

PROGRESS REPORT
OF THE
COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE PROSPECT
OF THE CATHOLIC COLLEGE STUDENT
IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN
INTELLECTUAL LIFE



It would have been a source of great delight to me to have been able to come before you today with a report of substantial progress on the work of this Committee which was established at the gracious request of the Executive Secretary by the Second Session of the Thirteenth National Council. Unfortunately and disappointingly, this is not the case, but I want to make it clear that this is not in any way due to my opinion of the potential of such a Committee. I am quite sure that a Committee of this nature can make substantial and important contributions, not only to the Federation, but to the whole of the academic community in America today of which the Federation is a part. Although I feel that the Federation is a part of this community, because of the very fact that it is made up of students represented by their governments, I also feel that this fact has not been too evident in the past. To put it more strongly, I don't think the Federation itself has lived up to its responsibilities in this regard. Therefore I think it is to the credit of the Federation that it has sanctioned the establishment of such a Committee, and I feel sure that the work of a Committee of this nature will make it clear to the academic community of this country that the Federation is actually cognizant of its responsibilities in regard to academic pursuits.

Thus, while I feel that the work of such a Committee is of the utmost importance, I must tell you that the Committee has actually not functioned as yet. The reasons for this are purely personal as far as this officer is concerned. An unfortunate and unlooked-for situation arose within my family that made it absolutely necessary for me to cut down on my work for the Federation. As I viewed the situation at the beginning of the second semester, it became clear that at least one portion of my work had to go by the wayside, and, since this Committee was only established at that time, with no prospect of its work being completed in one semester, it seemed best that it be forgotten so that I could concentrate on other aspects of my office. Thus I am forced to come before you with little more than a progress report.

Due to the lack of activity then, my first recommendation would be this: that the Committee, as established at the Washington Council meeting, be allowed to continue, or better commence its work under the chairmanship of the Vice President in Charge of Student Affairs. I make this recommendation not so much because of the lack of activity, as I said, but rather because of the obvious potential and importance of such a Committee.

In addition to this, I would like to make a second recommendation as a sort of self-appointed Committee of one. From the vantage point of the Student Affairs Vice Presidency, I have observed the situation of the Federation at the present time, and I think that it calls for at least two new developments, both of which lie in the same area of interest. One is the Committee as I have already discussed.

The other is concerned with the fostering and development of the same kind of study and thought that the Committee would undertake, but among the students of our colleges and universities. I take it to be an obvious responsibility of the NFCCS to foster the study of such things as higher education, the role of the university, the intellectual life, the role of the Church in higher education, etc., among the students whom we say we are servicing, and I think this is a responsibility that has either been taken too lightly or not duly recognized in the past. I ask you now to recognize this responsibility and go on record as approving the following.

I recommend that all campus delegations, in order to better service the more serious and interested students in their schools, organize study days or study week-ends for the purpose of discussing such things as the nature of higher education and the role of the student in the educational milieu.

In order to answer the several practical difficulties which will undoubtedly come up, I shall attempt to go through them one by one.

In the first place, I have suggested that this be carried out by individual schools because it is important that such a conference or study week-end be open not only to Federation personnel, but also to any interested students in the school, and surely there are some who have complained that the Federation does not offer this type of service. In this fashion, the Federation will be offering pertinent service to these students. However, some schools may find it advantageous to combine forces with another near-by school. If such is the case, then by all means, proceed in this fashion. Such procedure would have the advantage of bringing together more of a cross-section of opinion. In any event though, the discussion groups should not be too large, and they should be quite informal. It may be necessary to break up the entire group at such a study week-end into more than one discussion group.

As to the location of such a study week-end, I would recommend that it be held at some out-of-the-way place, far from the maddening crowd, in the manner of a sort of retreat - a place where a group of people can think together quietly. Perhaps a campus will be the only place where this can be held. If such is the case, then make sure you will not be overly-disturbed.

As to the theme of these study-weekends for students taking place all over the country, I would suggest that it be "The Role of the Student in Higher Education". As you can see, at the end of this report, I have included a model agenda devised along the lines of this theme. This agenda should provide you with at least an idea of the sort of study week-end I envision, and I think it offers a number of possible areas of discussion while also providing a variety of questions to be discussed in each area. Of course all of this is just a suggestion. Any implementation of it would require particular alterations to fit particular needs and interests. However, it is at least a starter -- in the right direction, I hope.

You may be questioning this whole idea of a study week-end, i.e., as opposed to an orientation day or something similar as is usually held in the beginning of a Federation year. The basic reasons for a study week-end (which by the way is a concept already in use in other student organizations) are two, and here I repeat myself. First, we must use this idea to service students other than Federation personnel who are vitally interested in such questions, as the aim of the university, for example. Orientation days, on the other hand, are usually aimed strictly at new or prospective Federation personnel. The second reason is that the sort of questions I am posing for discussion are of such a nature that they simply cannot be adequately discussed or answered in the few hours of a couple of hurried sessions on a Sunday afternoon. Thus I think an entire week-end is much more practical.

I have one last practical suggestion, and it concerns the dates on which such a study week-end could be held. As you all know, the National Council of Catholic Youth, of which the NFCCS is a constituent member, sponsors an annual Youth Week of which the Feast of Christ the King is the traditional highlight. I am suggesting that such a study week-end, as I have been discussing, be held on the week-end of the Feast of Christ the King. Thus, the Federation would be making its unique collegiate contribution to the proceedings of Youth Week.

In the past few years, there have been many criticisms from the students and faculty members of our colleges and universities concerning the entire approach of something like Youth Week. In many cases I think these criticisms have been justified because I think it is a fact that up until the present time the proceedings of Youth Week have been aimed at the CYO mentality for the most part. However, I think it is time we began to make some more constructive criticism while nevertheless still recognizing the sincerity and truthfulness of those who have objected to Youth Week in the past. It is time, I think, that the Federation took it upon itself to make its unique contribution to the concept of youth in this country - a contribution which it alone can make - something in line with the sublime and unique aim of the university, the development of the things of the mind and the excellence of the intellect. I am convinced that this is the role the Federation must play, or else it is arguing against its own existence.

I think that the study week-end which I have outlined for you provides a definite area in which the Federation can play this role. Thus, as has not been the case in the past I am afraid, we will not only be contributing to Youth Week, but more importantly, we will be strengthening our own end, namely rendering service to students in a university milieu and in such a way as to further the student vocations of ourselves and others. It is my sincere hope that you will approve this plan and go on record as urging it to be implemented by every school in the Federation.

Jerold Kappes
Vice President in Charge of
Student Affairs



THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Model Agenda for Study Week-end

Friday - 8:00 P.M. - Seminar One

1. Short address by an informed student or faculty member on the general implications of the theme.
2. Question and answer period, and subsequent discussion on the talk. (Definition of terms, etc.)

Saturday

8:00 A.M. - Mass and Breakfast

9:30 A.M. - Seminar Two

1. The Nature of Higher Education

- a. Is the development of the intellect and the intellectual virtues the primary function of higher education? Its only function? Only one of its functions?
- b. Are there secondary functions of education? What are their relationships to the primary ends or end? Are the secondary functions recognized as being worthy "in addition to" the primary function(s), or do they complement one another?
- c. What are these intellectual virtues, and how are they fostered by higher education? In fact, are these virtues being fostered at all?
- d. Does the sphere of morality have a direct relevance to the educational milieu per se?
- e. Is the inculcation of the moral virtues one of the aims of higher education? Should this be true of Catholic higher education? In fact, is it true? (Consider the functions of the family and the Church in general here.)

2. The Role of the University

- a. Should the university be responsible primarily to itself, or does it have responsibilities in regard to any needs of society, or vocational or political interests?
- b. Would you say that at the present time the university in America has given in to these vocational and political interests?
- c. To what extent must the university be concerned with the future of a student after graduation? (Consider jobs, careers, etc.)

12:30 - 2:30 P.M. - Lunch and Informal Discussions

2:30 P.M. - Seminar Three

The Role of the Student

- a. Does the fact of being a student place a particular responsibility upon a person? Would you say this responsibility amounts to a vocation? If so, what is the nature of the student vocation?
- b. Are student interests limited to the academic sphere? Is this the proper state of affairs?
- c. Of what importance are family, parish and civic interests in the life of the student? What should be the relationship of these "outside" interests to the interests of the campus? Are these campus interests strictly educational?
- d. What should be the role of the student in regard to the Church? Is it different from that of any other Catholic?
- e. Do students have the responsibility to assist other students in being better students? Is this the essence of the Student Apostolate?
- f. What is the role of the student in regard to Catholic Action?

4:30 - Break and Informal Discussions

6:00 P.M. - Dinner

8:00 P.M. - Informal Discussions, Social Activity

Sunday

8:00 A.M. - Mass and Breakfast

9:30 A.M. - Seminar Four

The Student and the Curriculum

- a. In terms of education in the ideal sense, is the liberal arts type curriculum the only valid and legitimate one?
- b. Evaluate the liberal arts curriculum, as you know it, in terms of the needs of education today.
- c. Evaluate other types of curricula: Business, Engineering, Science, Social Science, etc. Could these be termed "vocational training"?
- d. Discuss religion courses as you know them. Are they adequate to educational needs? Are they commensurate with student needs, interests?
- e. What should be the place of theology in the curriculum?
- f. In terms of the curriculum, is it wise to promote the reading of indexed books?
- g. Discuss the Great Books type curriculum.
- h. Does the democratic doctrine of "education for all" raise any difficulties on the level of the university?
- i. What should be the role of the student in curriculum evaluation?

12:30 P.M. - Dinner, Informal Discussions



2:30 P.M. - Seminar Four

The Student and the Extracurriculum

- a. Is it necessary that students take part in extracurricular activities? Is this desirable? Discuss this in terms of the function of higher education.
- b. What is the role of extracurriculars in terms of the Student Apostolate?
- c. What kind of extracurriculars are best suited to the educational milieu? What are co-curriculars?
- d. What should be the roles of social and athletic activities in the university?
- e. What should be the role of the student government in regard to extra-curriculars?
- f. Are extra-curriculars, as you know them, being developed in the best possible fashion, so as to aid in the educative process and assist the university in its task? Can student government aid in this development of extra-curriculars?
- g. What improvements would you suggest in extra-curriculars in general?
- h. What is the function of leisure-time in regard to the student?
- i. Is there a good concept of leisure among students?
- j. Can student government aid in the proper development of leisure?

5:00 P.M. - Closing Manifestation; Benediction.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro

