

Jurisdictionalism + Crisis = Alienation

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This presentation makes no attempt to use esoteric formulas or statistical procedures as supporting evidence for concepts presented. In fact, this presentation takes the position that perhaps there have been too many Chi squares, "T" tests, and analysis of covariance and not enough humanism and just plain personal concern in our research publications and professional journals.

The abundance of so-called scientific research portrayed in our professional journals of the behavioral sciences and education are perhaps symptomatic of one of the underlying causes of the overworked concept, "alienation". While the writer fully recognizes the need for research as well as its usefulness, he has become most concerned about its lack of inferences and adaptations. After perusing numerous doctoral theses from graduate schools across the country, particularly noting the summary and conclusion chapters, it is disturbing to note how few speculations, inferences and concepts of adaptation are suggested in the concluding chapters. The results are generally couched in levels of significance, directions of trends, and, of course, the universal quote "the need for additional research" without much attempt to speculate about productive usefulness and application.

For years our educational administrators, whether they be in the area of student personnel or the academics, have sought and searched for magic formulas to define teaching loads, administrative responsibilities, as well as to determine the rewards thereof. On the other hand, we see viewed in the journals of our professional associations the giving of mysterious ratings to various types of institutions in terms of

their qualities and deficiencies even to and including a letter grade for their salary levels.

Faculty senate, faculty welfare committees, and professional standards committees on campuses across the country sit for hours deliberating over whether or not tenure and promotion should be tied to degrees, works of art, published articles, convention attendance, etc. They continually seek to quantify and build rating scales as depersonalized techniques that would make it easier to justify promotional activity. In fairness, it should be pointed out that much of this has been generated as a result of inequities in the past. However, many of our esoteric colleagues are reverting to the exact patterns of which they accuse the establishment, "the establishment being anything, any group, or any agency of which you are not a part," of turning education into a mechanical, depersonalized process. We are all in a sense guilty of many of the charges and demands laid at our doors by our militant and concerned students. Naturally, many of our opportunistic professors join the students in storming the bastions of the registrar's office, admissions office, etc., screaming at the top of their lungs for freedoms that they themselves have attempted to destroy through jurisdictionalism, academic bureaucracy, and uncreative classroom activities.

The essence of this article — pardon the word — perhaps we should say that the objective of this article is to plea for a return to humanism and concern for those whom we seek to assist in their education. It is not to say that we should abandon our publication and research in our scientific endeavors, but to place them in their proper perspective and recognize that what we

do affects human behavior.

Dr. Darrell Holmes, President of Colorado State College, in a speech before 500 educators from Colorado and Wyoming, phrased the question, "Have we as administrators and educators placed such an emphasis on formulas for academic efficiency that we have lost sight of the fundamental role of education?" We have become so wrapped up in trying to be efficient and systematized that we have created a depersonalized, hedonistic, academic machine rather than a climate and facility for the exchange of knowledge, the foment of ideas, and the growth of fertile, creative minds.

The student critics can be accused of following in the same patterns that we have; for example, as one reads the news releases that list the demands being presented to college administrations and faculties, it appears that students think the addition of a course in a certain area is the answer to the ills of society, and that increased funds within certain departments will correct long-felt abuses. It, of course, can be debated that we must have knowledge, courses, and financial support to carry out programs. However, programs, courses, etc., irregardless of finance will be of little effect if those manipulating, using, and dispensing funds do not have the philosophical posture and human concern that seems to be lacking not only in our academic society but in our society in general.

Let us examine rather subjectively some of the typical problems found on campuses as suggested by newspaper articles, by our militants, and by our concerned students. Then, let us further examine some possible "festers" that have created these emotional uprisings. And thirdly, what are some of the possible "practical starting points" for the alleviation of these "festers."

Listed below are but a few of the type of "festers" that seem to contribute to situations that create crises and bring about alienation. These certainly are not new, unique, or original.

Too many teaching assistants, large classes, absenteeism on the part of instructors, rigidity in curriculums, lack of sensitivity to the needs of students and colleagues, indifference to social and community problems, antiquated procedures in the classroom as well as in administrative functions are some of the charges leveled at us. The reverse is also charged, for example, great social concern and political interest on our part causes us to neglect our responsibilities to the student. Our excessive concern about one's profession,

and overzealous interest in academic politics removes us from the stream of the student's life, and in some instances suggests inadequate academic preparation for classroom activities. Frequently we hear the students speak of the frustrations in attempting to pin responsibility on a particular department, academic unit, or campus agency.

As numerous writers have pointed out in the last year, the students we have today are "a different breed". For example, there is considerable evidence to support the contention that our students today are two years more mature than were students of the same age twenty years ago. They are also economically more secure than students of twenty years ago. Academically, they seem to ask more "whys" in soaking up bits of knowledge. The economic security has made it possible for them to be more idealistic and seek something greater in their lives than the economic goals of their parents.

Along with these new characteristics, students today carry the typical youthful exuberance, emotional decision-making, and the need for instant gratification. Granted that although much of this instant gratification is almost impossible to achieve, the student has pointed to many circumstances and situations where this concept of impossibility is erroneous. Youth has become impatient with the slow-moving wheels of academic democracy. And perhaps, academic democracy is in need of a few "shoves". Many of the gestures listed above are the results of traditionalisms and jurisdictionalisms that are no longer appropriate or necessary within the modern contemporary society. Also, it is believed by this writer, that many of the "festers" are created and developed through a lack of genuine, sincere concern for other human beings. When these types of circumstances occur in situations associated with crisis, the inevitable results are frustration, anger, and alienation.

What then are some of the guidelines and questions we must ask ourselves as professional educators, whether we be in an administrative function or in the classroom, whether we are in higher education or secondary education?

The statements listed below have been gleaned from interviews with faculty members from a variety of institutions. These comments or questions have been placed in two groups — those that are more appropriate to administrators or to those of administrative responsibilities, and those which are more appropriately directed at the faculty. Obviously many are



appropriate in both categories.

1. Has the college been intellectually honest in describing what it actually is, or does it have a public relations image for the legislature, another image for the parents, a third for the students, and finally a fourth which is reality? For example, does your college catalogue carry courses that have not been offered for years? Does your college catalogue indicate its admission requirements in any precise manner, or are they couched in all sorts of elastic clauses and loopholes that can be used perhaps more expediently by the admission officer than by the student seeking admission?

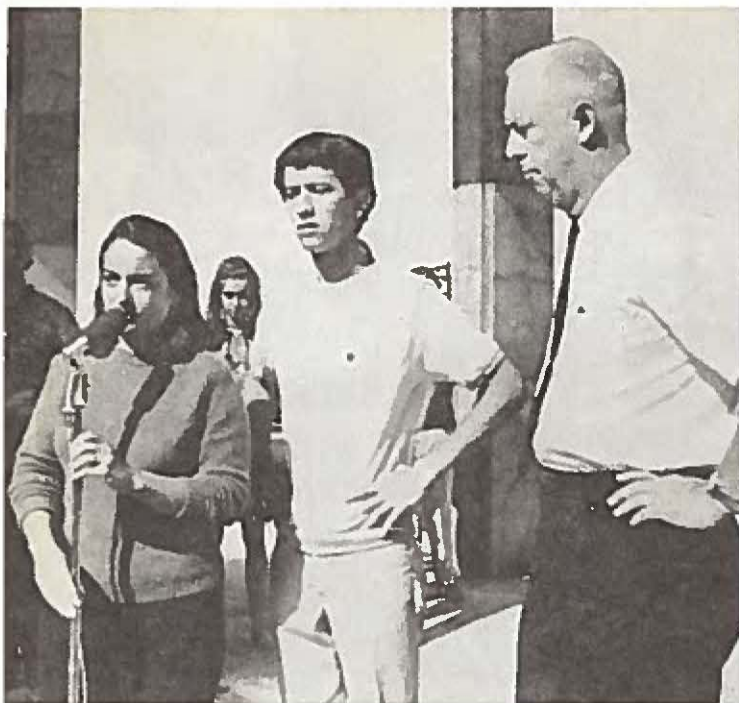
2. Are department heads and deans selected for administrative talents and abilities or are they promoted because they are competent teachers who need a pay raise?

3. Are the department heads and deans aware of their functions and the responsibilities of their position? And in defense of the dean and department head, is he given the opportunity to perform his function as an administrator or must he carry academic loads inappropriate to his administrative demands?

4. Are the administrators and the faculty more concerned about their professional image, their role, and titles, than they are about the function that they perform? Has a position been taken for ego gratification at the expense of the role and function of the position? Do you, as an administrator, implement what you read, hear, and discover, or is it just lip service

for scholarly meetings of deans? Do you seek out roadblocks within your departmental operations? Has the level of accountability been defined so that the various individuals functioning within your jurisdiction know their roles? What proportion of your time is directed towards interpersonal relations with the students you supposedly serve either directly or indirectly? How often do you say to students and others, "This is not my responsibility; I can't help you," rather than, "the buck stops here; what can we do for you?" How often have you had the courage to become involved in other departmental affairs when you are fully aware of the needs of individual students? In other words, do you communicate the problems as you see them to others who can do something about them? Are the procedures you've designed for your department more appropriate for yourself or are they there for the benefit of the student? It is very easy to say they are for the students, but really are they?

Are the procedures and mechanics designed and developed by your department really relevant, or have they just been there for years? When we speak of communication, do we just speak of it or do we actually seek ways of implementing? Are we really overworked, or are we playing the typical campus game of letting our colleagues know of our great contributions? If we are overworked, are many of the things we do appropriate and necessary today, even though they may have been two years ago? How often can materials lay in your "in" box awaiting approval, ac-



tion or transmittal while you busily give tales of woe to your colleagues? As mentioned above, these are not new or unique, and have been discussed on campus after campus. But these are the subtleties that assist in the germination of alienation and frustration.

Now, what of the faculty member? Many of the questions listed above would be most appropriate of the faculty, but let us add a few. Do you attend conferences and meetings to seek ideas that will enrich your teaching role, or do you attend and present a paper so that your expenses can be paid for a brief vacation? How often do you reexamine your classes to see if they are relative? We hear many of our colleagues speak of not having time to read the journals. Do you set aside time to get relevant? How many different people do you have coffee with during the day, or do you hide in the departmental coffee closet for fear of exposure to a student in the College Center?

Assuming a 50-hour week, how much of this week's activity is devoted to your class preparation and student contact? How often have you examined or reexamined your evaluation procedures or the keys to your multiple choice or true-false test? At what point in the quarter or semester do you inform the student of what is expected of them — or are you the one who assigns the term paper seven days before the final? How many books that belong to the library are on your shelf as faculty loan, that some student has been seeking for weeks? How often do you say when controversy arises that they are the ones that are doing it: not me? When you arrange your office hours for the quarter, at whose convenience are they?

How important is your obligation to those shining "yes men" graduate students? Does it overshadow

your responsibilities to the undergraduate? How often have you prepared your lectures from one text book and required the students to read another? How often have you failed to get your textbook order to the bookstore, and then when the book is not available, informed the class that the bookstore is very inefficient? How often do you assign readings to students in books that are not available, or that you have not read but have heard they were "good" at some conference? Have you recommended to the librarian any purchases within the last year? How long does it take your department to implement a new course or to get it through a curriculum committee; for instance, from the time of its original introduction to the time it is offered in the college? How often have you voted in curriculum committees, faculty senates, graduate councils, etc., to oppose a change in another department and voted from an egocentric or idiosyncratic base rather than rational, responsible judgment?

How often do you ask the students in your class to offer suggestions for the course, critique your techniques, and evaluate the department in which you serve? How often do you sit with your colleagues and reexamine the total program of your department or division in terms of its relevancy today? How often have you sought the counsel of your recent grads from your department as to suggestions and criticisms of your program? When you went on your sabbatical leave, did you really accomplish or seek out methods of enriching yourself to be a more effective teacher, or was it just a nice vacation?

Obviously, numerous other criticisms as well as compliments could be paid to the academic profession. And certainly, many of those listed above are not true of all our colleagues. However, were they not somewhat true, counselors in counseling centers in colleges and secondary schools across the country would not have heard them. All of the comments listed above have been gleaned from counseling notes of numerous counseling centers throughout the United States, from liberal arts colleges, universities, and community colleges. Needless to say, there is more to alienation than just the struggle on the campus between the administration and faculty on one side and the students on the other. Certainly we appear to be contributing to it.

Let the thinkers propose great concepts and let us continue our research, publication, and teaching; but let it be undergirded by a philosophy and a behavior pattern that focuses on the human being.