---the dying university

In recent studies, there has been an approach to analyze the attitudes of persons confronted with a non-curable disease and facing certain death. Briefly, the attitudes progress as follows: 1) Denial, 2) Anger, 3) Bargaining, 4) Depression, 5) Acceptance.

The question arises. Are these attitudes truly only those of such persons or are they really attitudes that all of us develop when faced with what appears to be fruitless endeavors? Do we not all undergo such a five-step sequence with varying degrees of rapidity? Do not some of us become entrenched in any one area, never to move to another? Do not some of us move toward the end of the sequence only to have another event occur which returns us toward the beginning? Does not the sequence of events reflect on some of the behavioral attitudes of our colleagues on this campus? Should we strive to achieve the last step, acceptance of an incurable situation, or are there alternatives?

The deterioration of a once viable institution is more than that of a futilely dying person, or is it? Are we willing to accept its death attitudes or will we maintain our hope to the last that a cure will be found? It is all too apparent that any single cure for the institution would be difficult to obtain. However, would surgery be an answer? Can we adequately remove sites of administrative necrosis without endangering the life of the institution? Would therapy with administrative review decrease the spread of rampant incompetence? Are there other actions to be taken? And last, but in no way least, do we cure the disease but lose the patient? Is the life to be saved worthy of the risks involved?

I think it is.

George H. Constantine, Jr., Ph.D.
November 4, 1974
ON WOPERSONS, HUPERSONS AND CHAIRPERSONS

The latest C&EN has a few words on the sexes which may interest our faculty. They quote from the wilds of middle America, and I hereby shamelessly lift the section in toto, as follows:

"I have noticed several uses in the past few weeks of the neologism 'chairperson.' The latest edition of Webster's dictionary lists 'chairman' as 'the administrative officer of a department of instruction (as in a college)' and recognizes the word 'chairwoman' as a 'female chairman.' [It does] not recognize the word 'chairperson.'

"I believe that the use of this term reflects a misunderstanding of the letters 'm-a-n' in the word 'chairman.' These letters are not pronounced 'man' as in 'The man was elected secretary, but 'mun' as in 'craftsman,' 'horseman,' 'woman,' and, of course 'human.' Unless we are ready to speak of 'craftsperson,' 'horseperson,' 'woperson,' and 'huperson,' I suggest that we not use the word 'chairperson' in University correspondence."

*Ed. note: Webster defines "neologism" in part as "a meaningless word coined by a psychotic."

4 November 1974
Octave Levenspiel
Chemical Engineering
Does Collective Bargaining Matter?

It is becoming increasingly evident that this university and the OSHPE are reaching the time when collective bargaining may become a way of life. To date, like many other faculty, my inclination has been to wait before openly expressing an opinion pro or con on this issue. I must admit that given the economic state of our profession one tends to lean toward a pro answer providing the bargaining were to be in the field of economics only. However, a strong belief that such a move would be only a beginning towards undesirable results prompts me to take a strong stand against collective bargaining.

In the last few years there has developed a growing trend of managed academia coinciding with a loss in traditional shared responsibility. The addition of collective bargaining to this only exacerbates this problem. My concept of collective bargaining may be naive. To me it means the "sitting at a table" where one side, management, sits opposite the "managed". Further, it means something is given up to gain something else. While it would be nice to conclude that this would be limited only to salary or non-salary benefits, it is hard to believe that other matters, including those academic, would not enter into the bargaining process. Are we willing to take this risk? I think not.

The very heart of a university is localized in that which we call academic freedom. This permits us not only to explore new horizons in research but equally in teaching including presenting that which we know as we see it. It permits us to share responsibility for developing creative intellect by providing sound bases for such development. Any deterioration of this shared responsibility ultimately leads toward erosion of the quality of the university. My opinion is that collective bargaining diminishes shared responsibility and academic freedom. This is at a time when the survival and growth of the university is highly dependent on improving the quality of that institution.

Let me say that I would be amongst the first to argue that it is not enough only to be against something without providing an alternative. The alternative is for the faculty to become more "active" and less "reactive". (We were invited to do so on faculty day.) It is time we exerted ourselves and lead in academic matters. We need to express ourselves so that there be no doubt where we stand and battle to assure ourselves that our stands are not only heard but acted upon. This means sharing in the policy making at all levels in the positive sense of leading where this is appropriate and necessary.

As to the means, I confess of knowing no other way than that of a faculty senate which is assertive and concerns itself with real policy making. This needs to be a senate that concerns itself less and less with reacting, trivia, or exercises in futility and more and more with leadership in scholarly endeavors.
Toward this end I would suggest concentrating each year on one or a few areas and developing a position that is positive. For example, if we believe that central to a university is provision for a strong program in liberal arts, then we should develop a stand that will assure this including funds where necessary. If we believe we are losing the economic battle then we should develop a strong position emphasizing not only why this is so but what remedies are feasible.

The development of a more effective faculty senate which is central to these arguments in my opinion will likely require change. This change needs to be such that the body has a significant input into the affairs of the university. To a degree it means a willingness to more readily accept committee recommendations providing these have been developed in a responsible manner. Committees should provide opportunities for input from interested faculty. An approach to this is that of announcing meeting dates including an agenda of topics to be discussed. If this becomes too burdensome an open hearing on topics may be a suitable alternative. After this, when a committee reports, the report should present a recommendation together with the reasons for this conclusion. At present, I think this is reasonably well done.

The senate should concern itself with major policy and as much as possible avoid the administration of these policies. If the administration of a policy is contrary to what is believed to be the meaning, the senate should express this in clear definite terms.

It is my opinion that the most crucial administrative unit in shared responsibility is that of the department or similar unit. This means that a need exists for these units to develop stands on policy matters and have a means to express these to the governing faculty body including its committees. This requires that the committees provide before the fact information about those areas in which it is currently concentrating. To work, it may be necessary to limit the number of committees.

It should also be pointed out that if shared responsibility is to function it means that the administration must accept the concept. If not the alternative becomes one of a change from shared academia toward adversary procedures.

Let's start with the premise that we honestly want to improve the quality of this university. Then let us through shared responsibility state explicitly how we believe this can be done.

R. W. Newburgh
November 22, 1974