

DOANE COLLEGE
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II

But this evening I wish to suggest that the American commitment to education

--is not just a commitment to access

to our schools and colleges;

--it is a commitment to excellence and service too.

And while we celebrate the dream of expanding opportunity, it is essential that we focus not only on the entry point to college, but on its ends as well.

the great labor leader wrote

At the turn of the century, Samuel Gompers ~~wrote~~.

"Education should provide so wide an understanding of the relation of one's work to society that no vocation could become a rut and no worker could be 'shut off' from a full and rich life in his work."

magnificently

Samuel Gompers captured ~~the~~ the spirit of this conference. ~~by suggesting that~~ The richness of one's education and the fulfillment of one's work are inextricably interlocked.

BUT THAT POWERFUL DECLARATION ALSO LEAVES US
 WITH A
 AND THE TANTALIZING PROBLEM ~~IS THAT WE~~
~~IS LITERALLY US LIKE TO FORGET.~~

3A

HOW CAN WE PROVIDE OUR STUDENTS WITH WHAT GOMPHUS CALLED.

VACHEL
 WINDSOY
 IT IS THE WORLD'S
 BAKES ONE CRIME
 SOME GROW DULL
 SOME SLEARN NEAR
 STONE-NOBODY
 THE - LIKE
 SHEEP

• SO WIDE AN UNDERSTANDING
 WHAT CAN WE DO TO MAKE
~~SURE~~ LIFE WITH RICH & POOR
 AND NOT REDUCED TO WHAT COMERS
 CALLED - A RUT.

IN RESPONSE TO THIS CENTRAL CHALLENGE -

I'D LIKE TO PUT MY OWN POSITION ^{SPARELY} ON THE LINE

I happen to believe that to

prepare students for a productive life

~~WE PREPARE THEM FOR PROSECUTION~~

~~And I also believe that to achieve~~
~~this and~~ DECISIONS must be made
The curriculum needs
something I'll call STRUCTURE.

integration of life values

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The modest, general education reforms from the Revolution to the Civil War did not challenge coherence. Rather they reinforced it. Science and technology and modern history were added to the rigid and required curriculum because society's self-image had expanded, not fragmented.

And paradoxically the race toward "free electives" which followed was in its own way rooted in "commonality." But what was "common" was the freedom of self-determination; what was "shared" was the right to be autonomous and unique.

When general education languished and died, it was largely because the commonality of self triumphed over the commonality of substance.

"Radical individualism offered a more powerful and accurate image of the times than the earlier social anchor points.

o o o

Here I must insert an important caveat.

I happen to believe that students must be free to follow their own interests, to develop their own aptitudes, and to pursue their own interests, to develop their own aptitudes, and to pursue their own goals.

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After all--

- o To claim that our Nation is not one culture, but many;
- o to assert the rights of minorities;
- o to protect individual liberties from mass tyrannies;
- o to preserve the right to dissent, even to disobey-- these are all keys to liberty. And to the extent that they have flowered in our midst, and have been affirmed by diversity on campus -- to that extent we may be justly proud.

III

But this story of diversity, with all of its validity and vision, has an unhappy sequel.

Today the safest thing one can say about a college diploma is that the student probably has been around the campus for about four years.

Today we seem more confident of the length of a college education than we do about its substance.

STANFORD UNIV

General II

Uniform Requirement on non uniform people

I'm convinced its time to reaffirm that a truly educated persons also

- ① or to return to Gompers
we need an education
that widens understanding
and places our
life & work
in perspective -

Here's my point
~~My point is this:~~

A college curriculum that suggests that students have nothing in common is just as flawed as one that suggests that all students are alike. And I believe that if we are to achieve the "wide understanding" of ~~the world~~, we must introduce students to the common experiences which are widely shared.

0 0 0

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There is of course no single combination of courses to capture the essence of our oneness. But I'd like to suggest several possibilities to illustrate the point.

I ^{to widen ~~the~~ ^{our property} ~~the~~ ^{students should understand that}}
 First, we share a common heritage, ~~and we have a~~
~~obligation to help the world remember where it has~~
~~been--and how, for better or worse, it got to where it is.~~

- o All students ^{should} ~~must~~ be introduced to the events, individuals, the great ideas and great literature that have contributed consequentially to human gains and losses.
- o An understanding of this "past" from which all of us have come ^{should} be required of all students.

Obviously, to talk about "our heritage" has a familiar ring. But a notion need not be rejected just because it is familiar, and if our schools and colleges do not help keep the past alive, ~~we~~ ^{will} not only have lost our past, we will have lost our future, too.

Here I should insert a word of caution.

It is not enough to be told that events have occurred, ideas have been thought, and people have been born and have died. It is not enough to be told that great literature has been written -- as important as this heritage may be.

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V

Second, we all confront the challenges of the present -- ^{search for a wider understanding} and our quality education should reflect this fact.

It has always seemed curious that most past experiments in general education have focused exclusively--almost compulsively--on the past.

o They have been remarkably inattentive to the crucial common experiences in the contemporary world.

o I believe a quality curriculum should also examine our existence here and now and focus on those contemporary circumstances that also shape our lives.

Here I have three examples to illustrate the point:

o o o

First, we are all engaged in the sending and receiving of messages.

o Language is what makes us a unique species, and all students should be required to master the written and spoken word.

II SECOND : ~~the~~

Common experiences in
our contemporary world
fixation with the past

LANGUAGE

BASICS

Institution

WORLD OF WORK

- 12 -

The guiding logic here is to recognize our common membership in our social ~~structure~~ *institutions*

- o to clarify their functions, *these*
- o and to understand how organizations can and should be changed in light of changing social needs.

o o o

And this brings one to the central message of this conference.

I also believe that if students are to acquire the "wide understanding" of which Gompers spoke they must understand ~~the~~ *the centrality of work.*

~~meaningful education, and they must be prepared for a useful and productive life. This is a part of liberal education.~~

We hear a lot of talk these days about "liberal" versus "vocational" education, and it is suggested that our collegiate traditions are "demeaned" if they lead directly to a job. Such a view not only distorts the present; it also denies the past. Education has always been a blend of inspiration and utility.

It is true of course that some work is not vocation and that some jobs are not uplifting but degrading.

But the problem of relating work to education cannot be so easily dismissed.

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- o Many useful, challenging, and crucial jobs have emerged in recent years, yet schools and colleges still confer "prime legitimacy" on those jobs that have been around the longest and to those we like the best.

Because of tradition, lethargy, ignorance, and snobbery, mindless distinctions are made between what is vocationally "legitimate and illegitimate." Such distinctions have led to equally mindless choices about what can and cannot be offered at the arts and science colleges.

- o It is all right, some say, to prepare to be a doctor, but it is less all right to be a nurse.
- o It is all right to be an engineer, but to be a computer programmer is off limits.
- o Teaching college is just great, but teaching elementary school is something else again.
- o To dig the ruins of the past is a respectable objective, but to work with ruined lives in an urban jungle -- a much more demanding task -- is not so worthy.

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To read what has been written in the past is fine, but to aspire to write about the present -- as a journalist perhaps -- is not quite legitimate at many arts and science colleges.

What logic is used by those who make distinctions such as these, by those who -- through the curriculum they offer -- determine for their students which work is honorable and which is not?

*FACULTY - LOOK SCORPULLY AT ANY TALK OF JOBS
DEVOUT EVERY WORKING HOUR TO ASSURE THAT*

I believe schools and colleges should be places where students come to understand that, for most of us, work is an expression of who we are and where we fit. "I work, therefore I am" may overstate the case, but it speaks to our condition. *THEY HAVE TENURE.*

This is not to urge that colleges become vocational. Rather, it is to suggest that we begin to rediscover the true meaning of liberal education.

Several years ago, I spent several months in Cambridge, England.

It's a bucolic spot with gardens, ivy-covered walls, quiet academic courts, all far removed from the corridors of commerce and from the clang of industry -- or so it seems.

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And yet there is another story to be told. During my Cambridge stay I read The Masters by C.P. Snow -- a novel that probes academic politics by describing the process by which a Cambridge college selects a master.

In the appendix of the book Snow talks about the history of Cambridge University -- how it all began. He tells how students came to study with their tutors 600 years ago. They slept in dirty lofts and went hungry many times.

They faced poverty for months for one simple reason: Jobs lay ahead: "jobs in the royal administration, the courts, the church, jobs teaching in the schools." The training was in fact vocational, Snow declared, "and jobs lay at the end."

Harvard College was founded not only to defend the Christian faith, but also to prepare young men for jobs: the ministry, law, medicine, teaching, and professions pursued by the privileged class.

In more recent years our arts and science majors -- so far removed from charges of vocationalism -- have been in fact quite practical in their thrust, with students going on to graduate school or specialized job training.

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The unspoken assumption has always been that our graduates would get productive jobs; and the greatest embarrassment for any academic department is to discover that its graduates cannot get "placed."

VI

IX One final point, I propose that to acquire a "wide understanding" students must

- o not only look at the heritage we share,
- o and not only reflect on fundamental common experiences of the present,
- o but they also must focus on alternatives for the future that in a thousand separate and unsuspected ways are being shaped today.

Such a core course would spend some time looking at the "history of the future."

In many ways societies are held together by their images of the future. It is important to consider the images that earlier cultures have possessed, as well as to look more closely at utopian literature, science fiction, scripture, millenium tracts, and other sources of such images.

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- o Who are the social prophets of our time?
- o What images of the future does our society possess?
- o What are our central dogmas, and our stated or unstated forecasts?

These questions too, I am convinced, deserve a place in the experience of every undergraduate.

I suspect we are at a pivotal time in human history, and educators must approach their responsibilities with a sense of confidence and of urgency.

And here are the central questions we confront -- the curriculum of some future common core:

- o Where will we get our food, and how can it be appropriately distributed?
- o What about our energy supply, and how can it be equitably shared?
- o How can we reduce the poisons in the atmosphere?
- o Can we have a proper balance between population and the life-support system of this planet?

GREAT
IGNORANCE

40%

Golden Rule
Rational
Society
Parents

① OLD JOBS ARE BECOMING OBSOLETE

② AND WE CANNOT LIVE BY THE OLD ASSUMPTION OF THE PAST

BEST PREPARATION-

CREATIVE-IMAGINING / EINSTEIN

- 18 -

o ~~How can we live together, with civility,~~
in a climate of constraint? These are a
few of the transcendent issues that today's
young people must begin to think about with
great care.

These issues not only relate to values; they relate to
productive work as well.

VII

~~One final word.~~

Dr. Lewis Thomas, author of Lives of a Cell, and a trustee
of the Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center -- said recently at a
meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of
Science that these are not the best of times for the human
mind.

All sort of things seem to be
turning out wrong, and the century
seems to be slipping through our
fingers here at the end, with
almost all promises unfilled. I
cannot begin to guess at all the
causes of our cultural sadness,
not even the most important ones,
but I can think of one thing that
is wrong with us and eats away at
us: we do not know enough about
ourselves.

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We are ignorant about how we work,
about where we fit in, and most of
all about the enormous, imponderable
system of life in which we are
embedded as working parts....
It is a new experience for all of
us. It's unfamiliar ground.

Just think, two centuries ago we
could explain everything about
everything, out of pure reason,
and now most of that elaborate
and harmonious structure has
come apart before our eyes.

We are dumb.

Dr. Thomas's appeal is an eloquent one:

- o it is a plea for more perspective,
- o and it begins by searching for more
- o knowledge about ourselves--where we
- o come from, how we work, where we fit
- o in, and where we want to go.

and how their work is in fact

###

The pathway to
a productive &
fulfilling life

The wider understanding of business

Samuel

Conroy's

spoke.

I believe this industry can be achieved

students gain more on things

pay to transfer interest only at

(19)

DR THOMAS' ADDRESS IS AN ELOQUENT ONE

IT IS A PLEA FOR THE WIDER UNDERSTANDING
OF WHICH SAMUEL GOMPERS SPOKE

AND I BELIEVE THIS UNDERSTANDING
(CAN) BE ACHIEVED —

AS STUDENTS GAIN MORE KNOWLEDGE
OF THEMSELVES

SEE THEMSELVES IN SOCIAL
CONTEXT

AND GRASP THE FACT THE

IT IS LARGELY THROUGH OUR WORK

THAT WE ACHIEVE ~~OF~~ A

FULFILLING, PRODUCTIVE
LIFE

↓