



## *Prelude to a Trustees Meeting<sup>1</sup>*

We, who are assembled here, are engaged in one of the oldest rituals of mankind. We are the council of the tribal fathers, assembled to take a look at the way the young are coming along in this generation, and the conditions of the world in which the young are likely to be living out their time; we are attempting to judge the emerging need of man and to shape a college accordingly.

For this ceremony, we need a broad and penetrating view of the generations up to date, and what it means to be a member of the human species; also an acute perception of what is now present

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by permission from *Improving College and University Teaching*. Winter 1966. (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press.)

in the world,  
projecting into the future  
the realities  
in which the young  
are likely to be maturing,  
and taking their responsibilities  
for shaping the affairs  
and fate of men.  
We are conscious  
there will come a time  
when these young  
will be called upon  
to sit in judgment  
of the human species,  
assembling wisdom  
and projecting  
into thought and act  
what man progressively becomes.

A college may, indeed,  
be thought of  
as an instrument  
provided by a people  
to afford its tribal fathers  
a chance  
to reproduce their kind.  
It is not  
that we regard ourselves  
so highly,  
but rather  
that a people  
needs some of its number  
to exercise their predilection  
in this regard,  
and take the time  
to bring themselves to focus  
on the state of man  
and recommended means  
for extending life  
within the human being.  
A people knows its need  
in this respect,  
and, in counting on a college,  
is counting  
on a provision it has made  
to see  
that its young,  
in their time,

may have a worthy tribal council  
and a chance  
to form a ground  
for a still better future.

The occupation of a college  
is, therefore,  
that of producing  
better human creatures,  
all other acts  
and judgments  
being instrumental.  
The product of a college  
is its people,  
and their value  
rests on their emanation  
as evolving persons,  
able, then,  
to inseminate their generation  
with what it takes  
to grow  
still better human beings.

The occupation of a council  
such as this  
is, then,  
to do the thinking  
that makes  
such provision worthy.  
This brings to us  
a need to plunge  
into the heart  
of what we know  
and are,  
to name for others,  
yet to come,  
the means  
by which to cultivate  
a better human.  
We need to name  
the present state of man  
and what it takes  
to make  
a better future.

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