

Complex Pattern Of Daily Life Ushers In A New Type Of College

Editor's Note—Dr. William H. Brown received his Ph.D. from Ohio State University. He is currently serving as a member of the Interim Committee.

This is a time of question for both America's old citizens and young citizens. Sharp changes in public policy, in the economic life of the nation, and in the national goals of our society generally have literally forced colleges to become something quite different from what they were in the past. While the transition is not yet complete, one can be reasonably certain that the purpose and pattern of the emerging college will be excitingly new. Transitions of all sorts can be confusing to many and utterly frustrating to some, therefore, a look at what colleges are becoming is in order.

Once a place where a relatively small number of students with some affluence went in search of knowledge and a social gateway of opportunity through status, the college is becoming a gateway of opportunity through which a multitude of rich and poor students pass in search both for knowledge and of ways of using knowledge. This new combination of knowing and using is packed with power for immediate and future use. In this sense, college is becoming a place where people can, with serious application, gain the power to defend themselves against exploitations, to free themselves and others from drudgery and economic insecurity, to achieve in a competitive society, to win, manage, or control the minds of men, to attract a mate, and to accomplish a wide variety of purposes. One must choose wisely his purposes for going to college, if he is to avoid disappointment and frustration.

College is becoming a place where success is determined by what one is able to do as well or better than the other fellow in a competitive society. Colleges are becoming more demanding, more impersonal, and more rigorous in response to society's demand for a more complacent graduate. The college teacher appreciates an unpolished apple as a gesture of friendship, yet he tends to regard only those students bringing well-conceived ideas and evidences of serious study. He knows that the student who expects little of himself, who puts forth little effort, who is indifferent, and who is absorbed in trivial matters is doomed to fail at the bar of competence. Those whose expectations are high and whose work is systematic and steady can emerge into a world where rewards are highest for persons of competence and maturity. To some, college seems merciless and severe; but those who have looked searchingly at the pattern of the new society know that colleges must simply be brutally realistic. The day of preferential treatment, based on excuses for lack of achievement because of race, poor background, or late blooming will soon be lost in the dim past.

In many ways, the current college population is better prepared than that of past generation. They can play for, and win, higher stakes in political, social, economic, and educational arenas. Perhaps no one can ignore the value of the gift of the present generation to future

generations — made through courageous social action movements. The accomplishments of youth is a tribute to the growing and untiring efforts of parents and schools to produce a generation of articulate, stimulated, and enterprising students. Actually, fewer and fewer students are continuing to pay dearly for an education only to walk out and leave their purchase on the counter. Colleges promise to be a place of great excitement, social pioneering, and opportunity, as they, and their students, face the grim but challenging realities of a new multi-colored society. WHAT IS A COLLEGE? Each person must decide what it shall be for himself.

College Means

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After graduation, the persistence of college-inspired motivations and orientations both depend upon the individual and the situation interacting one with the other.

Simple exhortations to maximize the possibilities of the four college years are insufficient. Between the natural tendency toward rebellion characteristic of the young and the social and cultural anemia of most Negro student, the college faculty has the most difficult job and the great responsibility for stimulating awareness of the true possibilities of these critical years. Members of a good faculty have at least glimpsed a portion of the wider world. It is their responsibility to be extraordinarily solicitous of their new sojourners.

Students likewise have a responsibility; they must learn, with the help of their teachers, to listen, to inquire, to truly search for what a good college may have to offer. After all, education at a college is for the students, the teachers being essentially guides and mentors. If a student does nothing at college, college can do nothing for him.

A good college fully activates the implied reciprocity between the teachers and the taught, hopefully to the mutual satisfaction of both. The word college embraces both faculty and students; hence all are participants in a common enterprise—that of learning. The students, however, have the greater stake in the outcome of the endeavor, for theirs are the lives which are being molded.



Every college has its gathering place. For NCC it is the much celebrated "rail."

Development Of Habits Is Finest Test Of A College

Editor's Note — Dr. Joseph Pittman, a member of the faculty since 1947, is the Dean of the Undergraduate School. Dr. Pittman has done post-doctoral work at Rutgers University and Iowa State University.

I think a good college is a place where one goes not so much for acquiring knowledge as for the development of habits. A college is not a dispensary of knowledge to be compared with stores for the sale of intoxicating liquors, i. e., a place where the customer enters and obtains the brand and amount of knowledge to suit his taste. Moreover, good colleges are not engaged in a

regurgitation of that knowledge on cue, and 3) nothing more. But even these students, let us hope, develop without conscious effort on their part some of the habits characteristic of educated men and women.

Perhaps the most important habit which a good college aids the learner in developing is the "habit of attention." Only through practice and experience in diverse situations can one learn to clear his mind at a moment's notice of distracting influences; to devote his intellectual powers almost completely to the elements of a discussion, a problem or a musical

the part of students is unavoidable. Those who develop this habit to a satisfactory degree survive; those who do not are expelled for poor scholarship.

I submit that one would have considerable difficulty defending a hierarchy of habits characteristic of educated men and women. However, with the temerity of a successful college teacher who accepted a deanship in these perilous times, I place second in importance the "habit of making effective use of language." In my opinion, effective use of language and reasoning ability are inextricably connected. The statement that a good college facilitates the development of ability to reason on the part of students subsumes the "habit of making effective use of language."

To further indicate my willingness to live dangerously, I place third in importance the "habit of submitting to refutation." It is always a pleasure for me to observe a person very quickly assume a new intellectual position, grasp another person's thoughts, indicate assent or dissent with soundly conceived reservations. An educated person depends upon the reasonableness of his ideas to gain acceptance for them. These are examples of intellectual behavior which characterizes the person who has developed the "habit of submitting to refutation." The environment of a good college encourages and nurtures the development of this habit.

In a very broad sense, life in the community designated as a college should not differ markedly from life in the larger community. A college is a structured environment in which optimum permissiveness is not only allowed but encouraged. The faculty, staff and administrators of a good college realize that all students have problems and are sensitive to the signals given by normal students that their problems are temporarily overwhelming them. But a good college does not attempt to stand "in loco parentis." Instead, it assists each student in developing the "habit of working out his own problems." I think the "habit of working out his own problems" is very important because I believe that man is a rational being and, if given the opportunity, will organize his life in his own best interest and in the best interest of other men.

If space permitted, I would discuss other important habits including "the habit of submitting to censure," "the habit of following a work-study schedule," and "the habit of working out what is possible in a given time." It seems to me, however, that I have made the point I wish to make in this essay. I repeat that a good college is a place where one goes not so much for knowledge as for habits. Conceivably, a student may obtain a degree without developing these habits to any appreciable extent. But without developing these habits to a marked extent, a student could never become the kind of individual envisioned by those who wrote the motto: Truth and Service.



"I really 'dig' Professor Higgins."

process of storing knowledge in the minds of learners in a manner similar to the programmer storing knowledge in the memory chamber of a computer. It is true that the behavior of many students gives us as teachers the impression that they regard the educational process as including 1) the acquisition of tid-bits of knowledge, 2) the

presentation; to close the door, so to speak, to the numerous matters militating for a central place in his thoughts; or to rivet his attention to a single problem for a period of time necessary for significant progress, however long that period may be. A good college is a place where the development of the "habit of attention" on

College An Agency

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inherited from one generation to the next, but they are a part of the heritage of the everlasting

ing history that was once lived and finally recorded by the people of the agency of democracy that is dedicated to the task of training the highest faculties of the intellect of mankind.

This is a college.

I wish some one would give a course in how to live. It can't be taught in the colleges: that's perfectly obvious, for college professors don't know any better than the rest of us.

—A. EDWARD NEWTON