

ASCD's Stake in Higher Education

THE Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development properly has devoted most of its talents and resources to the improvement of the educational opportunities of children and youth of elementary and secondary school age. Through this issue of *Educational Leadership*, the Association evidences its concern for the post-secondary education of American youth. The membership, and the readers of this issue, may well wonder why this extension of the interests of the Association at a time when they are beset by pressing problems of instruction and leadership in the public schools. The answer simply is that the Association has a stake in higher education, and higher education has a stake in ASCD. Neither is a simple holding.

First, there is the professional aspect of ASCD's stake in higher education. The Association, which is, in the last analysis, its membership, recognizes that education is a lifelong process. Its members are, therefore, professionally interested in the character and quality of the educational experiences offered youth and adults after they have terminated their common school education.

This professional interest covers the philosophy, the methodology, the organization, and the content of higher education. Simply because the members are professional educators, they wish to be conversant with the philosophies which are contending for support in our colleges. Likewise, they wish to assess the methods of instruction employed, to understand the organizational structures to be found, and to grasp the scope of the

content offered in American colleges and universities.

Second, there is the social aspect of ASCD's stake in higher education. The Association, through its members, has always been concerned about the social outcomes of education. At this time when the role of college and university trained men and women is of paramount importance in all aspects of American life, the Association may properly make manifest its concern for the social outcomes of higher education.

The social outcomes are complex, indeed. On the quantitative side, society must be assured of a sufficient number of college trained men and women to fill the manpower needs of our industries, our agriculture, our government and our social agencies, including our churches and schools. On the qualitative side, society must be assured that the training is of sufficiently high standard to meet its demands for competence. The man today who is "almost" competent to discharge the obligations of his position may be a socially dangerous man. The quantitative and the qualitative demands underlie the efforts of guidance workers in our colleges to conserve human resources by fitting ability and aptitude to the job to be done.

Perhaps the central consideration, however, is the social utility of the content of the programs offered. While few would argue that all knowledge is of equal worth, there is no unanimity of agreement upon what knowledge is of most worth. Yet all colleges, including the largest, must be selective in what

they teach because none can teach all. Certainly the individual student must select some content for study and pass up others.

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development has made very significant contributions to the selection of socially valuable content in public education. The principles of curriculum development and the criteria for content selection supported by the Association might prove useful in our institutions of higher learning. The Association should not miss this opportunity to extend its influence in American education.

There is, third, an ethical aspect to ASCD's stake in higher education. The principles of democracy and the highest ethical practices which the Association has supported in the common schools might well be continued and extended in the colleges. In fact, we have a moral obligation to support those who are concerned with the ethical development of college students by devoting space in our publications, time on our conference programs and the services of our consultants to work in this area.

Finally, as individuals, the members of ASCD have a selfish stake in higher education. Most of us return to the campuses in the summer for regular study or for conferences. Most of us are associated with recent college graduates and many of us are looking to the colleges for new teachers to fill the vacancies in our schools. We pay taxes for the support of public colleges and make contributions, voluntarily or by tuition, to support the parochial or private ones.

The Association, which is its membership, has a stake in higher education.

ASCD's Contribution

On the other hand, American educa-

tional institutions of post-secondary grade have a stake in ASCD. That this often is not recognized, especially by the colleges themselves, does not alter the fact.

In their search for better methods of instruction and for more functional patterns of curriculum organization many colleges are utilizing principles and practices that have long been supported, and in some cases pioneered, by ASCD. Techniques of group discussion applicable in the college classroom, student-teacher planning, decision making followed by effective action, and the development of democratic citizenship on the campus and in life are vital concerns of colleges today. Such forward looking colleges, as a matter of professional right, may reasonably expect the full support of the Association and of its individual members in their work in such areas.

While it is certainly not the ultimate vocation, the fact is that obtaining a good college education is the immediate vocation in which increasing numbers of American youth engage directly after leaving secondary schools. American colleges, and behind them the American people, are deeply concerned about the competencies which the graduates of secondary schools bring to this vocation.

With no implication of incrimination, and no liking for recrimination, the colleges are seeking effective ways of working on the underlying problems which are the mutual responsibility of themselves and of the secondary schools. To an increasing extent they are coming to recognize that the great professional organizations devoted to curriculum and instruction, of which ASCD is certainly one, can be the agencies supporting these mutual endeavors. The conference

programs, the publications and the professional activities of the members of such professional organizations are of immediate significance to our colleges.

Let us then recognize that the colleges do have a stake in the deliberations of this Association, in its publications, and in the decisions of its members that bear upon the competence of youth to enter this vocation.

Finally, and perhaps most fundamentally, the colleges may reasonably expect the members of this Association in their local communities to be the educational statesmen who will work to make the colleges of their areas a dynamic influence in the lives of their people. The

social effectiveness of colleges of all types and in all localities will be affected by the vision of this Association and of its members.

In recognition of the fact that the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development and institutions of higher learning have mutual interests, and each a stake in the other, this issue of *Educational Leadership* is devoted to "Meeting Public Demands for Higher Education."

—HAZEN A. CURTIS, *professor of education, Florida State University, Tallahassee; member, ASCD Publications Committee.*

Have You Registered for ASCD's Twelfth Annual Conference?

Plans for the Twelfth Annual Conference to be held in St. Louis, Missouri, March 17-21, 1957 are well under way. A variety of new ideas have been incorporated in the planning this year, and we are sure you won't want to miss this meeting. Theme of the conference will be: *Education and the Future: Appraisal and Planning*. General sessions will focus directly on the theme and will provide insights as to the kinds of things which curriculum workers will be considering some years hence. Again this year over 85 study discussion groups will discuss problems of mutual interest. These groups will focus on sharing experiences and information on topics of concern to school people, specific publications, research papers and research techniques. Assemblies and clinics also will provide opportunities for participants to hear outstanding educators discuss curriculum problems.

Preregistration forms have been sent to members of ASCD. If you have not returned yours, please do so in the near future so that you may be assured of the study group of your choice and take advantage of the reduced preregistration fee.

For further information and preregistration forms write to: ASCD, NEA, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N. W., Washington 6, D. C.

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