

- The Foundation College of Dumaguete founded by Dr. Vicente G. Sinco twenty years ago (long before he became president of the University of the Philippines), changed its status from that of a college to that of a university on January 28, 1969.

## FOUNDATION UNIVERSITY IN TRANSITION

Human experience should convince every sensible person that there is no finality to the process of education for all men and women who have caught the vision of the good, the true, and the beautiful. The ineluctable changes in the conditions of life, in the styles of living, in the methods and modes of activity leave their imprint on the thoughts and views of men of intelligence and education. Consciously or unconsciously we have to face them and be attuned to them if we ever hope to grow in intellectual and moral maturity to enable us to acquire a feeling of individual fulfillment. And to keep that hope alive, it is not enough that we have some vague awareness of their existence but that we understand their

significance, and, understanding it, we take advantage of their enriching influence. Should we fail to keep pace with the evolution of ideas produced by the inevitable passage of time and the shift of circumstance, we may have to suffer for that failure the tragedy of recession or deterioration in our mental ability, in our moral outlook, and in other valuable and precious qualities of our life.

It is not the individual student alone that has to face the problem of needed growth that should follow every stage of transition. Every educational institution, in fact every living institution, be it economic, civic, or religious in purpose, has to meet this crucial stage of transition if it is to preserve

their vitality and to maintain their power and potential for service to man and society. For no one can ignore with impunity the challenge of the changing conditions of life to develop such corresponding ideas that could fertilize a man's mind, broaden his sympathies, and sharpen his intellectual perspectives. The man of education should try to keep the lamp of learning ever bright to enable him to see the way to better modes of living, thinking, and working.

The change of Foundation College to Foundation University represents this stage of transition in institutional growth. We feel a sense of exaltation and a measure of pardonable pride in consequence of this change because it indicates a decisive improvement in the academic structure of our institution and in its capacity to be of service to people who are in search of moral, cultural, and intellectual betterment.

But the present attainment of university status by this institution should be taken only as a transitory step towards higher levels of acade-

mic growth. It is indeed the acquisition of a superior educational rank. It is an indication of a degree of institutional maturity. Let us not forget, however, that it also involves an added obligation to maintain a higher degree of efficiency and competence to breed persons of learning and imagination imbued with a deep sense of intellectual and social responsibility.

Let us all understand that a university worth the name and rank is expected to advance the cause of education as a means of acquiring those intellectual values which form the basic factors for a superior life. The uninitiated believes that a university should be satisfied if it produces pedants and walking encyclopedias. Of course, a university may produce persons of this classification; but this is neither its characteristic objective nor its essential function. A distinguished educator describes a university as a center of independent thought. As such its true spirit is something that infuses into every student, who takes his

work seriously, an unquenchable curiosity and a resolute determination to learn and to achieve; and it builds in him those sturdy habits of self-discipline, self-restraint, and moderation. It is opposed to every propensity to senseless revolt, irrational action, and stupid imitation. It looks down with disapproval at the political tantrums of juvenile upstarts and the atrocious appeals from man's lower nature. It cultivates the power of balanced judgment and looks askance at the pretentious posture of immaturity and inexperience.

The record of universities as respectable agents of civilization is ably described by the distinguished philosopher, mathematician, and educator, Alfred North Whitehead, in these pregnant phrases:

"The universities have trained the intellectual pioneers of our civilisation — the priests, the lawyers, the statemen, the doctors, the men of science, and the men of letters. They have been the home of those ideals which lead

men to confront the confusion of their present times... In early mediaeval history the origin of universities was obscure and almost unnoticed. They were a gradual and natural growth. But their existence is the reason for the sustained, rapid progressiveness of European life in so many fields of activity. By their agency the adventure of action met the adventure of thought.

On this occasion may I remind you that Foundation University is a Filipino university which seeks ways to instill in the mind of every student Filipino ideals of intellectual excellence. In our effort to grasp these ideals, we have to learn and respect old and new values in Filipino life and conduct to the end that when fully realized they may help us discover our identity as a nation. Paraphrasing Whitehead's words, Foundation University hopes to use in a modest way these ideals to confront the confusion of our present times.

As the first and only Filipino university established in this city and province, Foundation University expects its students and graduates to labor as pioneers for the social, economic, and civic development of this part of our country and to support all other efforts which our elders and betters may employ for the welfare of all.

The policy of Foundation University is to concentrate on teaching basic principles and authentic ideas to the end that our students may be able to understand and appreciate them for inspiration and application. As a university it will have to devote some of its time and attention to teaching the methods of scholarly investigation and to engage in modest and pertinent research work. Our aim is to pursue knowledge for its own sake

and for the cause of truth rather than for purposes of promoting pretentious claims of novel discoveries and superficial findings. My own personal conception is that a university should be directly dedicated to the development of the individual mind and character of man than to the cultivation of possessive and acquisitive powers for the sole use of industrial giants and economic overlords. A university should be the helper of man, not the servant of self-seeking power, nor the protector of greed. This is the stage this University hopes to reach in its journey to the heights of achievement. From this point of transition, your Alma Mater counts on your enthusiastic cooperation. — *Message of Dr. V. G. Sinco on the inauguration of Foundation University of Dumaguete delivered on April 12, 1969.*