University education varies purposes throughout world

The role of the student can be broken down into two broad areas. Within the university, the problem is one of interrelationships among faculty, student and administration. Outside the university, the question becomes the extent to which the student should play an active part in national happenings of a political or social nature. Before discussing the issue and any factors that might make the United States unique in the world, it is interesting to make a survey of the activities of students in other countries. These descriptions are the result of personal conversations with fellow delegates to the International Conference of Students at Cornell University.

In the decentralized university system of India, students are actively and enthusiastically engaged in international politics. They may take the form of sympathy strikes to draw attention to a particular problem or to support a specific viewpoint. They are generally thought to be symptomatic of a situation which honestly needs improvement. Students would in this case support the general student movement. Within the university, the students struggle with the problem of communications since there are no school newspapers. Formalized links between students and faculty members and between students and administrative officials provide the only means of obtaining student inputs, explaining university administration, and discussing problems of mutual interest.

Little effort is devoted to activities outside the university in Columbia. Student government primarily serves the function of communications. A representative to the administration is elected by the student body as are representatives to the college faculty (deans). Students can and do lobby for changes in university policy which are often only considered when students are united.

One of the strongest and most responsible of student government is that at the Free University of Berlin. Here a "mayor" is elected over a "village" of about 600 students and serves for a year, full-time, without simultaneously registering for courses. Typical projects undertaken by the students through the leadership of the mayor include raising funds to erect new buildings or finding the money and personnel to start new courses which are desired. In addition, students have a veto over both the admission of students and the selection of faculty members.

British students attempt to solve problems of discipline and social activities. Seldom do the issues of national politics interest students as a whole, except for occasional recommendations made to Parliament. Within the university, however, students often win struggles with the academic council. There is a tendency for the power of student government to increase despite what was interestingly referred to as the "normal" problem of apathy. Activities of students in the Philippines are often run with funds raised by the students themselves. Within the university, these activities include seminars and welfare programs, physical education classes and national contests in music and debating. Student opinion is solicited and used.

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