

The Deadly Halls of Ivy

'Hired Education': 60 Indictments

In 1517, Martin Luther nailed his "Ninety-five Theses" to the door of the Wittenberg Cathedral, placing before the public the concept of a religious revolution which had been brewing in the minds of many of the theologians of the day, and a number of the laymen as well. What followed was the religious, social and political revolution known as the Protestant Reformation, which has deeply affected Western culture to the present.

And what, you ask, is this bit of information doing in the Emerald and not in a history text? Let me explain. There is another revolution beginning in this country. It's being headed by students, and it covers the whole spectrum of our society. You've heard of student power, free universities, and experimental courses; you take advantage of pass-no-pass and course evaluation. But there are deeper things, and there is a philosophy behind it all.

So the Emerald is beginning to cover the revolution—in depth. To kick off this column, I am offering an article similar to Luther's theses, titled "Hired Education: 60 Indictments," by NSA official Mike Vozick, who spends his time creating experimental colleges.

My idea for this column, to be printed periodically, is to collect a hodgepodge of fact and comment focused on educational reform. What will follow will be reports on what's happening here and other places in experimental curriculum, plus articles by students and teachers at the University, reviews of other commentary from books and periodicals, and maybe even a little history. After all, the idea of student power isn't new; the first university of the Western world, the University of Bologna, was completely run by students.

In the article below, some of the questions are not relevant at the University, some are being asked now, many others should be asked. In asking these questions, you can tell what's right and wrong with this school. And you are asking, "Am I learning?" which is really what it's all about. Thus, 60 indictments:

1. Admissions: Are the right people getting in? The poor, the black? The other kind?
2. Advising: Are students helping each other to use the university?
3. Orientation: Does it tell how it really is?
4. Departments: Are students asked? Are they admitted to a discipline or indoctrinated into it?
5. Social Action: Does it get the breaks the government gets?
6. Buildings: Who plans them? Who has to learn in them?
7. Community Government: Who decides? What do students decide about their place of learning?
8. Student workers: \$1.25 an hour? Ever hear of unions?
9. Supplementary Courses: What about the things you want to learn, and can't?
10. Cultural Affairs: Does your campus build the arts you dig?
11. Institutional Research: Who does it? What do they ask? What answers do they give?
12. Community Research: Is knowledge being applied for or against the people in the city or state? The underprivileged?

13. Media: Are they improving in your part?
14. Public Relations: Are you in the picture? Is the picture honest?
15. Student Press: Does it ever get to the community? Is it learning to rah-rah?
16. Catalog: Who writes it? Is it English or jargon? Is it honest?
17. Personnel and Hiring: Are students consulted? Who decides?
18. Classes: Can students decide how to learn together? Are students encouraged to teach each other?
19. Administrators: Do they teach? On how the college works? Do they teach truth?
20. Seminars to big lectures: Do they explore the instructor's bias? Do students discover the problems of learning?
21. Parallel Structures: Are there any student-run alternatives to ordinary modes?
22. Independence of Freshmen: Do they get a chance to decide what to learn?
23. Enfranchised living: Can students run dorms, co-ops, learning quarters, etc.? Do they?
24. Rent strikes: Look, if there are rats in the dorms...
25. Co-op housing in the community: The college is in the world; why live in seclusion unless you are preparing for a life of privilege?
26. Fraternity: How about a non-exclusionary brotherhood in the 1960's?
27. The world: You're going to live there, why not learn there? Start small and move out to where life is being lived.
28. Semesters, quarters, and stuff: Whose convenience writes the calendar? Whose is the education anyhow?
29. Weekends, retreats, advances: Surround the president. Tell him how it is. Train some core to push a little. Or learn to meet and love others.
30. Negative fees: A sliding tuition scale by family income. No "scholarships"!
31. Problem-learning: Deal with real questions, real needs, relevancies, not disciplinary boxes.
32. Administration, again: Why don't students run the place, or help, or learn at it?
33. Student Governments: Why are they ugly, irrelevant, and undemocratic as hell? What's wrong with checks and balances instead of caricatures?
34. The Draft: How did a "grade" ever get to be a question of victim or executioner? Why don't educators refuse to participate in the rape of higher education?
35. Athletics: Is it possible that colleges may be ready to outgrow the circus?
36. Privacy: Are students intruded upon? Can it be halted?
37. Grades, Degrees, Credits: Can they become relics of the past?
38. Examinations: Why not train for self-evaluation? Do we need multiple choice? What do they tell about learning?
39. Rules for Conduct: Why are they almost invariably hypocritical and contradicted? What does a two-faced authority teach?
40. Mediation: Why is there no neutral desk where students, faculty and administration can improve learning together?

41. Hierarchy: Why do we trust the experience of teaching and deny any experience in learning? Teaching doesn't ever happen unless learning does, so why don't teachers simply talk to their students?

42. Why don't students sit in on decisions, as staff or for credit? Is there nothing to learn there?

43. Why aren't students trained to run tomorrow's universities, instead of learning to promote yesterday's disciplines?

44. Why don't teachers teach each other how to learn about teaching? Think they could ask the students?

45. Why are the faculty so jealous about their few vestiges of power? Why not share and conquer?

46. Democracy: Where is it? When will administrators act as they preach?

47. Self-starters: Why isn't this resource tapped? to teach? to start new programs?

48. Interns: Why not interns everywhere, instead, of just pre-med? Can they challenge?

49. Summer Sessions: Why not make them experiments in different learning?

50. Lobbying: Ever hear of it? For education? Got a state capitol?

51. Co-optation—The Great Bugaboo: Want to please Daddy? How about some self-reliance?

52. Ignorance: How about faculty and students learning something together?

53. People: Why can't students be people? Why do classrooms often have all the intimacy of municipal busses? A group of somebodies going someplace, apart, most of them not even heading where they want to go? Why don't people meet each other while learning?

54. Professions: What about the whys and the wherefores in the midst of all the whats and the hows? And that doesn't mean indoctrination into today's mores.

55. General Education: Why does it equal a general atrocity, with departments slaving over each other for the spoils? How about informing students about what there is to learn in the various disciplines? How about answering questions instead of super high school surveys? Why don't students run the GE courses with faculty as advisors?

56. The Freshman Year: Maybe it should be almost totally unstructured, small group discussions of what the students care about, and what and how to learn?

57. Primary or Reference Groups: Should a student belong to an encounter group to help him check out his own feelings while he is being educated?

58. The New: So suited as a teaching tool, why is education afraid of being relevant?

59. Evaluation: Why not give students credit for learning how to evaluate teaching?

60. Ghettos: Why not mine them as funds of relevant experience in every human discipline? Who's going to lose?

The university is going to become a conversation again, not a recording. Maybe only because some people tried to listen to each other. Maybe only because some people had the simple guts to ask.

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Schools' Quality Denied in Speech

By Associated Press

Students aren't getting the educational background they need to be effective workers in business, a Portland businessman told a group of school principals Friday.

John Mathews, vice-president of the OK Delivery Service of Portland and member of the State Advisory Council which guides Portland's community college programs, spoke at the winter conference of the Oregon Association of Secondary School Principals in Eugene.

Schools still aren't "producing a good product," Mathews asserted. Industry, he said, expects three things from education:

1. Students who, as workers, are what they say they are—not, for example, a cartoonist who claims to be a commercial artist.
2. Students with a "viable work attitude" who will go beyond the minimum expected of them.
3. Students "with some kind of elementary understanding of capital economics" who see how they fit into the "workaday scheme of things."

Public education isn't providing these, he said. "We're not getting our money's worth."

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