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AMERICAN CHEMICAL SOCIETY  
Committee on Professional Training

Department of Chemistry  
University of California  
Los Angeles 24, California

Dean Harry F. Lewis  
The Institute of Paper Chemistry  
Appleton, Wisconsin

Dear Dean Lewis:

I was pleased to receive your letter of September 23 concerning the meeting of the Midwestern Conference of Liberal Arts College Chemistry Teachers. After our meeting in Chicago with representatives of the Pennsylvania group which prepared a resolution concerning the accreditation of small colleges, I am fully convinced that most of the difficulty arises because many of the people involved are not fully informed concerning the policies, philosophies, and actions of our Committee. I am sure that if a discussion arises in Appleton concerning the problem of accreditation, it would help a good deal to have a member of our Committee there.

There are two members of our Committee residing in the Midwest, Dean Warren Johnson of the University of Chicago and Professor William Johnson of the University of Wisconsin. Although Dean Johnson has been a member of our Committee for the longest period and would therefore be able to represent the general philosophies of our Committee better, I am quite confident that Bill Johnson has attended enough meetings to be able to represent us adequately. Of one thing I am sure, that he commented on the fact that he was very impressed with the attitudes of our Committee when he joined it and expressed the opinion that it was unfortunate that all college presidents could not have the opportunity to actually meet with us. I should like to suggest that you correspond with both of the Johnsons with the hope that one of them, or even both of them, could be present at Appleton.

It has occurred to me that it might be possible to arrange to have them be on call so that when the conference meets it might consider whether it desires to have such a discussion and immediately make arrangements for attendance by representatives of our Committee. In case neither of the Johnsons is able to be present, it might be desirable for me to write you a few words which you might transmit to the group.

Most people do not appreciate the terrific problem which the Committee faced when it first arrived at minimum standards and attempted to evaluate some four or five hundred institutions. The question of just how rigid the Committee should be in interpreting its standards was in itself something which took time to determine. As a result of the difficulties which the original Committee faced, they adopted a rather conservative policy, the result of which led to very few small colleges being included on the original list. As time went on, the Committee found that it was desirable to take a very broad look at the facts gathered concerning a given institution and to determine whether it should be placed upon our approved list, even though there were certain technical

details in which the minimum standards were not met. As a result of this rather fundamental change in the operating policy of the Committee, a number of schools have been added to our list which might actually have qualified originally under the policies now in operation.

In general, however, we have found that the mere existence of our minimum standards has caused all institutions to strive for improvement and has led a great number of the small colleges to more nearly meet the technical details of our standards. Unfortunately, most chemistry departments fail to recognize that the Committee on Professional Training never initiates negotiations with institutions which are not on our approved list. In other words, if an institution was originally turned down, the initiative must be taken by them to receive reconsideration. I am confident that there are a number of small schools which probably would qualify for approval if they were to approach our Committee for an evaluation. I do not know the exact number, but I would guess that there are at least 50 small colleges that have qualified during the past five years or so.

Another way in which our Committee has offered valuable service to chemistry departments which is not well known is by serving in an advisory and consulting capacity. I can recall a good many instances where chairmen of chemistry departments have requested an informal hearing with our Committee to discuss the problems of their chemistry departments and have received valuable advice from us which led eventually to approval. In fact, our Committee has always stood ready to offer such advice, even though the institutions involved are interested in self-improvement and do not expect to receive a formal visitation.

Finally, I appreciate the fact that you personally have wondered why a number of schools were not on our list since your own experience indicated that they were doing a good job of training chemists at the B.S. level. It is my impression that several of those schools have now requested revisitation and been added to our list. I believe that one of these was Hope College, and I do not hesitate to say that it probably should have been included on the original list which was prepared, even though they were carrying outrageous teaching loads at the time.

Sincerely yours,

William G. Young, Chairman  
Committee on Professional Training