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BROADENING THE SPECTRUM OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

BY- PLUMMER, ROBERT H. RICHARDSON, RICHARD C., JR.

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THE 2-YEAR COLLEGE SHOULD CONTAIN TWO DIVISIONS. THE FIRST IS AN ACADEMIC DIVISION WITH A COLLEGE-PARALLEL PROGRAM FOR TRANSFER STUDENTS AND A TECHNICAL PROGRAM FOR THE SEMIPROFESSIONS. IT WOULD HAVE A SELECTIVE ADMISSIONS POLICY, BE ADMINISTERED BY THE DEAN OF INSTRUCTION, HAVE A FACULTY CHOSEN FOR TEACHING PROFICIENCY AND ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS, AND GRANT AN ASSOCIATE OF ARTS OR OF SCIENCE DEGREE. THE SECOND RECOMMENDED DIVISION IS A SERVICE DIVISION WITH UNRESTRICTED ADMISSIONS, PERIODIC EVALUATION RATHER THAN GRADES, AND NO COLLEGE-CREDIT COURSES. THE STUDENT COULD REMEDY DEFICIENCIES TO BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR THE ACADEMIC DIVISION, TAKE VOCATIONAL OR RETRAINING COURSES, COMPLETE ADULT HIGH SCHOOL, OR TAKE AVOCATIONAL OR CULTURAL COURSES. THE DIVISION WOULD BE UNDER THE DEAN OF STUDENT PERSONNEL SERVICES OR, IF SIZE JUSTIFIED THE SEPARATION, UNDER A DEAN OF OCCUPATIONAL SERVICES AND A DEAN OF COMMUNITY SERVICES. THE FACULTY MEMBERS WOULD BE SELECTED FOR SPECIALIZED TRAINING RATHER THAN FOR ACADEMIC DISTINCTION AND WOULD BE CALLED DIRECTORS OR CONSULTANTS. THIS DIVISION WOULD GRANT DIPLOMAS OR CERTIFICATES INSTEAD OF ASSOCIATE DEGREES. THIS TYPE OF ORGANIZATION WOULD OFFER OPPORTUNITY RATHER THAN FRUSTRATION TO MILLIONS OF LEARNERS BELOW THE MEDIAN, WHILE GIVING THE TRANSFER STUDENT THE ECONOMIC ADVANTAGE OF NEARNESS TO HOME FOR TWO MORE YEARS. THIS ARTICLE IS PUBLISHED IN "JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION," VOLUME 35, NUMBER 6, JUNE 1964. (HH)

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Broadening the Spectrum of Higher Education

Who Teaches the High-Risk Student?

By Robert H. Plummer and Richard C. Richardson, Jr.

A MAJOR problem facing higher education today is created by the pressure of enrollment in higher educational institutions to which the popularization of college has led. "The opportunity for competence must be available to all children, not just the elite. We err tragically if we try to ration educational opportunity. Ability and talent must be cultivated, but we must never forget the hundreds of thousands of youngsters who inevitably must fall below the median."[1] Senator Clifford P. Case of New Jersey, in an address to the national convention of the Association of American Junior Colleges in May, 1961, estimated that four-fifths of all jobs demand trainable skills—80 per cent of our young people need training beyond high school.[2]

On all sides, the student is reminded that without post–high school training his economic future is limited. Alarmed parents are informed that automation threatens the employment of millions of unskilled workers. Since the Second World War, the railroads have cut their forces by one-half, and the coal industry employs only a third of its former numbers. Major reductions are impending in the ranks of longshoremen and in newspaper work, agriculture, and manufacturing. United States Manpower Director Seymour Wolfbein said recently that productivity is increasing at such a rapid rate that in six years not only will it exceed 1960's output but twenty-two million workers will be displaced. Moreover, our work force will increase in the meantime by an additional thirteen million. This will create a need for thirty-five million new jobs by 1970.[3]

High-school graduates who have no special skills get an indifferent reception from employers. Bewildered and confused, an ever multiplying number of them turn to colleges in search of training they hope will bring them the rewards of an affluent society. Despite the increasing pressure,

[1]Harold G. Shane, from a speech delivered at the Summer Education Conference, Ann Arbor, Michigan, July 15, 1963.

[2]"From the Address to the First General Session," *Junior College Journal*, XXXI (May, 1961), pp. 503–504.

[3]*New Republic*, CIL (July 6, 1963), p. 2.

Robert H. Plummer *is assistant dean and professor of education at the Flint College of the University of Michigan.* Richard C. Richardson, Jr., *is dean of student personnel services at the Junior College District of St. Louis.*

higher education on the whole has not solved their problem. The solutions currently advocated fall into several categories. In the main, they are stopgap measures.

One proposal is that the college reduce the number of qualified applicants by stiffening entrance requirements and permitting gradual controlled expansion. A second course of action suggested is that public institutions maintain high standards by failing a sizable number of the freshman class. A third course is to move in the direction of doubling the size of already enormous universities. A fourth approach is to admit high-school graduates to community colleges in which transfer courses are available in addition to remedial work and a wide variety of terminal academic programs.

This last approach, currently used by many community colleges, leads to problems. Courses that are not designed to meet college standards encounter considerable hostility and resistance from the academic faculty, who view them as a threat to their professional status. The profusion of courses mars the image of the institution and raises questions concerning the validity of its college-parallel work. Moreover, able students often enroll in unchallenging courses. Overambitious students find themselves beyond their depth. Instructors are faced with the necessity of teaching classes made up of students who range widely in ability, bewildering those of low aptitude and boring the gifted.

The two-year college, with its policy of unrestricted admission, has been widely praised as the avenue to post–high school education for the maximum number of young persons. The simple truth is that public opinion demands that everyone have access to higher education in some form. The community college is the obvious alternative to an inundated state university. Consequently, the difficulties confronting the two-year college cannot be resolved simply by closing the open door. There is an essential job to be done for a vast number of youths who lack the ability to do work at the baccalaureate level but can profit from training beyond the secondary school.

HOW can the needs of learners below the median be met without lowering standards? The answer lies in a signal reorganization of the two-year college. Currently, course offerings are loosely combined in several groupings which are termed "transfer," "technical," "terminal," "community-service," and the like. Counselors may advise and persuade, but except in a few selective programs such as nursing, admission to the community college implies the student's right to select from among its heterogeneous offerings whatever strikes his fancy. Courses labeled "terminal" or "not for college credit" find few takers.

In order to maintain acceptable standards in the two-year college and at the same time help the student who is below the median, it is necessary to make a clear-cut distinction in the admissions to, and in the administration of, two separate programs. All the instruction the

community college is attempting to offer at present could be combined in two major divisions. The first of these, the academic division, would include all of the work presented in what are now the transfer and technical curriculums. This work would be clearly on the college level and would lead to the Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree. With the exception of certain advanced and highly technical courses, it could be used for transfer credit in a four-year institution.

Admissions to the academic division would be selective. Standards would be comparable to those of four-year institutions offering similar programs. The academic division would be administered under the supervision of the dean of instruction, as is the case at present. The faculty members in this division would be selected for teaching proficiency and academic qualifications. They would be recognized with professorial ranks.

The academic division would fulfill two distinct functions in the following order of urgency: Perhaps as much as one-half of the business of the academic division in the two-year college should be concerned with presenting a technical program to meet the needs of students of college age and adults in the middle quintile, or above, in ability. The contribution the two-year college has made in the last decade in its associate-degree program for the registered nurse is a convincing illustration of what should be done in a number of technical areas. One desideratum for the prestige of new technical programs is assurance from industry and business of job placement for all who graduate. Technical programs should not be started until this can be assured.

The other function of the academic division of the two-year college concerns college transfers. It is not of first priority because junior colleges already have well-developed transfer programs. Primarily a service of geographic propinquity, the transfer program helps to reduce the financial barrier to higher education. Performing a function somewhat less expensively than other institutions engaged in the same type of work entitles the two-year college to no particular distinction. The emphasis upon teaching as opposed to research, the willingness to give students who have failed a second chance, and the flexibility provided by the wide range of non-transfer courses into which those not suited for baccalaureate work may be channeled are the chief justification of the two-year college's claim that it offers students special advantages that cannot be found elsewhere.

THE second major area of the instructional program would be termed the service division. There would be unrestricted admission to this division. Instruction would not be organized in the traditional course pattern, nor would grades be given. Instead, periodic written evaluations would be made sketching the progress of each student and containing recommendations for his future work. Progress from one level to another

within the service division would be exclusively on the recommendation of the instructor. Classes might or might not follow standard semester patterns, depending on the nature of the work. No college credit would be given by the service division.

Students would enter this division with one or more of four possible motivations. They might wish to prepare themselves to enter the academic division by remedying deficiencies. Entrance would not automatically follow a specific period of study or sequence of classes, but, regardless of how long or short a period of time it took, would be contingent on meeting the minimum level acceptable to the academic division. Many learners would not be able to profit from higher education without diagnostic or remedial help. A second group of students might be motivated by the desire to learn a specific vocational skill or to take retraining courses as authorized by the Manpower Training Act. A third motivation would be to complete adult high-school courses. Many adults who, for reasons of status, would not consider returning to high school would willingly accept high school–equivalent courses in college. Thousands of workers and housewives living within commuting distance of urban communities avail themselves of such courses. The search for instruction in avocational and cultural activities motivates other students. As a community service, the division would offer instruction in creative and leadership-training activities, lectures, classes in drama, music, and art, short courses and workshops, forums, and institutes based on community needs and interests.

The service division would be administratively organized under the dean of student personnel services until the college grew to a size (over 2,500) that justified the appointment of a dean of occupational sciences and a dean of community services. Academically oriented staff members are not suited by temperament or interest to do an adequate job in this area. Faculty members would be selected for specialized training rather than for academic distinction. Professorial rank would not be given. Instead, descriptive titles, such as director and consultant, would be used to designate the instructor's area of competence. To compensate for the absence of academic rank and for the requirement of special training and teaching skill, a differential in salary might be paid to attract capable instructors. Therapeutic training is necessary for the staff that would help the student determine his problems, talents, and interests and that would do remedial work in reading, writing, study and problem skills, and arithmetic. For students in the service area of the two-year college, there should probably be separate graduation exercises, not overshadowed by the associate-degree exercises, in which certificates were awarded for the completion of some clearly defined training program, for earning transfer to an academic or technical program, or for obtaining an adult high-school diploma. There is a warmth of feeling among the students and teachers in a service group that substitutes for prestige.

THE two-year college, then, should contain an academic division with a college-parallel program for transfer students and a technical program to train students for the semi-professions. In addition, a service division would provide for vocational training, remedial work, and community-leadership training in avocational and cultural activities. In these two divisions, the comprehensive two-year college would furnish all adults above the age of eighteen who desired higher education a warming-up period (for exploration in self-discovery), on the theory that it would help students develop their potentialities to the maximum.

The two-year college should be more than a screening device for the four-year college. By providing separate educational lanes and permitting students to move back and forth between them, the comprehensive two-year college would make it possible to educate all youth and adults over eighteen who were motivated to improve themselves through higher education. Vocational, remedial, and community services will never be more than unproductive orphans so long as they remain an unwanted adjunct of the academic or technical program of the two-year college. Nurture them with sympathetic treatment in the right environment, and they will flourish. An educational frontier can be kept open by the comprehensive two-year college, offering opportunity rather than frustration to millions of learners below the median. The difference in expense between educating an individual and supporting him in idleness is heavily in favor of education. If the colleges provide the appropriate training, there is a place in our man-power ranks for every out-of-school, out-of-work youth.