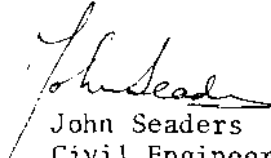


If there is a better way, let us find it!

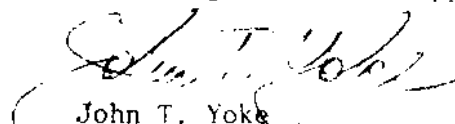
I enjoyed Dr. Bone's presentation on the mechanizing and computerizing of the educational system. If as is advanced in various schools of thought, man is a machine product "developed" out of a deterministic universe, then this proposal should be the most sensible, the most effective and probably the most economic way to "educate" students. There have been men, following philosophical convictions of this type, who were courageous enough to act on their convictions and committed suicide. Such despair and hopelessness of really being a significant human being is tragic. It is triggered by a dualism in thought which views human reason as autonomous and, therefore, must accept the facts of the universe and the mechanistic aspect of man as being the only reality and that one not significant and is yet aware of the facts of his own personality and individuality, which to each man is significant.

This irreconcilable dualism can lead then either to a man machine at the end of a tape recorder or to a communal drop out exploring the humanness of our being. The rejection of our "normal" societal format by some of our "youth" to find reality is merely the other side of the same thought form that leads to Orwells 1984. What is my option, do I willingly follow the described route of making education a more economical process or is there an alternative? The view that I am a created significant being with personality and reason not as opposites but as integral parts of my being having a purpose in being in terms of the creator and his creation will remove the dualism or schism of reason and reality. Such a "novel" view has possibilities that could lead to development of interpersonal relationships not only among students (this irreconcilable inconsistency in "logically speaking" will have to be deleted) but also among faculty and students. This will no doubt open up possibilities of creativity and value sensing experiences for many. In such a perspective the teacher may even find a significant reason for wanting to teach other than the economic benefits of putting on a new reel or changing the card deck.


John Seaders
Civil Engineering
November 2, 1972

POLITICIZATION OF THE UNIVERSITY

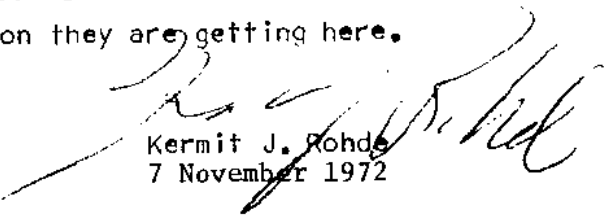
This is a protest against those colleagues who blindly go about politicizing O.S.U., heedless of the harm similar activities have caused in other American universities and of the actual destruction of scholarship in South American, European, and Japanese universities. We can speak as individuals or as "Citizens For" this or that candidate, but when we label ourselves "Faculty" we are such not as individuals but only in relation to the university. What we have in common is our scholarly work; we are as diverse as any other group in opinions on politics, religion, and life style. I object to the wearing of political buttons by professors in the lecture hall and by administrators in their offices. I object to finding my campus mail box stuffed with political propaganda (which I suspect has been printed on university machines). I object to "Faculty For" advertisements in the newspaper. I object to the turning of campus buildings into picture galleries of candidates, and to the clutter of bulletin boards (even ones supposedly restricted to laboratory safety notices) with election signs. I object to letters to editors signed as "Professor of -" or as "Chairman, Department of -". We all know of other universities where one's evaluation by his peers and department chairman is based more on the holding of "correct" views than on scholarly competence. Are we in the danger of that happening here?



John T. Yoke
Chemistry
November 6, 1972

FACULTY FORUM PAPER

Both major parties have agreed on one aspect of the election (and even the third party on the Oregon ballot does not disagree) that it is the clearest choice of the century. Yet, Oregon State students when interviewed by the Barometer find no differences between candidates. One wonders a bit at the nature of the education they are getting here.

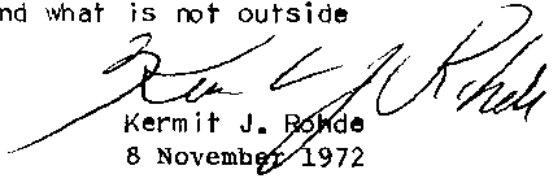


Kermit J. Rohde
7 November 1972

FACULTY FORUM PAPER

It was rather interesting to note that last year a faculty senator made a strong speech in which he said the faculty as a body should not concern itself, should take no position on matters outside the university. This year's first faculty meeting when President McVicar advocated working against and voting against a proposition on the state ballot, that senator said nothing. When it was pointed out in the library report that the OSU library, in order to keep pace with comparable university libraries, should be spending two million a year instead of one, the senator made a speech saying the resources of the nation would no longer allow universities to have complete libraries. Interesting that we should be concerned about spending the resources of the nation for a library budget, but not the 5 billion, enough for 2,500 such budgets, spent for just the spring reaction, the mining of harbors, and the bombing of cities, part of the Southeast Asian war.

It would seem that deciding what is and what is not outside the university is not a simple matter.



Kermit J. Rohde
8 November 1972

STUDENT EVALUATION OF TEACHING

Recently, there has been considerable emphasis placed, in this and other universities, on student evaluation of teaching performance. Many of us have been so evaluated, and have been pleased when our students tell us we are doing a good job, distressed when we are criticized. In at least some departments, such evaluations are being seriously considered as a part of the data used in deciding upon recommendations concerning promotion and/or tenure.

This seems, on the surface, entirely sensible. After all, the argument runs, who is better able to judge the quality of education than those who are supposedly being educated? Further, early studies showed what appeared to be a small positive correlation between student evaluations of instructors and learning.

However, a study has recently appeared which should give us cause for concern in relying too much on such evaluations. In the September 29 issue of Science (Vol. 177, pp. 1164-1166) these studies are described. I urge all of you who are involved in the evaluation of faculty to read this paper. A brief summary follows:

The paper begins with a brief critique of previous studies of this kind. The criticisms made seem, at least to me, to be appropriate. The experimental study involved students and teaching assistants in a large calculus course. The students were tested, throughout the term, with sets of problems. The teaching assistants were not permitted to see the problems before they were administered. Mean performance of the students in each section was measured. At the end of the quarter, the instructors were evaluated by the students, and a mean rating given to each instructor.

The results can be summarized briefly: Overall, there was a strong negative correlation between teacher evaluation and class performance.

Particular data are striking; the students of the most highly evaluated instructors performed worst, and the three sections who evaluated their instructors the lowest were the best performers on the objective tests!

I expect that there will be strong arguments concerning this and similar studies. We should not regard the issue as settled. But we should at least be very careful in placing too much reliance on student evaluations, at least if "learning" by students is what we seek to maximize. The study raises the disturbing possibility that student evaluations are essentially popularity contests, and that the most popular teacher may sometimes be the one who demands (and obtains) the least from his students.

K.E. Van Holde
Biochemistry and Biophysics
November 10, 1972

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "K Van Holde", written in dark ink on a white background.