up the disturbed condition of the student body. I had no idea at that time that it would break out but I have clearly seen it rising for three years.

But knowing that you really, truly, honestly, and to the best of your ability want to do everything for the good of the institution with the facilities you have at hand I humbly suggest a real remedy for the situation. I hope that I am not stepping out of my place in this for this is not my attitude. I am really honestly interested in the welfare of the school and am not representative of anything or anybody. My communication is personal and honest. I trust that this will be received in this light.
I suggest that the Administration call a small group of students in with them and go over the questions at issue and privately settle the affair by taking some steps toward adopting some of the student suggestions or showing them why they are not practicable and desirable. This should in no way appear that the Administration are surrendering the battle, or that they are whipped, for this is not what the students want. It can be arranged in another attitude entirely.

The "QUESTIONS" as I see them are these--

1. Some steps should be taken toward the establishment of student government and plans laid for the building up of an honor principle.
2. The Student Privilege Fee in some form should be enacted.
3. Dr. Porter should be released from the services he so despises and the office of Dean of Men created to use the Probation System as used by Dean Clark of Illinois. That is make a man whenever it is possible with the material you have. Certainly not that system of getting rid of every man who strays from the path. This is written with all due respect to Dean Porter and his noble efforts to fill the place assigned to him.
4. Student judgment should not be interfered with in the policy of their publications. If these reforms are attempted the students will all be satisfied and their will be no need of censorship.
5. The Faculty should be given an opportunity to do some of the many tasks left to the Dean and President and the President would be left more time to devote to internal conditions.
6. The cooperation of the Faculty should be asked and their advice given more heed and more power should be given to the Faculty. Why should there be such a distinct line between Faculty and Administration?
7. There should be more Faculty meetings and students should attend these to understand the actions.
8. The Alumni organization of the University should be placed in new and efficient hands. Retain the present secretary in some capacity other than that and place a live wire in that job.
9. Continue the policy of the last few weeks of welcome reception to student ideas and careful consideration of their merit.
10. Establish a preceptorial system for freshmen control and take some of the responsibility from the shoulders of the fraternities. Send an attentive ear to the green cap tradition and assist as far as possible in its establishment.

These are a few student suggestions and criticisms. I hope that I shall not be misunderstood. No one else will see this communication. I am the mouthpiece of no clique or body. These are honest personal views. To the best of my knowledge and belief they are the truth. Further the students and alumni are planning a program to take before the Board of Trustees without official sanction. Divided we can accomplish nothing. United the world is ours to conquer. My plea is for one side that can take the initiative and together work out the problems as they exist.

Assuring you of my utmost sincerity and with the utmost of personal esteem, I am,

Truly yours,

George B. Shaff Jr.

I shall welcome further discussion of these problems at your convenience.