

Central Piedmont Tries "Walk-Ins"- And Likes Them

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Early last summer two completely unrelated events at Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte resulted in the library's most successful out-reach project to date — weekly rap sessions known around the campus as "Walk-Ins." The idea evolved from the combination of a recently-stated library objective to make the library more relevant and from a conversation between two instructors overheard in the library. Bemoaning the fact that there was no vehicle on campus for unstructured dialogue between faculty and students, the two instructors dreamed aloud about the beauty and challenge such sessions could bring. The eavesdropper got into the conversation and a project was born.

Although it all sounds so simple in retrospect, there was much planning and many meetings before any "Walk-Ins" materialized. The first Walk-In Committee still exists, a five-person group consisting of the Library Director, the Assistant Director for Readers' Services, a staff member designated as Walk-In Chairman, and the two original instructors. All policies relating to the "Walk-Ins" are determined by this group as well as subjects and coordinators. Occasionally certain key faculty and students have joined the Walk-In Committee for skull sessions on topics and corresponding faculty knowledgeable enough to be coordinators. In some cases it was decided that other experts in the community be

invited in to "Walk-Ins" as further resource people.

In an effort to involve as many of the library staff as possible, the Walk-In Chairman has appointed committees to handle publicity and research. At first, bibliographies were prepared and made available each week. This was discontinued after the first quarter due to lack of interest. Smiley-face Walk-In buttons were distributed and posters displayed. Publicity is limited to the campus only, and herein has arisen an unexpected problem. Either because the "Walk-Ins" have been extremely popular with students or because of the controversial nature of the topics, or because of a combination of the two, the local media have tried to give radio and television coverage which has had to be rigidly refused. The Walk-In Committee feel strongly that public exposure will completely alter both the original concept and the candor and outspokenness of the "Walk-Ins."

The summer quarter of 1972 was the shake-down period for the "Walk-Ins." Crowds varied according to topic, and several methods of presentation proved themselves good or bad. The general format has remained the same, however. All "Walk-Ins" are held from 11:00 to 12:00 noon on Thursdays in the back part of the main floor of the library. Chairs are pushed

back to give open space for coordinators, panels, black boards, as the case may be. Students and faculty sit on the floor or on chairs or tables or stand up. Usually the coordinator gives a short presentation then throws the gathering open to questions or discussion. Interruptions may occur at any time. Panels have been used twice, and several times students have prepared questions and answers in advance. After the first few weeks, attendance started growing and since the beginning of fall quarter has been averaging 200 people each "Walk-In."

Topics for the Summer Quarter were Hypnosis, "God is", Violence, The Morality of Profit, and The Sex Revolution. Not surprisingly, the first and last were the crowd-drawers, with the other three having extremely tenacious audiences that stayed on well past the hour. During the fall quarter, ESP, Reincarnation, and Psychic Phenomena were handled by one coordinator each. Ecology and abortion both had panels to start and reinforce the dis-

cussion. Kung-Fu had an instructor for coordinator and three of his students for demonstration, and there were two "Walk-Ins" devoted to The McGovern-Nixon Debate, with the same coordinator choosing a different side each time.

For the present winter quarter, four topics are set up with others still at the discussion level. Those already planned are Nudity, Obscenity and Pornography; "Nigger"; Marriage?; and Zen, Transcendental Meditation and Alpha Waves. A clipboard has been left on the catalog since early December for topic suggestions from students or faculty, and another skull session is in the works with faculty from some yet untapped disciplines. From these two sources should come some new ideas for later "Walk-Ins" while the question of repetition will eventually be handled by the Walk-In Committee. The student and faculty response to the whole project has been exciting and challenging for the library staff. Central Piedmont has tried "Walk-Ins" — and likes them!

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