

- When may an educational institution be considered a university in nature and purpose? This paper is an attempt to describe a general test, which needs a sort of orientation.

THE WHYS OF UNIVERSITY ORIENTATION

Our country will be much better off with an educational system, sufficiently comprehensive, aimed at what our people need as may be revealed in studies and perceptive observations carried out by persons qualified to develop educational institutions and courses especially fit to promote ideals and values deemed indispensable to the virility of the citizen and the nation. The form, substance, and structure of the cultural, social, political, and moral constituents of the life of our people should be moulded or erected upon patterns of our own choice and preference rather than on patterns furnished by outsiders. This is not to say that we should disregard or throw overboard everything foreign, for this action is impossible to carry out; and if it could ever be done, it is bound

to injure us in several ways. But we really have to realize that we have adopted foreign practices and notions uncritically simple because we want to ape the American or European no matter how offensive they may turn out to be to our ideals and values. In education, for instance, we have to admit that our schools, colleges, and universities up to now bear all the distinctive earmarks of their foreign counterparts imitated superficially and in several cases adopted thoughtlessly and with some degree of belief in their unproved excellence. Much of the poor or defective educational performance of Filipino students in general is traceable to this feature and practice of our schools in our efforts to transplant the heart of a system that the nature of

our conditions cannot accept and assimilate.

Educators of high caliber are called upon to undertake the innovative task. It is a task that challenges mind, the imagination, and vision. But educators, if true to their profession, should accept whatever measure of necessary sacrifice such task demands for its realization. We could not have seen the development of a strong germ of Filipino nationalism if its original champion in the person of Jose Rizal had preferred to enjoy the comforts and splendors of the centers of culture and civilization abroad instead of coming back to the modest environment of his country with all the discomforts and the relatively primitive conditions which had to be slowly changed and improved.

It is regrettable that present-day Filipinos with their higher education do not seem to see the meaning of Rizal's life in this light and to follow the example it offers to them. Many of them consciously avoid the educational and cultural challenges of our provincial

communities. There are even some who feel proud and superior in being associated with institutions that have put a superficial sympathy with our nationalistic efforts and that silently adopt a condescending attitude towards Filipino organs for higher education.

It is obviously a matter of personal egoism and convenience that causes many of us to ignore the challenge of patriotic service outside the metropolitan centers. We see in this aloofness the continued servility to colonial standards and values and the indifference to the more satisfying rewards of self-reliance which needs time, determination, and patience to produce superior results.

Foundation University of Dumaguete aims at leading the Filipino youth away from strictly colonial values by impressing on their consciousness the importance of self-dependence and the reacquisition of the best of national traits which are revealed in their history but which have long been over-looked and so may wither on the vine

if not rediscovered, nurtured, treasured, and refined.

Coming down to our work at this particular moment, we are now busy preparing our faculty members under the leadership of deans and heads of departments in preparing a comprehensive program of *University Orientation* for its faculty. It consists in a series of informal discussions, covering, among other, the following subjects: the meaning, nature, and purpose of a civic and secular university; the nature and method of the work of university teachers; the nature of the work required of its students; the need for adequate libraries, laboratories, and other facilities as instruments of university education the necessary qualifications, practices, and attitudes expected of university faculty members; and the essential conditions for the maintenance of a university atmosphere as both cause and effect of the intellectual and cultural improvement of the university population.

The need for a University Orientation as briefly described here is unavoidable

in understanding the essence of higher education for Filipinos. But it has not been realized, much less observed, in this country for several reasons: one is the obvious failure of those who establish and administer universities in this country to identify and distinguish the essential nature a university from that of a secondary school or a vocational or technical school. This failure arises from several causes. One of them is the absence of a tradition of devotion to intellectual work and excellence. A professional education which is really vocational in nature and purpose, commonly understood by many of our people as higher education, is really deficient in intellectual depth, breadth, and intensity. Law and medicine, for example, which were known in highly developed countries as the learned professions, are pursued in our schools more as vocational occupations calling for skills in action, manipulation, and outward observation rather than for intensive mental concentration and scientific or cerebral activity.