

A Proposal: The Experimental College

By Dr. S. Suri

A well-known scientist recently said: "The creative personality thinks of the world as fit for change and of himself as instrument of the change." The situation today is somewhat different, for the world is changing rapidly. The need is for the persons who accept the changing world as challenge and opportunity for their and others' creative self-unfolding.

This proposal is motivated by the conviction that higher education in the U. S. A. and elsewhere must be a catalyst in this process.

With this in view, it is proposed to hold an experimental semester of about 8 weeks in July-August this year. It will have some fifty participants, including five or six professors. The campus of some small college that is free during the summer will be used. The semester will be an initial step toward the development of an experiment-oriented college.

Concretely, the aim is to develop a community of learning, self-regulating and self-determining; to stimulate the growth of creative persons responsive to the possibilities of the world caught in the toils of dramatic changes.

Participants: Some leading scholars, including philosophers, anthropologists, educationists, have indicated their willingness to cooperate. Students who have heard of the proposal have shown striking enthusiasm.

Participants will be drawn from all over the U. S. A. Individuals from abroad who are studying or teaching in the U. S. A. will be eligible.

Criteria for inclusion will be keenness to participate in the program and capacity to benefit from and contribute to its activities. Openness to educational and intellectual adventure rather than grade averages will be the main consideration.

The Program of the experimental semester is oriented to intermeshing the creative potentialities and processes of the participants individually and as members of a community with the challenges that face us in all directions.

Seminar-workshops will be organized around three basic themes. First, the socio-dynamic of the emerging world community. It may be called world civilization in the making and comprises a world-wide economy, the international political network, and an all-encompassing technological revolution.

The second theme is the crisis of individual self-identity and in the meaning of group memberships (community, race, nation).

Third, the state of religious beliefs or of any other kind of faith, or lack of faith. This theme may be called the "world religious situation" - - as it really is in the minds and hearts of individuals and groups.

Seminar-workshops will explore and develop these themes. These will be augmented by other activities such as filming, acting, writing, singing, painting and, of course, many bull sessions. Lecture discussions will be organized on "frontiers of knowledge" that will include discussions of new hypotheses and theories.

Hypotheses to be tested: Is the community of scholars meeting in an atmosphere of freedom and working through relatively unstructured seminar-workshops a successful means for the growth of creative individuals and for generating creative ideas?

Are the three basic themes posed here for discussion during the experimental semester such as to evoke the genuine enthusiasm and intellectual energy of the participants? Would the themes prove in fact to be central in the "crisis of our time?"

Evaluation: The group will be largely self-evaluating. Each participant will be requested to write a brief weekly report on her or his activities or observations, and a more inclusive report to be turned in before the end of the semester. Participating professors will also write similar reports. Papers written by the participants, the pictures painted or artifacts created by them will be included. There may be a "public" diary.

The organizing director, with the cooperation of some participants, will prepare the overall evaluation. It will cover the different foci of activities in the seminar, evaluate it as an experiment in educational methodology, and draw lessons for higher education in general and for the proposed College of the Future in particular.

Costs: Total expenses are estimated to run between \$75,000 and \$100,000. The immediate need is \$5,000 for the preparatory arrangements.

In conclusion, central to the enterprise is the assumption that the present and impending crises in our society, or



those facing the individual and mankind generally, are not simply problems out there that may be solved in a clinical manner. These are human crises to be overcome by the individual's growth toward greater creativity.



LIBRARIES DECLARE FREE BOOK RETURN DAY

Friday, March 22, has been declared a free book return day by Guilford College Libraries. Both the Downtown Campus Library will assess no fines for books returned to either library on that day. Any book, whether it has been taken from the libraries legally or illegally may be returned during this day of amnesty without any questions asked.

