

R.G. Weyant *

Response to Dr. Bernard J. Shapiro

Since I find myself in general agreement with much of what Professor Shapiro has said, particularly about Faculties of Education being part of the larger university institution and the need for cooperation, what I shall attempt to do is to elaborate on a few of his points and to take issue with him on just one point.

It may be well to begin with what Professor Shapiro has referred to as "an article of faith" since most universities need all the articles of faith they can get these days. This particular article of faith is "that university educated men and women act creatively in society and, therefore, will be a moving force within it." There is, in fact, a growing body of evidence to indicate that this is the case and, moreover, that the probability of an individual making a creative impact on society may be positively related to the amount of broad based, liberal arts education that the individual has received. Some of the evidence comes from studies made by private corporations. Recently, Chase Manhattan Bank carried out a study of its managers. Of those managers who were identified as being most successful, some sixty percent had liberal arts baccalaureate degrees while of those identified as the least successful managers, some sixty percent had M.B.A.s.¹ General Motors has stated that it wishes to attract "sizable numbers of college graduates whose analytical and language skills have been honed in a liberal arts program."² A much publicized study by American Telephone and Telegraph has found "that the Bell System's liberal arts graduates were promoted faster, were rated higher in administrative skills, and were found to have more management potential than technical graduates."³

What are the skills that the corporations are finding useful in the individuals they are placing in leadership positions and might some of those skills be important in education? Three years ago a report was published of the findings of a fourteen year longitudinal study of liberal arts education in the United States. The study began with a survey, from Plato to Clark Kerr, of views of the goals and presumed effects of liberal education. From the survey, the authors constructed a list of goals and effects:

1. Thinking critically or possessing broad analytical skill.
2. Learning how to learn.
3. Thinking independently.
4. Empathizing, recognizing one's own assumptions, and seeing all sides of an issue.
5. Exercising self-control for the sake of broader loyalties.
6. Showing self-assurance in leadership ability.
7. Demonstrating mature social and emotional judgment; personal integration.
8. Holding equalitarian, liberal, pro-science and anti-authoritarian values and beliefs.
9. Participating in and enjoying cultural experience.⁴

The details of the study, which followed a number of graduates of the class of 1968 for twelve years, are not something that I want to take the time to go into here. In general, however, the authors found that broad liberal arts education, in contrast to narrower vocational education, did appear to have a lasting effect into adulthood in a number of ways that would be expected from the

* Dean, Faculty of General Studies, The University of Calgary.

list of goals and presumed effects. It would seem that the effects of a broadly based, general education which are proving to be of value to corporations might also be of value in Faculties of Education. Moreover, our students will make a difference in society only if we give them the information, the skills and the attitudes necessary to make a difference. This should be an important scholarly concern of any Faculty of Education. If we are not educating our students to make a difference and demonstrating to them that they *can* make a difference, then we have no rational reason to believe that they ever *will* make a difference and we must seriously ask ourselves what it is we believe we are doing in education. One approach to this particular scholarly concern of Faculties of Education might be, as Professor Shapiro has suggested, for all of us to adopt a more cooperative stance within universities and to make greater use, in education curricula, of the arts and science programs that already exist within the institutions.

This raises the question of an appropriate curriculum for education students and a number of times Professor Shapiro has referred to one or another aspect of curriculum development. I do recognize that Faculties of Education have special problems here, having to deal not only with curriculum committees within their universities but also with provincial Departments of Education, teachers' organizations, school boards and concerned parents. But I believe that universities in general have been taking a very reactive role and failing to adopt an aggressively creative role. We have gotten into the habit of saying to the public, "tell us what you want us to do and we will do it!" But it is not at all clear that the voices of the public, in the form of politicians, businessmen, parents and students speak with any great wisdom in relation to education and, particularly, in relation to curriculum development. I am in complete agreement with the general thrust of Professor Shapiro's remarks that Faculties of Education, and universities in general, must resist the temptation to become manpower training centres. It is a real temptation. Paul Axelrod, writing in relation to the politics of Ontario universities, has commented:

Universities which therefore increasingly resemble high-minded trade schools can expect to survive and even prosper. Those which seek merely to promote culture, to serve the less privileged, to encourage critical thinking or the "pursuit of truth" may find themselves damaged beyond repair.⁵

Two points on which I am also in agreement with Professor Shapiro are the need for Faculties of Education to enter into cooperative ventures with other parts of the university and (not surprisingly) the importance in every student's program of some background of general education. Many of you will be familiar with the joint proposal made to the Alberta Minister of Education by the Deans of the Province's Faculties of Education. The proposal is titled "The Education of Teachers in Alberta: A Model for the Future." In the "Preamble," the Deans have made explicit some of the difficulties they see facing teachers both at the present time and in the future. They conclude:

If our future educators are to be equal to the task before them, thereby playing a vital role in maintaining and ensuring the quality of human experience in our society, bold and courageous steps must be taken now to help teachers anticipate and prepare for this challenge.⁶

Of the ten recommendations made by the Deans, one was:

That the program of teacher education require five years university education, comprising,

- (a) three years general university education, including specialist studies and basic/liberal education; and
- (b) two years professional preparation, including thirteen weeks of practicum.⁷

For some time now we, in the Faculty of General Studies, have been discussing with the Faculty of Education here at The University of Calgary a joint degree program that would be five years in duration and would have students completing our new, directive General Studies program as well

as work in the Faculty of Education. At the end of the five years students would receive both a B.A. in General Studies and a B.Ed. in Elementary Education. If these negotiations work out, this could become the required, normal route for students taking degrees in elementary education at The University of Calgary.

Since the concept of a degree program in General Studies is not one that is likely to be familiar to many of you, let me take a few moments to tell you a bit about it. The Faculty of General Studies came into existence on July 1, 1981 with a mandate to provide innovative, interdisciplinary undergraduate courses and programs. We inherited a number of programs and responsibilities that had originally begun in various parts of the University. These included programs in "Canadian Studies," "Women's Studies," "Science, Technology and Society," "Urban Studies," "Leisure, Recreation and Tourism Studies," and "Legal Studies." In addition, there were a number of "world area" programs — African Studies, Latin American Studies, South Asian Studies, East Asian Studies, and the Soviet Union and East European Studies. The University's Effective Writing Program, with the Effective Writing Centre, is also located within the Faculty of General Studies. In addition, we inherited the task of registering and advising approximately eighty percent of the University's incoming students, which means that some nine thousand students are registered in the Faculty although most of them will transfer into the disciplinary and professional Faculties during their first two years. Approximately eighty to one-hundred students a year take B.A. or B.Sc. degrees in General Studies. The curriculum we inherited was an extreme example of the "elective" model and came close to being an "any twenty courses make up a degree" type of program which we believed was not very adequate.

On the first of July of this year we introduced a new, highly directive curriculum that had been more than two years in the planning. During that planning time we had come to a conclusion very similar to a point made today by Professor Shapiro. It is that one fundamental problem shared by most North American universities is that the academic and administrative structuring of the institutions is carried out on the basis of the traditional, nineteenth century academic disciplines. It is a structure, we believe, that has invited protectionism and discouraged any fundamental curriculum experimentation, innovation and change. More important, the departmental structure has worked to discourage most attempts to provide students with an *integration* of the knowledge they gain within individual disciplines.

The curriculum we are just now introducing is a mixture of specially designed, integrative General Studies courses with a number of traditional courses from the various disciplines. There are four core areas required of every student. The first core area is called "Heritage" and consists of two mandatory full-year courses. The two Heritage courses are a combination of Western civilization, intellectual history and philosophical analysis with a heavy writing component. They are designed to emphasize the *interaction* between traditional areas ranging from the fine arts through science and technology.

The second core area is called "World Areas" and takes advantage of the programs which I mentioned already exist within the Faculty. Students are required to choose one of these areas and to take a number of courses pertinent to the world area. The goal of this requirement is to have students understand that people from other cultures view the world differently than they do, through different philosophies, different social systems and different religions as well as from different economic levels.

The third core area is one for which we tried in vain to find a short and sexy title. We finally settled for "Information and Skills Necessary for Life in the Twenty-First Century." It is a two

part requirement. To satisfy the "information" part of the requirement, students will have to choose from among a number of courses we teach that have titles such as "Change," "Computers in Society," "Leadership, Influence and Power," "Technology and Modern Society," and "Education and Society." For the skills part there are existing courses in decision making skills, writing and communication skills, statistical skills, programming skills, etc.

The fourth core area is called "Concentration" and plays a role somewhat similar to that of the traditional academic majors except that it has as its focus a topic or problem that is interdisciplinary and that we think will be of interest and of use to individuals living in the twenty-first century. Those areas of concentration that have already been developed are "Legal Studies," "Canadian Studies," "Science, Technology and Society," and "Women's Studies." We are in the process of developing concentrations in "Communications," "Resources," "Folklore and Ethnic Identity," "Leisure, Recreation and Tourism," "Art and Culture," "Urban and Regional Studies," "General Science" and "Educational Studies." The last of these would presumably be the area of concentration taken by students who were doing a joint B.A./B.Ed. degree, but it would also be available to students who had no intention of becoming teachers.

In addition to the core areas we have a "Distribution" requirement that has each student taking a number of courses that range from science and technology through the fine arts. There is also a "Computer Competency" requirement for graduation. Most university requirements in computer literacy require students to learn programming skills. We believe this to be a mistake. It is not at all clear that most of our students are going to have to make use of programming techniques or sophisticated computer languages since two of the major goals of present computer development are self programming capabilities and the use of natural languages. Our computer competency requirement has two parts, to demonstrate a "hands on" ability to use a computer and also to demonstrate a knowledge of the uses, limitations, and social, psychological and ethical problems raised by computers in our society. Students may work for a B.A. or B.Sc. degree or a B.A. (Honours) or B.Sc. (Honours) degree in General Studies.

It may seem as if we have strayed rather far afield from Professor Shapiro's paper with my commercial for the Faculty of General Studies, but I do not really think so. One way in which Faculties of Education can meet their scholarly obligations is in conjunction with other Faculties. There is no sane reason to assume that each Faculty must, all by itself, be prepared to teach everything to its students. In the present instance, members of the Faculty of Education have been teaching our course in "Education and Society," have been involved as members of our curriculum committee in the planning of our new degree program, and will be involved in the teaching of the Heritage courses as well as the concentration in "Educational Studies." We, in turn, have been responsible for the program of prospective education students during their first year at the University and will become very much involved in their education if the new joint degree program is approved. We believe that this is the way it should be. Unfortunately, as Professor Shapiro has pointed out, this is not always the way it is. I have had young, untenured faculty members from other Faculties, who would still have to face promotions committees, come to me and say that they were interested in helping us with our courses and programs but that they would prefer that their Deans and Department Heads did not know they were doing it. That, to me, is a very sad comment about the insularity and rigidity of some of our academic administrators, or "middle managers" as they are accustomed to call themselves.

Finally, I should like to turn to the point on which I believe that I may disagree with Professor Shapiro. In his comments on the idea of the university he mentioned two primary objectives of the

university as a centre of learning. They are:

- (a) The engendering in all of its members an ability to ask questions linked with generalized knowledge and to use evidence, logic, and intuitive judgment to provide answers:
- (b) The adding to our cultural capital through additions to knowledge, insight, and material innovation.

I wish that I still believed it to be so. The future that many of us once thought existed for universities was that of institutions in which ideas and research problems could be pursued for their own sake and for their own intrinsic interest. We saw the free exchange of ideas and the development of thoughtful, critical minds as our primary functions. We have watched as this future began to change and as the goals of universities began to move in other directions. Among these directions have been those created by unevaluated public demands for job training and those generated by the universities' own attempts to enhance and share in corporate profits. As federal and provincial funding for higher education becomes less abundant, conventional wisdom is arguing that the future of the universities lies with closer ties to the corporate world through increased corporate gifts and corporate sponsored research. We are also seeing an increasing influence on educational institutions of the accountants, computer systems managers and financial planners who would be as much at home working for the Bank of Montreal as for the University of Montreal. More and more they are deciding what can happen within the universities and in what directions the institutions will be allowed to develop.

It is fascinating, if disconcerting, to witness the fundamental change in attitude which seems to have taken place. University administrators who have correctly and consistently resisted *governmental* interference in their institutions' autonomy are now rushing into relationships with private corporations, apparently with little thought about the loss of autonomy that these relationships may involve. The image is one of a bandwagon chugging merrily along with university presidents, deans and some of the more enterprising faculty members scrambling to leap on board before they are left standing in the road eating corporate dust. While private support can always be argued to be a good thing since it lessens the possibility of governmental interference and control of universities, the growing extent of that private support is becoming worrisome. Private corporations do not usually invest tens of millions of dollars in any enterprise without attempting some form of control of the direction in which the enterprise moves.

This control may not be exerted in any overt, malicious or heavy handed way, but it does occur and has been documented in everything from CBC documentaries⁸ to articles in *University Affairs*⁹ to the work of Paul Axelrod.¹⁰ Donations of equipment, money for salaries, buildings, etc., in specified areas such as computer science, petroleum engineering and business that are of interest to corporations in achieving their own goals but which may or may not be congruent with the goals of the universities, have an effect on the direction that the university grows even though it may be argued that other areas of study will benefit from the presence of the buildings, computer hardware and the like. It is a version of the "trickle down" theory of Reaganomics (referred to by John Kenneth Galbraith as the "horse and sparrow" theory of economics — feed enough oats to the horse and in time the sparrow will get some). I cannot help but feel that we live in a world where both Faculties of Education and Faculties of General Studies are to be found among the sparrows.

In the end I guess I really believe that the scholarly concerns of a Faculty of Education should not be all that different from the scholarly concerns of everyone engaged in higher education. They

include, as Professor Shapiro pointed out, teaching that provides students with a broad cultural and intellectual base as well as necessary professional knowledge and skills, and scholarship of a high quality that is motivated by genuine intellectual curiosity rather than a desire to have something to list on this year's annual report and that is carried out with a level of methodological sophistication that can stand the scrutiny of the best refereed journals in the field. Early in his talk, Professor Shapiro referred to the relatively low status of Faculties of Education in most universities. This has certainly been the case in every university with which I have been associated either as a student or a teacher. This is an attitude that is related, in part, to being either a professional Faculty or an innovative Faculty. When we introduced a number of interdisciplinary General Studies courses into the curriculum in 1981, our General Faculties Council questioned me for an hour and a half on our submission. They then spent seven minutes discussing all of the other submissions from the rest of the institution. But if we are to be painfully honest about it we must admit that in some cases the low intellectual regard in which some Faculties of Education and some individual faculty members are held has been deserved. This, it seems to me, should be the real scholarly concern of every Faculty of Education, and, indeed, of every university faculty member since the public at large neither recognizes nor understands the details of administrative and academic structure behind which some of us like to hide. Faculties of Education are highly visible with the public and that public has little interest in the fact that my appointment may be in the Department of Psychology which is in the Faculty of Social Sciences rather than in the Department of Educational Psychology which is in the Faculty of Education. The scholarly concerns of the Faculties of Education have to be the scholarly concerns of all of us. If the intellectual calibre of our Faculties of Education is high, we shall all benefit. If the calibre is low, we shall all suffer. This, I take it, is part of what is involved in Professor Shapiro's reference to a more cooperative model within universities, and I am certainly with him on that point.

References

1. Cited in Richard Warch "Education and the World of Work." A paper presented at the 48th Executives' Conference of The Institute of Paper Chemistry, May 9, 1984.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Kathryn Mohrman, "Liberal Learning is a Sound Human Capital Investment," *Educational Record*, (Fall, 1983).
4. David G. Winter, David C. McClelland and Abigail J. Stewart, *A New Case for the Liberal Arts*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981).
5. Paul Axelrod, "The Politics of Ontario Universities," *Canadian Forum*, (April, 1982).
6. The Deans of the Education Faculties of the Universities of the Province of Alberta, "The Education of Teachers in Alberta: A Model for the Future," A Report to the Minister of Education, 1984, p. 2.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
8. CBC "Ideas" programs on "The Academic-Industrial Complex: Parts I and II," Nov. 18 - 25, 1982.
9. For example, James Downey, "The University as Court Jester," *University Affairs*, (May, 1983).
10. Paul Axelrod, *Scholars and Dollars: Politics, Economics and the Universities of Ontario 1945 - 1980*, (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1982).