and wait for students to seek him out. He must show an interest in students by both his present and previous actions. Unless he shows some concern for their interests, students are likely to stereotype the ombudsman as just another person in the system.

His job is to help put back the personal touch into higher education. His actions can and will indicate to students whether the university is interested in them or not. If the ombudsman believes in the "generation gap" he is doomed to failure from the outset. He must be able to recognize the difference between "what is" and "what should be," have the ability to make constructive criticisms and make use of persuasion to bring about desired change.

The criteria for selection of the ombudsman vary from one institution to the other; some universities appoint tenured faculty members; other campuses choose ministers connected with the school while still other colleges appoint young, recent alumni as the campus ombudsmen. As fortunate enough to be a member of the latter group. After serving as student body president in my senior year, I was chosen ombudsman at 21 years of age.

According to the administration I was chosen because of the report I had established with students, faculty and administrators and not because of my long time affiliation with the college. The ombudsman's age can aid or hinder the sensitive tasks of the office. Some people felt that I did not possess the experience nor the knowledge required for such a post. Yet students saw me as one of them, someone they could relate to, not just another part of the campus establishment. No matter who is chosen, institutions who have appointed ombudsmen must be committed to more than words.

Based on my limited experience, I believed that the idea of an ombudsman will work if given ample time and support by those who are a part of the collegiate scene. One problem, however, is likely to persist; the ombudsman is expected to be too many things, to too many people.

TWO VIEWS OF THE OPEN ADMISSIONS CONTROVERSY

by Joel H. Marin

Does everyone who wants to go to college have the right to go, regardless of his academic record or the quality of his previous education? There are many answers, pro and con, to this question, which contribute to the current open admissions controversy. Numerous articles, which have been written on the topic, have tended to focus on viewpoints that are either for or against, while relatively few have examined the topic from all sides. In this study, the author has compiled information to present the two primary views concerning the open admissions controversy.

At the heart of the argument put forth by the opponents of an open admissions system, is the feeling that not everyone is suited for higher education, and that it is wrong to lower standards and thus, the quality of an institution, in order to make college attendance universal. One of the most outspoken critics of open admissions is Vice President Spiro T. Agnew. Mr. Agnew has stated that it is a cruel waste of God-given talents to require a student of adequate ability to sit for hours in a classroom with those neither able nor prepared, and to permit him to be intellectually stalled at the level of the slowest students. He goes on to suggest that rather than lowering the standards of higher education, the level of the unqualified student's preparation and achievement must be raised so that he can successfully hold his own in active, healthy competition with other students. This can be done by providing that more compensatory education, extra summer study, and special prep schools are readily available to the unqualified student as preparation for entering into college. This would also be fair to the qualified student in that it would keep him from being permanently scarred as a result of trying and failing, due to inadequate preparation, Mr. Agnew asserts.

Some others have feared that open admissions would drive away the better student who would lack a challenge in having to compete with the unprepared. The able student might also choose to leave because the accommodations of those who are unqualified would produce massive enrollments and even more depersonalization than we already have on our campuses. It is also feared by the opponents that further clustering of our universities would bring on infirmitied and unrest. As Mr. Agnew puts it, "Even now, with 8 million students on the campuses of this country, there are tens of thousands there who did not come for the learning experience and who are restless, aimless, bored and rebellious. College, at one time considered a privilege, is today considered a right and is valued less because of that. Concentrations of disoriented students create an immense potential for disorder." Some educators have pointed toward the Italian system of open admission and warned that the same pattern could result in this country. In Italy, the number of people holding diplomas has increased immensely in the past few years to the point where these are considered bargain basement diplomas and
Italian employers, when advertising for college graduates, are careful to specify that the degree must have been earned before 1967.6

Finally, those opposed to open admissions fear that faculty members are largely unequipped, methodologically and psychologically, to meet the challenge posed by open admissions, and that an almost certain outgrowth will be future demands for easy promotion and guaranteed graduation. Open admissions would be a direct threat to the quality of American education.

Proponents of the open admissions system counter with the philosophy that everyone who wants to go to college should at least have the opportunity to see if he can succeed.7 Backers of this theory agree that not everyone cut out to go to college and they strive to assure others that they are not advocating a never-ending association with an institution such that the student’s performance be consistently below average; but what they propose is that every student, regardless of his academic record or the quality of his previous education, at least be given the chance to try. To those apprehensive that this is impossible, it can be pointed out that this exact plan is in operation at the City University of New York. Here every high school graduate who has a grade average of 80 or above, or who ranks in the top 50% of his class is guaranteed admission to one of the university’s 5 year colleges. Any high school graduate failing to meet these standards is guaranteed admission to one of the university’s 2 year community colleges. Upon graduating from one of the community colleges, a student is guaranteed junior year standing at one of the 5 year colleges.8

Of major concern to opponents of the open admission plan is the threat it would pose to academic standards. After conducting a nationwide study, Alexander Astin, research director for the American Council on Education, concluded that the lowering of admissions standards does not necessarily result in the lowering of academic standards. He points out that it is a commonly held belief that academic standards are somehow determined by admission standards. The type of education needed to qualify students is determined by the quality of instruction offered by professors who, themselves, set the absolute level of performance required to pass courses and earn degrees, as well as by the curriculum, facilities, and student services offered by the institution. Admission of high-risk students would not affect these offerings. Though concessions are made to get these high-risk students into college, they would be expected to do the same work required of others to stay in college. As Chancellor Albert H. Boxer of City University of New York states, “We will not award degrees for anything except college-level work.”9

It can then be asked, “How can the unqualified student possibly expect to keep his head above water?” The all-important answer lies in an intensive remedial program of catch up classes—that do not count toward a degree—along with intensive personal counseling, tutors, lighter class loads with as much time as is needed to finish, and training programs for faculty.10

Many individuals equate campus disturbance with the number of high-risk students attending an institution, fearing that alumni and other donors may discontinue their contributions to the school. Proponents of the plan point out that with the necessary programs and facilities for the disadvantaged students, these youths are not very likely to disrupt campus proceedings. Or, as one prominent educator states, “These kids are rarely involved in campus unrest. They’re too busy trying to keep in school.”12

Backers of the open admissions system admit that they are not sure it will succeed, but they are quick to add that it would be a sin not to try at all.13

Two Views of the Open Admissions Controversy
by Joel R. Maxin

Footnotes
3 Ibid., p. 110.
5 Agnew, op. cit., p. 110.
6 Ibid., p. 108.
7 "College for Everyone," op. cit., p. 78.
12 Ibid., p. 23.