

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COLLEGE COUNSELING

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More than at any other time in our history education offered in colleges and universities plays a very important and decisive role not only in the improvement of the individual for his own sake but also, and especially, in the betterment of the social and economic conditions of our country. It is the broader effect of college education that gives it a distinct color and a new significance in this era of scientific revolution. Even such an advanced country as the United States of America, which for a long time had assumed an attitude of self-satisfaction with its material wealth, productive industries, and nation-wide prosperity, has become very greatly concerned with the education of its youth and the condition of its schools and colleges during the last ten years or so in the face of the spectacular

achievements of science and technology that have taken place in the Soviet Union and other countries in Europe. Such achievements are but the direct or indirect results of college and university education.

Those of us who have been following the movements and trends in the educational world are quite well aware of the general dissatisfaction of most people in America with the work of many of their educational institutions. The agitation for changes in the educational programs of their colleges and universities has not been confined to a small group of scholars and scientists but has been participated widely by different elements of the nation, including businessmen, labor leaders, ministers of religion, social workers, professionals, and politicians. The general feeling is that col-

lege education of different grades and varieties should be improved and should keep pace with the times. In addition, it is felt that such education should be made more easily available to the greatest number of the young people and should adjusted to their different capacities and potentialities.

This clamor for college education, this demand for its improvement, is echoed in most parts of the world today. It is not just an expression of eagerness for diplomas and degrees. It is a thirst for knowledge that gives its possessor the ability and power to do and produce. It is the outcome of the realization that changes are not only constantly taking place but are taking place faster than what many of us know or by highly qualified scientists conjecture.

Estimates have been made by highly qualified scientists and scholars that human knowledge, particularly in science and technology, has been doubling every ten to fifteen years; and in the social sciences and humanities the increase in knowledge, although not as fast as in the natural sciences, has likewise been markedly large within a space of twenty or thirty years. Consider, for instance,

electronics, automation, the jet plane, antibiotics, nylon and other synthetic fibers, television, and other more recent developments. They were unknown to the world ten or twenty years ago. They were unheard of when my companions and I were college students. More recently man-made satellites, rockets, missiles, atomic energy, space exploration have come to add to the fund of skills, techniques, and knowledge of man. Whether we like them or not, they affect our ways of thinking, our methods of living, our systems of production, and our relations with the rest of mankind. Graduates or alumni of institutions of learning who received their degrees fifteen or twenty years ago would be uttering plain nonsense if they should now insist that what they learned and what their colleges had given them when they were students are good enough for their children and the students of today. If they expect their *Mama Mater* to be content with what it taught them and how it instructed them during their own student days, they are certainly grossly mistaken and their nostalgic feeling may well condemn them to the category of modern Rip Van Winkles.

With the changes taking place at such a rapid rate in the present-day world, education must necessarily be planned and developed with a view to taking such changes into account. This does not mean that every student should be expected to secure an education that would enable him to master all the developments of science and scholarship that have taken place and that will continue to take place. That would be an impossible thing to do; and college education is not intended to give any one an encyclopedic grasp of the entire field of knowledge. The essential element of real education in our day is the development of a person's ability to think and to decide in terms of the changes affecting his life and his particular work; and the college should so plan its instruction that its students may be adequately prepared to pursue the career they expect to follow and to understand its problems by reason of their college education.

In order to reach this objective it is necessary that college education should be a process of making a student learn how to learn. It is only in this way that the development of the intellectual ability of the student through

college education may continue throughout his life. It is only through such a process that college education could serve as a basis to prepare the student to meet new problems, to understand them, and to analyze them as they arise in his daily life.

These changes that science has produced and will go on producing have a decided impact on the activities of our country. They cannot be disregarded with impunity. To ignore them or to pay little heed to them for any reason whatever, whether political or sectarian or ideological or racial in nature, is to invite retardation or perhaps disaster to our economic, social, industrial, or political progress. Our student population has to be trained and educated to understand these changes. Not all of them have the same interests, attitudes, and capacities. Consequently, not all of them should be made to follow one single way of preparing themselves for the different tasks that await them. If our educational system is to follow a uniform and rigid plan of study beyond what may be considered the basic essentials of learning, it is bound to be of very little value as an instrument of social progress.

The rapid changes in the

nature, the quantity, and the quality of the fund of human knowledge should suggest that colleges give much importance to the study of science. But this should not mean that our students should all try to become scientists and that we should give preference to prospective scientists in college admissions and scholarship awards. On this subject I agree with the ideas expressed by Dael Wolfle of the American Association for the Advancement of Science when he said: "The changes that characterize the contemporary world came very largely from the work of scientists and engineers. There is a need for more well trained scientists and engineers, but there is an even greater need to have science better understood by the general public, and to have lawyers, businessmen, statesmen, and members of other professions understand science better than most of the members of those professions now do. Science has become an instrument of such power in changing society that we can no longer afford to have science understood and thought about only by scientists.

"Of course we do not want our statesmen to be atomic physicists or experts in biochemistry; we do not want

our business leaders to be physiologists or specialists in mathematics. But we do want them to understand what science is about, how the scientist works, and the relations between scientific work and practical affairs. How else can they make sensible judgments about the many aspects of government or business that result from scientific work or that influence — favorably or unfavorably — the future course of the country's total progress? To serve wisely in such a position, it is necessary to have an understanding of some of the trends of history, of some of the characteristics of our national life. In the same sense, and for the same reason, it is essential to understand something about science."

But the problem of college education is not merely one of curriculum content and method of teaching. It is not as simple as that. It is not simply a matter of raising funds for our educational activities, important as this matter is. It is not merely a matter of training teachers who are competent to teach their respective subjects in the curriculum of a college, although this too is a very important requirement. It is also a problem of human materials, the

type and quality of men and women that enter college as students. This is a very important aspect of the problem of college education; but until quite recently, it has not received the attention that it deserves.

If our educational program is to be of benefit to the entire nation, as it must be, it has to take into consideration the differences of our students in regard to their mental, physical, and emotional qualities. It has to take into account the differences of their interests and attitudes. This is a task that requires not only good school administrators and teachers but also, and especially, guidance counselors for without the assistance of this group of workers colleges and universities will be unable to render the kind of service best needed by the country. We do not need to be repeatedly told that the most precious resources of a nation are its men and women; and the best way of developing these human resources is to give them the education most suitable to the different individual capacities in order that each person could be of best use to himself and to society. That we have not given enough attention to this subject is attested by the fact that certain pro-

fessions are overcrowded and many of those who are in these professions are unfit and dissatisfied with their work. They represent a veritable social and national loss in the sense that they could have been of greater value if they had been properly guided in the selection of their vocation or profession.

How to identify and classify dull students, average minds, and the highly talented ones is one of the most critical problems of education. How to guide them to their proper places in the educational program is another serious task that colleges should undertake. The work of advising, counseling, and guiding every student that comes under each one of these classes is itself a job that requires serious study and preparation. The education of the counselor is by itself as important as the significance of his task. The success and failure of the student, his value as a citizen and as a worker, his happiness or his grief may well depend upon proper counseling and advising. But even more than that, the correct identification of our bright and talented young men and women determines the degree of progress that could be attained by our

country; for without them, we cannot well hope to have highly talented leaders and workers, scientists and technicians, statesmen and other men of vision upon whom the greatness of a nation depends.

Hence arises the value of discussing the various aspects of the problems of counseling in our colleges and universities. The materials necessary for the leadership of the nation must be well selected. This is specially true and urgent at this particular stage in our history for we have the freedom to build our own national structure. Just as in the case of the construction of a house, we can make it a strong edifice only if we have a solid foundation and a strong superstructure. To secure this result, it is the part of wisdom to classify the different pieces of lumber and materials ac-

ording to their respective qualities of strength and adaptability.

The same process is needed in the construction of the national edifice. The different kinds of men and women, in accordance with their qualifications and their potential strength, should be carefully selected and properly prepared for the educational development for which they are best suited. It is only in that way that as citizens of the nation they could be utilized to the best advantage and for the purpose which they could best serve.

The counselors may thus be considered as trusted classifiers of our human resources. Their responsibility in nation-building is enormous. The success of our educational enterprise greatly depends upon them.

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CANDOR

Jeanette was wearing a new frock when her dearest friend called.

"I look a perfect fright," she remarked, eager for praise.

The dearest friend was thinking of her own affairs, and answered absent-mindedly:

"Yes, you certainly do."

"Oh, you horrid thing!" Jeanette gasped. "I'll never—never speak to you again."