
Almanac

SUPPLEMENT TO VOLUME 17, NUMBER 5

From the President and the Provost:

PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

March 31, 1971

Dear Colleagues and Students:

The immediate task we—in this generation of faculty, students, staff, trustees, alumni and friends of Pennsylvania—face is to help our University build on the strength of the past and approach the future with confidence and enthusiasm, in contrast to the apathy or even despair which seems to envelop so much of the academic world today. What functions our University should perform is a question that must be constantly asked and answered. How this question is answered will shape and be shaped by the changes in our University in the years ahead.

This set of policy proposals reflects in large measure the constructive and imaginative contributions that have been prepared or suggested by members of the Council of Academic Deans, the Senate Advisory Committee and the Student Committee on Undergraduate Education. Also, many individual trustees, faculty, students, and administrative staff members have generously responded in interviews and other ways to our inquiries and those of the Vice Provost for Student Affairs. All of these suggestions—and many more which hopefully are to come—are greatly appreciated and warmly welcomed. The processes of deliberation on our educational future are, of course, continuous. Accordingly, we shall from time to time, be reviewing many other policy proposals with you, including ones dealing with graduate and professional education, with our strong career-oriented undergraduate programs in management and engineering and with our relations with the urban community of which we are a part. It is only with the contributions and help of everyone at our University that we shall be able to realize our many potentialities.

Before sharing our thinking with you about certain policies we are considering, there are several observations we should like to make. Necessarily occupied as we are with trying to balance the budget in the next two years, we are obviously even more concerned with assessing the evolution of the University and its future achievements.

The observation that stands out most in our assessment is the quality of our faculty and our students. They are better than they have ever been. Over a decade, the quality of our undergraduates, measured by any formal standards, rose and by 1968 came close to that of the most selective institutions. By most measures, our advanced professional school students are superior to those in anyone's memory. In graduate academic fields, the formal evidence is more scanty. Yet, again, in department after department, it is clear that we have been attracting first-rate students with splendid undergraduate backgrounds.

The faculty, which in the Educational Survey of the 1950's was described as too inbred, has become national and international. The American Council on Education graduate ratings, placed in rank order, show Pennsylvania in 15th place both in 1964 and 1969. Yet these rankings do not reflect all of our strengths. We have built selectively in many departments at Pennsylvania, wisely not trying to achieve full comprehensiveness. Also, should such a rating system be extended to professional and academic fields not covered by the ACE surveys, our standing would no doubt be higher.

Furthermore, we have not suffered those serious traumatic experiences some institutions have. In considerable part, this has been because of the climate of openness among faculty and students here. Although there have been and will continue to be significant

differences of views, our campus proceeds on the assumption that differences can be accommodated.

We have among both senior and younger faculty colleagues an encouraging willingness to develop superior educational paths. Implementing proposals originating with faculty or students is sometimes hindered by institutional sluggishness and by a scarcity of resources, a problem shared by all colleges and universities. What is most significant, though, is the energy and spirit which lead to seeking improvements in spite of the financial constraints that limit us.

In evaluating possible improvements, our starting point should be that the University of Pennsylvania is a major center for the exploration of new knowledge in academic fields and in learned professions. It is that character of being on the frontiers of knowledge and creativity that ought to permeate our undergraduate programs as well as our graduate ones; being an undergraduate at Pennsylvania should carry with it an opportunity at some point to partake in that exploration. The geographic concentration of the University with all of its schools on a single campus provides an unusual opportunity to do so.

The exploration of new knowledge traditionally takes place through specialized endeavors. Both for the sake of that exploration and for the learning-teaching to which we are committed, we must deepen knowledge within and build bridges across disciplines, invest academic fields with a sense of the pragmatic derived from the professions, and in turn imbue the professions with a sense of scholarly research and humaneness from the academic disciplines. Furthermore, this new synthesis requires tempering from the creative arts—these affective fields are as much part of intellectual concern as are cognitive studies.

Ours is a community which ought to see more gain than contradiction in the juxtaposition of disciplines with professions, of undergraduate and graduate learning with scholarship, of the presence of all of these in a great urban center easily accessible to other urban centers. For these potentialities in the educational environment of Pennsylvania to be more fully achieved requires many actions—some of which are suggested below.

These actions should help lead to an improved education characterized by subtlety as well as rigor. This education should stress the processes for obtaining and utilizing knowledge and insight so that the student can continue a lifetime pursuit of self-study and deepening understanding. It should avoid falling prey to what may be the growing malady of believing that intellectual activity is a vice.

Undergraduate Options

We recommend making available at Pennsylvania a variety of modes for undergraduate students to pursue their learning experiences, whatever the substance of their interests, or the school they are attending. These would include among others:

- a. *The Standard Option:* Many students have their educational needs met by the existing dominant scheme of undergraduate education based on the accumulation of credits for discrete courses and ending with the bachelor's degree.

- b. *The Continental Option:* Considerable numbers of qualified students with special gifts and clear interests should be able to begin a specialized formal education immediately upon entering their undergraduate years, as they would in a Continental European university. For the most part, they would undertake intensive early specialization, either having acquired some breadth in their earlier schooling or obtaining it later. In other cases, they would begin at least some direct study for an advanced professional program. (There are certain combined undergraduate and professional programs already in existence at Pennsylvania which ought to be encouraged in conjunction with this option.)
- c. *The Collegiate Option:* Beginning with some modest experiments this current year and a new program to be set up in Van Pelt House next year, along with other proposals that may also be inaugurated for the coming academic year, a pattern should develop, not only for providing more cultural vitality for residential life here, but also for setting a base for collegiate educational offerings, whether or not the student is a resident. These offerings may often be in seminars, cutting across or supplementing the offerings of departments, yet more structured than in the present individualized majors program (a program which will no doubt be enhanced.)
- d. *The Self-Education and Examinations Option:* The above options assume a considerable degree of formal instruction. However, there should also be available, as an alternative, examinations covering fields of concentration as well as areas of educational breadth. Through these examinations, those who wish the stimulus of a University environment with its varied resources, including challenging faculty and fellow students, but who are capable of intensive learning by themselves, can prepare through a combination of self-study, selected courses and some tutorial instruction. Demonstrated competency through such examinations should enable our students to receive degrees in varying lengths of time. Some may find two or three years sufficient for an undergraduate degree; others may need longer periods.
- e. *The Research Option:* For some students the most effective learning technique is through problem solving, independent investigation, or research. Such students might profitably undertake a program of scholarly inquiry, under appropriate guidance, as the unifying theme of their undergraduate program. The active nature of this option would provide a welcome alternative to students who are restive in the passive role of conventional programs. Within this option wide latitude should be permitted, ranging from the minimal level of a Senior Honors Thesis to the maximal level in which the entire collegiate experience would be coordinated to a program of independent inquiry.

These various options are not mutually exclusive. A student could pursue programs that are combinations of these or other ways toward the completion of undergraduate study. By providing the flexibility afforded by such options, we would take a major step in distinguishing a Pennsylvania education from that offered by many other institutions.

Dean of Undergraduate Studies

In line with the Report of the Task Force on Governance and its concern for an educational synthesis for undergraduates, we have begun discussing with the Advisory Committee of the University Senate a proposal that we appoint a Dean of Undergraduate Studies. Without in any way reducing the responsibility of the Deans of the separate Schools to be educational leaders of our University, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies would join them as one with special concern for those students who are at the beginning of their higher education careers. The Dean would have particular responsibility for educational modes and programs which cross school lines and blur distinctions between undergraduate and graduate-professional education.

The Dean, working with the Deans of the existing Schools, would be responsible for matters such as the curricular options and for bringing together those aspects of the undergraduate curriculum that desirably should be common to all parts of the University. This means concern for that portion of the curriculum directed to breadth rather than concentration, although it also refers to the developing of norms common for all concentrations in both the arts and sciences and undergraduate professional and pre-professional fields. To help in these responsibilities, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies would be able, on occasion, to convene all faculty who take part in undergraduate education.

The Dean would also have responsibility for undergraduate admissions and financial aid, both of freshmen and transfer students, so that these critical operations can be properly integrated with curricula and with modes of education such as those we discussed above.

Under the pattern of program budgeting we expect to develop, the greatest part of budgetary responsibility will continue to reside in the Deans of the various Schools. However, under this pattern, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies will have budgetary responsibility for collegiate, cross-departmental and cross-school programs. He or she would have a strong voice in matters of appointment and promotion as they relate to undergraduate programs.

In many respects, our College for Women now performs some of the functions of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, but for a special constituency. Until it is more clear that programs for women will receive due attention and resources in a University where male-oriented values are strong, we plan to retain the College for Women. Meanwhile we shall work for the achievement of those gains for women which will make it unnecessary.

Attracting the Ablest Undergraduate Students

The educational offerings available are the most important factor in attracting capable students. Although

we have an undergraduate student body that is of very high quality, we can raise that level, while preserving our objective of serving neglected groups of the population. The most important task of the new head of our admissions program will be the development and execution of a program to attract to Pennsylvania even abler students. To achieve this goal, increased personal involvement by alumni, faculty and students, working with staff, is necessary. We must seek to convey to superior prospective undergraduates the emerging character of our University and the desirability of their coming to Pennsylvania. The best means of attracting students to some scientific and technical fields where there is now more capacity than there are students is not to alter admissions standards, but to strive to interest more highly capable potential students who have such a bent and at the same time to improve educational programs.

Our University shares an obligation to provide high-quality education to neglected groups. Here again our aim should be to attract the most talented members of such groups, advantaged and disadvantaged, in the Commonwealth and beyond. To this end, we have applied to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare for funds which would be used for expanded supportive services and personnel to aid blacks, Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, Indians and others should they choose to use them.

We should consider making a special effort to admit students who have begun their higher education elsewhere. For many students what may have been (or seemed) suitable in the beginning of their undergraduate years may no longer be so. Other students may have completed a two-year program and be able profitably to go on to further study. Similarly, within our campus, we should facilitate student transfers to other programs when appropriate to their academic and career goals. Fortunately, we detect little of an attitude observed elsewhere suggesting that to transfer is an act of infidelity.

Student Aid

Financial assistance to students at Pennsylvania has increased seven-fold in the last dozen years; no other segment of the budget has gone up as much. Yet without the most extensive financial aid, many students who would benefit most from Pennsylvania could not even consider coming here as undergraduates or as graduate students. Most of the aid is now drawn from the University's general income, which cannot continue to sustain the recent rate of increase.

Therefore, additional scholarship and fellowship funds are needed and should be sought in the University's development program. One of our hopes ultimately is to obtain the necessary financial resources to convert the Benjamin Franklin Scholars Program to one which attracts up to 100 varied and talented students each year and, perhaps, to provide for an educational interrelationship among them.

Also, major loan programs should be fostered in conjunction with other institutions, foundations, and governments. We have taken important steps in the last six months to start developing new kinds of loan programs

in which repayments would be made over a substantial period of time and be linked to future income.

Transition to the University

There are many gifted students in secondary schools who would gain tremendously from acceleration to college study. They ought to be encouraged to apply to us for admission to college at the end of the 11th grade, and in some cases the 10th grade. We believe many outstanding students would be attracted here by such an opportunity. The question of maturity is relevant here; but the relative growth in sophistication among young people makes it possible that many more can now take advantage of such an opportunity than was the case in the past. There also ought to be the fullest opportunity for older persons who deferred attending a university to do so.

Similarly, there ought to be great flexibility in continuity of attendance available to those who are admitted. For example, students, subject to general guidelines, should be able to work or travel between admittance and commencing study as well as between matriculation and graduation.

Scale and Duration of Undergraduate Programs

The recent discussions on the size of the freshman class have failed to recognize that the total number of undergraduates is more significant for student life and educational experience than the number of beginning students. Considering the large and probably increasing number of transfer students, the variable rates of leaving the University for temporary periods and, more important, the educational policies we may adopt which would influence the duration of schooling, the size of an entering class is not a paramount consideration.

We propose that, given our resource base in terms of faculty and facilities, we keep the number of undergraduates at about the present level. We do not make this proposal with the notion that increases beyond this level would destroy intimacy and create an impersonal atmosphere. We also wish to emphasize that our size is an asset; it enables us to provide a variety of offerings which a smaller institution cannot. And impersonality and lack of intimacy can be overcome in a large university by measures such as those we suggest elsewhere (for example, a collegiate pattern) and by others which we will welcome.

We are asking relevant academic and planning groups to study this proposal for limiting numbers.

Academic Advising

In an academic environment that creates a number of options for students to pursue, it is important to have a strong system of academic advising. It is important to help students to progress toward educational goals they perceive as suitable to their talents and aspirations. Some students have definite visions of their career objectives from the time of matriculation into undergraduate schools; for them, the opportunity to be counselled by a preceptor from that field would be a source of valuable early integration of educational patterns. Other students have a more open-ended view of their ultimate place in society and

need the wisdom of a sympathetic advisor to permit intelligent exploration of alternatives while they proceed through a period of intellectual and personal growth. Beginning students are particularly in need of assistance in understanding the possibilities open to them in a large and complex institution.

The most effective source of academic advice of this order is the faculty, with assistance from a professional counselling staff. How great the burden would be to institute such a program on a large scale is not clear. The possibility of attracting substantial new resources for this purpose is not promising. We are exploring whether we can marshal sufficient strength from within the University to attain the desired benefits.

Calendar

The Council of Academic Deans, faculties, students and other groups should all examine the possibility of a future academic calendar which provides:

- a. Flexibility to enable some kind of learning to take place in short blocs of instructional time, for example, of a very few weeks duration and in some cases restricted to a single subject.
- b. The use of University facilities throughout the year (and the day).
- c. Fewer required weeks of instruction for teachers and students; both would then be working more intensively in a teaching setting for shorter periods and would have concentrated blocs of time for research, student job periods and other activities; or both might elect longer teaching periods each year, so that a professor could have periods of consecutive time available or students could complete their work more rapidly.

Advisory Boards

At present some of the Advisory Boards at the University are active, some inactive; some are alumni-oriented, some not. We propose that the Boards be advisory to the Deans or Directors, to the Provost and Vice President and to the President, and through that avenue to the Trustees. Their functions should be to review and report on the substantive programs with which they are concerned, the resources required for these programs and possible sources of support, and ties between these programs and activities outside the University. Members of the Boards should be distinguished alumni and other lay friends of the University and the particular program and also some of the most eminent scholars and professionals dealing with such programs outside of our University. That combination is difficult to achieve, but when achieved can provide tremendous help and support for our activities.

The Research-Teaching Balance

One of our assets is that we are a research-based teaching institution. Departments can distinguish themselves in undergraduate as well as graduate instruction, with both reinforced by scholarly research and other creative activity. The new wisdom which suggests that the three functions are incompatible with each other is false. Indeed, many of our most outstanding departments

Proposals for Consideration by the University Community (Continued)

are examples of just such a combination and should be models for all of us. That is not to say that every member of the faculty at the same point in time ought to be engaging in all three activities and in certain administrative tasks as well. It does mean that the title "professor," except in rare cases, should be reserved for those who profess directly to students rather than for those who choose to sequester themselves in the library or laboratory. It also means that the great bulk of the departments of the University, including many in the professional schools, should have the responsibility of continually encouraging their colleagues, senior as well as junior, to teach undergraduates as well as graduate students. One of our great strengths should be that all our students have the opportunity to see how the boundaries of knowledge and creativity are stretched and, in very many cases, to be part of these efforts themselves.

Alumni: Life-Time Education

This coming summer we intend to establish a week-long "alumni college" for alumni and alumnae and their families as a step in continuing education programs to help make available to our 125,000 alumni learning experiences throughout their lives. These programs should often be tied to professions and other careers and also to present and evolving cultural interests of former students. Thus, once an individual matriculates at Pennsylvania, he or she should have the opportunity of maintaining from then on an educational bond with the University. We believe this approach will open new kinds of allegiances between the University and those who have studied here and continue to study through special summer programs, seminars, correspondence work, and even special programs carried out in areas where there are many alumni. Future support for these programs should be borne by business, government and other institutions. These activities are in addition to ongoing continuing education programs in medicine, engineering, the Wharton School and the College for Women.

Foundation Support of Programs

Pennsylvania has received in recent years between 5 and 6 million dollars a year from foundations. This is a sizeable source of support for our teaching and research programs, but the potentiality from this source is much greater. The University of Chicago, for example, receives much more from foundations than we do. Some kinds of foundation support can be sought centrally through our Development Office. For example, we may develop a college system with intellectual content and depth—as well as a cultural patina—but without the elaborate investment in plant of a Yale; such an effort warrants extensive foundation support, and it should be sought. However, most foundation requests must originate with professors and departments. One of the functions of a Dean is to be on the lookout for such opportunities and to work with his or her faculty in developing them.

Though the possibility for increasing support from

foundations is particularly promising, the same general point applies to the federal government and other sources of funding.

Salaries

In the assessments of the levels of compensation of our faculty and our staff, the need for strengthening is unquestionable. The American Association of University Professors compilations showed Pennsylvania was 20th in the fall of the 1959-60 academic year in average compensation for full-time faculty. In the fall of the 1969-70 academic year, Pennsylvania was 30th. It is not sufficient to point out that many of the institutions preceding Pennsylvania are not viewed as academically comparable. The important comparison is that almost all the large private universities with which we are otherwise competitive are at a higher rank. Though fewer comparisons are available for most non-academic staff, the evidence we have is discouraging.

We feel this administration would be remiss if we did not pledge to fight for salary and wage increases, however modest, for 1971-72, despite the financial difficulties we face. Furthermore, it is our aim, in the years ahead to equal or surpass salaries of faculty and staff in other major private institutions, except for those very few that have inherited huge resources from the past. To do otherwise would be to continue subsidizing the University excessively at the expense of its staff and faculty.

Libraries

Pennsylvania has experienced an important period of library development; about 85 percent of the collections are now housed in quarters built or renovated in the past decade, and in that same period the library budget has tripled. But libraries elsewhere have been growing, too; relative to other universities, the size of our collections and our rate of acquisition have declined.

In 1924 we were sixth in size; by 1960 we were tenth. In 1969-70 our library was nineteenth in size, thirty-second in expenditures for books and binding, and thirty-fourth in the number of volumes added per year. While it is true that the catch-up efforts of some new or rapidly expanding universities account for some of this change in rank, it is also true that we are not keeping up with the collections of some comparable private universities which have fewer students than we.

A great marshaling of gift support for the library—both spendable funds and endowment—is clearly in order. A strengthening of the role of the Friends of the Library at the University of Pennsylvania, originally formed in 1933, might provide advocacy and support for resources for periodicals and new technological means of communication, for books and the improvement of professional salaries. The Friends and others could also help encourage the donation of book collections to the University.

In addition, the advantages of greater collaboration—in the form of co-operative acquisitions and shared storage facilities—should be thoroughly explored with nearby

colleges and universities and with key special collections which abound in the region.

Equal Opportunity

We are committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons in the University, not merely because we believe it is just, but because only thus can we make the most of our available resources. Our major need at this time is to reinforce our procedures to be sure that we are not failing, by inadvertence or inattention, to use modes of employing and promoting personnel that convert a policy of equal opportunity to reality. Our faculty now is predominantly male and white. Our several thousand women students have few women faculty members to serve as models for them to emulate in forming career and other goals. In the case of blacks, we know of only 34 who are faculty members and senior administrators in the University.

An investigation of the situation of women faculty members is underway under the aegis of the University Council. The committee's first report is nearly completed. Similarly, an *ad hoc* group of interested women faculty and staff has given us important suggestions for improving the status of women, whether faculty or staff.

We have affirmed the following policies:

- a. For any opening in the University, academic or non-academic, the officer conducting the search must include the ablest available candidates who are women, are black, or are members of other minorities;
- b. Equal pay for equal work must prevail;
- c. The nepotism rule should only prevent relatives from hiring, promoting, or making other vital job decisions regarding each other, and not act as a hindrance to the employment of members of the same family;
- d. The newly established Equal Opportunity Office, its administrator, and its advisory committee are charged with helping to implement these policies.

We call on all to help achieve the above.

Priorities

If all our present financial aspirations are achieved, we will still have to decide which areas of activity at the University are to be strengthened, which stabilized, and which reduced and sometimes even eliminated. Resources will always be scarce. Through the planning and consultative processes in the University, we must decide which programs we will emphasize and which we will not. We must decide which shared efforts should be undertaken with other institutions; we cannot emphasize this point sufficiently.

As we face the difficult challenge of establishing these priorities, it will be essential that we know the true net costs of each of our educational programs. That is not to say that priorities will be based on costs, but rather that we must know costs if we are to allocate adequate resources to the programs we choose to support. This type of detailed analysis for each program leads also to program budgeting as the principal means of allocating our resources. Each functional program will be allocated resources for faculty, staff and other services and facilities—whether it is a department, undergraduate collegiate program, or a graduate group.

We see this as a time of adding quality to the University and its programs. Merely being satisfied ought not to be our principle in any of the activities significant to us. All our policies should be predicated on the preservation of quality and its selective strengthening.

The policies suggested here are only some of these currently under consideration. We shall look to the months ahead as a time in which faculty, students and staff can concentrate on suggestions and position papers on many matters to give an intellectual and policy base for the further deliberations in the early fall. We need your help in developing our University in such ways that we all, without question, would rather be working here than anywhere else.

*Martin Meyerson,
President*

*Curtis R. Reitz,
Provost and Vice President*