

A special meeting of the Senate of the University of British Columbia was held on Wednesday, November 25, 1964, at 8:00 p.m., in the Board and Senate Room, Administration Building, for a general discussion of the report and recommendations of the Committee on Academic Goals.

Present: President J. B. Macdonald (in the Chair), Chancellor Phyllis G. Ross, Dr. K. F. Argue, Dr. C. S. Belshaw, Mr. R. M. Bibbs, Dr. A. E. Birney, Mr. J. F. Brown, Mr. W. T. Brown, Mr. F. L. Burnham, Dr. J. D. Chapman, Dr. I. McT. Cowan, Dean B. A. Eagles, Mr. H. Elder, Dr. J. G. Foulks, Dr. S. M. Friedman, Dean W. H. Gage, Dr. W. C. Gibson, Mr. W. Ireland, Dr. J. A. Jacobs, Dr. S. M. Jamieson, Dr. F. H. Johnson, Mr. J. S. Keate, Dr. H. L. Keenleyside, Dean S. W. Leung, Dean H. McCrae, Dean J. F. McCreary, Dr. M. F. McGregor, Dr. K. C. Mann, Dr. G. W. Marquis, Dr. W. H. Mathews, Dean A. W. Matthews, Mr. F. A. Morrison, Dr. D. C. Murdoch, Dean D. M. Myers, Dean K. D. Naegele, The Honourable Mr. Justice N. T. Nemetz, Rev. C. W. Nicholls, Mr. E. P. Nicol, Dr. J. M. Norris, Dean V. J. Okulitch, Dr. M. A. Ormsby, Dr. G. J. Parfitt, Mr. H. N. Parrott, Dean G. N. Perry, Dr. A. J. Renney, Dr. W. Robbins, Dr. B. Savery, The Honourable James Sinclair, Dr. J.H.G. Smith, Dr. Ross Stewart, Mr. B. Stuart-Stubbs, Mr. E.C.E. Todd, Mr. F. E. Walden, Dr. H. V. Warren, Mr. A. A. Webster, Acting-Dean R. W. Wellwood, Mr. P. H. White, Dr. S. H. Zbarsky and Mr. G. Selman.

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Dr. D. H. Copp and Dr. R. F. Scagel were also present by invitation as non-Senate members of the Committee.

Messages of regret for their inability to be present were received from Mrs. H. F. Angus, Rev. J. Blewett, Dean G. F. Curtis, Dr. J.E.A. Kania, Mrs. H. J. MacKay, Dr. R. F. Sharp and the Honourable Mr. Justice D. R. Verchere.

The President opened the meeting by suggesting that it should be limited to general discussion of selected parts of the Report, with no resolutions formulated at this time. Members of the Committee would summarize the Report, one chapter at a time (not in sequence), and would indicate the points deserving consideration. At the conclusion of each summary, there would be an opportunity for discussion of the chapter in question.

Chapter VIII - Academic Administration

Dr. Norris stated that a major recommendation of the Report was the establishment of a Standing Committee of Senate on Academic Affairs, charged with the responsibility of advising Senate on the quality and development of the University curriculum. The Committee on Academic Goals proposed that this body have nine academic members, one of whom should act as Secretary and should hold continuing membership. Three alternative methods of selection of the Committee members were outlined:

- (a) Election of part of the membership by the Joint Faculties, since the Faculties would be affected by the recommendations of the Committee;

- (b) Election of the members (either including or excluding the Chairman) by Senate from a slate of candidates nominated by the Chairman of Senate;
- (c) Direct election of the members by Senate.

Dean Cowan expressed his concern that the addition to the existing framework of such a Committee and, in larger Faculties, a Faculty Planning Committee (which was also recommended in the Report) might stifle initiative on the part of individuals.

Dr. Norris felt, on the other hand, that the Academic Affairs Committee would encourage initiative and expedite action, although in itself it would not have executive authority. Faculty Planning Committees were already in existence in several Faculties. Dr. Belshaw added that machinery was needed to evaluate new ideas from the overall standpoint of the University; and to determine the extent to which academic activities now existing on the campus in a rudimentary stage, or not yet represented, should be encouraged.

Mr. White believed the Committee on Academic Affairs should be concerned with continuous development of policy over a wide academic range. He did not think it could fulfil this function with only nine members. Appointment of sub-committees to examine specific issues would permit the specialist approach to those issues, but the major concern of the Committee should be over-all policy.

Dean Myers stated that the proposed terms of reference were virtually the most important functions of

the Senate itself, and he deplored the possibility that Senate might become a "rubber stamp" for an advisory committee. He felt also that the recommendations in the Report with respect to Faculty Planning Committees, and the function of Faculty Curriculum Committees, should be considered by the individual Faculties and not by Senate. The President replied that the Committee presenting the Report intended the recommendations to be considered by the respective bodies concerned.

Referring to Mr. White's comments, Dr. Savery expressed the opinion that an over-all policy committee should have only a small number of members, but should call on appropriate members of Faculty for advice on specific issues.

The President pointed out that the participants in the discussion had indicated a wide variety of viewpoints. He felt this was one reason against attempting to move too rapidly in implementing the recommendations of the Report.

Chapter II - Admission Policy and Enrolment

Dr. Chapman stated the Committee on Academic Goals believed the University would shortly be in a position to determine its size, because of the growth of other institutions and the provision of other avenues of post-high-school education. The University would also be in a position to influence the direction of its growth.

Tables 1 and 2, indicating enrolment in 1963 and

1973, were a cross between a forecast and a goal.

Dr. Chapman reported growing interest across Canada in the use of standard University admission tests, either alone or in conjunction with high-school records.

Dean Perry commented on a report recently prepared for the National Conference of Canadian Universities and Colleges by Dr. E. S. Graham, on the application of the United States College Entrance Examination Board tests to Canadian conditions. McGill and Bishop's Universities had used these tests because they found it difficult to evaluate candidates from other provinces on the basis of their secondary school performance, and because the reports on secondary school performance were not available soon enough.

Dr. Graham strongly recommended that the N.C.C.U.C. should develop a Canadian equivalent of the C.E.E.B. examinations, and suggested that in the meantime the Canadian universities should use the United States tests, on the assumption that Canadian students would not be competing to any great extent against United States students for admission to Canadian universities.

The President stated there had been almost unanimous agreement at the recent meetings of the N.C.C.U.C. that Canadian tests should be developed, since there was increased movement of students from one province to another, and from other countries to Canadian universities.

Mr. Justice Nemetz inquired about the recommendation in the Report that "studies comparing achievement in secondary

school and performance at university be enlarged in scope and carried out regularly by the Office of Student Services in conjunction with the University admission officers." He asked why British Columbia should not revert to the matriculation examination system.

Dr. Chapman felt, first, that the Canadian universities favoured investigating the C.E.E.B. examinations, but that not all of them would adopt a system of this type in the near future. The University of British Columbia had found the most reliable indication of a student's academic standing was the high school examinations or recommendations, interpreted in the light of the experience of Dean Gage and the Registrar. Adoption by other Canadian universities of a uniform testing programme would provide useful information on correlation of the results with those in high school examinations. In brief, he believed a multiple estimate of a student's ability would be better than a single estimate, but there was some limitation on how much better.

Dr. Birney asked whether the recommended limit on enrolment by 1973 (16,500 undergraduate and 5,500 graduate) was based on computation or educational philosophy. Dr. Chapman replied it was principally a proposal for restricting undergraduate growth so that the University could focus on development of graduate and professional schools.

Dr. Friedman inquired whether the Committee had considered the provincial or national interest, or the need of the potential students. He cited a New York report on

the testing of 13,000 freshmen, which concluded that nineteen percent went to universities for higher education, and another twenty-seven percent in preparation for professional training. Over fifty percent had interests peripheral to the interests of the university. He asked whether there were figures available on individuals with inclination and motivation towards university education, who because of other responsibilities of one kind or another did not take university entrance examinations.

Dr. Norris stated that the Committee had examined a report by a member of Faculty in 1959 on the motivation of a small sample of University students. Additional data since that time could form the basis of a further study.

To establish a precise goal for future enrolment, it would be necessary to study such factors as the economy of British Columbia, the level of expectation for higher education, and the level of expectation on investment in education.

Dean Gage cautioned that the tables in this chapter required knowledgeable interpretation: for instance, the definition of "graduate" students (Table 1) varied in different institutions; comparisons between students from First Year University and Senior Matriculation (Tables 5 and 6) did not allow for the fact that the majority of high-ranking students from Grade XII went directly to the University because of the financial assistance available. Moreover, distribution of high-ranking students among the

Faculties was not in the same ratio as total enrolment.

Dean Gage believed it was premature to recommend that "students entering from Senior Matriculation be required to have a clear pass at first attempt in five subjects and an average of 60%" until the University had decided the standard it would require for students seeking admission from junior colleges.

Dr. Mann stated that the Committee was well aware of the proportion of high-ranking students from Grade XII proceeding immediately to the University, but thought its recommendation about those entering from Senior Matriculation was valid since the situation with respect to First Year University and Senior Matriculation was not likely to change in the near future.

Dr. Zbarsky inquired whether 5500 was a desirable goal for graduate students by 1973, or an upper limit. Dean Cowan regarded it more as a goal, since he felt it would require continuous effort to achieve adequate financial support for a graduate school of that size.

President Macdonald commented that it was almost the uniform experience of eastern Canadian institutions attempting to restrict their enrolment in recent years, that they had not been able to maintain the restriction to the level considered ideal at an earlier date.

Chapter V - The Design and
Structure of the Curriculum

Dr. Norris summarized the recommendations with respect to undergraduate curriculum.

Dr. Stewart expressed conflicting views on many of these recommendations:

1. Optional programmes as a replacement for unprescribed electives - Dr. Stewart felt students should retain the privilege of choosing electives in a field of their own interest. This would not necessarily destroy the cohesion of the individual's programme.
2. Replacement of the unit system of measurement by a series of designed programmes of study - whatever system was used, some procedure for evaluating courses would be necessary.
3. Requirement of Bachelor degree in Arts or Science for admission to a professional programme - Dr. Stewart doubted that the full programme could be prolonged to this extent.
4. Relation of selected discipline, allied disciplines and general education - there should be greater emphasis on the selected discipline in an honours programme, and there should be free choice of subjects in the "general education" category.
5. Requirement of three "general education" courses in the first two years would preclude an adequate level of specialization in an honours programme.

6. The honours programme should retain the traditional emphasis on high academic standard as well as specialization.

Mr. Nicholls suggested provision might be made for some students to specialize intensively and accelerate their programme. Consideration should also be given to methods of instruction other than formal lecture courses - e.g., directed instruction of small groups.

Dr. Murdoch commented that this chapter appeared to refer almost entirely to the Faculty of Arts. Even though the general honours programme was not to be regarded as inferior to the selected honours programme, in practice the majority of high-ranking students would be proceeding to graduate study and, particularly in the Faculty of Science, would enrol in a specialized honours programme.

He felt also that "general education" courses would prove impractical, since only outstanding teachers could effectively present such courses. A "cultural" course in science, including mathematics, would be of less value to a student in the arts than one of the existing fundamental courses.

Dr. Norris pointed out that the recommendations left ample scope within the selected honours programme for a high degree of specialization.

With respect to the recommendation that a Bachelor's degree should precede admission to a professional programme, Dean McCreary stated that medical schools in the United States had for some years followed such a pattern.

Medical schools in Canada had had a different approach, which was gradually being adopted by institutions in the United States: admitting good students at the end of their third undergraduate year, and deferring consideration of others until they completed a Bachelor's degree. Dr. Norris explained that the Committee believed some of the basic medical science courses might be included in the programme leading to the Bachelor's degree, thereby permitting a shortening of the professional training.

Chapter III - The Quality of
Instruction and the Assessment
of Achievement

Dr. Belshaw summarized the recommendations on instructional methods and assessment of student achievement.

Dr. Robbins quoted the statement in the Foreword to the Report that "the Committee consulted widely with members of the Faculty". No member of the Department of English, the largest Department in the University, could recall being consulted during the study.

Table 9 of the Report, quoting statistics on percent distribution of final grades in some courses in English, was misleading because of the wide variation in qualifications for admission to these particular courses. Dr. Murdoch and Dr. Johnson added that the same was true of the courses in Mathematics and Education cited in the table.

Dr. Savery pointed out some of the difficulties involved in giving effect to recommendations with respect

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to reducing lectures to an "effective minimum", and recording standing on transcripts by letter grades and the rank order of the student.

The President suggested that the other chapters of the Report be discussed at the next regular meeting of Senate as time permitted.

The meeting adjourned at 10:05 p.m.


Secretary.


Chairman.