

A VIEW FROM THE DEAN'S CHAIR: SHIFTING PRIORITIES FOR THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

The theme for this issue of *Educational Perspectives* is very timely. The national reduction of birth rates followed by a drop in public school enrollments have created a crisis for most colleges of education.

Historically, periods of teacher surplus caused chiefly by job shortages have been of short duration in Hawaii. The most severe occurred during the depression of the 1930's and lasted about five years. In that day, the response of government policymakers was to restrict severely the opportunity to be trained for teaching. This does not appear to be a wise or even practical policy for the '70s. A certain proportion of our young people will want such preparation and licensing irregardless of the current job market. If it is not provided locally, this generation will secure it elsewhere. Follow-up studies of our graduates indicate that the Bachelor of Education degree has applicability for a wide spectrum of people-oriented employment. Our degree is 80 percent based on liberal arts and subject matter courses of the College of Arts and Sciences. As such, it appears to us to be a reasonable alternative to the Bachelor of Arts degree. Qualified undergraduates should be entitled to earn the Bachelor of Education degree, with the clear understanding of the state of the current job market. Therefore, we propose that entrance requirements to the College of Education be maintained at levels no more restrictive than can be justified by the need to secure high quality candidates for the profession.

Nonetheless, substantial enrollment drops can be expected and indeed are being experienced. This frees faculty loads to provide most in-service assistance to teachers who are employed. However, in Hawaii, the drop in summer session enrollments of in-service teachers and principals is partially a by-product of collective bargaining. Relieved of the statutory requirements for credit accumulation, State Department of Education personnel now seek self-improvement in a variety of new ways. The delivery of both credit and non-

credit, in-service courses especially designed for current in-service needs is already underway. In addition, the provision of consultive services to the DOE as part of our faculty's regular load assignment is now feasible, with the slackening of the demand for training pre-service personnel. The DOE and teacher requests for such services are already outstripping our current resources.

The chronic dissatisfactions expressed of public school programs imply to us the continued need for rigorous and large scale curriculum improvement programs. We anticipate that the in-service training needs for the proper installation of these new programs can partially be met by shifts in existing faculty assignments in this College.

It must be noted that DOE long-range planning and legislative policies and State master plan for public education all have a direct impact on this College. It is impractical to adopt long-range College of Education plans in isolation from these broader elements. We have the obligation to take part in the considerations which result in broad public policy decisions affecting education. We have the further obligation to respond to the need for changes in curriculum programs and the personnel improvement activities which will be associated with such changes. Finally, we will continue to have, at a temporarily reduced level, the mission of locating and preparing high quality young people to enter and renew the teaching profession.

This College has had an important and historic role in the development of these islands over the past eighty years. The degree of emphasis directed toward any one of its several functions may vary with the demands of time. The basic objective of improving the lives of our people through education is no different than it was in the last century. However, the ability of our graduates and our institutions to deal with the demands of the next century will be the crucial criterion for us.

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