Dear Dean Nicodemus:

We have read with a certain degree of apprehension the Staff Newsletter of October 18 in which there appeared, in uneasy juxtaposition with the Charter Day announcement, an exposition on a new permanent identification card for faculty. Our apprehension may stem in part from the projected images Oregon State University may acquire during its second hundred years, but our real concern arises from considerations far more serious than images, real or imaginary.

There is an obvious implication in the issuing of these cards that one's word is no longer valid in the various divisions of the university, and that only card-carrying faculty are to be considered as the genuine article. While the library card has its place, it is nothing less than idiotic to suppose that the creation of a credit-card-faculty will solve the various and sundry logistic problems in university organizations. Strict adherence to the use of such devices may well lead to ludicrous situations where bona fide faculty members are denied use of or access to campus services because they have misplaced, lost, or burned their "identity." One can't help but wonder, in fact, as to what sort of penalty will befall those who fail to pick up their card before November 1.

The words "Successful use of the card . . . is predicated on the integrity and trust of both issuer and user," are meaningless. That the issuer (our 100-year-old university) finds it necessary to base its trust on our social security numbers speaks poorly for our integrity.

There is some small hope, perhaps, in that our credit cards will come equipped with a "self-destruct sticker." We don't know what a self-destruct sticker is, but as long as it disintegrates, or liquidates, or atomizes, or whatever else self-destruct stickers are supposed to do, we really don't care to know. Shades of Orwell and Mission Impossible! This would all be funny if it weren't for the alarming implications.

Sincerely,

W. P. Nagel  
G. W. Krantz

October 28, 1968
FACULTY STATUS --- STUDENT RIGHTS

At first sight, these topics may appear unrelated. On reflection maybe this is not so. If we view the university of today, including ours, it becomes increasingly evident that unrest exists—faculty unrest and student unrest. In the sense of disruption of the academic process we may conclude that this institution is one of the "mild-mannered". Yet change is occurring in universities and there is no reason to believe that we will escape seeking change whether this be initiated by orderly or disorderly processes. Faculty and students alike demand more of a voice in academic policy. By policy I am not referring to the creation of daily rules to guide our operation. What is meant is a voice in deciding direction in long-range planning, in curricular matters and in all those things academic in nature, including teaching and research.

Oregon State University should not be found guilty of complacency in these areas. Real concern should be shown for the topic of this discourse, faculty status and student rights.

If our efforts are to be real it must mean faculty acceptance of responsibility and leadership in formulating policies leading to true academic freedom including matters of tenure and promotion. First, as a faculty we should decide what we want this university to be. What level of excellence and achievement do we desire? Once this is established, we need to ask ourselves how are we to achieve this? Paramount to answering these questions is the establishment of the status of the faculty in the process of academic change. To date, my inclination is to conclude that thus far we as a faculty have been too inclined to indulge ourselves in "daily administration" rather than to formulate long-range direction and policy. Certainly this is not to say that we do not need to satisfy ourselves that "daily administration" is consistent with the long-range plan and our academic freedom. When we as a faculty in consort with the administration and students have defined our goals then we as a faculty must act responsibly to achieve these goals.

* by "daily administration" is not meant only daily operation but also over concern with less important considerations.
What concrete moves might we then take? As a first step I would suggest the formation of long-range planning committees at the department, school and university level. These committees together with the faculties and administrators involved after a responsible self-evaluation, need to define what they hope to achieve and why and how they propose doing this. It is evident that this requires first a departmental initiative through open departmental meetings that by design permit frank discussion. I realize that some may state this has been done. I would quarrel with this at least in terms of the thoroughness suggested here. What needs to be emphasized is the importance for such studies to be initiated by faculty and students. This is particularly important if the result is a change in direction or emphasis. Getting down to the "nitty-gritty", suppose that a department decides that to move forward in the training of undergraduate and graduate students requires faculty in a new area of that department's discipline. How do you accomplish this? In an affluent situation it may be easy. If the department or school is less affluent then decisions have to be made that may in the extreme involve non-reappointments. Need I say more about the desirability of responsible faculty involvement? Choices have to be made.

In such deliberations we should not forget that an integral part of such deliberations is the third and equal part of the university triangle, the students. Certainly they have the right to express what they expect and deserve from their university experience, and to share in shaping its future. This should include active participation both in the initial discussions and the final decisions. Like the faculty, they share the obligation of responsible action. Not incidentally, they have the right to expect protection of their academic freedom from non-academic recriminations.

It is realized that this forum may be only a place to express views and as such may or may not result in action. Be that as it may, I would hope that this discussion might stimulate positive action. The only way it will is if this faculty and student body initiates concrete moves. The beginning most likely will have to start through departments or student organizations. Whether discussion continues depends on each accepting a responsible role with the belief that it is worth doing. One role of the administration is to convince all that the results will lead to a better university and a better understanding of faculty status and student rights in the process.

R. W. Newburgh

Nov. 11, 1968
Some Thoughts About Dr. Rohde's Thoughts of October, 1968

Admittedly, the synthesis of idealism and medievalism which Dr. Rohde advances as a solution for the troubles of the honors program is appealing. It combines the flower of chivalry with flower power; the brazen ring of trumpets and nakers with the strumming of guitars; the strength of Gothic faith with the dissolution of a Gotterdammerung.

It is beautiful—but impractical.

It is based upon an unrealistic premise. It ignores the facts of modern life and society. It offers no practical alternatives. It is filled with wishful thinking, broad generality, and blanket condemnation which serves rather badly as a base upon which to develop a workable program.

Dr. Rohde apparently operates on the premise that there is such a thing as a "universal man." This is pure medievalism. It was true enough in the days of Erasmus and the Admirable Crichton, but it is generally accepted that the last "universal man"—who held within his mind a workable totality of human knowledge—was Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibnitz. Von Leibnitz died in 1716. Since then, human knowledge has grown exponentially and today the curve has turned asymptotic and has run right off the chart! No matter how nice it might be in principle to have an honors student capable of crossing disciplinary lines, the concept is impossible except in the most elementary form. A modern university, struggling madly to keep its students abreast of the flood of new techniques, publications, and discoveries is simply not designed to produce "universal men." The development of Admirable Crichton is neither useful nor a practical function no matter how fascinating the concept may be to certain types of educators.

Dr. Rohde ignores the fact that modern society has been forced to specialize because of this enormous increase in human knowledge. He denies, at least by implication, that students must specialize if they are to play any effective part in the development of civilization. He recoils from the thought; he calls it "narrowrobotization." Yet there is a distinct possibility that the only fair "honors program" must be "honor programs" specialized according to the disciplines involved.

Dr. Rohde would reject "out of hand" the GPA as one of the criteria upon which an honors program is based, but he offers no alternative. Admittedly, the GPA is an imperfect instrument, but it serves well enough to make the basic separation of the superior from the ordinary and, until something better is developed, it must remain. Certainly Dr. Rohde has no reason to confuse a numerical equivalent of ABCD with a numerical evaluation. I frankly doubt that anyone involved in education or grading ever thinks of a 4-point as double the value of a 2-point. The numerical equivalent is merely a convenience. The fault, if there is one, lies in the system—but, since the system is virtually universal and the convention is understood, there is no real reason to change it. And Dr. Rohde knows perfectly well that the separation of the "honors" from the "A" student involves an additional set of criteria that are considerably more demanding.
Of course, a complete individual personality profile of each student covering everything from academic proficiency to habits and traits of character would be a better method of basic evaluation. But it would be extraordinarily cumbersome, just as subjective, and just as dependent upon the prejudices of the evaluator as the present system. The only way to avoid subjectivity is to go to the objective roboticism of a computer. And this, rightly so, is anathema, for no computer can be programmed to recognize genius.

I feel that Dr. Rohde is attempting to return to the academic womb by this advocacy of "broad knowledge in humanities and sciences." Such a policy might produce breadth, but it would certainly lack depth, and the individual who tried to conform to it would inevitably know less and less about more and more, until eventually he knew nothing about everything.

This statement about breadth reminds me of the wise old owl to whom the forest creatures came for advice: A centipede limped up and said, "Sir, I have arthritis. My leg joints ache and since I have several hundred, the pain is unbearable. What shall I do?"

The owl eyed the centipede’s swollen legs for a moment and then replied, "The answer is obvious. Since you cannot walk, you must learn to fly."

"But, sir, how am I to do this? I have no wings."

"Don't bother me with details," said the owl. "I'm an idea man."

Jesse F. Bone, D.V.M.
Professor, Veterinary Medicine
November 7, 1968
LET'S ELIMINATE THE "DROP-OUT"

It is time we stopped building Oregon State University into a Multiversity, composed of a great multitude of students, gathered in large classes taught by professors who, thereby, must remain almost entirely impersonal in their relations with students. The University should be restricted to those serious minded students who are well prepared and can, therefore, be reasonably expected to successfully pursue and complete the studies for a degree.

Approximately 27% of the students who enter OSU actually receive a degree here. Of the 3402 Freshmen who entered OSU in Fall 1967, only 2553 returned this fall. I believe it is a fair assumption, that this large attrition is due, in the main, to lack of adequate preparation or aptitude for University level studies.

But what about the many High School graduates who desire to continue their education but would be unable to meet the high entrance requirements that should be established for the University? For them, we must establish a system of Junior Colleges. These could be so organized that the "drop-out" would be almost eliminated. To this end, I suggest the following:

1. Junior Colleges should operate under the State System of Higher Education and offer a curriculum closely parallel to the Lower Division at the University. This will permit those students, who indicate aptitude for University level studies, to improve their grade level so that they can, eventually, be admitted to the University and earn a degree.

2. Vocational courses must also be offered. Not all Junior Colleges can, or should, offer training in the same vocations. With this Vocation option, the following advantages accrue:

a. The student who, after a term or so, finds himself unsuited to complete studies for a degree, can, instead of dropping out of College, "DROP-IN" to a Vocational Course. In this way he avoids the stigma of being a "COLLEGE DROP-OUT".

b. Upon completion of his Vocational Course, he will be awarded a "CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION" by a "COLLEGE".
c. As he pursues his Vocational Training, he has the opportunity of enhancing his "overall" education by other available courses not directly related to his Vocation.

d. Although not earning a degree, he will be a "College Graduate". By virtue of this, he should experience an enhancement of prestige, that could considerably narrow the gap presently existing between the mechanic or technician and the professional man.

3. Student residency must be available at all Junior Colleges. This will permit the "DROP-IN" to transfer to a College where education in the Vocation of his choice is available.

J. A. Herrmann
Assistant Professor
Mathematics
November 18, 1968
The "OSU Faculty Forum Papers", a publication for the exchange of faculty opinions concerning university affairs, is published monthly through the office of the Dean of Faculty with the assistance of a faculty advisory committee. Guidelines for this publication were approved by the Faculty Senate on March 7, 1968 and appear in the March 15, 1968 edition of the Staff Newsletter. The guidelines contain the following directions for the preparation of manuscripts:

a. Must be authored by a faculty member eligible for election to the Senate according to the provisions of Section 2 of Article IV of the Bylaws.

b. Should be typed in a form which can be reproduced directly without the need of retyping or rearranging. Short papers of one or two pages may be typed with either single or double spacing to make best use of full pages. Longer papers must be single spaced. Other requirements:

   (1) Use 8-1/2" x 11" plain white bond paper (sub. 20)
   (2) Type on one side of page only
   (3) Do not number or fold sheets
   (4) Leave at least a 1-1/2" margin at the top of all pages.

c. Should not exceed a reasonable length. A six page limit is suggested, including displays such as tables or graphs. If this limit is exceeded, publications will require approval of the faculty advisory committee.

d. Should be signed (use black ink) and dated by the author at the end. The author's name and a subject, if appropriate, may be typed at the heading of the first page of the paper.

e. Manuscripts are to be submitted to the office of the Dean of Faculty. Receipt of each manuscript will be acknowledged. For each monthly publication, the deadline for the receipt of manuscripts shall be noon of the last full working day (Monday thru Friday) of the preceeding month.

Papers intended for the January 1969 issue should be received by the Dean of Faculty by noon on Tuesday, December 31.