

A COMMENTARY ON THE CITY AS A UNIVERSITY

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Except for the extension services of land grant colleges, the separation of a university from its surrounding community is of long standing. The major responsibility of a university has been the creation of new knowledge and the synthesizing and the transmission of this knowledge. This very isolation has given the university certain strengths. The abstraction and, in many cases, the pursuit of knowledge regardless of its allocation has been important in the past and has a high degree of relevancy for the future. If, however, universities are institutions of society, particularly in this present, complex situation, they must be sensitive to and monitor changing needs, and become involved in helping to meet these needs through their many resources. The foremost question is how this can be done without having an adverse effect upon the primary function of a university: education.

An article in the January issue of *Fortune* magazine states that two innovations came out of World War II which had major significance to society today. The first of these was the systems-planning approach to problem solving, bringing ends and means together, suggesting various alternatives and, finally, determining their cost analysis and cost benefits. The second innovation relates to the development of the joint federal-university-industrial research program. This continues to grow and nurture and has become an accepted way of life. However, the faculties of universities for

certain reasons are more attune to relating to national government and international government than to the government of the local community in which they reside. It is more exotic and more dramatic being on a study section or advisory council on a national or international level. It is a much cleaner relationship too, one that does not have to become involved in the squabbles and disorientation existing in the local community. It is much more attractive to an anthropologist, for example, to do research on some exotic island off the coast of Africa as to why the natives count certain kinds of beads in a certain kind of way rather than to study why the inhabitants of Harlem have certain customs and practices which inhibit their participation in the progress of society. It is also more fascinating for the linguistic expert to study the dialects of some underdeveloped nation than to perform the same job in the community in which he lives. This is not to minimize the importance of such study in far off lands among primitive tribes, but the importance of using these talents in helping to solve the problems in an urban population should be emphasized.

Dr. Densen has demonstrated what has been done in the area of health and the benefits that accrue both to the university and to the city in a joint venture. He would agree also with the desirability and necessity for involving other disciplines within the university and related groups of the community in such joint program endeavors. This recognizes the interdependence of health with other professional disciplines, in planning and action in the community.

A university can successfully become involved in community service programs if it first defines its role. For example, the staff in the Health Sciences Center of Temple University, believe they do have an important contribution to make in the community, but they have defined that contribution as establishing standards and doing research and evaluation in such areas as alternative methods of delivery of health care services and more effective utilization of health manpower. They then share the results of this investigation with the organizations which have the respon-

sibility for such activities. They plan to establish such a program under the auspices of our University Hospital for an area populated by approximately 50,000 individuals and to do the same thing in two satellite health centers. In both of these they will develop a base line of information from epidemiologic and statistical studies and then attempt to develop various plans of care with evaluation techniques so that several years later the effectiveness of what has been done may be evaluated as well as which parts of the plan were ineffective. In this way they become involved and participate in community problems, but do not become so overwhelmed with service that educational efforts are affected adversely.

Also, such community studies must involve and seek the participation of the various entities within the community; otherwise, the dependency is merely transferred from one group to another. For example, in one of the satellite health centers, which will serve a population of about 20,000, the alternative existed of building a pharmacy service or providing service through the four neighborhood pharmacists. If these pharmacists would engage in professional activities they would have a real contribution to make within the family and the community, and to the program. Working with the Dean of the School of Pharmacy and some of his faculty, the Health Sciences Center decided to involve these four neighborhood pharmacists and help them become real professional members of the team in providing health care. They will become an effective bridge between school and community.

One other suggestion relates to possible loan of faculty members to governmental bodies whether federal, state or local. The reverse procedure has occurred for many years, but with the increasing involvement of the government, particularly in financing, it would appear that the loan of some key faculty members for a period of six months to a year would help the fusion of the university's imagination and ideas with the government's, and provide a liberal education to these faculty members.

In conclusion, Dr. Densen has illustrated two very important points among several relating to a bridge between a city govern-

ment and a university. He has demonstrated the opportunity for interdisciplinary action and at the same time, has provided and enriched clinical teaching environments for students. The benefits to the other participants relate to their contacts with students and faculty which are always stimulating and help to add the scholarly resources of the university to the task force working on community problems.