

FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP:
NEW PRIORITIES FOR THE PROFESSORIATE

Remarks by
Ernest L. Boyer
President

**The Carnegie Foundation for
the Advancement of Teaching**

**George Mason University Faculty Colloquium
Fairfax, Virginia**

Thursday, November 7, 1991

not professed

This afternoon I've been asked to talk about

- **the role of the professoriate in American higher education.**

And I'd like to begin

- **by reflecting very briefly on how the role of the faculty has changed throughout the years.**

HISTORY

When little Harvard College was founded in 1636

- **the focus—quite "single-mindedly"—was on the student.**
- **Teaching in those days was a central even "sacred" function.**

And the highest accolade a professor could receive

- **was the "famous one" Chaucer extended to the clerk at Oxford, when he said—**
- **"gladly would he learn, and gladly teach."**

The institution in that day was often

- **far too rigid and too didactic.**

Still, teaching was considered the college's most essential mission.

It was the President who taught the

- **capstone course on morality to all students.**

And for a century and a half

- **that's what scholarship in America was all about.**

BUILDING

But then following the War of Independence

- **the focus of higher learning slowly shifted,**
- **from the shaping of young lives,**
- **to the building of a nation.**

In 1824, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

- **was founded in Troy, New York.**
- **And according to historian Fred Rudolph**
- **RPI was a constant reminder that America needed railroad builders,**
bridge builders,
builders of all kinds.

Then came the famous Land Grant Act of 1862

- **which linked higher learning to the nation's agricultural revolution.**

In 1867 Ezra Cornell

- **in Ithaca, New York said,**

I would build a college

- **in which students can study any subject.**

And when Lincoln Steffins visited Madison in 1909, he said that

- **in Wisconsin the university is as close to the "intelligent farmer"**

as his pigpen

or his tool house.

The focus of higher education now was on

- **"reality" and "practicality"**

is the way

- **David Starr Jordan**
- **President of Stanford put it.**

And so

- **By the late 19th Century**

The scholarship of teaching had been joined

- **by the scholarship of building.**

RESEARCH

Meanwhile a third vision of scholarship was emerging.

But the late nineteenth century

- **distinguished American academics who studied at the European universities of Heidelberg and Humboldt**
- **were profoundly influenced by the emerging "scholarship of science."**

Men like Daniel Coit Gilman

- **who founded Johns Hopkins in 1876**
- **were convinced that a new kind of university was required in America,**
- **one that focused "almost exclusively" on graduate education and research.**

In response to this emerging influence,

- **universities like Harvard and Berkeley, and most especially Johns Hopkins—to name a few—**
- **began to "emulate" the European model.**

And when the blueprint for Johns Hopkins was first drawn in the 1880's,

- **no undergraduates were included.**

It should be remembered too that

- **the community college movement in this country**
- **was sparked—at least in part—because**
- **The University of Chicago believed that**
- **teaching freshmen and sophomores**
- **was not an obligation that a truly outstanding university should have to do.**

The first two years of College Ed, it was agreed, should be "spun-off"

- **into something called a "Junior College."**

Still, through the first half of this century, most colleges and universities in the country continued to give priority

- **to teaching and**
- **to service.**

THE CURRENT CLIMATE

But then, following World War II,

- **priorities of the professoriate profoundly shifted.**

Federal research funds

- **for the first time dramatically increased.**

A new generation was trained

- **and went out to clone themselves.**

In the early 1960's, I was at the University of California, Santa Barbara and watched a former teacher-training and home economics institution

- **being folded into the prestigious University of California system.**
- **It was a wrenching process—as faculty expectations were dramatically redefined.**

In 1965 I joined the State University of New York where we struggled to protect diversity in a 64-campus system,

- **at a time when everything was "drifting upward,"**
- **and when research and publication became the single yardstick of success.**

During this post-war period the campus culture became increasingly divided into two separate campuses

On the one hand is the colonial college,

- **which we try to keep alive in undergraduate education.**

And we speak sentimentally in our view books

- **about community and family.**
- **View book - 60% (?)**

Collegiate Tradition

On the other hand there is the European university tradition with its emphasis

- **not on the student**
- **but on the professoriate**

not on general

- **but on specialized knowledge**

not on loyalty to the campus

- **but on loyalty to the guild.**

Students and faculty

- **live in two separate worlds.**

The irony is that according to Carnegie data

- **neither students nor faculty**
- **were participating happily with this arrangement.**
- **40% of students feel like a number in a book.**
- **60% of faculty say they prefer teaching to research**
- **65% need better ways besides publication and measure faculty performance.**

THE ANSWER?

Well, what precisely are we to do about all of this?

Is it possible to somehow relieve the tension between the university and the Collegiate Model?

Recently—at the Carnegie Foundation—we released a little monograph entitled

- **Scholarship Reconsidered**

And in this report we concluded that the time has come

- **to move beyond the tired-old**
- **teaching vs. research debate**

And begin to ask the much more compelling question,

- **what does it mean to be a scholar?**

And in response to that intriguing question, "What Does it Mean to be a Scholar?"

We concluded that there are, in fact,

- **four dimensions of scholarship**
- **that should be recognized and rewarded.**

And typically of the professoriate that reflected more recently

- **both the great diversity of higher education in the country,**
- **as well as the rich mosaic of faculty talent.**

Scholarship of Discovery

And we begin with the most familiar—

we say in our report that research is—of course

- **at the very heart of academic life.**

And we celebrate what we call

- **The Scholarship of Discovery.**

Fifty years ago,

- **Vannevar Bush—former President of MIT—put it this way.**
- **Universities—he said—are the well-spring of knowledge.**
- **And as long as scholars are free to pursue truth wherever it may lead**
- **there will surely continue to be a flow of new scientific knowledge.**

Indeed, I'm convinced that all professors should meet further essential tests.

- **First, every faculty member should have demonstrated his or her capacity to do basic research,**
- **which is what the dissertation is all about.**

Indeed, I'm convinced that one of the best ways to measure whether a professor is a teacher

- **is to ask him to choose the three most consequential new findings**
- **or new theories in his field.**
- **and then critique them in writing.**

That paper, in turn, could be

- **peer reviewed.**

The point is that

- **The Scholarship of Discovery is absolutely crucial**
- **if the creativity and quality of the academy is to be**
- **sustained and strengthened.**

Scholarship of Integration

And this leads me to priority number two.

In the new Carnegie Report we say that,

- **in addition to the**
- **Scholarship of Discovery,**

we also need what we call

- **The Scholarship of Integration.**

I'm convinced that in our fragmented academic world we urgently need scholars

- **who go beyond the isolated facts,**
- **who make connections across the discipline,**

and who can—by their creative work—help shape

- **a more coherent view of knowledge**
- **and a more integrated, more optimistic view of life.**

Some years ago, I was strolling nonchalantly along Charing Cross Road in London, England minding my own business when

- **I discovered, quite unexpectedly, a well-worn little volume entitled, *Essential Knowledge for All*—which incidentally was at the bottom of a box of discards.**
- **After handing over a pocketful of shillings—I became the proud owner of this neatly packed hip-pocket version of a core of common learning.**

There was a time

- **when we "really did" believe—too innocently, perhaps, that all of higher education could in fact be neatly packed in a single volume.**

But in recent years almost all of that vision of coherence has been swept away.

We now know that knowledge is almost endlessly expansive and that its quite impossible to capture the "sweep of truth"

- **during four years of collegiate study,**
- **or even in a lifetime.**

But it's also true that in recent years

- **the pendulum, I believe, has swung, I believe, too far in the opposite direction.**

In recent years

- **students complete the credits needed for credentials.**

But what they often fail to gain

- **is a more coherent view of knowledge**
- **and a more authentic view of life.**
- **They turn in their credits for credentials,**
- **but fail to see connections.**

Simple little story. Joan Cooney vs. ____

Ecological, fragmentation

No connection between what they learn and how they live.

- **Junior High**
 - **Water faucet**
 - **Light switch**
 - **Garbage chute**

Students study fragments

- **patterns and connections have been lost.**

I'm suggesting that scholarship, at its best, means moving beyond

- **traditional, academic boundaries**

and putting learning in

- **intellectual**
- **social**
- **and ethical perspective.**

Frank Press, the President of the National Academy of Sciences recently suggested that

- **the scientist is, in some respects, an artist, too.**

Frank went on to observe that

- **"the magnificent Double Helix—which broke the genetic code**
- **is not only rational," he said,**

"it's beautiful as well."

**And several years ago when the world renowned physicist
Victor Weiskopf was asked**

- **what gives you hope in troubled times**

he replied,

- **Mozart and quantum mechanics.**

But where in our fragmented academic world

- **can academics make connections such as these?**

The good news is that the old departmental boundaries are beginning to break down.

And I'm convinced that the most exciting work going on in the Academy today

- **is in the hyphenated discipline,**
- **in psycho-linguistics,**
- **in bio-engineering and the like.**

In what Polanyi calls the

- **overlapping academic neighborhood.**

Professor Clifford Geertz,

- **a wonderfully reflective scholar at the Institute for Advanced Study,**

wrote a provocative essay several years ago entitled

- **"Blurred Genes."**

In this essay Geertz concluded that

- **Something is happening today to the way we think about the way we think.**

And new disciplines are emerging

- **in response to new intellectual questions.**

I'm suggesting that

- **what we need to do today is give new dignity and new status**
- **to integrative studies,**
- **and reward reflexive, integrative ____**

Over fifty years ago, Mark Van Doren wrote that

- **the connectedness of things is what the educator contemplates to the limit of his category.**

Van Doren concludes by saying that

- **those who can begin early in life to see things as connected**

have begun the life of learning.

And this—it seems to me—is what good scholarship is all about as well.

THE SCHOLARSHIP OF APPLICATION

This brings me to category number three.

We say in the Carnegie Report that

- **beyond the scholarship of discovery**
- **and beyond the scholarship of integration,**
- **we also need what we call the scholarship of application,**
- **which means relating the theory of research to the realities of life.**
- **I'm talking ____ service in a ____**
- **Service at its best is rooted in good pedagogy, too.**

Donald Schön of MIT writes about

- **what he calls "the reflective practitioner."**
- **which means moving**
- **not just from theory of practice**
- **but from practice back to theory.**

This idea of making knowledge "useful" is rooted

- **in the land-grant colleges,**
- **in the polytechnic institutes,**
- **in the normal schools,**
- **in the conservatories,**

institutions that were—in the nineteenth century—in the nation's service.

Well, we're not in the nineteenth century—we're standing on the threshold of the twenty-first.

- **And I'm convinced that today's colleges and universities must respond to the crisis of this century,**
- **just as they responded to the needs of agriculture and industry a century ago.**

Today our shorelines are polluted,

- **our ozone layer may be threatened,**
- **our cities are imperiled.**

How can we justify a college that is surrounded by urgent human problems and essentially ignore them?

It's a failure,

- **not just socially and educationally,**
- **but ethically as well.**

And, incidentally, I'd like especially to urge that colleges give more support to schools.

Today the nation's schools are hopelessly overburdened.

- **They're being asked to do what the families**
- **and churches**
- **and communities**

have not been able to accomplish.

And yet frankly I'm convinced that most school critics

- **could not survive one week in the classrooms they so energetically condemn.**

To put it simply,

- **teachers and principals don't need more rules and regulations,**
- **they need more recognition,**
- **and more support of encouragement from higher education.**
- **I applaud George Mason.**

I'm suggesting that—in the end—theory simply cannot be divorced from practice.

- and that in developing new priorities for the professoriate,
- we simply must give new dignity and new status
- to the scholarship of application.

THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING

This brings me at last to category number four.

We say in the Carnegie Report that scholarship means

- **not only the ability to discover and to integrate and to apply knowledge.**
- **It also means inspiring future scholars in the classroom,**
- **a process we call the scholarship of teaching.**

Several years ago, I could not sleep, and instead of counting sheep I tried to recall all the teachers I had.

- **I must confess there were a few nightmares in the bunch.**

But I also remembered three or four outstanding teachers ,

- **who not only knew their subjects,**
- **but knew their students, too.**

These wonderful mentors had a huge impact on my life.

- **And I suspect that almost everyone in the audience today is here because of at least one inspired teacher.**

My point is that to keep scholarship alive we need classrooms

- **where there is active, not passive learning,**
- **where students are creative, not conforming,**
- **and where undergraduates learn to work together rather than compete.**

Since—in the coming century—

- **the truly consequential human problems will be resolved only through collaboration.**

I'm suggesting that

- **if students are not stimulated by great teachers,**

then all the talk about scholarship

- **in its richest, fullest sense,**
- **will be simply a diversion.**

Robert Oppenheimer,

- **at the 200th anniversary of Columbia University, put it this way:**

He said that

- **it's the proper role of the scientist that he not merely find a new truth**
and communicate it to his fellows.

But it's also the role of the scientist—Oppenheimer said—

- **that he teach,**
- **and he try to bring the most honest and most intelligent account of new knowledge**
to all who will try to learn.

And surely this means inspiring future scholars in the classroom.

SUMMARY

What I've tried to suggest this afternoon is that perhaps the time has come

- **to reaffirm the great diversity of American Higher Education,**
- **and to celebrate the great diversity of the professoriate as well.**

And is it too much to suggest that in the days ahead those who are

- **integrators, for example,**
- **or those who enjoy field work,**
- **or those who excel as scholars in the classroom**

will be rewarded alongside researchers

- **creating a "mosaic of talent" in the campus?**

Since scholarship is a seamless web

- **discovery with integration is pedantry,**
- **integration without application is irrelevance,**
- **and application without ____ school means that the flame of scholarship will go out.**

One further point:

- **In the Carnegie Report we suggest that faculty should be encouraged**
- **to move from one dimension of scholarly endeavor to another across a lifetime.**

And we propose something we call

- **"Creativity Contracts" for professors.**
- **During one contract period a professor might focus primarily on research.**
- **During another he or she might seek to integrate.**

Later the focus may be on teaching,

- **developing new courses, for example,**

or a faculty might devote a block of time to field work.

I also like the idea of

- **multiple academic citizenship**
- **that's being used more frequently on the campus.**
- **Departmental membership**
- **Hold _____**

I'm suggesting that what we need today

- **is a "broken field" approach to scholarship,**
- **one that would keep faculty professionally alive,**
- **and bring vitality to a "sophisticating system."**

The university should, in fact, promote creativity—not conformity,

- **not only in the classroom,**
- **but in the academic culture, too.**

And how about broadening scholarship

- **beyond the campus.**

In 1836, Ralph Waldo Emerson, a clergyman, was invited to give the Phi Beta Kappa lecture at Harvard.

Only recently have we confused scholarly with academic ____.

ASSESSMENT**The crucial issue:**

- **can we evaluate faculty ____?**

CONTEXT

Finally I cannot conclude my comments this afternoon about the professoriate

- **without saying one final word about the social context in which we in the Academy ____ carry on it's not ourselves.**

Today, the face of young America is changing.

- **The nation is becoming more richly varied—more diverse,**

and we should celebrate this rich mosaic of culture and traditions.

But it's also true that America is becoming a deeply divided nation.

- **We're splitting up along racial and ethnic lines.**

And if—in Century 21—we do not find better ways

- **to change prejudice on the campus,**
- **if we can't begin to heal the tragic racial or ethnic divisions in our culture,**

then I'm convinced that the future of the nation is imperiled.

In a Carnegie Report called

- **Campus Life**
 - **In Search of Community**

We suggest that a college to be a community must be

- **purposeful,**
- **just,**
- **honest,**
- **disciplined,**
- **caring,**
- **celebrative.**

Faculty are at the very heart of campus life

- **and have, I believe, a special role to play**

in building community

- **both in the classroom**
- **and beyond the classroom, too.**

Bringing the academic and civic dimensions of campus life back together.

This is the civic dimension of academic life

- **that should be vigorously affirmed.**

CONCLUSION

Here, then, is my conclusion.

For more than 350 years American higher education has modified its mission

- **in response to changing needs.**

And, as we approach a new century,

- **it seems absolutely clear that changes will be required once again.**