

## CHAPTER 20

### EACH INSTITUTION SHOULD SEEK ITS OWN PROPER LEVEL

THE time has gone when just *any* college may hope to become great. There was a time when colleges in America were few, when the pattern of the ultimate development of the country was unknown, when any founder might reasonably hope that his college would grow to become an institution of great distinction.

Today, with 1,700 colleges, universities, and technical institutes in operation, much is settled. For certain professional fields there is ample provision. In certain areas there are many colleges. Each institution is largely limited by its location, the development of adjacent institutions, and by its financial resources.

Toward what level of service is your college headed? What may it best aim to do 25 years, 50 years, 100 years hence? What can it best do to supplement the services of the other institutions in its area? Try to view the future of your college in terms of the moving and dynamic future of American education as a whole.

All of your present planning will take clearer shape if the ultimate level of work and service of your college is agreed upon. A list of the various commonly recognized types of institutions may be of use in thinking of your institution.

#### *Junior Colleges (Two Years)*

1. Offering courses to fit students for entering the junior year of a four-year college or university.
2. Offering vocational terminal courses. Designed to carry

students one or two years beyond high school and give them vocational training in secretarial work, auto mechanics, salesmanship, or other subjects that will fit them to enter an occupation well prepared.

3. Offering both 1 and 2.

*Colleges of Arts and Sciences (Four Years)*

1. Limited to liberal arts and sciences.

2. Liberal arts and sciences with some vocational courses. The most frequently met vocational course is education, preparing teachers for high schools. Courses in commerce and engineering, journalism, and other subjects are also found. If vocational courses are offered they should be honestly supported and taught in a manner worthy of the institution, and not merely used as advertising devices for purposes of competition.

3. Either of the above with graduate work for the masters degree added. If graduate work is offered, it should be carefully limited to fields adequately staffed with professors able to direct worthwhile graduate work at a level comparable with that given at the universities for the same degree.

*Technical Institutes, Offering Technical, Vocational Courses Only*

1. Undergraduate only. The fields of instruction should be sharply determined.

2. Undergraduate and graduate. The fields of undergraduate instruction should be carefully determined and fixed. The scope and purpose of graduate work and research should be carefully fixed within the important fields of instruction and within the financial capacity of the institution.

*University*

Determine clearly the undergraduate vocational and professional fields in which instruction will be given. Determine fields of graduate work and research, limiting them sharply

to the fields peculiarly suitable and necessary to the institution and within her financial ability, and support these fields generously. A few fields well developed and supported are far better than many fields inadequately supported.

After the level of an institution is settled it should be developed at this level with several governing ideas prominently in mind.

1. Every institution has a personality of its own. Preserve it and do not violate it.

2. Preserve the integrity of the institution. Take no action that may seem to reflect unfavorably on the institutional integrity, honesty, and sincerity.

3. Stop thinking in terms of competition with other neighboring institutions. Think of how best you can cooperate with them. The work of education, like that of religion, will never be so completely accomplished that energy can be spared for competition.

There are now developing numerous fields in which cooperation is being effected. In some cases colleges are cooperating in instruction, library development, and in other ways with nearby institutions. Swarthmore, the University of Pennsylvania, Haverford, and Bryn Mawr have developed cooperative enterprises in research, teaching, and use of facilities that point to a rich and significant program in the future. Among university and college libraries cooperation has already become an important aspect of the educational picture. Efforts are made to avoid unnecessarily duplicating expensive collections; also by lending freely and by use of microfilms, the unnecessary purchase of expensive books is avoided.

A notable instance of cooperation is that between the University of Texas and the University of Chicago in operating together a great astronomical observatory in Texas.

*Does the education offered by your college best suit the needs of your constituents?*

Education is very conservative. Times and constituents change; what was most suitable once may not be suitable now. Yet a faculty tends to perpetuate courses and curricula as they were, without much change, and with few new departures.

Present offerings are not necessarily the best that could be given. Often a college can materially improve its services to its students without material increase in expense. Any such change usually must originate with the trustees or the administration.

Test the education given by your college against the educational needs of your constituents. While the great majority of educational needs are probably identical with those of other constituencies there may be one or more peculiar, outstanding need here. If so, are you serving it?

Does your institution draw her students chiefly from:

1. A very limited geographical area?
2. A special constituency, as members of a certain religious sect?
3. A region where a single industry is dominant?
4. From one of the distinct regions of the United States?
5. From all over the nation?

After the origin of the major part of the students is determined, endeavor to determine whether the offerings of the institution are those which will best serve these students. Should the appeal of the college best be carefully restricted or widely extended. If there are some special needs, serve them. If there are only standard needs, why attempt to cover everything?

A few illustrations may be useful. At Akron, the great rubber center of the country, the University of Akron offers strong courses in the chemistry of rubber. Alfred University, located near great ceramic industries, maintains one of the strong departments of ceramics. The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas and Iowa State College, each in the center of great livestock areas, maintain strong Veterinary Colleges.

So far as possible develop to its highest the particular potential strength of your institution, rather than dissipate her finances in an attempt to compete with every rival.