A CONTENTIOUS BONE

I deign to pick a bone with Dr. Bone (FFF, 10-'72), relative to his snide sardonic sarcasm on learning efficiency — the implications of which are quite reminiscent of similar and related provisions in the projected and approaching inhuman society of George Orwell's 1984.

Fact is, students rightly insist on the personal relationship in learning — something lacking in any mechanical and electronic supplementation to the process. Thus the professor, like sex, is here to stay, and by popular demand. A "society" which will not afford him, is not worthy to be called a human society.

If one relies on mechanical learning for man, he may with equal invalidity depend on the novel and mechanical, artificial insemination to perpetuate his species. As for choice of methods, just give me the good old days.

As a final thrust in behalf of the much maligned professor who allegedly spends too few hours per day in duty, let us be reminded that this professor is very much like the little white bull: It is not so much the amount of time he spends, as it is the importance of what he does:

Howard D. Hilleman
Zoology
October 16, 1972
IN DEFENSE OF TENURE

In recent years the tenure system has come under attack from many directions. One of the aims of these attacks is to get rid of the "deadwood." Those who want to abolish tenure argue that the tenure system makes it impossible to fire the incompetent and unproductive teacher. They also feel that tenure is not necessary to guarantee academic freedom and to insure a certain degree of job security.

I recently read a report on tenure by Kingman Brewster, President of Yale University. One might argue that the situation at Yale is different and that his comments don't necessarily apply to O.S.U. I don't think so. Brewster's remarks are applicable to any institution of higher learning where tenure is granted. His remarks in fact touch on issues involving tenure which are currently being discussed and debated here at O.S.U. The following are excerpts from his report:

"Of all the folkways of university life, perhaps "tenure" is least comprehensible. To those whose professional or executive life involves the staffing of other forms of organized activity -- business, finance, government, or non-profit service. In prosperous times the tradition of academic tenure evokes, appall. In times when colleges and universities are struggling for financial survival, tenure is challenged with increasing frequency.

How, it is asked, can we talk glibly about the knowledge explosion or the exponential rate of change -- with all its risk of rapid intellectual obsolescence -- and at the same time lock ourselves into lifetime obligations to people in their mid-thirties? Not only do we risk becoming stuck with the obsolete, but we remove the most popularly understood incentive to higher levels of performance. Furthermore, since even in financially easy times, university resources are finite, every "slot" mortgaged for a full professor's lifetime blocks the hope for advancement by some promising members of upcoming generations. When resources are so tight that the faculty must be pruned, because of tenure most of the pruning is at the expense of the junior faculty. Many juniors are more up to date in their knowledge of new methods and problems in fast-moving fields and many of them are more talented than are some of the elders.

The Association of American University Professors has recently taken some pains to make it clear that tenure is not an absolute protection against dismissal. They say that a person can be fired for gross misconduct or neglect of duty. They assert that even a person with tenure may be terminated for financial reasons. Such termination is permissible in their eyes, however, only by a process which puts the burden of proof upon the university and in which the victim's faculty peers are both judge and jury, subject to final disposition by the trustees.

The practical fact in most places, is that tenure is for all normal purposes a guarantee of appointment until retirement age. Physical or mental incapacity, some chronic disability, some frightful act of moral turpitude, or persistent neglect of all university responsibilities have on a very few occasions in the past resulted in "negotiated" termination settlements. However, even in extreme circumstances there is a deep reluctance to compromise the expectations of tenure.
The defense of tenure usually falls into two categories: the need for job security, in order to draw good people into underpaid academic life; and the need to protect the academic freedom of the faculty.

Both of these points are valid; but put thus simply, both grossly understate the significance of tenure to the quality of a first-rate university.

The argument based on the recruitment of faculty, is underscored by the simple fact that as long as most institutions grant tenure then any single institution must go along in order to remain competitive. This is probably true.

The job security argument arose when university faculty were grossly underpaid in comparison with other professional callings. They were even more disadvantaged when compared with the marts of trade and finance. This is still true, especially at both ends of the ladder: the bottom rungs of starting salaries, and the higher rungs of top management compensation. In the middle range, however, academic salaries are not grossly lower than the earnings of other professional callings. So, the use of job security as bait to persuade people to take a vow of "academic poverty" is not a sufficient argument.

The rationale of academic tenure, however, is somewhat different from job security in the industrial world, especially in an institution which wants its teachers to be engaged in pushing forward the frontiers of learning. This lies in the fact that contributions to human knowledge and understanding which add something significant to what has gone before involve a very high risk and a very long-term intellectual investment.

If teaching is to be more than the retailing of the known, and if research is to seek real breakthroughs in the explanation of man and the cosmos, then teachers must be scholars, and the scholarship must be more than the refinement of the inherited store of knowledge. If scholarship is to question assumptions and to take the risk of testing new hypotheses, then it cannot be held to a timetable which demands proof of pay-out to satisfy some review committee.

Even with their privileges and immunities our academic communities are often too timid in their explorations. The fear of failure in the eyes of the peerage inhibits some of our colleagues, even when they do have tenure. Too many seek the safe road of detailed elaboration of accepted truth rather than the riskier paths of true exploration, which might defy conventional assumptions. Boldness would suffer if the research and scholarship of a mature faculty were to be subject to periodic scorekeeping, on pain of dismissal if they did not score well. Then what should be a venture in creative discovery would for almost everyone degenerate into a safe-sided devotion to riskless footnote gathering. Authenticity would replace discovery as the goal. The results might not startle the world, but they would be impressive in quantitative terms and invulnerable to devastating attack.

Purely economic connotations of "job security" greatly understate the distinctive aspect of the academic calling. At its best the university expects a person literally to make a lifetime investment in his special way of looking at the human and natural experience, in the hope that he will contribute something of permanence to the understanding of some corner of the universe.
The second, and most highly touted, rationale for tenure is academic freedom. This concern, traditionally, has focused on the privilege of immunity from "outside" interference. Within the memory of those still active, "McCarthyism" is the most telling nightmare.

Of course there are corrupting influences, financial, institutional, and professional. By and large, however, of all the types of institutions which gather people together in a common effort the university remains the least inhibiting to a variety in ideas, convictions, styles, and tastes. It encourages its members to pursue doggedly any idea in which they have confidence. Progress in the world of thought depends on people having enough freedom and serenity to take the risk of being wrong.

This struggle to preserve the integrity of the institution and the freedom of its faculty members from external coercion is never over. However, despite the winds of controversy inherent in a troubled time, whetted occasionally by demagogic desire to make academia the scapegoat for society's ills, the ability of a strong university to give its faculty convincing protection against such threats will depend more on the steadfastness of the institution as a whole than it will on tenure.

The dramatic image of the university under siege from taxpayers, politicians, or even occasional alumni is a vivid but not the most difficult aspect of the pressures which tend to erode academic freedom. The more subtle condition of academic freedom is that faculty members, once they have proved their potential during a period of junior probation, should not feel beholden to anyone, especially Department Chairmen, Deans, Provosts, or Presidents, for favor, let alone for survival. In David Riesman's phrase teachers and scholars should, insofar as possible, be truly "inner directed" -- guided by their own intellectual curiosity, insight, and conscience. In the development of their ideas they should not be looking over their shoulders either in hope of favor or in fear of disfavor from anyone other than the judgment of an informed and critical posterity.

In strong universities assuring freedom from intellectual conformity coerced within the institution is even more of a concern than is the protection of freedom from external interference.

This spirit of academic freedom within the university has a value which goes beyond protecting the individual's broad scope of thought and inquiry. It bears crucially upon the distinctive quality of the university as a community. If a university is alive and productive it is a place where colleagues are in constant dispute; defending their latest intellectual enthusiasm, attacking the contrary views of others. From this trial by intellectual combat emerges a sharper insight, later to be blunted by other, sharper minds. It is vital that this contest be uninhibited by fear of reprisal. Sides must be taken only on the basis of the merits of a proposition. Jockeying for favor by trimming the argument because some colleague or some power will have the power of academic life or death in some later process of review would falsify and subvert the whole exercise.

As a practical matter of personnel policy, the very fact that the professorial promotion is a lifetime commitment of university resources makes the departmental and committee process of promotion to tenure much more rigorous and hard-headed than it otherwise would be. If there were a confident feeling that mistakes in judgment could be rectified by some later review process we would all be soft and give colleagues of whom we are personally fond an excessive benefit of all doubt. Realization that the commitment is for keeps helps to hold the standards high.

So, I would venture that whatever gains might be made by reserving the right to a
second guess would be more than offset by the laxity which would come to soften the first guess. In short, we would not have as good a senior faculty as we now do, if tenure were not the consequence of promotion to senior rank."

(*Excerpts from the Report of the President of Yale University, August 28, 1972.)

Peter R. Fontana
Physics Department
October 20, 1972
ONE AFFIRMATIVE ACTION OFFICER: MINORITIES OR WOMEN?

In the six years that I have worked at OSU, there have been many changes. Friends have come and gone, styles have changed, behavior and appearances of both students and faculty have changed somewhat, and some attitudes have changed. Although we have become more aware of the problems encountered by minorities and women, we are not, as a whole, really conscious of the subtle prejudices which exist in our own thinking.

Living in Corvallis, or anywhere in Oregon, is a very relaxing thing; and we tend to become complacent because we are very, very sheltered with respect to the hassles and pressures of congested urban living. We are not made continually aware of poverty, overcrowding, noise, and pollution. We live a comfortable life in a small, rather conservative community. We sometimes fool ourselves into believing that all is well with the world, since all is well in Corvallis. When a malcontent brings something unpleasant to our attention, we tend to push this reality aside and try not to think about it. In many ways, we have done this with the women employed on this campus. OSU has done many positive things for women and minorities as a result of the investigation by HEW and at times of its own volition. An Affirmative Action Office was established, many committees were formed, and some of the female academic staff salaries were raised following analysis of faculty women. But is that enough? I think not.

It is now easy for us to recognize racism, but we cannot always see sexism. We take it for granted; and when a woman resents some snide remark, she is thought of as a sore head or a poor sport. If you hear something like "women are good with their hands, and they don't mind doing detail work," try inserting "blacks" or "chicanos" in the statement to hear how it sounds. We are easily reminded of other racist cliches of former times.

OSU has an Affirmative Action program. The director, Tony Brich, is also the Director of Budgets and Personnel Services. The current one and only Affirmative Action officer is Karla Brown. Bob Gutierrez was also an Affirmative Action officer; but he recently resigned to work as a staff assistant in the President's Office, and a replacement is being sought. Apparently, due to lack of funds, there will be only one position as Affirmative Action officer for the 73-74 fiscal year (the position that is currently open).

Bob Gutierrez's vacancy most likely will be filled by a minority person. This position, now a research assistant
Unclassified, will become a classified position (Program Executive I) as of July 1, 1973. The position now held by Karla Brown is funded until June 30, 1973. This action puts the women and the minorities in a very peculiar position. There will be only one position to represent two vastly different groups. It can be said that a minority person would surely take the interests of women into consideration; however, it does not seem to follow to some observers that a woman could as easily understand the problems of minorities—especially a white woman. And that is true. But why is it not true that a minority male or any male could be so understanding of women's problems?

Minorities must be represented. That is obvious and necessary. However, women too, must be represented; and as of July 1, 1973, they very well might have no voice in Affirmative Action. Only 15% of our academic staff are women, but why must they have no representation once again?

Although this university is suffering from serious economic pains, which may or may not improve the next two or three years, there always seems to be a little bit of money tucked away somewhere for emergencies. We all know that there are small untapped resources here and there if they are really needed. I cannot believe that two full time positions in Affirmative Action would pose an undue financial strain on this strong university. One person can only do so much and the responsibility of both minority and women's problems is too large a job for only one individual, no matter who accepts the post. Which group is going to lose out in the trade off?

It has been emphatically and clearly stated that only one position will be supported as of next July. But we must have two. Otherwise, the women at OSU will have been very subtly snubbed again. If this fact doesn't upset a good number of women on this campus, then we have accepted our "place" and we will still be enjoying our complacency. When the next financial crisis arrives on the scene, who will be the first ones to go?

"Last hired, first fired."

This phrase used to be true for women and minorities. Now it seems to be true only for women. Perhaps women have now lost even their decorative function. Sigh, things have changed!

Kay Porter
Computer Center
October 24, 1972
THERAPY FOR CREDIT: THE NEW HIGHER EDUCATION

We find ourselves in a novel and disturbing situation. A radical departure from the higher education we all know and love has been introduced into the curriculum in the form of courses intended to affect personality structure and effect behavior changes by direct assault upon the student's psyche. The code word for this academic aberration is "small-group techniques". Other terms referring to the same undertaking are "group processes", "process training", "small group behavior", "group dynamics", "sensitivity training", "T-groups", and "encounter groups", but this list does not pretend to be exhaustive. Irreverent sceptics sometimes use the term "feelies", by way of reference to a prominent feature of such groups (e.g., the ritual hug after a soul-shattering vituperative exchange between "trainees").

These "courses" in fact constitute therapy for credit. That instructors of them (who prefer to be called "facilitators", lest it be mistakenly thought that they would teach anything to anyone) are engaged in therapy is urgently denied--to admit it would be to admit that this is not education at all, in any ordinary sense of the word--but that denial is a quibble. It is based on the contention that their students are not ill, and that hence the facilitator cannot be administering therapy. We might as justly be criticized for saying of firemen that they were "firefighting" in a case where there turned out to have been only smoke, but no fire. If anyone contended that the firemen could not be firefighting, since there was no fire, we would rightly respond that that is a quibble. That the facilitators' doings are not improperly characterized as therapy is all the more apparent to us when we become aware of the fact that the very same techniques they employ may also be employed on people who are not well, e.g., by a clinical psychologist on his patients. Moreover, one definition of "therapeutic" is "gradually or methodically ameliorative" and the amelioration of what group-process facilitators like to refer to as "hang-ups" is precisely what they have it in mind to do.

Without attempting to describe fully what goes on in such courses (it boggles my powers of description), it may serve to delineate the general nature of the business to point out that the focus (perhaps too strong a word) of it is primarily on "the individual's personal reactions in the here and now." A practitioner of the art on this campus, for credit, is quoted in the Barometer ("Class Offers Knowledge Beyond Regurgitation," Nov. 12, 1970, pg. 3) as saying of his class, "We deal with the immediate, not what happened in the past. What's happening now between you and me, brother." Typical of the business is extremely candid appraisal of members of the groups by other members of the group, made in the presence of the group. Tears and rages are not infrequent. Part of being totally candid is the use of language not ordinarily heard in the classroom.
The following is a verbatim account of the beginning of one such course, taken for credit at this university, by an undergraduate student: 

"When we came into the classroom on the first day, oriental music was playing. The professor was sitting on the floor in what he said was a 'semi-lotus' position. He told us to close our eyes and explore our bodies mentally." That this account is not the invention of a student's warped sense of humor is certain: the faculty member whose course that it is has acknowledged its accuracy before an OSU academic committee--without a blush. Those who may have seen blindfolded students being led about the campus by other students may now correctly surmise that this further exemplification of the higher learning is another element of such courses.

I do not wish to say that encounter groups, elsewhere than in this university (and they are widely available elsewhere), are necessarily a bad thing, nor that those who "facilitate" them are necessarily quacks who endanger mental health. I do confess to grave reservations about this business, and I have no doubt whatever that some facilitators who have practiced their art on this campus for credit may be a real menace. I am aware that at least one student in such a course given on this campus attempted suicide here. But I am prepared to credit the judgment of those whose judgment I must respect when they tell me that participation in a properly run encounter group by a person who is "normal" often has salutary effect, even though "small group techniques" are admittedly experimental, and, according to a statement in a document from our Counseling Center "have never really been evaluated to determine just how, when, or where they may be used appropriately."

Now, I do not presume to instruct my colleagues as to what is and what is not suitable for inclusion the curricula of this university. We do not all have precisely the same concept of higher education. Still, we are the keepers of it, and it is for us to decide what changes are to be made in it. With respect to encounter-group courses, I cannot recall that we have approved of any such radical departure, nor even that we have discussed it. Yet we do now have a large number of such courses in our university: no fewer than 72 courses "involving small-group process theory and training" were identified by catalog designation to the university Curriculum Committee last year!

This is in no small part our own fault. We have let it happen, by simply not paying attention. The curriculum committees of several of our schools and of the university have routinely approved them and the faculty senate has rubber-stamped them. But it is not entirely our fault that these radical departures from what we normally think of as courses have crept past our curricular watchdogs and into our catalog, for the syllabi submitted when requests are made to institute such courses are, judging from those I have seen, a little less than candid. They look like syllabi for real courses. What they do not say is what actually happens to the student in the classroom when he enrolls in those courses. Perhaps this accounts in part for our slumber.
In 1968 (as a result of the unfortunate incident mentioned earlier), a committee was set up to make recommendations concerning the dangers of these courses and suitable control of them. That committee (which, I am told, ceased to function after it made its report in March of 1968) did not question the academic legitimacy of such courses, however. It is now a little past high time to do that.

The School of Humanities and Social Sciences will shortly convene a School meeting, the purpose of which will be to discuss this question in all its ramifications and perhaps to go on record as explicitly approving or disapproving of courses of the kind in question. Other schools, and especially those other schools that now have such courses in their curricula, may wish to do the same.

I append a list of the 22 courses mentioned above. The list was prepared by Professor Keltner and submitted to the Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate in February of 1971.

Peter Anton
Philosophy
October 30, 1972

Courses in the 1970-71 Catalogues which involve Small Group Process Theory and Training.

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<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
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<td>Psy 361</td>
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<td>Theory of Small Groups</td>
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<td>Theory of Conflict</td>
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<td>Communication and Leadership in Small Group Discussion</td>
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