

by the President. A sense of mutual confidence should encourage in the several administrators of the University the practice of contingency without capitulation and in the President the practice of referral for further consideration--without arbitrary reversal or abrogation of his ultimate responsibility. All of this will take time, a scarce commodity. And doubtless there will be some bruising of spirits. But we must make the attempt, for the integrity of a great idea, the collegium, is at stake.

To effect these goals I propose to introduce some innovations in administrative organization and to utilize most of the traditional agencies.

First, I intend to reconstitute the President's Staff. One of my principal objectives in doing so will be to increase administrative attention and focus on the University's primary mission--its academic programs. The President's Staff, as presently organized, deals with a wide array of administrative affairs and is too seldom able to give undivided, sustained consideration to educational matters. The primary body for achieving this objective will be the Council of Deans in which the Dean of Faculties and I shall both be involved: I to join him in meeting with them, perhaps once a month, principally to facilitate my communication with the vital instructional and research areas of the University; the Dean of Faculties to meet the Council, at intervals to be determined, both for communication and to transact business. I shall invite the several deans to come to my office periodically, or upon their request, to discuss their problems and aspirations, but their business will be conducted with the Dean of Faculties, who will take action or make recommendations to me. I hope to meet with department heads and faculties, as time permits or your wishes dictate, in groups, or by appointment in my office--again for the purpose of communication, the business to be transacted in the appropriate office. But I should add, that communication is not to inform only, but to provide the basis for action.

For the auxiliary functions of the University--the housing program, the health service, student affairs, and others--and to coordinate and implement policies that impinge upon more than one area of the University, I shall meet regularly with an Administrative Committee including the Dean of Faculties, the Dean of Administration, and others.

I shall continue regular meetings with the Advisory Council, a unique and indispensable agency of this faculty. I shall continue the practice begun and followed to good purpose by Charles Johnson in meeting regularly with the Budget Committee to seek advice in the preparation of the budget and the disposition of discretionary funds, and I shall rely upon the Committee on Committees to recommend appointments to standing committees, aware, of course, that the ultimate responsibility for assignment rests with the President. I am hopeful that the role of the Faculty Senate can be enlarged, not only in the matters to which I have alluded, but in functions of studying and proposing or acting upon policy change. I shall, at its request, meet with the A.S.U.O. Cabinet twice a month, and hopefully at times yet to be determined with a committee representing minority students, in both instances for communication, with policies and specific proposals for action to be developed through the agents of the administration.

Lest you may not have perceived my intent, let me state that it is to share responsibility, and yet not let go of the vital functions of the University. In a way, I am an offspring of Walt Whitman: I embrace you all; I would gladly enter into the enterprises of all of you, and shall do so, so far as my abilities and time will permit. And yet it is not calendar alone that deters me. I am a little like Percy McKaye's scarecrow who, transformed into a human being, could sustain life only so long as he continued to smoke his pipe. I shall be no good to you, unable to sustain my role or to find satisfaction in it, unless you--and others--allow me a little time to read and reflect, to try to stay alive intellectually.

II. I hope that this administrative pattern will be effective for all of us. We shall have occasion to test it forthwith. For the problems facing us are many and urgent.

A. One of them is to define our purpose as a University. Periodically every University must re-examine and redefine its mission. In general terms

one scarcely need do more than restate Ortega. Roughly his propositions are two: first, the function of the University is to transmit culture, to teach the professions, and to advance knowledge (through research); and, second, the organization of the University should be based upon the student and not upon the professor or upon knowledge.

I shall return to the second of these propositions later. On the first, it may not be difficult, with careful exposition of the meaning, to get faculty, students, and the Legislature to agree on Ortega's statement of functions. The problem arises in the distribution of limited resources and creative energy among the three.

The Legislature, by its action, has spoken out clearly in judgment of the State System of Higher Education, but in terms that most adversely affect the University of Oregon. Its conclusions: The University has too many graduate students; it neglects undergraduate instruction, and its growth, as far as it is based on nonresident students, is too rapid for the economy of the state to support. As correctives, the Legislature imposed a limit on the percentage of graduate and nonresident students, and it established a fund for the improvement of instruction and for experimentation in curriculum for undergraduates.

We may find some encouragement in the belief that these limitations are not necessarily permanent, that they represent arbitrary levels to be observed until we have defined our purpose and persuaded the Legislature that it is sound.

Our University was unprepared for the legislative action. It had assumed that its growth and development were generally in accord with the prescription and assumptions of the Legislature and the Board. Let me name several.

(1) Areas of instruction and research in the liberal arts and sciences, and specified professional fields, were prescribed by the Board and adhered to by the University.

(2) It was generally assumed, as in most public universities, that growth in each of the several instructional departments would be determined in a large measure by student demand. Heretofore, the public has not been hospitable to the imposition of arbitrary limits on enrollment, save in exceptional cases, as, for example, the lack of laboratory space in one of the sciences. The areas assigned to the University, particularly the arts and sciences, education and business, are those which experience the greatest demands for advanced graduate study. The very nature of this University, therefore, encourages a larger percentage of graduate students than might be expected in applied fields.

(3) Our increasingly sophisticated society demands an increasing number of highly prepared men and women. It is doubtful that the University of Oregon, in its graduate program, has kept pace either with the needs of society or with comparable public universities in other states.

(4) It has been assumed that the state of Oregon should maintain a rough balance between nonresident students and Oregon residents who seek higher education in other states. The data suggest that in the State System as a whole we have maintained that balance. But the curricula assigned to the University are those which seem to attract the more mobile students, and the University, having a disproportionate share of nonresidents, is the institution most seriously affected by the new regulation. University education ought not to be limited by state boundaries. It is a part of a national, indeed of an international whole. One of its purposes, as a recent critic has said, is "to liberate young people from local ties and provincial values, just as education in general enlarges vision to enable one to see beyond himself." Or, to look at the issue from a more localized view, too many young men and women have entered this state as undergraduates and remained to distinguish themselves as citizens for us to take a parochial attitude toward enrollment of nonresidents.

But when all of this is said, the mission of the University must be defined, not on educational terms alone, but also on the basis of available resources. Last spring, before the action of the Legislature, when your committee discussed with me the possibility of my returning to the University

I expressed concern that some of the departments had overreached their resources in the enrollment of graduate students. It is ironic that I asked if the Board and the Legislature would permit the University to impose limits on enrollments.

We must, then, define our purpose. Department by department, we must examine the assumptions on which we operate. Our criterion ought not be how many students we can recruit, but, given our resources, what kind of education can we offer them when they enroll. We must reweave and justify the allocation of faculty to undergraduate and graduate functions, we must restudy and adjust teaching loads, both to improve undergraduate instruction and to protect the research function essential to graduate studies. It is a big task and much is at stake.

B. If, in discussing the purpose of the University, I have been concerned with the form and have ignored the substance, it is only because I presented my views on curriculum and instruction at a special conference on this campus last summer. So I speak briefly to this problem.

If we were to believe the critics, the university in America is about to desintegrate; it is a sterile, maddening experience for the student, no longer relevant to his needs. It is the imperialist society, colonizing the young, enslaving and exploiting them for the purposes of the establishment's one-dimensional society. It is the Brave New World using the classroom as the breeding place for Beta-minus minds. I think that critics may overstate the case!

But it is true that the world is out of joint. The experiences of our youth, not unlike those of our fathers, and their fathers before them, seem to this generation extraordinarily remote and quaint, if not revoltingly naive and moralistic.

We shall be well advised to experiment freely with instructional methods and to foster innovative approaches to the curriculum and to course content. I offer these comments and suggestions.

(1) The University is large enough and sufficiently diverse to experiment without destroying that which is good. The present pattern of group requirements, with improvement in course content, may well be the most satisfactory approach to general education for the majority of our students. The group sequences are an attempt to give balance to the professionalism that engages the attention of most students. Without neglecting the sciences, they are skewed toward the humanities, an emphasis appropriate to our prescribed mission. Through the year-long sequences they have avoided the fragmentation and political compromise, the pot-pourri that characterizes the distribution requirements in many public universities. And yet I suspect that far too many of them are professionally oriented or that, ignoring Ortega's injunction, they are based upon the abstract requirements of the subject matter, and not upon the concrete needs of the student. We ought to hold fast to that which is good, but we ought to make it better.

(2) We ought to consider whether or not it is feasible to provide a small seminar, every year or every term, for every undergraduate student.

(3) Professors should experiment with new, and even radically different, method of instruction. Several were suggested in last summer's conference. Three or four professors have reported to me their own innovative approaches. The Legislature has provided funds to support efforts to improve instruction; the Coordinating Council is now developing guidelines for the distribution of the funds. On our campus the committee on Educational Experimentation, Innovation, and Improvement will be responsible, so far as local autonomy permits, for the administration of the project. I hope that many of you will apply for support.

(4) The most important innovation that we can undertake, in my judgment, is the development of several small, relatively autonomous groups of students and professors who, within their academic communities, may depart in radical ways from the traditional curriculum. It is possible that one or more of these groups might develop a satellite or residential college.

(5) We should consider the feasibility of giving selected students--largely self-selected--the discretion of determining, within broadly defined areas, the content of their own education and the means of acquiring it,

through attendance at lectures or independent study, without sacrificing the quality of learning.

(6) We should recognize that it is the function of the University not only to conserve and transmit but to act as an agent of change--so long as the University is faithful to its own character. "Universities cannot help being agents of social change," said Kenneth Boulding. "Knowledge is a chief agent of change."

As Myrdal pointed out so eloquently a generation ago, the American Creed, even those much-maligned ritualistic forms of the salute of the flag and the reading of the Declaration of Independence, can be made to serve the needs and rights of the oppressed. I believe that it is a violation of the University's integrity to yield to the student's demand that he be given credit for community work, however noble that work may be, or to his demand that the University as University engage directly in social or political conflict. But it is proper for the University to teach its students the processes of social change; to encourage them to engage in the laboratories of community work and to study their efforts to apply what they have learned; and to give them credit for their attempt to conceptualize what they have experienced. Thus, in history, literature, and the social sciences, and even the sciences, we can make the curriculum relevant, make the subject matter, without our compromising its integrity, serve the needs of the subject.

C. The definition of purpose and the reconstruction of the curriculum are general problems, affecting the whole University. Equally urgent, and likewise of concern to all of us, is the need for the University, as an agent of the general society, to meet the special needs of students from minority groups. This is an old problem with new dimensions. Oscar Handlin has recorded the bitter struggle of uprooted immigrants who fought to make a place for themselves in a new world. But for all the bitterness, they had hope. The society needed their backbreaking labor, and sons could climb upward on the backs of their fathers. In our technological society the labor of the unskilled is an embarrassment. The only way up, the only way open to an integration into the larger society, is through the acquisition of skills and knowledge. Once there was time--a generation, or two generations, for a dispossessed group to make the transition--but now time is a downward and backward slope into the morass. Society must take positive and highly creative steps to accelerate the acquisition of skills and knowledge, and the University must do its part. Business has undertaken a massive effort, through the National Alliance of Businessmen (NAB) and the Urban Coalition. It has operated on three principles: (1) that it will hire the unskilled, the unemployable; (2) that it will train them (with government subsidy); and (3) that, once trained, and given an adequate time for orientation, the workers will perform at the level of those brought in through the personnel offices. The program has worked remarkably well though the prospective decline in employment opportunities is a foreboding note. The operating principles are, with modification, applicable to higher education. If we are to accelerate the education of minority students, as I believe we should, we must continue to enlarge the program of special admissions (without, however, recruiting young people to the certain and bitter experience of failure); we must improve our assistance programs, both instructional and financial; we must provide time for these disadvantaged students to establish themselves without their being forever freighted down with substandard GPA's; we must reach out not so much to help them as to give them the chance to help themselves. But, once we have made these concessions to their need, we must expect them to hold their own, to make their way on the basis of ability and performance. Social promotion in the University, like an over-extended sentiment of pity, may be only a subtle expression of feelings of racial superiority.

D. Finally, I should like to speak to the problem of student unrest and disruption. We can do much to reduce conflict if we move vigorously on the issues I have already discussed. Two of the great assets of the University of Oregon in meeting the current crisis are (1) the longstanding and proud tradition of a campus open to the free discussion of opposing and divergent ideas, a tradition that, sustained by the people of Oregon, survived the oppressive period of the 1950's; (2) the University faculty's sense of responsibility, assigned by the charter, for student conduct and welfare.

In the immediate crisis, two distinctions must be made clear, both for ourselves and for the better understanding of the public:

(1) Argument, demonstration, protest, even bad manners, ought not to be confused with disruptive and coercive behavior. The Man from Madras, in Ken Metzler's splendid portrait in Old Oregon saw that clearly. The students have a right to demonstrate, he said. The Supreme Court has sustained that right in defining picketing as a form of free speech. Professor Sanford H. Kadish, in presenting the AAUP's Alexander Meikeljohn Award last spring, put the matter succinctly, in defining the "necessary conditions for students to learn and grow--the right to express their criticism of what they disapprove, the right to hear whomever they choose, and even as the rest of us from time to time, the right to be tasteless in expressing their points of view." The public, however, has not always perceived the point, and much of the uneasiness among the people in this state, I believe, is due to their confusing demonstrations on the campus with violent disruptions elsewhere. I shall attempt to explain and defend the students' rights as frequently as is necessary and possible.

(2) Oftentimes student's demands are made not so much to effect change on the campus as to dramatize an issue of more general concern. There is small reason, therefore, for the administrator to feel frustrated or angry when students demand changes that he cannot effect. The problem, however, is that students themselves, or many of them, do not always perceive the distinction--with the result that the President's failure to yield to an unreasonable demand generates frustration and anger that can be inflamed into violence.

Added to these is the fact that some students are so persuaded of the moral rightness of their cause that they are intolerant of all other views. It is now a widely enunciated dogma that there are limits to tolerance, that only those who judge themselves to be right are qualified to speak or act for the people, that the right to speak or to act--or to offer to take certain curricula--must be withdrawn from the majority or from certain segments of the society or the University. "Liberating tolerance," and I quote from a prophet of the Left, "Liberating tolerance would mean intolerance against movements from the Right, and toleration of movements from the Left . . . it would extend to the stage of action as well as of discussion and propaganda, of deeds as well as of word."

In addition, there are a few students, very few, committed to the destruction of the society, and the University, in the classical anarchist tradition that destruction is the necessary first step towards a new, humane society.

This is, indeed, a trying circumstance for the University. Traditionally, because men accepted its values, it has not been required to defend itself, or even to anticipate the necessity of defending itself, against violent disruption. Hopefully, that day will come again. But in the meantime, if the University is faced by threats of violence with which it is not prepared to cope, it must call on the larger society for assistance. I am not trigger happy. But if it becomes necessary to call the police to sustain or restore order, I shall call them.

I know, however, that my actions will be futile unless they are sustained by the faculty and the great majority of the students. Law and order are not a product of the police state but of a community that gives its willing consent and support to law and order. I expect, therefore, to turn to the faculty or its representative bodies, the Faculty Senate and the Advisory Council, and to the students, for advice and assistance if we are confronted or threatened by disorder or violence. I am hopeful that we can form a liaison committee of faculty, administrators, students, and representatives of the police to establish proper limitations and plan appropriate action, if action becomes necessary. A clear understanding of our intent will, I believe, do much to restrain disorder.

I have exhausted by time and tempted your patience in the discussion of problems. But, as you must perceive, it is not the problems that have brought

me back to the University or the state of Oregon. It is rather the spirit and character of the University and of the society that sustains it, that reaches out to all of us, that gives substance to the aspirations we share. It may be euphoric, but I sense in this state a new and growing appreciation of the quality of life to which men ought to aspire, but which we have largely ignored in our technological society. You and the students you have taught and the citizens you have reached have done much to foster that new spirit. It is only a tender bud, not yet flowered; it may wither. But it is a hope and I am delighted that you have asked me to share it with you.

The President then declared the meeting adjourned.

George N. Belknap
Secretary of the Faculty





UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

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