

- A significant position paper on "Institutional Integrity" was adopted unanimously on October 11, 1966 by the Federation of Regional Accrediting Commissions of Higher Education, meeting in New Orleans. The federation is composed of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, New England Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The complete statement follows:

## INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

By academic tradition and by philosophical principle an institution of higher learning is committed to the pursuit of truth and to its communication to others.

To carry out this essential commitment calls for institutional integrity in the way a college or university manages its affairs — specifies its goals, selects and retains its faculty, admits students, establishes curricula, determines programs of research, fixes its fields of service.

The maintenance and exercise of such institutional integrity postulates and requires appropriate autonomy and freedom.

Put positively this is the freedom to examine data, to question assumptions, to be guided by evidence, to teach

what one knows — to be a learner and a scholar. Put negatively this is a freedom from unwanted harassment which hinders or prevents a college or university from getting on with its essential work.

A college or university must be managed well and remain solvent, but it is not a business or industry. It must be concerned with the needs of its community and state and country but an institution of higher learning is not a political party nor a social service. It must be morally responsible, but even when church related, it is not a religion nor a church.

A college or university is an institution of higher learning. Those within it have as a first concern evidence

and truth rather than particular judgments of institutional benefactors, concerns of churchmen, public opinion, social pressure, or political proscription.

Relating to this general concern and corresponding to intellectual and academic freedom are correlative responsibilities. On the part of trustees and administrators there is the obligation to protect faculty and students from inappropriate pressures or destructive harassments.

On the part of the faculty there is the obligation to distinguish personal conviction from proven conclusions and to present relevant data fairly to students because this same freedom asserts their rights to know the facts.

On the part of students there is the obligation to sift and to question, to be actively involved in the life of the institution but involved as learners at appropriate levels. The determination and exercise of proper responsibilities will be related to the students' status as undergraduate, professional, or graduate students.

Intellectual freedom does not rule out commitment; ra-

ther it makes it possible and personal. Freedom does not require neutrality on the part of the individual nor the educational institution — certainly not towards the task of inquiry and learning, nor toward the value systems which may guide them as persons or as schools.

Hence institutions may hold to a particular political, social, or religious philosophy as may individual faculty members or students. But to be true to what they profess academically, individuals and institutions must remain intellectually free and allow others the same freedom to pursue truth and to distinguish the pursuit of it from a commitment to it.

All concerned with the good of colleges and universities will seek for ways to support their institutional integrity and the exercise of their appropriate autonomy and freedom. In particular, the Federation and the regional commissions, which have a particular responsibility to look at an institution in its totality, will always give serious attention to this aspect and quality of institutional life so necessary for its well-being and vitality.