

## FOR THE SMALL COLLEGE

by Morris Keeton  
(Academic Vice President of  
Antioch College)

more distinctive—to decide what they want to do and can manage well, and what they should leave to someone else.

THE second major recommendation is two-pronged: Colleges should first prepare to serve a greater variety of students than they do now, and then they should thrust greater responsibilities upon these students. Recent studies show that what we measure as "intelligence" can be raised with appropriate educational opportunity for both normal and exceptional children and youth. The array of talents viewed as worth cultivating will increase. High school dropouts may have high verbal intelligence that is not measurable on today's scholastic aptitude tests. Students who are not verbal may have much-needed artistic, mechanical, and intuitive abilities that amount to alternative modes of intelligence. The rising affluence and know-how of our society will make it possible for us to cultivate these students. Already federal legislation provides measures to remove inequities in educational opportunity for "handicapped children," children of poverty, and other categories. All these trends combine to produce students who have more varied talents and backgrounds than those we are now educating, and who require diverse educational programs.

If we bring together these trends, symptomatic of important human needs, with the meaning of liberal education, a major new level of educational opportunity emerges. A liberal education not only aims at self-knowledge and an appreciation and knowledge of one's heritage. It also aims to *cultivate* self and culture. This cultivation means not merely preserving the best of the past, but also criticizing and transforming both self and culture to achieve still better possibilities. In the past, most colleges have been far too protective—both of students and of traditional institutions and practices—for this fundamental part of liberal education to be well served. We ought to give greater responsibilities to students in those matters over which the college itself has control—teaching, research, and some kinds of public service.

Of course, given substantial freedom, students can make ridiculous, sometimes even destructive, choices, for they are novices in freedom; they lack the vested interests which make their elders more cautious. If, therefore, students are to learn through participation in college governance, enormous time must be set aside for student-faculty-administration

deliberations. If the appropriate time and talent are invested, the return can be handsome; but if not, it would be better never to make the gesture. A pattern of student-initiated courses can be chaotic or creative, and sometimes both. Students can confuse responsible freedom with making the campus and dormitories a kind of legal sanctuary in which self-destructive and socially harmful practices take root. Or they can use that freedom to achieve a quality of community that no corps of deans could impose. Colleges will struggle to learn how to get this result. They may be tempted to offer students the sop of student government with much fanfare and little substantive responsibility. This arrangement is one that has already had its day and failed. Students can and should take greater responsibilities.

Undergraduate education in the past has been more indoctrination than inquiry. Youthful exuberance has been drained off in such minor destructiveness as spring riots and painting the founder's statue. If ever this energy is turned predominantly toward intellectual discovery, it is sure to bruise more deeply the proprieties and the consciences of both professors and the public. As a society we have not been sufficiently mature to bear more than a few Harvards and Berkeleys, Reeds and Swarthmores. In the coming century, however, the costs of racism, parochialism, and Nationalism will be too heavy and too immediate to go unchallenged; students can be effective allies in pressing the challenge as an integral part of their own education if colleges can provide the essential leadership.

The homogenized faculty and the one-track system of faculty careers are also on the route of the dodo and the dinosaur. The strong college of the future will not frown on faculty who consult for the Government, take research leaves, and run up monstrous long-distance telephone bills. The explosion of knowledge has outdated faculties whose numbers, teaching loads, and style of life are those of the typical contemporary college. In many a small college, a professor teaches four or five different courses each semester, but serves only a few students in each course. He is thus both overworked and underproductive. Whereas a well managed clinic may have seven supporting staff members (secretary, technicians, nurses, etc.) for three doctors, even an "affluent" college will have an average of less than one such

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relevance of their fields, he is not only illiberally educated, he is a poorly equipped specialist.

But the network idea is no cure-all. It creates hard choices for the colleges themselves. Every link that a college establishes with a place off campus costs money and talent. Anyone who has sent students to Sierra Leone or the National Institutes of Health, or even to the college or university in the next county, knows what an appalling amount of planning and managing it takes. A college could easily go bankrupt if it sets up off-campus programs promiscuously. It must choose. And every time a college chooses one link rather than another, it defines its own character.

A college, for example, might emphasize collaboration with research institutes, sending students to Oak Ridge or the Argonne Laboratories or Ohio State or Dow Chemical and thus developing a high-powered program of professional preparation in the sciences. Or a college might develop a number of links with a foreign country, as Earlham College is doing with Japan. Or it could develop associations with a city, as Antioch is beginning to do with Washington and Philadelphia. But a college cannot do all of these things at once. It will have to decide what traffic within the network will be most appropriate to its students and its mission, and what arrangements will better the ratio of educational benefit to cost. Colleges will have to become