

Educational reform brings change

(Editor's note: The problem with education in Chapel Hill is that too few people are concerned about improving it. Educational reform is not the responsibility of just the Chancellor's Advisory Committee on Teaching and Curriculum. Its burden does not fall solely on the faculty or on the Office of Experimental Studies.)

The quality and quantity of educational opportunities will only improve as more and more students seek and demand them. The demands met by this University are the demands voiced most loudly, persistently and persuasively by the academic community.

People need to be more aware of the need for educational reform and its possibilities. Like a bucket of cold water in the face, it hopes to awaken and stimulate, to provoke thought, commitment and maybe even action.

Only a few aspects of educational reform are touched on here. There are countless others that need to be explored, analyzed and worked on.)

At Fordham University, students and faculty live and study together as long as mutual interest in areas of common concern remain alive. Every academic undertaking is an ad hoc arrangement and there are no grades, credits or degree requirements as such.

At Callison College of the University of the Pacific, each student spends his sophomore year in India to experience the shock of cultural clash.

With the frontier long closed and with the population and degree of technicality increasing, America is now faced with what perhaps may become its greatest challenge: keeping itself busy.

Within thirty years, industry's work week will be substantially shorter. A twenty or thirty hour week will not be an uncommon contract stipulation. The mandatory retirement age will be reduced to somewhere between forty-five or fifty years of age. Vacation time will be increased. Benefits, social security, welfare—all these will be bolstered. Where is this leading us?

Obviously the first conclusion is that more and more people are being and will be paid not to work. It is also not too far-fetched to predict that sometime in the future those people who do not want to enter the labor force will be paid not to. The government has been paying farmers for a number of years now to plant certain crops in order to keep those crops' market value up.

Likewise, industry and government may in the near future decide that in order to maintain a certain quality of work and a certain minimum productivity rate, the best course will be truly to pay people not to work. It may be the only alternative.

It may become the only alternative because with population increasing and with technology also continuing to rapidly advance, there will be, relatively speaking, fewer jobs for a greater number of people. In the future there will not be enough jobs for everybody who needs one; yet, if a technical society can be created, there should not be.

Already today, because we have created "jobs" in order to fulfill union contracts or to maintain a level close to maximum employment, many jobs are intrinsically valueless. This not only frustrates the individual, but also hinders the productivity of the industry.

In any event, citizens of the U.S. will in the next thirty years have an ever increasing amount of free time. Within those years it will also become the U.S.'s greatest problem. If a man retires in 2000 at the age of 54, he will probably be expected to live another forty years.

been set aside for par land will be too crowded to enjoy.

Having made and accepted these conclusions, the chief way man will then be able to justify or satisfy himself is in the pursuit of knowledge. Golf or tennis and a casual glance at "Newsweek" will not suffice to fulfill the long hours of idleness.

However, by suggesting that the answer to what may become America's greatest problem is the pursuit of knowledge for the sake of one's own curiosity and self-satisfaction is also to suggest a major change in American life and culture. Certainly, this is true; however, compared to the change in structure and philosophy that will occur when people are paid not to work, it will only seem natural.

Work has been and is the foundation of the American system. Without it a whole new set of standards—economic, social, political—will all have to be established. No longer will one be able to look at a man's job and determine many of his political views, his social standing, or his economic base. This is the change that will truly revolutionize the United States.

Education, if it wants to remain relevant to the needs of the nation, will also have to undergo a tremendous revolution. It will no longer be able to operate as a finite sixteen year package that the student buys and resells through the labor market. Instead of pointing towards training the student for a job, education will have to be restructured and redefined as not a finite experience, but an infinite experience that becomes the means not to a definite end, but to a continuous search and attainment of knowledge and self-satisfaction.

If, in the future, education accepts this redefinition, the university will become the center of American life. It of course will not be the university as we think of it today.

The great libraries and the centralization of scholars will be the same, but instead of being a packaged unit, the university will be open and free. One professor described it as a "library system" where the student will come to the university and take from it what knowledge he feels that he needs. It will operate entirely on a self-orientated, self-initiated format that is directed towards self-justification and self-satisfaction.

For the majority of people, it is America's greatest hope. The university, by becoming open to everyone, will not only assure a free flow of personnel, and consequently, ideas, to and from industry and government; but for those out of work it will assure a means to satisfaction and justification as well as offer a never-ending task.



Class coordinator Skip McGaughey fields questions from his Political Science 95A class. Small seminars, flexible class attendance and grading scale and the reliance on

controversial speakers such as Rennie Davis and Jane Fonda have made this Contemporary Affairs course one of the most popular on campus.

Project Hinton one step toward educational reform

Educational reformers' first task is to clarify the aim of education. John Dewey once said that education is life itself, not preparation for life. Since life is not calm, the university's purpose must not be to run smoothly. Since life is pushing and pulling, the university must constantly change, grow and search for answers.

The university must be lifelike, a place where ideas are tried. If they fail, they are analyzed and tried again. The university must be an atmosphere inspiring creativity. It must be a community lending support to its struggling members.

This sense of community is achieved in large universities through smaller units within the whole. Project Hinton is one of these smaller units. It evolved from the current national movement to form independent clusters within the larger university. A residential college experiment to improve

dormitory life, the Project is a coeducational community on the ninth and tenth floors of South Campus' Hinton James dormitory. The experiment was designed to include an academic program and has evolved into a new, exciting academic community.

Project Hinton's academic emphasis is the mutual effort of students seeking an academic experience outside the classroom and faculty fellows fighting the crisis of classroom ennui. Project Hinton members design their own courses, recruit faculty to offer them, and work with the professors on the syllabus. The student is the center of the curriculum. The often first-name student-professor relationship continues after class through meals, town meetings, retreats and parties. The result is a more balanced, rewarding relationship.

Project participants are 100 women, 100 men, resident directors Jim and Vivian Wharton and faculty fellows selected by the students. Doctors Bill Peck (religion), E. Willis Brooks (history), Frank McCormick (botany), Walt Spearman (journalism) and Bob Voitle (English) teach "out there" this year.

Many things are required for the success of such a living-learning experiment. First, the Project requires sincere, dedicated faculty commitment. Some faculty fellows are released somewhat from their normal departmental teaching loads. But their participation in the Project (where "we are all students, we are all teachers") requires extensive time and effort. Teaching a Project course doesn't mean dusting off aimless standard lectures, but evolving passionately with the class' fellow members. Each Project Hinton course is unique because the faculty fellow tries to respond directly to the students' concerns.

Being a faculty fellow does not

mean only classroom teaching. It means becoming a part of the Project life through endless kinds of activities.

Bill Peck, Bob Voitle, Frank McCormick, Will Brooks and Walt Spearman are all sincerely committed to education and to the Project as an educational alternative. They have done an excellent job. The problem has not at all been with individual faculty fellows, but with the administration. The teacher reward system recognizes not involvement with or concern for students, but research, published works and administrative ability. This value judgment must change before the University can radically improve the quality of its educational opportunities.

Success also requires administrative commitment. The College of Arts and Sciences and other schools within the University must allow more academic freedom within guidelines rather than the existing massive rules and restrictive regulations. More Project courses must be approved. And the administration should pursue the project further as an educational alternative.

Success further necessitates better physical facilities. Education communities like the Project require an integrated building with cafeteria, community living rooms and study areas.

Success also requires students to elect to live and grow in the Project. The housing office currently assigns some students to live there who do not really want to become a part of the Project. All Project participants must desire to live there, not be dumped there by the housing office.

Project Hinton is only the first phase of what could develop into a number of fantastic learning opportunities. Much more is possible if only the University will commit itself to student-oriented education.

This page was written specially for The Daily Tar Heel by Chris Sawyer, chief liaison between the Inter Fraternity Council and Upward Bound; Jim Wharton, co-director of the Project Hinton residence program and Judy Hippler, chairman of the Toronto Exchange.

Insight

The Daily Tar Heel

Education

Are students isolated for 8 semesters?

If education is life and not just preparation for life, should students be isolated in Chapel Hill for eight consecutive semesters?

The Peace Corps has recently emphasized the potential destructiveness of prolonged confinement within the protective academic community. Students come to rely too heavily on an authoritarian support and prefabricated structure. They are exposed to few cross-cultural contacts or experiential training. A Bachelor of Arts generalist must usually be retooled before he can work, live and contribute to a community in India, Kenya or Chad. The 22-year-old Chapel Hill graduate is often unable to teach himself or learn from such radically personal involvement.

"We can experience learning tasks only by engagement with particular problems, people and times," emphasizes Bob Sigmon, director of the North Carolina Internship Program. "Students should be able to bring back to their regular studies questions and concerns aroused through experiences like internships. Experiential modules can supplement the quality of education."

Students finding summer jobs over the Christmas holidays could outline a parallel program of study. They could seek credit for their work under Honors 38 or a departmental independent study course.

For example, Mike Almond, a senior political science major, is receiving 15 hours credit for his

At Antioch College, each student initiates his own academic program, including periods of regular university course work interspersed with internships off campus. Work-study and independent study programs are thus emphasized, giving maximum opportunity for individual freedom and social development.

At Livingston College at Rutgers, the policy is to offer an outstanding and relevant education in a congenial and responsive environment. Its liberal arts curriculum is "problem-centered and multidisciplinary."

research on student activism in Europe last spring. Almond will be credited with nine hours under Honors 38, three hours under Political Science 99 (independent study) and three hours under Political Science 91. He is presently writing his honors thesis on his research in Political Science 92, another three hours credit.

"The most important thing to do is to have your proposal thoroughly outlined when you approach the Honors office," Almond explained. "You ought to knock them over, show them you have considered everything in advance."

He submitted a reading list of about 30 books on student

activism. He proposed to talk with students and educators in four or five European countries. He requested the freedom to take advantage of situations in Europe as they came up during his travel. Now he is writing his thesis, already 180 pages and only half or a third completed.

Another political science senior,

Virginia Carson, received six hours credit last spring working in Mayor Howard Lee's office. She researched the availability of federal grants and programs for the Mayor. She also studied the values reflected in government and the relation of society to government with Dr. Alden Lind.

A third political science major, Blair Ruble, will receive nine hours credit for study in the Soviet Union this spring. Ruble will undergo five weeks of intensive study of language and East European law at Ohio State University. He will travel with a group through the Soviet Union for six weeks in April and May. The group will interview judges and examine courts and penal institutions at Moscow, Prague, Kiev and Belgrade. Dr. Glen Elder, sociology, and Dr. Robert Rupen, political science, are his sponsors. He is also taking two reading courses in conjunction with his study under Dr. Will Brooks and Dr. William Levine.

Experiential work-study programs are one means of improving the quality and meaningfulness of education. Like Project Hinton, internships are only one alternative, one experiment. There are many, many more.