NEW DIRECTIONS

STATEMENT TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON THE MASTER PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION OF THE CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

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March 23, 1973

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Joint Committee,

In his remarks before this Committee several weeks ago, President Hitch stated that the University of California agrees with the spirit and general thrust of the Joint Committee's views as expressed in the chapter on New Directions. By way of further testimony this morning, I wish to reinforce the President's opinion of this very important part of the Committee's Report and to make clear the University's support for your general conclusions that California "should commit itself to new modes of extended learning."

Universities and colleges in California, as elsewhere, are confronted with an array of fiscal, educational, social and political problems as unrelenting as they are unresolvable within the context of prevailing educational conventions. In an effort to discover suitable responses to these and related difficulties, the University and her sister institutions in this decade and the next can be expected to seek out and develop a variety of alternative, experimental and unconventional programs of study and accommodate new educational forms and structures. Among the more insistent pressures for such change are included:

--the unrelieved push for greater access to higher education and more equal educational opportunity;

--the desire of government to reduce unit costs of instruction;

--the unmistakable preference of some full-time students to mix part-time study with work and the growing desire of the fully employed to combine work on the job or at home with periodic full-time or part-time study; and

--the influence of communication technology on the variables of time and space in the conventional learning process.

Institutions of higher education in California have acknowledged these pressures and sought solutions to them in typically diverse fashion; and, I might add, with a measure of caution entirely appropriate to any reconsideration of long-established and deeply rooted first educational principles.

The development of nontraditional study programs in this country and abroad in recent years, as your Report noted, has given rise to a significant number of major new programs. In California, we have the University of California's Extended University, the State University's External Degree and a variety of programs undertaken by sister institutions in the private sector. And, more recently, entirely new institutions have been proposed in California for the purpose of developing nontraditional approaches to learning, i.e., the CCHE Staff proposal for a Golden Bear College; Dr. Martin's suggestion for a College of California; Senator Dymally's proposal for a California Open

College; and your own Committee's recommendation for a California Cooperative University.

There are then, in California, an array of nontraditional programs already underway and a number of proposals whose intent is either to complement such initiatives or to pre-empt them.

There are, of course, very real educational issues to be dealt with for which viable solutions must be discovered regardless of which organizational arrangement may in time come to be the most preferred, e.g., residency requirements, admissions criteria for the older student, design and development of curricula for older students studying off-campus, part-time.

There are also major operational problems, among the more intractable of which are those concerned with the provision of adequate library and laboratory services and the maintenance of personal and meaningful student-teacher relationships in non-traditional study programs. Imaginative solutions, within acceptable budget limitations, are required to bring books, periodicals, and non-book resources to an off-campus, part-time student body, and to assure that an intended emphasis on independent study does not result in cutting the student off from his teacher and/or from his fellow students when interaction among them is essential or helpful to learning. And the problems of counselling and advising older, working students are as significant as the solution is elusive.

The problems associated with the establishment of off-campus learning centers are also difficult to deal with. For example,

what should be the functions of such learning centers, their location, form, size and character? What are the costs? How can such centers be shared with others?

A coherent strategy for the assertive use of learning technologies will also need to be identified. These technologies can be used to improve learning, individualize and enrich the educational experience, extend the range of curricular choice, increase access to learning resources and improve the overall productivity of the instructional process, if properly employed. If carelessly or indifferently developed, however, they can depersonalize the entirety of the learning experience, dampen individual initiative and drive unit costs of instruction beyond fundable limits.

The educational quality of such nontraditional study programs is an issue of major concern. The several regional accrediting associations are only now beginning to grapple with the problem as are other state and national study commissions interested in the movement. Samuel Gould, for example, chairman of the prestigious Commission on Non-Traditional Study, whose final report is in press at this writing, has identified some of the dangers:

1. "There is the danger of deterioration of standards;
2. There is the danger of the external degree being used too much as a political instrument and too little as an educational instrument;
3. There is the danger of curriculum content vagueness;

4. There is the danger that in the excitement of developing new ways of delivering instruction and credentialling [sic] people, the important and needed debate over what constitutes an educated person will continue to be postponed."

The competence and motivation of the students; the adequacy of funding; the sufficiency of supportive library, laboratory and counselling services; the knowledge, skill and dedication of the faculty; the rigor of the program--these and related considerations bear upon the essential worth and integrity of any coherent academic program leading to a degree. Nontraditional study programs should be scrutinized no less in this regard than are established offerings and; and they doubtless will be.

For the last three years, the University of California has considered its opportunities and responsibilities in the area of nontraditional study and carefully weighed its options within the context of 1) the major issues facing higher education in the country; 2) the California Master Plan for Higher Education; 3) the implications such unconventional learning approaches would have for the University's established academic programs; 4) the problem of maintaining the standards of the University in this new and unfamiliar educational arena; and 5) the question of funding new programs while existing ones remain badly underfunded.

The first question we asked in considering the place of nontraditional study in as traditional an instituional setting as UC's was: 1) how adaptive, flexible and resilient had the

University been in its one century of existence when confronted with new educational ideas? The answer was that the University had been remarkedly adaptive to change, in spite of less generous observations to the contrary that derive in my view from an abbreviated view of history. The second question logically followed: 2) what was the prospect that the University's present faculty and administrative leadership would take seriously the development of new degree programs for and the extension of established ones to mature students studying part-time both on and off the campuses of the University? The tendency, of course, would be for such leadership to focus attention more on how the new would implicate the old than how the old could reinforce and invigorate the new, a problem avoided in the main if a new academic unit were to be created expressly to develop the program and relieve the established campuses of any burden in the matter. While such an approach would most likely relieve this problem, it would introduce others.

Two full years of careful study, planning and negotiation were required before the decision was finally made in favor of developing degree programs for adult, part-time students as an inseparable part of, and as a fully integrated effort within, the University's campuses and established schools and colleges. The decision was crucial on several counts:

a. it meant that the University's regular faculty would not only create, review, approve and monitor the programs but that they would also be responsible for the teaching of them;

b. it meant that the University would attempt to meet the educational needs of persons throughout their lifetime, and not just during what has come to be regarded as the "college years;"

c. it meant that the University intended to mix older with younger students in its established academic programs;

d. it meant that the University, not wishing to discriminate against older, part-time students or to mount the program as an extramural effort, would seek State funding for the program on essentially the same basis, at least initially, as its established offerings are funded;

e. it meant that innovations in curricula and methods of instruction would quite deliberately be fostered throughout the full range of the University's academic programs; and

f. it meant that responsibility for the maintenance of quality would rest with the same faculty committees and University procedures as govern all other degree programs offered by the University.

In short, the University intended to build on its existing strength, assure academic rigor and standards appropriate to the University of California and effect significant changes in the University itself over a period of time.

I would like to turn now to the Committee's recommendation for a fourth segment; and, in light of similar proposals made by others, including Senator Dymally, to consider Recommendation 40 more as a general proposition than to discuss its several parts.

There is, of course, much to be said for mounting bold new initiatives within the nurturing environment of an entirely new

institution whose present and future welfare depends upon the successful achievement of nontraditional educational objectives. Those responsible in such settings, among other things: 1) can settle upon their own administrative and admission procedures rather than confront the task of revising those already in force; 2) can devise and design new curricula unencumbered by the constraints of others already in place; 3) can recruit and appoint a faculty committed to the purposes for which the new institution is dedicated; and 4) can pursue resources and support with little regard for its affect on the general pattern of funding for higher education. In short, the range of discretion is greater and the constraints are fewer, however demanding and difficult may be the task of giving life to a new institution.

New institutions, of course, are as vulnerable as they are administratively attractive: 1) they can be blocked by more powerful interests without doing damage to or prejudicing established programs; 2) they can be used by competing interests for different but related purposes; 3) they can be embraced by influential interests whose purpose is not to nurture but to smother; 4) they can become too closely associated with the fortunes of one charismatic personality whose ill-timed departure would compromise the effort; and, 5) they can be hurt by a hostile or indifferent higher education community should it collectively choose to boycott the entire effort by refusing to acknowledge the essential worth and transferability of credit earned in such unconventional programs.

The advantages and drawbacks, of course, apply with as much relevance to new academic units developed within established

learning systems as to those created outside of them.

Nevertheless, the proposed California Cooperative University, or some variation thereof, may eventually prove to be the most viable approach to extended learning for the State to take, especially at the undergraduate level. No one's crystal ball, however, is really clear enough at this point to know. The evidence has yet to be assembled and analyzed.

We should like to turn now to the Committee's several arguments in behalf of California Cooperative University which, it seems to us, fall short of supporting what may otherwise be a genuine claim to the responsibility for planning and coordinating post-secondary off-campus programs.

First, California is certainly not, as the Committee suggests, "lagging behind other states in moving towards making off-campus educational services available to our citizens." No State has a system of post-secondary education as generally accessible to its citizens as does California. Certainly, many impediments remain--financial, administrative and curricular--to equal educational opportunity; and these have especial relevance for the poor and for the adult student. The maturing of the Community College system, the expansion of the State University and College system, the development of the University of California and the outreach efforts of the independent institutions have gone a long way toward knocking those barriers down; and, now through various extended degree programs, extension offerings and similar efforts, the higher education community in California is moving to remove some of the final obstacles.

Secondly, the Committee notes that there appears to be little possibility "for curricular innovation and new approaches to learning keyed to new clientele as long as courses and programs must be channeled through conventional department and academic senates."

The facts belie this assumption. Both the University and the State University and Colleges have encouraged and funded important changes in curricula, methods of instruction, independent study, credit by examination, self-paced learning and so forth. In several of its programs and on all of its campuses, the University has effected significant innovations through its conventional departments which include the use and deployment of microwave television to off-campus locations, audio-tutorial systems, computer assisted instructional devices, programmed learning materials and simulation exercises.

The Committee's third justification for a fourth segment evolves from the assumption that external programs developed by the segments will be more responsive "to institutional interests than to the educational needs of the people of California" and that there has been no coordination between the University and the State University on external programs.

Extended University degree programs are being organized as pilots and will themselves constitute a test of whether institutional interests or educational needs are served. If only institutional interests are served, the case for a fourth segment will have been substantially strengthened. As President Hitch remarked before this Committee, there is a distressing assumption throughout the draft report that "there is a necessary antithesis

between institutional progress and the public good." If extended learning models fail to serve the public good, they will have failed completely.

With respect to intersegmental coordination, the University of California and the California State University and Colleges have conferred throughout on the planning and early development of their respective programs and each was represented on and actively participated in a special CCHE committee concerned with extended and external degree programs. Since the segmental programs are only in the pilot stage, however, direct coordination between the two has been limited to the sharing of research results and methodologies, market data, and the identification of areas of cooperation.

As these programs get underway, more extensive coordination will be indispensably essential; and the State has every right to insist upon it.

Finally, the assertion that segmental organization "seems inappropriate to many of the new approaches" appears to contradict the Committee's expressed desire to "institutionalize diversity"--a goal in our view more likely to be attained through the functional differentiation provisions of the Master Plan than through the consolidation of all nontraditional programs into a single institution.

I would now like to make several brief comments on committee Recommendations 41, 42, and 43. These are consistent with the draft report's concern for institutionalizing innovation. We share your concern and have, over the years, systematically encouraged innovation and renewal throughout the University

through a variety of budgetary, administrative, and organizational initiatives, many of which have been funded from Regents' rather than State resources. The costs of such programs fall within the range of 1% to 3% which you suggest for the funding of innovative and experimental programs.

As you will have anticipated, we are also very supportive of your suggestion that new funds be committed to the fostering of innovation in post-secondary education; and, in fact, have just this year sought such funding for the Extended University, which the Governor has included in his 1973-74 proposed budget.

In conclusion, it is important to note that most nontraditional programs as are in place or anticipated in the United States take relatively little account of their prospective impact on the established learning system. Interaction between the nontraditional and the conventional is, seemingly, to be more inadvertent than intended. We believe this is a mistake and that California has the opportunity to chart new directions. What is needed is not only new and innovative programs serving new student constituencies. What is needed in addition is that such fresh approaches to the educational process <u>also influence the established learning system</u> so that it in turn can profit from the infusion of new ideas while lending its strength and experience to the development of extended learning opportunities; and, in this connection, the University was pleased to note your Committee's expectation that the segments would continue to offer significant extended learning opportunities even if a fourth segment were to be established.

We are confident that your Committee's interest in "new modes of extended learning" will materially assist the segments in their efforts to mount pilot programs designed to gain experience with the educational issues involved while testing their own capabilities in this new arena; and reciprocally, I am certain that the segments will fully cooperate with the Committees of the Legislature and other interested agencies of government as the idea of a fourth segment is studied and carefully reviewed. You have the University's pledge to do so.

Thank you.