DISCIPLINARY PROFESSIONALISM:

TWO VIEWS ON THE CHANGING CONTEXT FOR ALTERNATIVE COLLEGES

I. First View: Frederick Stirton Weaver, Hampshire College

In this examination of current tendencies and likely changes in undergraduate liberal arts education and their implications for alternative colleges and programs, I will focus on the nature of academic disciplines. In that disciplines are the principal organizational form in liberal arts curricula, such an emphasis is warranted simply by their importance. In addition, however, I believe that some of the most far-reaching impending changes in colleges can be best understood through the study of academic disciplines and the peculiar type of academic professionalism they represent.

THE PROFESSIONAL CHARACTER OF ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES

While we all know, at least in a general sense, that disciplines are a set of conventional categories of knowledge, it is less well appreciated that these conventions embody and rely upon a system of power relationships. That is, disciplinary conventions are defined and enforced by departments, learned societies, scholarly journals, degree structures, and granting agencies; academic disciplines are professional organizations. Directly analogous to other professions, such as medicine and law, disciplinary professionals organize and create specialized knowledge and transmit it to others, and, in the name of those services, they control the training and certification of disciplinary competence, reserve a range of jobs for certified practitioners,

work to maintain standards by dispensing sanctions and rewards, and insulate themselves from the judgments of outsiders in all of these activities. The Ph.D., awarded by university disciplinary departments, is the reigning certificate, and through control mechanisms like departments, journals, learned societies and degree structures, disciplines sustain internal hierarchies and define legitimacy as a particular, but changing, set of intellectual activities.

The institutional foundations of disciplinary professionalism were laid during the middle and late decades of the nineteenth century, as a part of a more general movement propelled by the rise of the urban middle class and their ambitions and career expectations. These new social forces rapidly consolidated into what Burton J. Bledstein so aptly calls the "culture of professionalism."[1] The traditional professions of medicine and law, after the antebellum disintegration of elitist, local guilds, reorganized themselves into state and national professional groups based on what they saw as meritocratic principles; the ministry, as a profession and as an influence in colleges, continued to decline; and a whole range of middle class occupational groups actively and self-consciously sought to become professions. Morticians, dentists, pharmacists, librarians, veterinarians, school teachers, engineers, architects, social workers, and public administrators are examples of occupational groups which made concerted efforts to control their occupations in the name of eliminating quackery and establishing authority for sound, professional practice. The historical reasons for the widespread professionalization efforts at this time have recently begun to be explored in suggestive ways, but in this surge of scholarly

interest, the significance of the differences between the professional projects of academics and those of other occupational groups has not been sufficiently recognized.

In order to appreciate these differences in a way that highlights the peculiar character of academic professionalism, it is necessary to look more closely at some of the general processes involved. First, it should be apparent by now that I am defining a profession by the special set of institutionalized occupational controls which regulate the means of entry, standards of practice, and competition both within an occupation and between that occupation and others.[2] It is necessary, however, to refine this definition further, and the clearest and most useful means is to identify bachelors and/or advanced degrees from colleges and universities as entry requirements by which professions distinguished themselves from other occupations (e.g., trades), which also may be formally controlled.

The successful professional projects were those which fastened onto the emerging university as the means to train and certify a standardized competence, and the most successful were those able to enforce graduate degrees as necessary vehicles for entry into the profession. Centralizing professional training in colleges and universities entailed struggling simultaneously against amateurism, apprenticeship systems, and proprietary schools. These struggles were more successful in some cases than in others, depending only in part on the character of the occupations, and the rewards for driving out amateurs and rival training systems were substantial for those in a position to reap them.

All of this, however, is only one side of the professional projects. Vesting training and certification in universities, monitored by professional associations, was possible and effective if and only if the resulting symbol of competence was honored by employers, clients, patients, and other customers for the professional services. That is, there is little point in controlling the supply of a quality service if the demand for that type of service is not ensured. This was a problem, because even though aspiring professional groups magnified and exploited people's fears and insecurities about health, social order, sex, race, and culture, they could not rely on the unprofessional public to respect the professional certificate to the proper extent.

If the public at large could not be adequately convinced, however, state legislatures were capable of being persuaded to enforce the needed recognition by closing off whole sets of activities to all but the certified.[3] In some cases, occupational licensing was the prior condition for raising standards, i.e., requiring college and university degrees. In addition to suspending the competitive market, all levels of government contributed significantly to a considerable number of professional projects by creating demand for appropriately certified professionals, either directly by employing them or indirectly by creating procedures and requirements which forced others to employ them.

The drive for professionalization was a major impetus for the creation and impressive expansion of the modern university and for the transformation of undergraduate colleges in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[4] Not only did this expansion of higher education require more teachers, the new importance aspiring profesisons and professionals attached to these institutions meant that the functions of training and

culling students required qualified educators. Thus academics, in their own professionalization efforts, were able to manipulate to good effect the same symbols of competence, merit, and specialization used by others.

Nevertheless, while the academics' language was similar and their general interests in professionalizing instruction was apparently congruent with those of other professions, the manner in which leaders of the newly-founded national disciplinary associations conceived of their professional projects was not so harmonious with the aspirations of students and non-academic professional groups: academics managed to define competence, merit, and specialization in terms appropriate for professionalizing research rather than teaching. As a consequence, teaching generally and undergraduate teaching in particular remain low status professional work.

It is no surprise, then, to find that the organization of disciplinary graduate programs, designed to train research professionals, already began to influence undergraduate curricula in the late 19th century. During the early decades of the 20th century, undergraduate majors and minors rapidly and significantly constrained the elective system, which in its time had nurtured the development of disciplinary departments. This step represented the domination of the undergraduate curriculum by disciplinary professionalism, although the corresponding changes in administration did not occur until the 1930s.[5]

What is especially important, however, is to understand that in this process each academic discipline came to constitute a distinct professional body.[6] While adequate for some purposes, the usual "academic profession" category is insufficiently refined to identify some

of the most interesting processes.[7] Although disciplines were housed side by side in educational institutions and played similar roles in preliminary training of non-academic professionals, the disciplinary particularism of highly professionalized faculty members was already a strong trend in the 1920s and 1930s. By the late 1940s and early 1950s, the department had become the point of intersection between disciplines and institutions, and the avenue of professional advance and recognition was outward from the department to national disciplinary associations, journals, and colleagues--far from students, class schedules, college committees, academic deans, and other irritating institutionsl demands with no professional payoffs. The proper role of the institution in this scheme of things (and one which institutions increasingly came to accept and encourage for enhancing their reputations) was to support, honor, and compete for individuals whom disciplinary bodies had accorded professional recognition.[8]

This is to describe a successful conclusion, but the achievement of autonomy by disciplinary departments in colleges and universities required more influence than was available to individual disciplines. In the first decades of the 20th century, several national disciplinary associations vainly tried to establish the primacy of purely professional criteria in faculty personnel decisions, but their impotence was unequivocally demonstrated in some notorious cases of faculty firings.[9] Cooperation was clearly necessary to dilute the power of college and university administrations and governing boards. In 1913, representatives of the American Economic Association, American Political Science Association, and American Sociological Association took the preliminary

step towards founding what two years later emerged as the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), encompassing all disciplines. The AAUP's central purpose was clearly expressed in the classic 1915 Report of its Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure: "The responsibility of the university teacher is primarily to the public itself, and to the judgment of his own profession; and while, with respect to certain conditions of his vocation, he accepts a responsibility to the authorities of the institution in which he serves, in the essentials of his professional activities his duty is to the wider public to which the institution itself is morally amenable."[10]

In spite of the AAUP's jingoistic stance during World War I, general civil libertarian convictions did have some role in the formation of the association; nevertheless, its central thrust was professional, reserving certain crucial realms (curriculum, research, and personnel) to the judgment of professionally certified competents--the disciplinary faculty. These professionals, and <u>not</u> administrators, trustees, or legislators, were to be seen as the only qualified interpreters of the interests of the "wider public."

Academic's political struggle for professional autonomy within colleges and universities corresponds, in some general sense, to the licensing efforts of other occupational groups, but in sharp contrast to the predominant situation in other professions, the employers of academic professionals are academic professionals. As soon as the AAUP's principles of academic freedom and tenure became generally incorporated into academic institutions' power relations, it was professional historians, biologists, economists, philosophers, etc., who trained and

and subsequently hired new professional historians, biologists, economists, philosophers, etc. Thus, the demand for as well as the supply of certified professionals are immediately under the control of each disciplinary profession. As a consequence, there are no bases for continuing conflicts between professional associations and professional schools nor is political intervention (e.g., licensing) required to ensure the market for the certificate. This almost pure form of professional colleague-orientation (as opposed to client-orientation) obscures the professional character of academic disciplines, even to academic disciplinarians.

The professional model offers a much more satisfactory explanation for academic disciplines' evolving and overlapping intellectual content than do efforts to define disciplines by intellectual essence. The attempts to list distinctive intellectual characteristics of disciplines (e.g., subject matter, methodology, etc.) are directly analogous to the 1940s and 1950s scholarship on the sociology of the professions, in which so much effort went into defining professions by finding sets of traits specific to certain occupational activities.[12] While this approach has lost some favor in the sociology of professions, it seems to be alive and well in scholarship on academic disciplines, in spite of the trouble people have in applying it. [13]

Like the sociologists' traits of professions, such a definition of disciplines begins by implicitly accepting at face value disciplinary professionals' assessments of their own activities and worth. Moreover, such an approach consistently fails to represent accurately how disparate are the specialized activities which are lumped together under general

rubrics like history, philosophy, sociology, and biology, or to discriminate adequately between, for example, astronomy and physics, mathematics and philosophy, historical sociology and social history, anthropology and sociology, and even economics and business administration. In a similar vein, are ecology, urban studies, American studies, and geography <u>really</u> disciplines? These problems are considerably less formidable when one considers academic disciplines to be primarily professions, a large part of whose activities center on controlling the supply of and creating demand for practitioners.

The conception of academic disciplines as professions does not deny the distinctive intellectual character of academic disciplines; the various disciplines obviously do address different types of knowledge in different ways. Nor does this conception deny the progressive moment represented and furthered by the establishment of disciplinary professions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[14] It does suggest, however, that questions of each discipline's intellectual coherence and utility are important only to the extent that they serve the interest of research professionals. These interests require a definition of what a particular category of disicplinary professionals does, and the more sharply this line can be drawn around a specialized expertise, the more convincing a case can be made for those research professionals within the boundary. But even in the upper reaches of disciplinary professionalism, standards of precision have not been very high. Boundaries remain amorphous and subject to rapid redefinition when a growing field of inquiry, with promise of substantial employment and grant opportunities, looks as though it might fall outside the discipline. Occasionally

these developments, whose genesis is seldom from within the academy, lead to the birth of a new discipline.

Definitions of disciplinary content are flexible, intellectually arbitrary, and change over time, but they do exist. The disciplinary departments of major universities are the principal arbiters of disputes about which side of the boundary particular questions, issues, methods, and views are located, and these departments exert a profound influence on what is or is not legitimate at a particular time, an influence which permeates higher education and professional work defined by discipline in all settings. The curricula of the leading graduate departments, whose members dominate professional associations, journal editorial boards, and advisory positions in funding agencies, are the nearest we have to explicit definitions of professional legitimacy and the best indicators of new areas of intellectual activity being approved for disciplinary sponsorship.

Academic disciplines, therefore, are categories of knowledge fashioned by the interests of research professionalism, and even if one accepts current disciplinary categories as useful for research purposes, the substance of disciplines is intellectually arbitrary and pedagogically awkward for undergraduate education. Disciplines simply were not developed to help undergraduates organize their thinking about the world, and there is certainly nothing in their constitution to suggest that pedagogical usefulness has been an unexpected by-product. Yet undergraduate curricula continue to look like watered-down versions of graduate programs designed to train research professionals, even in colleges where the ethos of faculty research has always been weak.[15] Undergraduates'

academic work is, by and large, an introduction to one or more disciplines, and disciplinary definitions prevail in discussions about such central educational principles as breadth, depth, coverage, and rigor.

In my opinion, then, the research orientation of academic professionalism has had the most deleterious effect on undergraduate education through its influence on the organization and content of the liberal arts curriculum. This conclusion is significantly different from most critiques, which emphasize the academic reward system and the way it favors research activities at the expense of undergraduate teaching. The reward system is indeed strongly tilted towards research, but there are serious problems with making this argument the center of a critical analysis.[16]

An undue emphasis on the potent effects of research incentives necessarily carries with it the implication that those who are exclusively undergraduate teachers are not sufficiently smart, creative, or self-disciplined to succeed in research careers. This assessment comes from even critical commentators, who thereby accept the disciplinary professions' definition of who are the "best people" and bemoan the loss of these quality individuals to undergraduate instruction.[17] This tacit acceptance of conventional criteria of excellence results in an unwarranted undervaluing of the large numbers of talented men and women who are committed to undergraduate education and have chosen to make it the center of their careers. As soon as one acknowledges the peculiar and self-serving nature of the disciplinary professions' standards of faculty merit, there is no more reason to argue that the potentially most able undergraduate teachers are diverted away from

undergraduate teaching than there is for its equally dubious converse: those who have made it to the very top of their disciplinary professions are precisely those least suited for effective undergraduate teaching.

Moreover, the empirical evidence, such as it is, consistently indicates patterns of faculty work in which teaching, and mostly undergraduate teaching, is the activity to which faculty devote by far the greatest amount of time and effort, irrespective of institutional type, faculty rank, gender, and discipline.[18] So, at least in terms of reported behavior, it appears that the effect of the biased reward system is not as important in directing faculty effort as might be thought.

The principal point, however, is that independent of relative rewards, the overwhelming proportion of faculty committed to teaching undergraduates do their teaching in disciplinary curricula.

PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE

These implications are intrinsically important, and a clear interpretation of current practices is necessary for plausible speculation about future directions. For these speculations, I will rely on the fundamental elements of the professional model: the hegemony of disciplines in undergraduate curricula depends on the research orientation of academic professionalism, which in turn is based principally on institutional power relationships.

As I have already mentioned, the research ethos of disciplinary professionalism was already established, at least as strong tendency, by the 1930s, but it was during the twenty-five years after World War II, with the rapid increases in enrollments, public faith in higher education as a means of upward mobility, large-scale research projects funded by

public and private sources, and shortages of qualified faculty, that the place of academic disciplines was developed and crystalized.[19] To attribute this development and crystalization directly to these factors, however, analytically short-circuits the line of a causation by missing the mediating linkage--the unparalleled rise of faculty power within institutions. Disciplinary professionalism was already sufficiently established that this shift in power, leading to greater faculty autonomy especially in matters of curriculum and personnel, resulted in its being expressed in the hegemony of academic disciplines.[20]

In predictable dialectical fashion, these changes also produced their own negations, principally in student revolts against the types of education they were receiving and in the alternative institutions and programs most of us here represent. But the irony of the student reaction is that its most important consequence was to dismantle general education and breadth requirements, and while there probably was little educational loss associated with their demise (with the important exception of foreign language study), their abolition left the disciplinary major virtually unchallenged as the most coherent and systematic liberal education. And the institutions and programs whose organizations were non-disciplinary or anti-disciplinary exercised, alas, very little influence on the direction of academic life, remaining rather polite alternative to what remained the mainstream.

This perspective, then, suggests that the research orientation of faculty professional life is likely to be severely challenged in the next couple of decades. As the number of academic job opportunities

relative to certified professionals continues to decline (along with research funding), there are good reasons to expect that institutions will reassert their control over faculty work at the expense of disciplinary research emphases.

Growing faculty unionization may mitigate some of the effects of the shift of internal political power from faculty to adminsitrators, but even this may not be of much help in retaining the hegemony of academic disciplines. Faculty unions are most definitely not disciplinary organizations; like faculty senates, they can be most effective when they are perceived by their members to be neutral in respect to intra-institutional struggles among disciplinary groups. Moreoever, the rise of collective bargaining on campuses is one of the contributing factors leading to changes in the character of college and university administrators. Not only does the industrial union model frequently reduce the faculty's say in the selection of new administrators, the need to deal with unions, chronic budgetary crises, governmental regulations, and whatever are already leading to the supplanting of faculty-oriented administrators by labor relations specialists, lawyers, fund raisers, financial experts, information specialists, and others with similar skills.[21] The faculty, as a conseuqence, will have less direct influence over them than over their more academic predecessors, and this new breed of higher education manager will be considerably less sympathetic to or impressed by traditional symbols of institutional quality, a good number of which rely on a high degree of disciplinary professionalism.

Therefore, as the size, financial health, and even survival of more institutions become increasingly dependent on recruiting and

retaining students from smaller cohorts and differing backgrounds, the terms of faculty-administration struggles are likely to shift towards accepting the principle that the faculty's primary responsibility is to design and implement instructional programs attractive to students.[22] That is, teaching and other client-oriented activities will become more vital facets of faculty work than publishing books and articles on issues whose major importance is internal to the disciplinary professions.

If we simply project current intra-institutional power relations into this new environment, however, one might expect a strengthening of disciplinary professionalism and an exacerbation of weighting research over teaching. Those arguing this conclusion can point to three important processes stemming from a sharp and sustained decline in the number of faculty positions: young people with Ph.D.s from elite universities will increasingly have to accept jobs lower down the institutional pecking order, thereby heightening disciplinary professionalism in places heretofore less affected by it; as promotion and tenure opportunities continue to narrow, making standards more stringent, departments may well lean more heavily on the seemingly tangible criteria of scholarly publications than on difficult-to-assess teaching effectiveness; and financial pressures on institutions will enable ("require") disciplinary faculty and academic administrators to jettison parts of the curriculum which are not of "core" disciplinary stature.

I am not denying the effect of these forces, and we can see them operating now. Nonetheless, I believe that they are short-run and will be transformed by changing configurations of power within institutions.

The stark fact is that colleges and universities will have to cater to students rather than to faculty, and it is extremely doubtful that research-oriented disciplinary professionalism is going to have much influence in institutional changes during the next two decades. Especially if faculty try to retain professional work patterns, trustees, state legislators, and, above all, administrators are going to be setting the directions in this new context.

Colleges and universities in the United States, compared to those in other nations, have always been sensitive to changing consumer demands, but we will see something new in this regard; instead of change coming by expanding into new areas, as in 1880-1930 and 1945-1970, colleges and universities will try to reallocate contracting resources to meet the interests of a changing type of student. This will lay bare the conflicts of interests between students and professionalized faculty at a time the faculty market position is very weak, institutions' need for students is very strong, and the availability of public fiscal resources is, at best, uncertain.

This pressure will no doubt be felt most strongly in those institutions lower down in the standard rankings of quality, but it certainly will not be restricted to them. Even at the very top, major universities will continue to be squeezed by reduced governmental research funds and the difficulty of finding positions for their graduate students, but of course pressures will be considerably less direct and harsh on these few instittuions. This form of professionalism, therefore, may survive more or less intact in some elite universities and colleges, but without followers, these leading institutions' disciplinary professionalism may simply become an artifact of an earlier era.

THE PLACE OF ALTERNATIVE COLLEGES (A Tentative Outline)

From my reading of current trends, I believe that there are at least three areas in which alternative colleges must improve their performance if they are to survive the next two or three decades with integrity to their principles and meeting their responsibilities to students and society. I will briefly mention these three and look forward to discussing them more fully during the conference.

1. It is imperative that we refine our thinking about the intellectual and pedagogical purposes of interdisciplinary education. If my projections have any validity, we will see the rise of interdisciplinary courses and programs throughout higher education, especially tailored to what are perceived to be the interests of particular segments of potential students. The chances are, however, that these endeavors will not be of the type in which most of us desired to be involved when we chose to go to an alternative institution. The unfortunate fact, however, is that we as a group have done a very poor job in articulating the purposes of interdisciplinary teaching, and the interdisciplinary nature of our programs, in and of itself, will not distinguish us sufficiently from other colleges and universities for very long. With the notable exception of St. Johns, most of our presentations of interdisciplinary purposes have not gone beyond the argument of "coverage." That is, the contention that disciplines overemphasize specialized rigor at the expense of breadth, and that there exist important lumps of information which have fallen between the cracks between disciplines.[23] There have always been a number of serious problems with this argument:

a. It not only reifies disciplines, it portrays them inaccurately. When sociologists, historians, philosophers, anthropologists, biologists, physicists, geographers, and many, many others convincingly demonstrate how such a portrayal seriously misrepresents the range of legitimate work within their disciplines, and rigor has already been conceded, this case for interdisciplinary education is not especially compelling.

b. The pedagogical consequences of this "coverage" rationale is based on the same positivistic conceptions of knowledge as most disciplines are, and therefore this line of argument supports the disciplinary style of pedagogy: the teacher as authority filling empty students with information and techniques. This promotes unfortunate habits of mind among students, who too easily accept their prescribed role as passive consumers of objectified knowledge.[24]

I believe that alternative colleges must break out of the organizational forms and pedagogical practices consistent with positivistic conceptions of knowledge, and in doing so become true alternatives to conventional conceptions of education.

2. Faculty at alternative institutions are in the best position to demonstrate that undergraduate teaching is first and foremost an intellectual activity and to show that it can and should be the principal basis for professional growth. Good teachers are made, not born, but the converse proposition has for too long supported the ideology of disciplinary professionalism and the reluctance to consider teaching as a serious part of professional development.[25] Are some types of curricula more conducive to teaching development than are others? I

suspect so, but there has been very little effort to discuss this in systematic ways.

Closely related to the above, it is important to show that any instructional development effort which implicitly assumes that the content of teaching is either fixed or not of central importance offers neither a feasible nor desirable conception of faculty development.

3. In a curriculum in which the principal intention is to develop habits of interesting, systematic, and independent thinking, the distinction between "liberal" and "pre-professional" education is irrelevant. This supposedly qualitative distinction between types of education possessed only a dubious validity when it was used by nineteenth century proponents of the classical curriculum in their struggle against the incursions of the disciplines, and now it is virtually empty of meaning. Undergraduate major curricula in liberal arts disciplines make sense only in terms of their decisive preprofessional nature. The remainder of students' study programs are made up of breadth requirements, formulated through political compromises among disciplinary departments and for the most part relying on introductory disciplinary courses, and electives, which can be chosen on the same bases by any student, liberal arts or not. Nevertheless, much of the debate about higher education seems to have been cast in this false dichotomy, and we in alternative colleges ought to be able to use it to our advantage.

While my prescriptions are slanted in very specific ways, my major conclusion is that alternative colleges cannot afford to remain mere "alternatives" in the next few decades. Although probably in a

variety of ways, we all will have to take the very risky step of defining ourselves as critics of conventional forms of higher education, a step we have too long been reluctant to do. I realize that this will entail even more work for faculty and administrators in institutions whose major unifying characteristic is overwork, but our place in higher education now requires that we aggressively demonstrate to all that our institutions are most definitely not merely places for students and faculty who cannot make it in the mainstream. We represent very different, active visions of higher education, and along with that, correspondingly different visions of the society in which we will live in the next few decades.

FOOTNOTES

1. Burton J. Bledstein, The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education (New York: W. W. Norton, 1976), Magali Sarfatti Larson, The Rise of Professionalism: A Sociological Analysis (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), especially pp. 104-207, and Thomas L. Haskell, The Emergence of Professional Social Science: The American Social Science Association and the Nineteenth-Century Crisis of Authority (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1977) are important interpretations of the historical relationship between higher education and professionalization.

2. See Terence M. Johnson, Professions and Power (London: McMillan, 1972), pp. 43-45, for this definition of profession.

3. Occupational Licensing Legislation in the United States (Chicago: Council of State Governments, 1952), pp. 23 and 78-80 are valuable tables, showing occupational licensing by occupation, state, and date.

4. Three especially useful sources on the organizational and intellectual changes in higher education during the last century are Laurence R. Veysey, The Emergence of the American University (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); Christopher Jencks and David Riesman, The Academic Revolution (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968); and Alexandra M. Oleson and John Voss (eds.), The Organization of Knowledge in Modern America, 1860-1920 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).

5. In addition to the citations in footnote #4, see Frederick Rudolph, Curriculum: A History of the American Undergraduate Course of Study Since 1636 (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass for the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, 1977), pp. 202-244.

In the 1930s, the central position of disciplinary departments was acknowledged and made administratively rational by gathering groups of them into divisions. Laurence Veysey, "The Humanities in American Universities Since the 1930's: The Decline of Grandiosity" (Santa Cruz, Calif.: mimeo) is a provocative study of the least coherent of these new units.

6. The visual and performing arts are the newest and least professionalized of the liberal arts disciplines, and they are constantly subject to criticism about standards from colleagues in more established disciplinary professions. For a good discussion of the place of visual and performing arts in higher education, see James S. Ackerman, "The Arts in Higher Education," in Carl Kaysen (ed.), Content and Context: Essays on College Education (New York: McGraw-Hill for the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973), pp. 219-266.

7. Most of the works cited in the earlier footnotes refer to an undifferentiated "academic profession". For other examples of this, see Harold L. Wilensky, "The Professionalization of Everyone?" American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 70, #3 (September 1970), p. 141, and the articles collected in Walter P. Metzger (ed.), Reader in the Sociology of the Academic Profession (New York: Arno Press, 1977). A partial exception is Peter M. Blau, The Organization of Academic Work (New York: Wiley, 1973), p. 12, who uses conventional sociological criteria and tentatively concludes that disciplines might be professions.

8. Donald W. Light, Jr., "The Structure of the Academic Professions," Sociology of Education, Vol. 47, #3 (Winter 1974), pp. 2-28 [also included in Metzger's anthology, Reader in the Sociology of the Academic Profession] is a clear statement of this character of the disciplinary department in

colleges and universities. Additional useful works on this are P. H. Dressel and D. J. Reichard, "The University Department: Retrospect and Prospect," Journal of Higher Education, Vol. 41 (May 1970), pp. 387-402; R. Straus, "Departments and Disciplines: Stasis and Change," Science (November 30, 1973), pp. 895-897; and the concise expression of different opinions by the first four contributors in Dean E. McHenry (ed.), Academic Departments: Problems, Variations, and Alternatives (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977), pp. 1-62.

9. The Principal source on this subject is Walter P. Metzger, "The Age of the University," in R. Hofstadter and W. P. Metzger, The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), pp. 407-605.

10. Metzger,"The Age of the University," p. 409.

11. In a frequently reprinted article, Reuben A. Kessel, "Price Discrimination in Medicine," Journal of Economics and Law, Vol. 1 (October 1958), pp. 20-53, argues that the patterns of medical practice made the cultural homogeneity of physicians important for coordinating and maintaining their professional monopoly in the national market. Therefore, there were tangible pecuniary reasons for making it more difficult for anyone who was not a white Protestant male from an upper-middle class background to enter the profession. It is somewhat surprising that the peculiar type of market control exercised by disciplinary professionals in the academy did not enable them to be considerably bolder in opening their professions to others.

12. Johnson, Professions and Power, pp. 22-23, cogently criticizes the traits approach in scholarship on professions. This approach is older

than functionalism in sociological theory and should be considered as an important forerunner of it. For the congruence of these conceptions, compare the formulation in Alexander Flexner's address to the National Conference on Social Welfare in 1915, entitled "Is Social Work a Profession?" and published in The Social Welfare Forum: Official Proceedings (1915), pp. 576-590, with the functionalist classic by Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore, "Some Principles of Stratification," The American Sociological Review, Vol. 10, #2 (1945), pp. 242-249.

13. The difficulties of trying to identify disciplines by internal intellectual characteristics are discussed and illustrated by Jonathan Broido, "Interdisciplinarity, Reflections on Methodology", in J. J. Kockelmans (ed.), Interdisciplinarity and Higher Education (Penn State Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1979), pp. 244-305, and Charles B. Fethe, "A Philosophical Model for Interdisciplinary Programs," Liberal Education, Vol. 59, #4 (December 1973), pp. 490-497.

14. The rise of research and the academic disciplines were instrumental in giving colleges and universities their current intellectual definition and purpose. We can argue about the extent to which this has actually been realized, but certainly compared to early nineteenth century institutions, in which classes were devoted mostly to students' recitations of memorized texts and faculty were recent graduates desperately trying to maintain a semblance of discipline inside and outside the classrooms, modern higher education institutions appear intellectually very serious. A large a part of this change is due to the professionalization of the faculty through disciplinary training. In addition to the citations in footnote #1, Oscar and Mary Handlin, The American College and American Culture: Socialization

as a Function of Higher Education (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co. for the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1970), pp. 5-42, describe the strongly non-intellectual character of older colleges in the U.S.

15. Rustrum Roy, "Interdisciplinary Science on Campus", in Kochelmans (ed.), Interdisciplinarity and Higher Education, pp. 163-166, and Neil J. Smelser, "The Social Sciences", in Kaysen (ed.), Content and Context, pp 129-144, discuss this influence on undergraduate curricula in different areas of study.

16. See Blau, The Organization of Academic Work, p. 106; Carol Herrnstadt Shulman, Old Expectations, New Realities: The Academic Profession Revisited, AAHE-ERIC/Higher Education Research Report, No. 2, 1979 (Washington, D.C.: AAHE, 1979), pp. 26-35: and Howard P. Tuckman, Publication, Teaching, and the Academic Reward Structure (Lexington, Ma.: Lexington Books, 1976), pp. 70-94, for the pattern of rewards favoring research.

17. For instance, this form of criticism is predominant in the introductory essays in McHenry, Academic Departments, pp. 1-62.

18. J. Victor Baldridge, et al, Policy Making and Effective Leadership (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1978), pp. 102-110 and Shulman, Old Expectations, New Realities, pp. 26-28 report such findings from a variety of surveys.

19. Baldridge, et al, Policy Making and Effective Leadership, p. 95 discusses the influence of these forces on strengthening disciplines after World War II.

20. Shulman, Old Expectations, New Realities, pp. 9-10, relying mostly on Ladd's and Lipset's surveys, argues that the rise in faculty salaries and general status during this period attracted to the professoriate young

people from higher social strata than had previously been the case, thus reducing the extent to which college and university teaching was a means of upward social mobility. It is also likely that those from more privileged backgrounds contributed to developing the occupation's professional trappings. Blau, The Organization of Academic Work, pp. 95-99, shows that elite colleges and universities exhibited class bias in the recruitment of their faculty.

21. Baldridge, et al, Policy Making and Effective Leadership, pp. 208-209 discuss these changes in the character of administrators. Also in these pages, they observe that the shift of the faculty, responding to student preferences, towards professional teachers of professional and vocational subjects will increase the segment of the faculty which has been the most politically quiescent in campus affairs.

22. The final report of the Carnegie Commission on Policy Studies in Higher Education, entitled Three Thousand Futures: The Next 20 Years for Higher Education (1980) states that "Students will be recruited more actively, admitted more readily, retained more assiduously, counseled more attentively, graded more considerately, financed more adequately, taught more conscientiously...The curriculum will be more tailored to their tastes...This may well become their Golden Age". Quoted in The Chronicle of Higher Education (January 28, 1980), p. 11.

23. Donald J. Campbell, "Ethnocentrism of Disciplines and the Fish-Scale Model of Omniscience," in M. S. and C. W. Sherif (eds.), Interdisciplinary Relations in the Social Sciences (Chicago: Aldine, 1969), pp. 328-348, Carl R. Hausman, "Introduction: Disciplinarity or Interdisciplinarity?" in Kockelmans (ed.), Interdisciplinarity and Higher Education, pp. 1-10, and Tamara Swora and James Morrison, "Interdisciplinarity and Higher Education," Liberal Education, Vol. 60, #1 (April 1974), pp. 45-52, perceive interdisciplinary education in terms of coverage.

24. Philip Phenix, "The Use of the Disciplines as Curriculum Content," Educational Forum, Vol. 26, #3 (March 1962), pp. 273-280, clearly exposes these epistemological premises: "The structure of things is revealed, not invented...given, not chosen, and if man is to gain insight he must employ the right concepts and methods.../Therefore/, disciplines are the only proper source of the curriculum." (p. 280, emphasis in original).

Drawing heavily from Freire and Habermas, Vincent C. Kavaloski, "Interdisciplinary Education and Humanistic Aspiration," in Kockelmans (ed.), Interdisciplinarity and Higher Education, pp. 224-243, is an excellent criticism of this position.

25. E.g., Laurence Veysey, "Stability and Experiment in the American Undergraduate Curriculum," in Kaysen (ed.), Content and Context, p. 61.

Hans O. Mauksch, "What Are the Obstacles to Improving Quality Teaching?" Current Issues in Higher Education, Vol. 2, No. 1 (September 3, 1980), pp. 49-56, makes an excellent case for reversing current practices and considering teaching as an essential type of professional development.

DISCIPLINARY PROFESSIONALISM:

TWO VIEWS OF THE DEVELOPING CONTEXT FOR ALTERNATIVE COLLEGES

II. Second View: Jeanne Hahn, The Evergreen State College

This essay does not take issue with Weaver's broad argument on the nature of academic disciplines as "categories of knowledge fashioned by the interests of research professionalism" (pg. 10) or his position that "the research orientation of academic professionalism has had the most deleterious effect on undergraduate education through its influence on the organization and content of the liberal arts curriculum" (pg. 11), but it does draw a somewhat different analysis and conclusion from these arguments. Exception will be taken with Weaver's conclusion that as changing power configurations within the university transform the nature of disciplinary teaching and attempt to meet the needs of a changing type of student, research-oriented disciplinary professionalism will wane in the undergraduate curriculum.

The argument presented here is based on certain assumptions regarding a continuing era of limits and retrenchment in the larger economy and their reflection in changes in the internal landscape of higher education. If one focuses on the forces of this generalized economic crisis and the impact they are likely to have on the structure of higher education, one arrives at conclusions somewhat different than those of Weaver. However, like Weaver, this paper views higher education as a contested arena, a contested arena in which a number of important contradictory trends are at work; and the argument here is that the long-term trend likely to emerge from this contestation will be somewhat different from that posed in Weaver's essay.

This paper takes the position that as the academic depression deepens -- as the financial base of higher education erodes and as enrollments fall -- the traditional mechanisms of disciplinary professionalism and departmental hegemony will reassert themselves. Tendencies in this direction can be seen in the substantial number of innovative programs and "inner" colleges, products of the education boom of the 1960s, that have closed or been absorbed by traditional departments over the past few years.[1] This paper will argue that this trend is likely to accelerate during the 1980s. It will be argued further that as the larger economy remains crisis-prone, students will be less inclined toward interdisciplinary and innovative curricula but will rather increasingly show a preference for disciplinary-based and professionally-oriented programs, programs that have some easily identifiable relation to the job market.

It will be suggested that revolutions in the structure of higher education and most particularly in its substantive curriculum and teaching methodology are more likely to occur in times of expansion and optimism that in times of contraction and retreat. It will further attempt to show that there is a direct link between the present stagflation crisis in the economy and the retrenchment crisis in higher education and that together they work to impose more traditional department-based, skill-oriented education. Finally, it will be argued that while this tendency has led (and will continue to lead) to the erosion and/or closure of innovative programs and to the reassertion of old patterns within established colleges, it seems likely that "alternative" education institutions whose entire curriculum and educational philosophy are organized on other than departmental lines are more likely than inner colleges or experimental programs within the traditionally-organized college to survive the current trend.

The economic boom period from the end of World War II to the late 1960s with its attendent levels of relatively high productivity and relatively low levels of inflation and unemployment was reflected in the structure and content of higher education. As in the rest of the economy, higher education experienced a period of expansion and increased state investment, both in the growth of institutions and in the training of ever larger numbers of new faculty to meet the demands of rising enrollments. It was under this stimulus of an environment of economic prosperity and expansion that higher education in the United states underwent a number of significant changes. Those of which are of interest to us here resulted from increased enrollments from categories of entrants new to higher education (racial and ethnic minorities, women, working-class students) and, toward the end of the growth years, from the baby boom population. Specifically what one saw was a liberalization of the curriculum to meet the interests/demands of students previously excluded from higher education as well as those of students who, feeling the blush of economic prosperity, demanded more than the traditional department-bound professionally-oriented course format. Curricular change was of course influenced by many often conflicting factors outside the academy such as the anxiety over scientific education created by Sputnik, the impact of the cold war mentality, and the energies released by the civil rights movement and, later, by the agony of Viet Nam and was hence not always directed away from the traditional concerns but often resulted in disciplinary-defined growth under the unmistakable aegis of the profession.

Colleges and universities, now blessed with hertofore unprecedented levels of public and private sources of money, were able and, by the early 1960s, willing to respond positively to the demands of many faculty and

On the other side, the Goodrich Scholarship Program, established in 1972 to provide a two-year core curriculum for economically disadvantaged students, has remained a vital part of the Nebraska curriculum. This program was, in effect, established as a department within the College of Public Administration and Community Service, a college headed by its own dean. In addition, its students received four-year scholarships and all the support services of the University which further tied the Program to the university apparatus. Its faculty were tenured both in the Program and at the University, thus providing them a double security enjoyed at few colleges. When the 1977 budget cuts came, the Goodrich Program was little affected, and while through a series of University-wide budget cuts from 1977 to 1981 it has lost several of its frills, its essential core and original faculty strength have been maintained.

That the end of the long postwar boom in the early 1970s has had its effects on the structure of higher education, as it has in all sectors of American society, should be beyond debate. It is a major premise of this paper that both the short- and the long-term prospects for disciplinary professionalization and alternative higher education are best understood when analyzed within the context of these long waves of prosperity and crisis which affect the capitalist nations.[3] It is within this broader perspective that we can best understand the range of the pressures on the organization of knowledge within the academy, the contradictory nature of a number of these pressures, and arrive at some projection of the likely changes in undergraduate liberal arts education and their implications for alternative colleges and programs within traditional institutions.

For our immediate purposes the most significant change in the internal landscape of higher education has been the deepening academic depression -- in terms of the simultaneous fiscal and enrollment crisis -- and its relation to the systemic political, economic, and social crisis faced by the entire society. I am suggesting that the tendencies of the previous boom period, having established themselves as increasingly serious but not yet critical challenges to the orthodox disciplines, will give way to the current political and economic realities and in so doing, the old structures will reassert themselves. However, having presented some serious structural and substantive challenges in the organization and presentation of knowledge and facing different structural arrangements in the larger society, I will argue that the new academic landscape will not (or will only superficially) resemble the status quo ante. The reassertion of disciplinary dominance will be shaped by a convergence of student demands, driven largely by market forces, by attemps to deal with the impact of the fiscal crisis, and by imperatives from the political and economic climate. But at the same time, countertendencies exist which suggest a continuing struggle over the shape and content of the undergraduate curriculum and avenues for a serious continuing challenge to disciplinary hegemony. Before discussing this areana of contestation, it is necessary to develop in more detail the argument that reassertion of the old structures and an increasing consolidation around traditional disciplines and their presentation through the professionally-oriented course format will characterize further trends in the undergraduate curriculum.

As college enrollments continue to decline and departments compete for fewer students, the diversity that began to emerge in the 1960s and early 1970s and was sanctioned and even encouraged in some departments and in some

colleges by the establishment of transdepartmental interdisciplinary programs is being increasingly squeezed out in a quest for internal unity and a professional coherence resembling the mainstream orthodoxy. While often being done under the rubric of fiscal exigency, each discipline will likely attempt to reassert its methodological and professional hegemony by purifying its departments of dissenting and methodologically unorthodox members and by restricting the scope of interdisciplinary teaching allowed within and between departments. This move is furthered and legitimized by the "retrenchment" in higher education and the "back to basics" trend, both of which clearly threaten those programs (largely interdisciplinary) and those faculty (largely radical or methodologically unorthodox) not protected by department structures and/or tenure.

Within the conventional college or university a large portion of the interdisciplinary or alternative curriculum is found either outside the departmental structure and/or taught by untenured often part-time faculty. For example, in one of the largest and often most interdisciplinary areas of growth through the 1960s and early 1970s -- women's studies -- half the teachers hold only part-time appointments.[4] In addition, unable to compete for budget allocations on the same footing as the established departments with their heavily tenured and influential faculty, the low funding of many women's studies programs forces them to hire the lowest cost teachers.[5] Interdisciplinary and extradepartmental programs and courses of this sort have also relied heavily upon untenured gypsy faculty, hired specifically to meet these needs often on clearly-specified one- or two-year terminal contracts. These faculty find themselves in a doubly weak position: The programs into which they have been hired give them no bargaining power within the institution and little hope of tenured status; and they are

called upon to teach in the most innovative and non-traditional areas of the curriculum while the reality of the academic job market is such that research, performance, and publication in an established and departmentally-recognized discipline are the primary means of advancement.[6] Tenured faculty who do teach in these programs are most often department-based, released on the sufferance of their department chair and subject to recall. This faculty member's reward structure (sabbaticals, teaching assignments and schedules, salary recommendations and promotions, access to discretionary funds, etc.) continues through the department and he or she understandably feels compelled to place his or her primary institutional loyalty there.

These circumstances have led to something of a caste division within the faculty, a division in which those with tenure, a departmental basis, professional status, and institutional power are increasingly divided from those who teach in the non-departmentalized, less institutionally powerful portions of the curriculum and who themselves are without the bargaining power that goes with tenure, professional security, and departmental support. Added to this caste division is the overall deterioration of faculty position, perhaps most clearly illustrated by the virtual collapse of the faculty labor market in all but a few fields. It is established by the Carnegie Commission that the level of net faculty additions will remain at its current level -- about zero -- or below for much of the remainder of this century.[7] The increasing age of tenured faculty will further aggrevate the caste division, making it ever more difficult to introduce new programs and new innovations both inside and outside the departmental structure. The magnitude of this problem can be appreciated by considering tenure ratios which have risen from 50 percent in 1969 to

75 percent ten years later.[8]

While the tendencies described above will work to reinforce the organization and dissemination of knowledge as defined by the traditional disciplines and administered through the departmental structure at the expense of innovative and interdisciplinary curricula, it should be fairly clear that in the long-run they also work to undermine the power of the departments vis-à-vis the college administration and to increase the marginality of all faculty in the life of the college. As department chairpersons increasingly become adiminstrators first and faculty members second (if at all) and as the college governance system becomes more explicitly modeled after the methods of modern business management, all faculty loose a certain amount of control over the curriculum, to say nothing about other matters of traditional faculty prerogative. On this point Weaver and I are in full agreement. My major disagreement regards the degree of significance Weaver attaches to the intra-institutional power struggle between disciplinary-oriented faculty and administrative control over the curriculum, a struggle which faculty must ultimately loose. As has been suggested, I believe the struggle is wider and symptomatic of broader changes in the social system and that while there clearly has been (and will continue to be) a shift of internal political power from faculty to administration, departments will continue, albeit in somewhat altered form, to monitor disciplinary orthodoxy and assert major control over the curriculum.

As the general ecomomic situation worsens and as state expenditures are trimmed further, those programs and faculty considered frills to what in the post World War II period has increasingly become the task of postsecondary education -- producing workers trained to meet the changing

needs of the labor market[9] -- will be eliminated in favor of a more "practical" curriculum. This trimming will also serve to protect departmentally-defined faculty jobs in an ever tight faculty labor market. In the light of these economic and labor-related imperatives, the tendency in most departments and in the curricula they offer will be toward increasing specialization designed to produce professionals (in the four-year colleges) and technical workers (in the community colleges) for increasingly specific and narrow job opportunities. This, in turn, will mean that many of the struggles of the 1960s and early 1970s to transform departments and/or the college curriculum so as to speak to the needs of third world, women, and minority students and to those wanting to pursue issues whose content does not conform to the boundaries set by any one of the established disciplines will be increasingly lost as these special programs are dismanteled and the faculty who taught in them are let go.[10]

An example of the impact of this financial crisis and the response of the college administration can be seen by a look at the $13.5 million reduction in the 1981-82 academic budget of Michigan State University, and at those academic programs most directly affected by the cuts.[11] While the 81-82 Michigan cuts are perhaps deeper than those in most states (Michigan receives almost sixty percent of its operating budget from the state and the severly depressed auto industry has sharply decreased state funds), the cuts themselves exhibit an increasingly familiar pattern in higher education. Two special programs -- Lyman Briggs, a residential college established in 1967 with a mandate to provide an integrated, "liberal" education for science students, and the College of Urban Development -- were eliminated entirely. James Madison College, a residential college with a curriculum oriented toward public affairs and originally

targeted for elimination by the board of trustees, was severly trimmed. A fourth college, Nursing, was also slated for elimination; but strong opposition from legislators, professional associations, and other nursing schools resulted in its retention.

While eliminating and cutting non-departmentalized, nontraditional aspects of the curriculum, the budget

> "gave priority to traditional undergraduate and graduate curricula, to the university's land-grant mission, and to professional areas with the most student interest. The budgets of the three 'core' colleges -- arts and letters, natural science, and social science -- were cut by about 10 percent, and those for agriculture, business, communications, and engineering by between 5 and 8 percent." [12]

These sorts of reductions, and the power struggles that accompany them, are likely to spread to most state colleges and universities and to continue throughout the 1980s.

Like other institutions -- public and private -- in the post-boom era, institutions of higher education are in the process of retrenchment, of reassessing or redefining their mission to meet changing political, economic, and social realities. The elimination of inner colleges and experimental and innovative interdisciplinary programs will most directly affect the white, affluent student who, finding the range of extradepartmental and interdisciplinary options narrowed, will nevertheless in all probability remain in college. This is not likely to be an option for many in the other large group of students affected by the innovations of the 1960s. While there is much concern and discussion over the prospect of declining

enrollments throughout the remainder of the century due to the passage of the baby-boom generation through its college years, little attention has been given to the fact that sharply rising tuition, cutbacks in student loans/grants, increased student fees, and enrollment lids -- all policy decisions based primarily on financial considerations -- also serve to reduce enrollment. In this case, it is enrollment of those least able to pay the higher tuitions, to get by without loans or grants, or to move to another community or state if enrollment lids have been met in their area. This often means people of color, ethnic minorities, working class students, and women resuming interrupted educations -- those very people to whom much of the alternative curriculum of the late 60s and early 70s spoke -- are frozen out of a college education. For example, in Washington State the restrictive enrollment lids for the 1981-82 academic year fall much more heavily on the community colleges, which had been exceeding their contracted enrollments for the past three years, than on the state's four-year colleges and universities. It should be clear who it is that these lids and their accompanying tuition hikes will most directly affect.[13]

This enforced decline in enrollment (and those whom it most directly effects) is not incompatible with changing employment opportunities in the labor market. Ernest Mandel's 1975 observation on the nature of the labor market will continue valid through the eighties to century's end: "What capital needs is not a large number of highly-qualified intellectual workers. It needs an increasing but limited quantity of intellectual producers equipped with specific qualifications and with specific tasks to fulfill in the process of production and circulation.[14] This changing job structure and the sort of worker it requires is not compatible with the innovative and interdisciplinary curricula -- with its stress on

critical questioning, analytical ability, and the systematic investigation of broad questions -- that was the hallmark of much of the educational change of the mid 1960s and early 1970s. It is, however, compatible with the clearly specified and vocationally-oriented curriculum which is increasingly found in the four-year as well as the community college. As early as 1973 the Carnegie Commission in its Final Report recommended some restriction in access to four-year higher education and the simultaneous expansion of two-year community colleges with the argument that these would meet market needs and not develop in students the critical faculties and "all roundedness" of the traditional curriculum.[15] So when Weaver argues that "colleges and universities will try to reallocate contracting resources to meet the interests of a changing type of student," (pg. 16) it is a student whose "interests" are in very large part shaped by structural changes in the job market and by a narrowing range of employment opportunities which are increasingly demanding of specialized degrees. In addition, as has been suggested above, even some of these students may find themselves frozen out of the two-year curriculum due to enrollment lids and tuition hikes.

Weaver suggests (pp. 15-16) that new student-defined interests combined with a weakened faculty market position and institutions' strong need for students will lead to a further deterioration of faculty power vis-a-vis the administration and to a diminishment of the ability of disciplines to assert their professional orientation over the curriculum. While agreeing with this general tendency, I maintain that Weaver hasn't sufficiently explored the source of these new student interests and that, while stressing the flexibility of most disciplines, he underestimates their ability to respond to preceived student need while at the same time defining the course of professionalism.

Students' educational demands as well as the college curriculum have responded quite quickly to structural changes in the economy. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching found that professional and vocational majors among undergraduates rose from 40 to 60 percent between 1969 and 1975,[16] and "by 1975, 95 percent of American undergraduates considered training and skills for an occupation to be either essential or fairly important goals for their college education."[17] The Council goes on to report that:

> "When undergraduates were asked what was most essential for them to get out of a college education in 1969, learning to get along with people and formulating values and goals for their lives were ranked first and second. Seven years later, these desires were outranked by getting a detailed grasp of a special field and obtaining training and skills for an occupation. Three-quarters of freshmen report that they are attending college in order to get a better job.
>
> "The single most obvious result of this emerging 'vocomania' is that students' enrollment patterns have changed. Among subject areas, the big gainers are business, the health professions, biology (the gateway to medical school), agriculture, and other technical fields. Nearly a quarter of all freshmen intend to major in business, which is at the top of the heap; this represents nearly a 50 percent increase relative to 1969. The big losers have been the least occupationally useful fields -- education, the humanities, and several of the social sciences.[18]

In addition, the Council's data indicate that undergraduates are spending more time studying their majors -- "between 1967 and 1974, the proportion of credits students were taking in their area of concentration increased from 44 to 58 percent"[19] -- and less time on electives and general education credits. The Council suggests that without distribution requirements this situation would have been even more pronounced, "since 41 percent of college students feel current degree requirements restrict them from taking as many courses in their major as they would like."[20] Given developments in the overall economy with its aggravated conditions of stagflation and increasingly tight and specified job market for college graduates, it seems likely that this trend has increased since the Council's 1974 report and will continue throughout the remainder of the century.

The curriculum has accommodated this increased student interest in specialization, largely through departmental majors, without major student agitation (as opposed to the agitation accompanying the loosening of the curriculum in the 1960s). Again, the Carnegie Commission:

> "On the face of it, the poverty of undergraduate preparation, the race for jobs, the competive atmosphere on campus, and the pressure for grades would seem to make college a dreadful experience for today's students. Not so. They are more satisfied with college than the students of the 1960s, who also were extremely satisfied. A majority of the undergraduates of the 1970s report being satisfied with college in general, with their majors, with their teaching, and even with the mechanics of grading.
>
> "The student of the 1970s is more traditional in academic values than the undergraduate of the last decade and is less interested

> in seeing things change. The demands of the 1960s for greater relevance, the abolition of grading requirements, and more attention to student emotional growth are less popular among students now. Fewer believe that less emphasis should be placed on specialized training in favor of a broad liberalized education or that teaching effectiveness rather than research should be the primary criterion for faculty promition."[21]

As the undergraduate curriculum becomes more specialized and technical, as the segmentation of postsecondary education continues to develop a tracking system designed to reproduce the class structure and labor market needs (from elite professionals to vocationally-trained white collar and technical workers),[22] super/subordination in the classroom will likely increase. The transmission of knowledge (or the delivery of education) in this fashion not only encourages students to fragment and compartmentalize their learning and hence their view of social reality but it discourages them from thinking abstractly, analytically, and critically. In other words, it fails to equip students with the habits of mind and the sense of personal efficacy necessary to act positively on large social issues -- issues which are increasingly being seen to cut across all dimensions of social life. At the same time, the organization of the typical college classroom, the nature and transmission of knowledge within it, the testing and grading of students and the tight labor market in which "desirable" jobs will be fewer and more difficult to obtain create a set of social relations among students reproductive of the larger society in which they will take their places. Competition for a scarce commodity -- the few "good" grades which often become the currency (translated into a "spendable" GPA) for the desirable job or the slot in the graduate or professional

program -- fosters individualism, a lack of cooperation, a hording of information and, once the grades are distributed, an invidious comparison of intellectual and even social worth.

So even within a single department a not-too-subtle tracking for status and job advantage takes place not unlike in kind but only in magnitude to the hierarchial division of labor established along the spectrum from the most elite liberal arts college to the vocationally-oriented community college. In neither setting is the nature of the education or the process by which that education is delivered directed toward helping students develop as persons.

The argument to this point leads to the conclusion that throughout the remainder of the century traditional academic departments will continue as the primary mechnaism for organizing and administering knowledge within the academy, that the thrust of the disciplines will continue to be strongly "scientific" and increasingly directed toward more specialized and techincal knowledge, and hence that the student experience will become more fragmented and dehumanized. This tendency seems clear to me. Yet it is not to say that those forces of the late 1960s and early 1970s -- both student and faculty initiated -- to break out of the confines of narrow specialization and "value-free" methodology, to create learning situations that foster critical and broad thinking, to establish courses and programs that call the conventional wisdom -- academic as well as political and social -- into question, have been extinguished. There are strong countertendencies that challenge and disrupt the new situation, and these countertendencies will continue to make the arena of higher education one of conflict and contestation. While the educational system plays a primary role in reproducing and extending those necessary conditions for continued capitalist accumulation

(most particularly, labor power trained to fit changing job requirements) and the attitudes and values necessary for continued capitalist hegemony, the university and professional disciplines which make up its academic core are not simply instruments of the inperatives of advanced capitalism. They retain a degree of relative autonomy that keeps open a sphere of critical discourse and provides the terrain for a continuing struggle.

Furthermore, fundamental contradictions in the larger society, particularly the transformation of work which increasingly proletarianizes and bureaucratizes the sons and daughters of the middle class at the very time that the college curriculum held out promise for greater self-determination, find their analogues as well as their points of opposition and protest in the university. Educational goals of autonomy, creativity, and self-definition (which of course have their counterparts in the larger ideology of liberalism) come increasingly into conflict with the conditions of work which are often repetitive, fragmented, and meaningless. Not only do the realities of the larger society thwart student aspirations for rewarding work and status but the realities of the changing curriculum -- its content as well as its administration -- increasingly prepare students for the acceptance of the new social reality.[23] Yet the emergence of new critical tendencies and social movements in the larger society in the 1970s -- around feminism, gays, ecology, and nuclear power and alternative energy systems -- will continue to have their impact and influence on the academy, serving as lines of arguments against the compartmentalization and fragmentation of knowledge and providing alternative views of the conventional wisdom.

Thus the struggle both to obtain and to provide a liberating, empowering education continues in many colleges, although in muted and often somewhat precarious form. Many of the faculty who initiated and/or supported the changes of the 60s and 70s are still teaching and now have as their colleagues some of the radical students of that era. This group of faculty is largely responsible for the establishment of a marxist perspective and critical discourse as a strong presence in higher education, particularly in the liberal arts disciplines. While a number of these faculty have been victims of the closing of nontraditional programs and the dismissal of nontenured faculty, many others have established themselves within the traditional departments and there constitute strong voices against the current trend, particularly in their ability to cogently address the failure of conventional methodologies, theories, and analyses and to propose a more integrated approach to understanding the past and addressing the current social reality.[24] Moreover, the crisis confronting each of the professional disciplines, particularly the social sciences, and their inability to decisively resolve, let alone speak to, this crisis maintains an opening for students and faculty to struggle against the tendencies outlined above.

In short, the phenonmena of the 1960s and early 1970s taken together with the developments of this period of contration -- the move to mass education, the integration of the formerly excluded into the colleges, the resistence to bureaucratized and alienating work relations, the tightening of the labor market, and the pressures imposed by the fiscal crisis -- insure that higher education will remain a contensted arena. While these tensions will continue to be felt, in varying degrees, in all institutions of higher learning, the argument of this paper has been that the tendency is

clearly in the direction of a more traditional and increasingly specialized undergraduate curriculum, administered under the dominance of a revitalized departmental structure.

The developments discussed throughout this essay led to the conclusion that those "alternative" educational institutions whose entire curriculum and educational philosophy are organized on other than departmental lines are more likely than inner colleges or experimental programs within the traditionally-organized college to survive the current trend. Of those alternative colleges established in the late 60s/early 70s, those organized on a non-departmental basis -- The Evergreen State College, Hampshire, Stockton State, Ramapo, Old Westbury, and University of Wisconsin at Green Bay -- have been able to maintain their philosophical and organizational integrity, although not without some adjustments, particularly in the direction of a more rationalized and predictable curriculum. A detailed case study of how one of these colleges dealt with the new realities without undermining its philosophical base -- Byron Youtz's "The Evergreen State College: An Experiment Maturing" -- can be found in this volume.

The pressures toward disciplinary professionalism and departmental hegemony over the curriculum and the lack of a power base within the established administrative structure are of course absent at these colleges. But this is not at all to suggest that they can look forward to a trouble-free future, somehow immune from the historical factors affecting higher education. None are autonomous actors. All but Hampshire are public institutions, subject to state allocations and cuts within their respective state systems. They face the possible danger of closure by the state or a forced move to a traditional department-based curriculum. For reasons

similar to those that make a nontraditional program insecure within a traditional college, the nontraditional state-supported college is in a weak position vis-a-vis the other colleges and universities in its system. In a case of extreme fiscal exigency, for example, it is likely to be decided that the education it offers is marginal and/or extravagant to the main enterprise and thus expendable. I would suggest, however, that short of a major fiscal crisis, as long as enrollments are maintained at a high level and the educational quality remains sound, these colleges will continue to exist. But, to agree with Weaver's final conclusion, existence is not sufficient: Alternative colleges must do more than remain "mere alternatives."

As the alternatives within the conventional college's undergraduate curriculum disappear or are transformed into increasingly specialized pre- or para-professional training, it becomes even more important that the nontraditional college provide a model of a truly alternative education, one that empowers individuals to act as informed, critical, purposeful, and responsible citizens in an uncertian world.

FOOTNOTES

1. For example, closure or substantial modification away from interdisciplinary or nontraditional programs has been the case at Goddard, Franconia, Thomas Jefferson College of the Grand Valley State Colleges, Prescott College, Johnson Center (Redlands), Strawberry College at UC Berkeley, Unit I of the University of Illinois, the Global Survival Program at University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Michigan State University's Lyman Briggs College and James Madison College, Hostos/CUNNY, and Centennial Education Program at University of Nebraska.

2. I am indebted to Barbara Leigh Smith for this example.

3. I am here following the argument of those who maintain that modern capitalist development is characterized by an overall pattern of long waves of two or three decades in duration. For example, see Eric Hobsbaum, "The Crisis of Capitalism in Historical Perspective;" VI Socialist Revolution (October - December 1976); David Gordon, "Up and Down the Long Roller Coaster;" In URPE, United States Capitalism in Crisis, New York: Union for Radical Political Economics, 1978; Ernest Mandel, Long Waves of Capitalist Development, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980); and Thomas Weisskopf, "The Current Economic Crisis in Historical Perspective," LVII Socialist Review (May-June, 1981)

4. Emily Abel and Deborah Rosenfelt, "Women Part-Time Faculty," XVII Radical Teacher (November, 1980) page 61.

5. A graphic example of the high costs of this squeeze is the closing in December 1979 of the Goddard-Cambridge Graduate Program in Social Change. Its Feminist Studies Section, perhaps its strongest and best known component, had been so undermined by tuition increases, a reduced budget, and staff cuts that it elected to close the program rather than undergo the structural changes necessitated by the cuts. From "Notes for Educational Workers," XVII Radical Teacher (November, 1980) page 59.

6. This is the case not only at large state institutions, but al small liberal arts colleges as well. For a discussion of the situation at Oberlin College, see David Love, "Interdisciplinary Work at Oberlin," LXXVII Oberlin Alumni Magazine (Summer, 1981), pp 2-5.

7. Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, Three Thousand Futures: The Next Twenty Years for Higher Education (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980), page 80.

8. Ibid, page 82.

9. For a full treatment of this development and its relation to the rapid growth of an increasingly segmented system of postsecondary education corresponding to the segmentation and extension of the wage-labor system, see Sam Bowles and Herb Gintis, Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life (New York: Basic Books, 1976), pp. 201-203.

10. For some sense of the magnitude of problem, see footnote 1.

11. "Michigan State's Budget Cut $13.5 Million, 368, Many with Tenure, Face Loss of Jobs," XXII The Chronicle of Higher Education (April 13, 1981), pp 1, 8 & 9. The discussion in the following two paragraphs relies heavily on the Chronicle report.

12. Ibid, page 8.

13. Washington's enrollment figures for the academic year 1980-81 and the lids for 1981-82 are as follows:

College	80-81 FTE Enrollment	81-82 FTE Enrollment
University of Washington	31,210	31,000
Washington State University	16,500	16,500
Central Washington State College	5,895	5,900
Western Washington State College	9,120	9,100
Eastern Washington State College	6,575	6,800
The Evergreen State College	2,384	2,500
Community College System	97,000	92,000

This information was provided by Mike Bigelow, Budget Officer, The Evergreen State College.

14. Ernest Mandel, Late Capitalism (London: NLB, 1975) page 262.

15. Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, Priorities for Action: Final Report (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), page

16. ----------. Missions of the College Curriculum: A Contemporary Review with Suggestions (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977), page 103.

17. ----------. A Summary of Reports and Recommendations (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1980) page 138. The heavy student investment in professional education can be seen from the following table:

Components of the Curriculum

Undergraduate enrollments in majors are approximately as follows:

Area	*Percentage*
Professional	58%
Social Sciences	11[a]
Humanities	5
Biological Sciences	7
Physical Sciences	4[a]
Arts	6
Other or no major	8

Ibid, page 132.

18. Ibid, page 230.

19. Ibid

20. Ibid

21. Ibid, page 231.

22. This trend is perhaps most evident in the operation of the California College system with its clearly articulated three-tier structure. For further discussion of the class and labor-market related nature of this tiered system, see Burton R. Clark, The Open Door College: A Case Study (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960); Jerome Karabel, "Community Colleges and Social Stratification," XXXXII Harvard Educational Review (November 1972), pp. 521-62; and XIV Radical Teacher (December 1979), Special California Issue.

23. For a more detailed discussion of the argument that the roots of the crisis of higher education exist not so much in the structure of higher education itself as in fundamental contradictions in the larger society, see Bowles and Gintis, pp. 215-219.

24. This development is not, however, without its ambiguity, particularly for marxist academics. The relative safety of the departmental rubric has led a number to restrict the scope of their work and to fragment broad questions in order to legitimate their presence within the disciplinary framework and hence to better secure their position within the University.