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Title: Report of the President to the Board of Trustees (May 1786)

Date: May 10, 1786

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717-245-1399

archives@dickinson.edu

The Hon ble the Board of Trustees of Dickinson College, from their very little fine to (Robt Davidson, There are atthrefint, (10 th may 1/86) in Dickinson Colleges 60 Students, - 23 of whom are taught in the Mathematica department, and the rest are under Mr Role. of those who are Studying Mathematics, Jome are unacquainted with the Latin of greek classis; the rest are young men, who have for the most part nearly completed their classical studies, have made confiderably proficiency in some of the fiences, - and frem eager to acquire, as foom as possible, an acquaintance with the other finnes to be laught in the college, in order to the attainment of a degree . agreeably to the plan of education, there are to the four clapes in the college: Un M. Ross is one ofthe profesors, the highest class in his fehool may be for perly considered as one of the four: all those who are removed from his fehood, may be thrown into 3 claper. They are not however formed into regular classes as yet; for as there have been but two profepors in the inflitution, appointed and qualified as the charter di forming of regular and standing classes fearer to be

the business, either of the board of Trusties, or of a duly organized and full faculty; and it was expected that formenew Inofepors would be now chosen; it was thought best to leave these and fome other matters to be determined at, or foon after, the prefent meeting. Some of these have been very carefully instructed by Motohnston in the following parts of the mathematics; - common withmetic, six books of Euclid's Elements, planety pherical Trigonomatry, mensuration, quaging, furucijing; navigation, logarithms, and ef. use of of glober. These they have been taught from first principles, and appear to be well agreainted with: They have also, as well as most of the other students in the mathematical Johool, been taught, in a compendious way, an entire system of Geography, and have had occapional Lections on history: But this latter, together with chronology, they have yet to learn in a pysternation My Johnston is preparing to intruct them foon in aftrony - a fine of which he is extremely fond, & which he has been for form time past applying himselfts with great assidinty. He is very folicitous to know, what parts of the mathematies of Board will confider as indispensibly meetsary in order to a deque; as forme are ready to imagine that they are detained too long in this part of their course.

Those Students, who are farthest advanced freem fully prepared for entering on the important Science of National Philosophy, as foon as the Board will please to appoint one to teach it. They may also enter as foon the Principal pleases, on the Study of Logic, Metaphysics, Moral Philosophy &c. If a Clap could be instructed in these ficenes, and he fre frand to take a degree about this time next year, at the farthest, it would be qually for the encouragement of the Students, and the reputation of the college. as it appeared impossible to maintain any order in the institution, or carry on education to any good purpose, without forme necessary regulations, - a for laws were therefore paper by the faculty, in concurrence with the trustees of the Box rough which it will be newpany for the Board now to take up, and either to confirm or alter, as may frem mount from my most expedient. To encourage parents to fend their children here for a compleat english education, it feems absolutely necepary, that the Board Should pay attention to this matter; - as we have last formefour best boys from Ballimore, because their progress in English and drithmetic was not so apparent as in With

With respect to the library, it feems proper that all the professor should have auch toit, at any time - as they may have oceasion very often to look into books, for a for minutes, which it would be troubleforme to take out in the upal way. Very confiderable difficulties & have arisen, from the Orofesors and pupils being put on the fame footing, in applying for, and returning books. His desired by many parents that threemight be but one long vacation, every year, and that in the Spring: it may be objected, that it is a pity to lofe the pleafantest Jeafon, in play; and to be confined to rooms and close Study, during all the warm and fichly months. Cerhaps the Philosophy classes would require more va-cant time, than the grammar boys, & could improve it M. Johnston July expects, to be now chofen a Profesor, - Their amon of a very good character, - is very ingenious, extremely diligent, has a good method of teaching, will be more respected and better obeyed by the higher classes, can few the institution better bey having a vote in Faculty, than if he is only confidend as a destor, is as well qualified to be a professor of math, as M. Rofs- of languages, - and if encouraged a little can even with the help of a very valuable work lately reed in the college instruct a class in the most are entirely fubmitted to the wisdom of the honde Board. The Honble the Board of Trustees of Dickinson College,
from their very hble Servt
Robt Davidson

There are at present, (10th May 1786) in Dickinson College, 60 Students, - 23 of whom are taught in the <u>Mathematics</u> department, and the rest are under <u>Mr Ross</u>. - Of those who are studying Mathematics, some are <u>unacquainted</u> with the Latin & Greek classics; the rest are young men, who have, for the most part, nearly completed their classical studies, - have made considerably proficiency in some of the sciences, - and seem eager to acquire, as soon as possible, an acquaintance with the other sciences to be taught in the college, in order to the attainment of a degree. -

Agreeably to the plan of education, there are to be four classes in the college. As Mr Ross is one of the professors, the highest class in his school may be properly considered as one of the four: all those, who are removed from his school, may be thrown into the other 3 classes.

They are not however formed into regular classes as yet; for as there have been but two professors in the institution, (appointed and qualified as the charter directs,) since the last meeting of the board; and as the forming of regular and standing classes seems to be the business, either of the board of Trustees, or of a duly organized and full faculty; and it was expected that some new professors would be now chosen; it was thought best to leave these and some other matters to be determined at, or soon after, the present meeting.

Some of these young men have been very carefully instructed by Mr Johnston in the following parts of the Mathematics; — common Arithmetic, — Six books of Euclid's Elements, — plane & spherical Trigonometry, — mensuration, — guaging, surveying, — navigation, — logarithms, — and ye. use of ye. globes. These they have been taught from first principles, and appear to be well acquainted with. They have also, as well as most of the other students in the

Mathematical school, been taught, in a compendious way, an entire system of Geography, and have had occasional Lectures on history. But this latter, together with chronology, they have yet to learn in a systematic manner.

Mr. Johnston is preparing to instruct them soon in Astronomy — a science of which he is extremely fond, & which he has been for some time part applying himself to with great assiduity. He is very solicitous to know, what parts of the Mathematics ye Board will consider as indispensibly necessary in order to a degree; as some are ready to imagine that they are detained too long in this part of their course. Those students, who are farthest advanced, seem fully prepared for entering on the important Science of Natural Philosophy, as soon as the Board will please to appoint one to teach it. They may also enter as soon the Principal pleases, on the Study of Logic, Metaphysics, Moral Philosophy etc.

If a Class could be instructed in these sciences, and be prepared to take a degree, about this time next year, at the farthest, it would be greatly for the encouragement of the students, and the reputation of the college.

As it appeared impossible to maintain any order in the institution, or carry on education to any good purpose, without some necessary regulations, — a few laws were therefore passed by the faculty, in concurrence with the Trustees of the Borough — which it will be necessary for the Board now to take up, and either to confirm or alter, as may seem most expedient.

To encourage parents to send their children here for a compleat english education, it seems absolutely necessary, that the Board should pay attention to this matter; — as we have lost some of our best boys from Baltimore, because their progress in English and Arithmetic was not so apparent as in latin. With respect to the <u>library</u>, — it seems proper that <u>all</u> the professors should have access to it, at any time — as they may have occasion very often to look into books, for a few minutes, which it would be troublesome to take out in the usual way. Very considerable difficulties have arisen, from the Professors and pupils being put on the same footing, in applying for, and returning books.

It is desired by many parents that there might be but one <u>long</u> vacation, every year, and that in the Spring: - it may be objected, that it is a pity to lose the pleasantest season, in <u>play</u>; and to be confined to rooms and class Study, during all the warm and sickly months. - Perhaps the Philosophy classes would require more vacant time, than the Grammar boys, & could improve it better. -

MT Johnston fully expects, to be now chosen a Professor, - He is a man of a very good character, - is very ingenious, - extremely diligent, - has a good method of teaching, - will be more respected and better obeyed by the higher classes, - can serve the institution better by having a vote in Faculty. than if he is only considered as a Tutor, - is as well qualified in my opinion to be a professor of Math. s, as M. Ross - of languages, - and, if encouraged a little, can even (with the help of a very valuable Work lately recd in the college) instruct a class in the most useful parts of Natural Philosophy. -But these things are entirely submitted to the wisdom of the honble Board.