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CHANGE AND REFORM IN HIGHER EDUCATION: BIG EIGHT
FACULTY ATTITUDES TOWARD SELECTED THESES PRESENTED
BY THE ASSEMBLY ON UNIVERSITY GOALS AND GOVERNANCE.

The University of Nebraska - Lincoln, Ed.D., 1973
Education, higher

University Microfilms, A XEROX Company, Ann Arbor, Michigan

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CHANGE AND REFORM IN HIGHER EDUCATION: BIG EIGHT FACULTY
ATTITUDES TOWARD SELECTED THESES PRESENTED BY
THE ASSEMBLY ON UNIVERSITY GOALS AND GOVERNANCE

by

Prosper L. Duensing

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College in the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Education

Department of Educational Administration

Under the Supervision of Professor Dale K. Hayes

Lincoln, Nebraska

May 1973

TITLE

CHANGE AND REFORM IN HIGHER EDUCATION: BIG EIGHT FACULTY

ATTITUDES TOWARD SELECTED THESES PRESENTED BY
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Higher education was remarkably uncritical of itself in the 1950's and the early 1960's as it grew at unprecedented rates.¹ Today, with pressure from both within and without, administrators must reconsider the fundamental goals of their institutions and review the traditional modes of achieving these goals. Further, the roles of faculty and students who are entering into and continuing the learning process in higher education must be examined. Cultural and societal demands upon higher education today are vastly different from those of just ten years ago.

In a recent report entitled Less Time, More Options: Education Beyond High School, the Carnegie Commission examined and made recommendations concerning the flow of students into and through the structure of higher education in the United States and the role played by the degrees granted.²

In March of 1971, a publication entitled Report on Higher Education, also known as the "Newman Report," was released by the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The authors of this

¹American Academy of Arts and Sciences, The Assembly on University Goals and Governance (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1971), pp. 41-42.

²Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, Less Time, More Options: Education Beyond the High School (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1971), p. iii.

publication, after examining the growth of higher education, suggested that there were disturbing trends toward uniformity from one institution to another, growing bureaucracy, overemphasis on educational credentials and isolation of students and faculty from each other. These trends tend to prevent higher education from adequately reflecting the interests of society. The authors concluded that we must create a more diverse and responsive system of higher education and that we must revise and enlarge our concepts of the nature and goals of the students as well as our concept of the overall role of higher educational institutions in our society.³

Also early in 1971, The Assembly on University Goals and Governance, founded by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, presented its "85 Theses" which were designed to stimulate thinking and to provoke discussion about change and reform in virtually all areas of higher education. Some of the areas the "85 Theses" focused on were education of the poor, graduate programs, education of women, university governance, academic tenure, and innovations in instruction, research, administration, budgeting and planning.⁴

All three of the publications previously mentioned deal with the need for reevaluation and reform in higher education. In the introduction to the "85 Theses" it was stated that if the Theses serve to stimulate trustees, faculties, presidents, students, staff, alumni groups, and public officials to look at colleges and universities more

³U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Report on Higher Education (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971), p. vii.

⁴The Assembly on University Goals and Governance, op. cit., pp. 11-31.

critically, and if the resulting deliberations help to bring about improvements, the Theses will have served their purpose.⁵

The significance of these studies in general and the "85 Theses" in particular will, then, depend upon the attitudes and actions of these groups of people mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Therefore, in order to be more knowledgeable about the ultimate impact of these calls for educational reform one can examine the attitudes of the people who are directly involved. One of the most important of these groups in terms of both effecting changes and being affected by changes in higher education is the faculties of colleges and universities.⁶

In this study, then, the writer determined how individual faculty members felt about individual Theses concerning change and reform in institutions of higher learning. For this particular study, the Theses were selected from the "85 Theses" prepared by The Assembly on University Goals and Governance, and the faculty responses were elicited from randomly-selected faculty members at the Big Eight universities.

THE PROBLEM

In general terms, the findings of this study should give some indication of the specific areas of higher education where change and reform might be anticipated and, conversely, of those areas where the status quo will probably prevail for some time to come.

⁵The Assembly on University Goals and Governance, Ibid., p. 6.

⁶Charles K. Warriner, Professional Commitment and Institutional Loyalty as Factors in Faculty Orientations, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Project Number 9-F-073 (Washington, D.C., 1970), p. 1.

Specifically, the purpose of this study was to determine how Big Eight faculty members responded to 25 selected Theses concerning change and reform in higher education and to do an analysis of the responses according to faculty rank, tenure, age, and discipline.

PROCEDURES

A review of literature citing specific evidence leading to the creation of the "85 Theses" was conducted. In addition, a review of faculty studies concerned with change and reform in higher education was done. The review of literature provided a basis for understanding the rationale of appeals for change and reform in higher education. The faculty studies review provided a basis for comparison and interpretation of the survey data.

A questionnaire was selected to secure the responses from the faculty. This was done to acquire an adequate number of responses from faculty members at each Big Eight institution located in the states of Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma.

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of 25 selected Theses from the "85 Theses" prepared by The Assembly on University Goals and Governance. The selection of the 25 Theses was made by five professional educators identified by randomly-selected peers. The selected Theses represented the 25 deemed the most significant and relevant to change and reform in higher education. Limiting the questionnaire to 25 Theses enabled each respondent to complete the questionnaire in approximately 20-25 minutes.

The questionnaire was mailed to a random sample of the faculty at each Big Eight institution. The size of the sample was determined

from the percentage of returns from a preliminary administration of the questionnaire to the faculty at a Big Ten institution. A table of random numbers was used to select the participating faculty members at each Big Eight institution.

The analysis of the collected data focused on whether the respondents agreed with, disagreed with, or had no opinion about the selected Theses. This analysis focused on the relationships between the responses and the rank, tenure, age and discipline of the respondents. The analysis was done by percentile distributions.

The collected data was keypunched on data processing cards and the statistical calculations were done by a computer.

DEFINITIONS

Big Eight--This term will include the following institutions:

University of Colorado, Iowa State University, University of Kansas, Kansas State University, University of Missouri, University of Nebraska, University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University.

Faculty--This term will denote the faculty members who hold the rank of assistant professor and above in Big Eight institutions.

85 Theses--This term will refer to the first report released by The Assembly on University Goals and Governance established in September, 1969 by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The "85 Theses" issued in January, 1971, proposed change and reform in almost all areas of higher education, asserting that the academic community must review its fundamental orientations if colleges and universities are to be revitalized and their weaknesses eliminated.

OVERALL DESIGN

The following four steps represent the general guidelines for this dissertation:

1. A review of the literature, focusing on the specific kinds of evidence which led to the formulation of the "85 Theses" and a review of faculty studies concerned with change and reform in higher education. The period from 1945 to 1972 is included in the review of the literature and faculty studies.
2. An acquisition of the attitudes of randomly selected Big Eight faculty members without requiring an unreasonable amount of their time.
3. An evaluation of the responses to the questionnaire in accordance with the problem statement.
4. A summary and conclusion based on the responses to the questionnaire.

CHAPTER CONTENTS

The order of the presentation for this dissertation is as follows:

- Chapter 1: Introduction
- Chapter 2: Review of Literature
- Chapter 3: Procedures and Response Characteristics
- Chapter 4: Presentation of Data
- Chapter 5: Summary and Conclusions

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The 25 years from 1945 to 1970 were perilous years for higher education. That period of time ushered in the atomic age with Hiroshima. Then came McCarthyism and civil rights, Sputnik and the National Defense Education Act, sit-ins and Berkeley, Vietnam and again civil rights and campus disorders.¹

1945-1950

It was the G.I. Bill of Rights, perhaps the most significant act of federal legislation affecting higher education thus far in the twentieth century, that provided an economic boon to American colleges and universities. It provided many opportunities to military personnel who might otherwise have been unable to attend institutions of higher education. By letting the veterans choose the institution they wanted to attend, the government gave the beneficiaries of the Bill an opportunity to select programs and colleges that they probably would never have considered had their education not been interrupted by the war.²

By 1946, with thousands of veterans returning to homes and colleges, it became very clear that higher education facilities

¹G. Kerry Smith (ed.), Twenty Five Years: 1945-1970 (1st ed.; San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1970), p. 1.

²The Assembly on University Goals and Governance, op. cit., p. 38.

were being overstrained and that a major turning point in higher education was near. Accordingly, in 1946, President Harry S. Truman appointed a Presidential Commission on Higher Education urging the re-examination of the system of higher education in terms of its objectives, methods, and facilities and in the light of the role it had to play.³

In 1945 there were two campuses in the United States with enrollments of over 20,000 students. By the year 1970 there would be more than 60 institutions with enrollments of over 20,000 students.⁴

THE 1950's

The college students of the 1950's have often been referred to as the silent generation. The silence of this generation stemmed mainly from its lack of commitment or activity in political affairs. G.I.'s who had dominated the campus after the war were graduating. The opportunity for higher education was reaching more segments of the population. The G.I. Bill had broken the barrier; college was no longer only for the wealthy or elite. Parents of all economic levels were sending their children to college. Universities, particularly the state institutions, expanded and enlarged.⁵

By the mid-1950's, trends were developing that were to have their greatest impact in the following decade. A large number of institutions started to pursue academic excellence and advanced

³Richard Hofstadter and Wilson Smith (eds.), American Higher Education, A Documentary History, II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 970.

⁴The Assembly on University Goals and Governance, op. cit., p. 39.

⁵Calvin B. T. Lee, The Campus Scene, 1900-1970 (New York: David McKay Company, 1970), pp. 88-91.

graduate study as their major objectives. Federal agencies made the decision to support scientific and research efforts, providing incentives and income on a new scale. At the state level, states that had long supported higher education made new and larger state appropriations. Other states with records of modest support developed new interests in higher education. At this same time of government support, many of the established colleges and universities became quite selective in their admission requirements. Admissions to many colleges and universities were very scarce and competition for them was intense. Also the cost of education per student rose rapidly and tuition cost, which was fairly stable for a generation, started to rise.⁶

In 1957, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik. In time, the role of the federal government was to take on even greater importance in higher education.

THE 1960's

By 1960, it was estimated that between 1.5 and 2 billion dollars of federal money was flowing to colleges and universities annually. After 1957, 25 percent of the construction cost on campuses was paid from funds borrowed from the federal government. Also by 1960, 20 percent of the operating income of the colleges and universities was being provided by federal money. University research was becoming a major business of the federal government as it paid for 70 percent of all university research. Thus, the government was very much in the activity

⁶The Assembly on University Goals and Governance, op. cit., pp. 39-40.

of supporting education, and its commitment would continue to grow. It would grow because an accelerating scientific revolution would not let it do otherwise, and it would continue to grow because the reduction of the effect of time and distance had eliminated the parochialism maintaining the concept of local support. Finally, it would grow because there was no other agency willing or able to underwrite the financing and the cost of education for over half of the students in higher education.⁷ This federal support, along with high tuition income, generous individual and corporate giving, plus state support, was creating a basis for a physical and psychological expansion that put in the background everything that had previously happened.⁸

However, other types of activity were taking shape in the 1960's in addition to the involvement of federal money in higher education.

In 1959, Clark Kerr prophesied about the students of the 1960's:

I can see . . . that they are not going to press many grievances . . . they are going to do their jobs, they are going to be easy to handle. There aren't going to be riots. There aren't going to be revolutions. There aren't going to be many strikes.⁹

As it is now known, Kerr was wrong. No educator in his wildest thoughts would have guessed what the 1960's would bring to Berkeley, California, in specific or to American higher education in general. It was in 1964 at Berkeley that students registered the first major negative verdict on a greatly expanded academic enterprise. There were many

⁷ Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University: A History (New York: Random House, Inc., 1962), p. 490.

⁸ The Assembly on University Goals and Governance, loc. cit.

⁹ Lee, op. cit., p. 108.

reasons given for this particular student uprising, but there was little agreement on what the students were really trying to say. Before the end of the decade, student uprisings would take place at hundreds of campuses. Some evidence does suggest that many students were disappointed in their instruction because they thought it was irrelevant to their needs. Also, many students resented what they believed were unnecessary pressures of academic life.¹⁰

The 1960's brought to the American colleges and universities commitment, involvement, relevance and drugs. It brought student evaluation of professors, student involvement in the decision-making process, and the partial end of credit for R.O.T.C. programs. There were also mass take overs of classrooms, administrative offices, and computer centers; fires in student unions and libraries; clashes with police; and outright confrontations with the National Guard. Skirmishes with the National Guard culminated in the terrible events at Kent State and later at Jackson State. A large backlash developed regarding higher educational support by state legislators, members of Congress, the courts, the general public, parents, alumni, and administrators. The 1960's saw cynicism and disgust with the war, the draft, the System, and a greater appreciation of the value and worth of human existence in modern society. The student body was a larger and smarter student body than ever before. There were students who questioned the values on which the academic community was built, its structure, and even its basic rationale for continuing.¹¹

¹⁰The Assembly on University Goals and Governance, op. cit., pp. 40-41.

¹¹Lee, op. cit., pp. 108-109.

As the 1960's saw the reality of travel to the moon, the 1960's also created in the minds of young people a questioning of human values. As society sent its children to college, the idea of the necessity to finish college in order to get a good job was weakened and the questioning of the moral values of our society was strengthened. Even though we had accomplished triumphs such as the moon landing, there were also tragedies - the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Robert Kennedy. The college students of the 1960's drove administrators, faculties, state legislatures, Congress, and even the President of the United States to the point of distraction with the chaos, bloodshed, and disruption on the campuses. The students refused to conform and in general seemed totally uncontrollable.¹²

An interesting paradox in American society was pointed out in 1968.

On the one hand, we are a nation which sees itself as racked and divided over problems of poverty, riots, race, slums, unemployment, and crime. On the other hand, we are a nation which is clearly enjoying high prosperity, rapid economic growth, and a steady diffusion of affluence at a rate almost unimaginable a decade ago. [Although the economic goals of the sixties, steady prosperity and faster growth, have been achieved,] yet, today, the mood of the nation is more troubled, and our internal problems seem more stubborn and incurable than was the case a decade ago.¹³

In 1968 in an address entitled "Agenda for the Colleges and Universities," given to a California Conference on Higher Education, John W. Gardner identified what he considered to be the major problems facing higher education. One problem area reviewed was the declination

¹²Lee, Ibid., p. 109.

¹³Kermit Gordon (ed.), Agenda for the Nation (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1968), p. 5.

of quality teaching. He felt that of the three functions of a university, teaching, research, and service, teaching was being slighted, particularly the teaching of undergraduates. A second area reviewed was that of the academic curriculum which had now become less effective. He felt higher education must undergo a thorough reform of the academic curriculum. This area would require a searching reevaluation of the aims of education in each field. Gardner cited the lack of institutional planning as another problem area. He felt that to be adequately prepared for the students of the 1970's, administrators must perform better planning within institutions and better planning on a statewide level with an attentiveness to the costs of education never exhibited in the past. Gardner also identified four other areas of concern to higher education: an examination of the academic calendar and the four-year pattern for a degree, finding ways to allow the small liberal-arts colleges to continue as an important function of higher education, more consideration given to continuing education and off-campus instruction, and the challenges of providing higher educational services to the community.¹⁴

As the 1960's ended, college students sensed the complexity of the life around them. They searched hard for meaning in their lives. Thus, as higher education entered the decade of the 1970's, it was faced with a host of unprecedented challenges.

The forces challenging higher education were most visible with students demonstrating about such social issues as war, poverty, race, and academic government representation. Less visible forces such as faculty unionism, money shortages, rights and responsibilities of civil

¹⁴Alvin C. Eurich, (ed.), Campus 1980 (New York: Delacorte Press, 1968), pp. 1-5.

versus campus authorities, and legislative concern contributed to an atmosphere of strain and urgency on nearly every campus in the United States. Traditional modes of authority and institutional leadership were being challenged causing uncertainty, alarm and confusion for many educators and policymakers. An end result was that many colleges and universities found themselves in situations where, in order to cope and survive, change was not only inevitable but mandatory.¹⁵

CONCERN FOR CHANGE AND REFORM

Because of the existence of problems and forces challenging higher education in the late 1960's, it was with some relief that various groups were addressing themselves in the early 1970's toward solutions of the problems. Within the first two years of the 1970-1980 decade, five publications were released which, along with identifying problem areas, cited specific recommendations for change and reform in higher education.

In January, 1971, The Assembly on University Goals and Governance sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences presented its "85 Theses" designed to stimulate educational reform in nearly all areas of higher education. Some of the "85 Theses" are as follows:

1. Opportunities for disadvantaged students of all sorts should be greatly increased and joined with programs designed to make up for earlier neglect.
2. Colleges and universities should admit greater numbers of

¹⁵ Ernest G. Palola and William Podgett, Planning for Self-Renewal (Berkeley Center for Research and Development in Higher Education, 1971), p. 1.

women to graduate and professional schools, and make special provisions for their needs. They should demonstrate their willingness to hire women at every teaching, research, administrative, and staff level.

3. Higher education should not be reserved for young adults between the ages of 17 and 24, but should be open to people of all ages.

4. New paths to employment and status should be developed so that the involuntariness of attendance will end. New kinds of institutions should be established to appeal to those who are not attracted to an academic environment.

5. A deferred-payment program covering tuition and other fees and room and board should be made available for any student capable of doing college or university work.

6. National and institutional examinations should be further developed to enable students who lack a bachelor's degree to go directly into advanced graduate or professional study.

7. Colleges and universities should seek to attract men and women from fields other than academic to teaching positions.

8. Tenure should be maintained as a guarantor of academic freedom against political and other pressures, but means should be developed to allow for early departure of faculty members making little contributions.

9. General education which is in retreat needs reformulation. Faculty members should define alternative forms of what general education should be and how students should be encouraged to explore them.

10. Colleges and universities must develop far greater knowledge about higher education itself.

11. Difficult as it is politically to favor some institutions rather than others, selective support, public and private, is essential.¹⁶

Also in January, 1971, the Carnegie Commission released its report entitled Less Time, More Options: Education Beyond High School.

This report examined and made recommendations concerning the general flow of students into and through the structure of higher education.

Some of the major proposals are as follows:

1. The length of time spent in undergraduate college education should be reduced roughly by one-fourth. This may be done without sacrificing educational quality.

2. Young people should be given more options in lieu of formal college, to defer college attendance, to stop out from college in order to get service and work experience, and to change directions while in college.

3. Opportunities for higher education and the degrees it affords should be available to persons throughout their lifetimes and not just immediately after high school.

4. New degrees, particularly the Master of Philosophy and the Doctor of Arts, should be greatly extended in their use to meet the needs of students and to fit the requirements of their subsequent employments.

5. There should be four generally accepted degree levels (now many institutions use only two, the B.A. and Ph.D.) to reduce the dropout rate and to create more points for reassessment of his college

¹⁶"Scholars Call for Rethinking of Academic Goals", The Chronicle of Higher Education, January 18, 1971, p. 1.

career by the student and of the student by the campus. These four levels should be: A.A., B.A., M.Phil., and D.A. (and Ph.D.).

6. The emphasis on certification through formal higher education should be reduced. Certificates, where necessary, should be broad, rather than narrow in their coverage.

7. More educational, and thus, career, opportunities should be available to all those who wish to study part-time or return to study later in life, particularly women and older persons.¹⁷

Not only did Less Time, More Options make specific recommendations, it identified new developments having a significant impact on higher education. One development identified was that many more young people now attend college. In 1900, four percent of the college-age group went to college; in 1970, forty percent attended. Other developments identified included the following. Young people today are of many more levels of academic ability and academic preparation than in earlier times. Also, they are from many more cultural backgrounds and have more diverse career goals. Much more of education takes place before college, outside of college, and after college than ever before. The schools, including high schools, have improved their quality since World War II and can improve still more as much of the last year of high school is wasted for those already admitted to college. Many students are one year farther advanced, academically, than their age group was at the end of World War II. The first year of college is often largely wasted for students with a better general background than which the colleges earlier adjusted. In addition, jobs have changed. Rather than

¹⁷Less Time, More Options: Education Beyond the High School, op. cit., pp. 1-2.