

Address to the Faculty on Curriculum Change

Part Two
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I would like to turn to the problem of the historical perspective. To me the historical perspective has been grossly neglected recently. The late sixties in particular led us toward abandoning the past for contemporary and relevant studies, the BHTC reading matter being a case in point. History, in its larger significance, is much too important and complex to leave to teachers of history or to the one history course students may or may not take. History tells us where we have been and thereby suggests where we are, and perhaps what we can expect of ourselves. Young people cannot be expected to know much history, nor, from the way it is usually taught in high school, care for it much. History may be the passion of the middle-aged who are trying to get themselves found a bit more, but the loss of historical perspectives is a disaster.

If anything characterized the rebellion of the late sixties, it was a total lack of knowledge of the past, and consequently a total lack of understanding of the present or of the possibilities of the future. We need geological history, technological-scientific history, political history, anthropological and social history, but most of all we need cultural and intellectual history. The burden of this need is on all of us. None of us individually can begin to provide more than a bit of the picture, but if we

do not make a serious effort the larger picture will never come together.

Without going into it, the same principle applies to What Am I? What can I believe? And How should I act? These are the matters which make the glue that sticks us together as a culture. It is in our handling of these matters as much as in any specialized knowledge that we will find our survival as a culture.

To know where we are involves, additionally, an understanding of our social and physical environments. But not just the facts. Our business is to offer facts, but then to ask questions and to suggest implications. In *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, Dylan Thomas speaks of the toys of Christmas, the useful toys and the useless toys. Among the useful toys is a book about wasps which told everything anyone wanted to know about wasps, but "why?" To the extent that we can with reason do so, we should all speak to the "why's".

It seems to me that the implicit question which the curriculum committee has been asked to deal with and which we are all to consider today and through the year is: should we have a program? That we do not now have anything which is that self-conscious or formalized is a conclusion to which, I think, we have all come. We have the very next thing to free choice in what we as teachers can include in the distribution

requirement area and in what students can take. At the moment the curriculum committee has no bases for admitting or denying any course to the list of distribution courses. In many cases departments do not consult the committee, and when they do so the committee nods gravely and bows to the expertise and opinions of the department involved.

Our present flexibility, which is a good word, suggesting liberality, came about partly from pressure within the faculty and partly from student pressure. In actual fact, flexibility is a desirable quality. We should preserve it. I don't think we want to move to the sort of rigidity we had when I came which involved a grand and elaborate scheme which had as the apex and crown of studies an introductory course in philosophy taken in the senior year. Yet, there were advantages to that system. Once a student had finished a year, you could make assumptions that he had been exposed to certain areas, questions, and figures. Now we can assume no common reading matter or questions but those of BHTC 101. You cannot build much on that little.

I suggest that we should consider ways of constructing a program which has a desirable degree of flexibility but which promotes a common goal and involves common processes. Some will question the concept of a program, or if not the concept at least the institution of any particular

one. We had an unfortunate row on this subject several years ago which there is no point in dismissing from our memories. The question simply is: Can we, the faculty in its general consensus and can the curriculum committee, in its examination of particulars, decide that a program is a desirable thing to institute and that it will contain guidelines for courses which might be proposed as part of the distribution requirement?

Although the practice at each point would be difficult, and perhaps beyond our energy and wills, the principle is one we MUST reconsider. It is the principal question we must debate, or at least the first one. Until we have a decision about whether we are willing to submit to the guidelines of a program, we cannot do much more than make political and economic decisions. Those practical elements will have to be a part of our decision-making, but if they remain primary as they were on the last go-around of curriculum change, we will remain as an institution in the intellectual woods, squeaking occasionally about the liberal arts.

If we are to consider developing a program we may want to give thought to further characteristics which a good program might embody. The point of a program ought to be to arrive at educational goals. Certainly one of the goals assumed by most programs of any sort is that of progress. As an institution we represent a stage in intellectual progress, the final one of formal study for most students. Within the college we assume that a student will develop a variety of skills, although we seldom name these publically. The assumption of progress is built into most of our major programs. When students do not progress within major fields of study we may become keenly aware of this and regard it as a shortcoming. If progress in the skills of thought and communication are an inherent feature of our educational system and expectations, we should perhaps consider whether at present such progress, or development, currently occurs at a desirable rate, particularly within studies outside of the major and so outside of any control we currently have. If it does not, we may wish to consider methods by which we can do more to assure such development.

When I consider our

situation I am forced to a variety of impressionistic and personal judgments. We do not have much institutional research on the matter of progress. But my impression, and that of many others, is that far too many of our students operate through their last three years on what might be generally described as a sophomore level, perhaps not in their majors but certainly elsewhere. Cyril Harvey feels this to be the case, and Bruce Stewart voices that opinion. It would be time consuming, but not essentially difficult, to do a sample study of how juniors and seniors fill their related area requirements, their distribution requirements, and elective choices. What I believe we would discover is that many students outside of their major work, where possible, limit their courses to what we might call introductory studies, courses in which the intellectual assumptions and significant writing assignments are likely to be minimal.

If we are to develop a program, we might wish to investigate ways in which we could assure ourselves that students grow intellectually in some sustained fashion outside of their majors. Each department might want to consider a general review of the actual practices it follows in handling its related field requirements. In the non-technical majors, many students accumulate their related area lists for Floyd Reynold's graduation form with no plan whatsoever for developing and growing, or even for relating. There are other ways in which we could move in the direction of increasing advanced studies. For instance, we could make a serious effort to classify our courses by number, and then attempt to teach them appropriately, so that a 300 level course expected sophisticated skills and serious intellectual experience. Students could be required to take at least two courses in their related area at the 300 level and one 300 level course in an elective field. I am not proposing any particular number of junior-senior level courses, but only the idea. The present BHTC 401 program is a deliberate move in such a direction. We should learn a good deal from that program. One of the things I suspect we will learn is that many fourth year students are weak in thinking and writing, the primary skills of a general, liberal arts college education.

Informal Musicales Returns Sunday

The Sunday Afternoon Musicales will return to Guilford College at 4:00 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 13, in the choir room of Dana Auditorium.

The public is invited free of charge to attend the informal, one-hour program arranged by Ed Lowe of the Guilford College music faculty.

Featured will be Lucy and Henry Ingram, who will play a program of four-hand piano music, and cello soloist Gayle Masarie, accompanied by Patricia Williams at the piano.

"The musicale is being held at the time of day before the evening meal, at the time families look forward to being together," Lowe said. "We invite everyone to come on campus earlier to walk around and enjoy the natural beauty, and then gather in the choir

room to be entertained for just an hour by the fine arts."

Lucy and Henry Ingram are both graduates of the Eastern School of Music in Rochester, N.Y., where they studied with the distinguished Cuban pianist, Jose Echariz.

They came to Greensboro in 1958 when Dr. Ingram began teaching at Greensboro College. Mrs. Ingram teaches privately at home and in the Kindermusik program at Christ Methodist Church. They will play music by Poulenc, Mozart and Schubert.

Gayle Masarie has soloed with orchestras in New York, Michigan, Ohio, North Carolina and most recently with the Elon College Orchestra.

She has taught in several universities including the University of North Carolina in Greensboro and Chapel

Hill. Ms. Masarie will play Suite Italienne (1932) by Igor Stravinsky.

Patricia Williams, who will accompany Ms. Masarie on the piano, is instrumental music teacher at Greensboro Day School.

She holds degrees from Indiana University School of Music and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Ed Lowe, a native of Panama, left Bennett College to teach at Southern University at Baton Rouge before returning in 1972 to become director of music programs at Guilford College.

Lowe also presents two musical programs each Sunday morning on WQMG-FM and a program of opera on the station each month.