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Parkland in 1974

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Reflection on a Primary Archival Source: Parkland College in 1974

This year, 2016, we celebrate the 50-year anniversary of Parkland College. Thus, it is fitting to take a look at what this school was like at the very beginning. The 1970's were an interesting time for fashion, social activities, and education at Parkland. Comparing what Parkland was like in mid-1970s to 2016 shows many differences that I will highlight throughout this paper. It is important to look back at what this school was like in the past because it can show us what has made Parkland College so special over the years. In this paper, I will specifically compare my own experiences as a student to the stories told by the pictures and captions drawn from a primary source; Parkland's Yearbook called *Conveniamus*, which shows what the Parkland College student body, faculty, and staff was like in 1974.

On page 26 of the 1974 yearbook, two students are standing in front of a board that says BIO 102 and the next picture is that of students in a classroom. One of the main things I have noticed going through these pictures is how different the fashion is in the 1970's. The pants are flared out for both men and women, hair is parted down the middle, and the shirts have lots of detail and patterns. On the other hand, the Life Sciences building shown in the yearbook is very similar to what it is now. I am taking a biology class and spend a lot of time in the health professions wing at Parkland so I could relate to the experiences shown in these yearbook photographs. The students next to the board seem to be giving a presentation on what they have been learning, which is similar to what I am doing now in my biology class. One of our

assignments is to give a presentation on an enzyme that we have been studying all semester, and the students in the picture from 1974 also seem to be giving an end of the semester talk.

The Life Science department pictures in the yearbook also show students in a classroom during a lecture. It can be assumed that these students spend time in the classroom each week to take notes and learn new information and take that new information to translate it into papers and other assignments. Another similarity I found from these students in the life sciences program and students in the same program today is that each class has lectures during the week and is given assignments or lab experiments that translate that information into a hands-on experience to further their knowledge of that topic. A significant difference that I noted is the technology used in 1974. Today, we have so much more technology that has been invented that did not exist in 1974 both in lab equipment and to seek information, do research, and write our papers and exams. I can image that students back then would have to do more work on some parts of their assignments and experiments because of this. Another difference between then and now is the way that students communicate with their teachers. It is a lot easier for us today because we can send our teachers an email to get an answer to a question, but students in 1974 would have had to go to the teacher's office and ask that question in person.

As I looked at the details of student life at Parkland through the pictures published in the yearbook I also noticed other differences to student life today in the way students interacted with each other and got their work done. Some of these are shown in images of students using typewriters, playing card games, pool, and Ping-Pong during their breaks. I also noticed that a lot of the pictures showed students sitting close together and working on homework. This is different from the present day at Parkland because I believe most students like to have their own space and work individually. Some similarities I observed are that the students were slouching in

their seats while listening to a professor lecture, hanging posters to promote clubs in the hallways and classrooms, and doing group work for classes. I feel as though these actions of students from 1974 are still continuing today.

The pictures in this yearbook can also provide readers a glimpse of what gender relations were like back in the day as well as relations among different ethnicities, social classes, and other forms of diversity such as age. For the interactions between genders I looked at pictures of men and women working together in the classrooms as well as in clubs like Student Government. From what is shown in these photographs and their captions, men seemed to have had more of a leadership positions in these clubs, but there was still participation from women. Relations among different ethnicities showed people with different ethnic backgrounds working in the classroom and participating in clubs and sports teams side by side. Relationships between students and faculty are shown with pictures of students in the classroom listening to a lecture given by the teacher. The teacher looks excited and ready to teach and the students look very engaged in what is being taught to them. I would say that these relationships are similar to what it is like at Parkland today. However, I also think gender and ethnic relations could be said to have improved from what it was like in 1974 as there is much more diversity across different ethnicities that can be seen in Parkland's student body today and women participate more in student club leadership positions.

I really enjoyed looking at the yearbook from 1974 and seeing what student life was like back then. It is very interesting to see pictures of areas of Parkland's buildings that I have walked through going to my classes and see people from the 1970's doing the same thing. I tried to picture myself going to school around that time and this helped me see the differences and similarities that I have discussed in this short essay. In the old yearbook pictures, everyone looks

happy and like they are enjoying their time at Parkland. I think I would have enjoyed going to school in 1974 because of how much simpler life seemed for these students. Technological advances just seem to have complicated our lives and made them more difficult. I think the comparisons I have described in this paper also show how this school has adapted to a changing society and how students have changed along with it. Having looked at the differences and similarities from the past to the present, it is exciting to think about what Parkland will be like in another 50 years!

Works Cited

Parkland College, "Conveniamus 1974" (1974). *Conveniamus*. Book

5. <http://spark.parkland.edu/yearbooks/5> ? Web, digitized version.