

Welcoming New Faculty

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5 speech before
 Welcoming new
 Faculty members -
 9/11/50
 a.m.

The Committee making arrangements for this program suggested that my remarks be limited to three formidable topics - Aims of the Instructional Program, University Regulations, and Organization of the Faculty. Out of consideration for you, the Committee also quite properly imposed a time limitation of ten minutes. If I thought it were possible for a Faculty Committee ever to have sympathy or consideration for any Dean, I would say the latter limitation was also out of consideration for me; for the Committee realized, I am sure, that anything like an adequate discussion of such topics might lengthen our welcoming program unduly; this program, otherwise, might become a symposium on educational objectives and organization similar to those which have claimed so much of the time and thought of administrators, faculties, learned societies and of numerous professional groups striving for the clarification of objectives or projecting plans of organization and management of Universities in keeping with methods designed to achieve desired objectives.

At the outset, in pondering the aims of the instructional program of any University one is tempted into a consideration of the purposes and aims of higher education in our society. There is also suggested particular consideration of the nature and purpose of Louisiana State University, in the light of the variety and breadth of services this institution renders in our State and region. Concerning the former, I have rarely seen the heart of the matter more tersely stated than by President Stoddard. He recently observed that "**** the aim of higher education is not to turn out 'educated' men and women, emerging bright and shiny like so many insects from a four year cocoon. The aim is rather to give students a living fund of knowledge from which they may generate ideas. The aim is to encourage straight thinking ****." Such, I think, is surely the broad aim of the instructional program of this or of any University. It is an aim to which all of us will subscribe. We seek through the instructional process, at both undergraduate and graduate levels, to provide opportunity whereby individuals may improve themselves, ~~and~~ broaden their capabilities and sharpen their intellects.

In this phase of the process, we affect mightily the life prospects of individuals. By serving individuals in this manner, in turn, through the instructional process, we serve society by providing the professional skills and abilities required by that society. It is this dual aspect of our work which places such heavy responsibilities on institutions claiming to serve in the instructional areas of an institution of higher learning.

I recall the summation made by a Faculty survey committee at another American State University. After a searching self-analysis in which institutional purposes were considered as the necessary prelude to any delineation of proposed improvement in process, methods and services the Committee wrote:

"There is no doubt that initially the purpose of the University***was to furnish liberal and professional education at the post-high school level to the youth [the State]. It still has no more important purpose than this. Three basic and interrelated objects of such education are to train the individual to earn a living in a socially useful manner, to develop in him the highest cultural and intellectual interests, and to make him a moral, intelligent and well informed citizen with a deep sense of his obligation to the community."

Turning more specifically to L.S.U., the booklet embodying the Regulations for the Organization of the University, contains similar statements of general objectives. Emphasis is placed upon the instructional work of the University as its most important purpose. Thus we see from the University Code, which is

the basic statute governing this institution:

"The University is established and maintained to serve the needs of the people of the State. It shall seek to expand the areas of knowledge and understanding through scientific and speculative inquiry and in various ways shall encourage and assist the people of the State to a fuller development of their intellectual capacities and a greater enjoyment of their resources. With these ends in view, an adequate program of studies shall be provided in the liberal arts and sciences, in the important vocational and professional subjects including agriculture, business and commerce, education, engineering, law, medicine and military science and tactics; and additional courses may be provided in such other subjects as shall appear to be worthy of inclusion in the program of the University. Libraries and laboratories adequate for important and effective research and investigation shall be provided and maintained.

"Though the primary purpose of the University is to provide and maintain the highest type of instruction in the various important branches of knowledge for graduates of the high-school courses of study, it shall also offer such opportunities for instruction as may be practicable to persons in the State who are not in residence on any of its campuses."

The instructional program of this University, viewed as its primary purpose, is carried out as a matter of organization through the undergraduate and graduate academic divisions which include - the Junior Division, offering general education and preparatory courses for the senior colleges, the College of Agriculture, the College of Arts and Sciences, including the Schools of Geology and Journalism, the College of Chemistry and Physics, the College of Commerce, the College of Education, College of Engineering, the Law School, the Library School, the School of Music, the School of Social Welfare, the Graduate School, the General Extension Division, the School of Medicine, located in New Orleans and the Francis T. Nicholls Junior College of L.S.U. located at Thibodaux, Louisiana. A mere enumeration of these major academic ^{divisions} even without enumeration of the basic departments comprising each division or college, indicates the broad scope of the University's program in teaching and in research,

How well instructional services are performed in any area or in any field of knowledge at any given time - that is, the quality with which the aims of the instructional program are achieved depends, in the last analysis, not upon organization or high purposes, but upon the scholarship of the Faculty and student-body.

Only through the scholarship of the Faculty and the students is the teaching program made vital and effective. As we begin working together this year as members of the Faculty of this University, the University administrators may take pride in the scholarship you represent collectively and individually. With confidence the University looks to you to join your departmental colleagues in the academic division of the University which you represent, adding that annual increment of strength in scholarship with which every University must be constantly replenished and without which no University can flourish. This University, in short, looks to you and to your colleagues, to advance the instructional work of the University in the various fields of knowledge founded upon that sound scholarship which is the heart of the instructional process. Through your work and the work of the others whom you now join as members of the Faculty, the aims of instruction of this institution will, we are confident, be maintained at a high level of educational effectiveness during the current year and in ensuing years.

I will only briefly refer to University Regulations and the matter of the Organization of the Faculty. You are asked to familiarize yourselves with the major academic regulations found in the catalogue, pp. 75 to 79. In addition, may I invite your attention to the booklet entitled: "Regulations for the Organization of Louisiana State University and A. & M. College". You will find

in that booklet the basic law governing the University - the University Code; the by-laws of the governing Board - our Board of Supervisors; the duties and responsibilities of the principal officers of the University; the Organization of the University into Schools and Colleges. A mere glance at pages 49 - 53 of these Regulations setting forth the Educational Divisions of the University or an examination of the University Catalogue, also furnished to you, will give you further indication of the breadth of the University's instructional programs and the organization designed to carry out these functions.

May I invite your attention particularly to that portion of the Booklet dealing with appointments, promotions, tenure, leaves of absence, group insurance, retirement, and related matters. Answers to any specific inquiries you may have as to any of these matters will be supplied upon request.

Concerning the organization of the Faculty, it should be observed that members of the Faculty, through departmental deliberations, through the meetings of the college faculties, and through the Faculty Council, have a major share in the shaping of educational policy at L.S.U.

Section 52 of the Regulations sets forth the functions, purposes, organization and authority of the Faculties of the several Colleges and Schools of the University and Section 53 of the Regulations sets forth the responsibility of the departmental staffs.

The important University-wide Faculty organization is the Faculty Council. Under Section 50 of the Regulations, you will note that the Faculty Council includes all Faculty members through the rank of assistant professor. Instructors are invited to attend the monthly meetings of the Faculty Council; but have no vote. The Committees of the Faculty Council and their personnel you will find on a mimeographed list which is available for distribution to you.

The functions of the Faculty Council are broadly stated in Section 50(b) as "co-ordinating authority in all matters involving the establishment of curricula, the fixing of standards of instruction, the determining of requirements for degrees, and generally the determining of the educational policy of the University in all matters affecting more than a single college, school or division." The University looks forward to your participation as members of the Faculty Council in its work and deliberations.

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In conclusion, may I say, as Dean of the University, that Louisiana State University considers it is fortunate indeed in having you join forces with us this year. We hope you will find your work stimulating and that you will call upon us for any assistance within our power to render. We operate under an open-door policy here and have no iron curtains to block information. If my office or any other academic officer of the University can assist you in any way, please call on us.