

APRIL 1970

We Need to Support the Minority and Special Services Program

I believe at this time that the faculty of Oregon State University should support the Minority and Special Services Program at O.S.U.

If we are sincere in our belief that minority groups should be given a chance to become a part of the American system and contribute to its well being, then we must see to it that they are able to stay and compete in the university. If we bring minority groups here we can do three different things with them: we can do nothing for them and flunk them out; we can pass them regardless of how well they do and lower our standards; or we can give them some meaningful assistance so that they can successfully compete. This latter is the type of program we should support. If we fail to provide adequate counselling and tutoring we are having them participate in an exercise of futility. These students no doubt have the intelligence, but they do lack adequate background training.

Whether you are a liberal or conservative, radical or reactionary, it is my opinion you can with a good conscience support this program.

I was pleased to read in the April 3 issue of the Staff News Letter that the Executive Office supported this program. I hope that the faculty will see it this way and give the program the financial support that it needs.

Respectfully yours,

Myron G. Cropsey
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FACULTY FORUM PAPERS
Oregon State University

Dear Colleagues:

As a matter of human nature, it seems required in times of stress, that we exacerbate our woes by self pity, by imagining that we alone have suffered such trials, that our situation is unique and, therefore, there is little reason to seek council from others. Because "misery loves company," I have been seeking evidence that in fact, our situation is not uncommon. By chance, I recently came across a quotation by Jaques Barzun that confirms my belief that our problems at Oregon State are not unique but are symptomatic of an illness common to many institutions of higher education today (The Center Magazine, III(2):51).

"Making the university more worldly has enormously increased the power of professionalism both inside and outside the university. The Mandarin system is now in the saddle everywhere, and with all its usual features: vanity, self-seeking, faddishness, and punishment for the naive, who are usually the geniuses. The contemporary spectacle of the curb market in prestige, with its bargains and bribes and daily ranking of men on the big board, is a reproach to intellect; and the goal of public service which frequently leads to genteel prostitution in the halls of industry and charitable foundations, is no less a reproach to morality. We keep speaking of a company of scholars, but what we have in our new Babylons of higher learning is a scrimmage of self-seeking individuals and teams, the rugged age of gilded research. This commercial outlook, re-enforcing professionalism, explains the absence of original ideas in almost every field of learning and will insure the continuance of that dearth for as long as the boom lasts."

And then, too, I found the following in an essay by William Arrowsmith (Campus 1980, ed. A.C. Eurich, p. 125).

"Why don't administrators take the stump on behalf of their policies? There is, I suspect, only one answer, and it is not powerlessness, but lack of policies and ideas, and a long habit of prostration before success. A man cannot stump for programs he does not have, and this is why so many administrators talk such dreary rubbish. They have, quite literally, nothing to say. Alternatively, they are the prisoners of their origins, the professoriat from which they emerged and whose assumptions and aims they share. Hence, they conceive of their task as the encouragement of the status quo and, when confronted with the crisis of education, claim, like Clark Kerr, that chaos is positively good for us, or, like President Perkins, that we can reconcile teaching and scholarship by the simple device of abandoning liberal education."

I believe that my colleagues of the Faculty of Oregon State University would do well to read and re-read these two statements and ponder seriously their relevance to the current academic crisis on this campus. In like manner, I believe that every administrator should, in addition, read again this admonition contained in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Faculty Senate (Gill, Glicksberg, Wehausen). "...but we believe that each person who opposed tenure should ask himself if he would have made the same decision if each man had been unobtrusive outside his academic life, spending his leisure time playing, say, bridge, golf, or the piano."

The time is near at hand when all concerned must face the question of this institution's raison d'etre. But we are not alone facing a need for the justification of our institutional existence in terms of our educational function, but also the justification of our actions as an intellectual community. We must not allow ourselves to be bound to ritual and convention. Our intellectual insight must not be blinded by prejudice and emotion. We must remain a forum for the new, the different, the controversial as well as the repository for the old, the traditional, the accepted. We cannot allow the fad of the moment to interfere with our intellectual life.

Most serious of all the sad results of the present conflict is the interruption of communications, never very freely resorted to on this campus. The tendency to defend decisions that have been challenged by citing pretended, irreproachable standards or goals effectively stifles discussion. The putative standards of individual and institutional excellence have been arbitrarily adopted and are themselves being widely and seriously questioned. Moreover, the decisions as to institutional goals remain to be made. Nevertheless, the advocacy of these so-called "standards" makes opposition difficult because of the ease with which the "professional standards" of an opponent may be made the subject of debate rather than the substantive issues involved in a questioned decision. If this is a conscious strategy, then it can only be compared to a politician's espousal of church, flag and motherhood when otherwise lacking an adequate defense for his performance or program. If the adherents to this strategy deny that there is a conscious effort at diversion, then there remains only the alternative that they have succumbed to illogical reasoning.

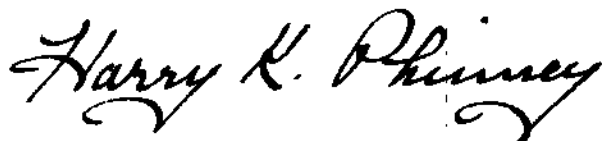
Whatever the basis for these differences of opinion, there is only one means to a satisfactory solution. This is, of course, a full and frank discussion of the substantive elements. The intrusion of peripheral matters, particularly of personalities only further polarizes the issues without any hope of final resolution by intellectual processes. While there is no question but that "the administration" has legal authority to make arbitrary decisions predicated on assumptions of need for "the good of the institution" or the "protection of the image of the institution," it is also incontrovertible that reliance on the power of position to force compliance with or "acceptance" of a decision is unworthy of the intellectual community. When reasons are promulgated

that involve "position," "prestige," "size," money, conformity or other non- or anti-intellectual concepts, it become obvious the educational function has truly been lost to sight. When the "institution" or "the administration" begins to acquire greater significance than the educational function, it is obvious that the power to direct has been usurped by individuals who are not scholars interested in ideas but are simply people seeking some form of personal satisfaction or professional aggrandizement. This is usually associated with obvious desire for power or prestige or with the pursuit of causes antithetic with the educational process.

Not uncommonly, when the aggressive, messianic administrator fails to persuade by rhetoric, the next ploy is tendentious reorganization. When vigorously assailed by logic, the ultimate weapon is progressive isolation and emasculation of the opposition. The combative gamesman views this as a legitimate road to victory, but to the educator, it represents defeat of the principle of free interplay of ideas. To the institution it marks a failure to achieve the status of a university and to the public it lends credence to the idea that the educational process is really like any other business venture.

What scholar has time for gamemanship, for power plays, for consideration of political advantage? What teacher worthy of the title would dare defend a classroom position by authoritarian dictation? Faced by these tactics and rebuffed in their efforts to obtain proper intellectual consideration of essential principles, the Faculty of Oregon State University is falling into disarray. Those who feel their professional or social lives are not directly affected seek neutrality. Those driven by strong personal ambitions have opted for the position calculated to do their careers the most good (or the least harm). A large proportion of the Faculty, however, still vocally express their concern for humanitarian, intellectual and educational principles and stoutly refuse to accept less than an intellectual assessment of their grievances. While we still hope that time or circumstances will provide us this relief, it is a matter of real grief to many that this has not been automatic, immediate and unquestioned.

"---our motto too, will be "Publish or Perish"--but by "publish" we mean simply "make public." Some men "make public" by writing books, others building institutions, others teach, still others are. All of them will, one hopes, have a place in the new university" (William Arrowsmith, *The Center Magazine* III (2):50).



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