Toward human survival

Despite all the verbalizations and palpation on this and other campuses about relevance and reform, even some of the most active members of the academic community have overlooked two of the most basic themes which unite the various issues which we face: human survival and the responsibility of individuals and institutions to ensure that survival. Human survival requires that we not destroy ourselves in a nuclear holocaust, or leave ourselves in poverty paying for the hardware to make it possible. So, DoS will be concerned with technological applications, which have been unable to cope with technology and human nature, and attempt to find solutions for the problems of overurbanized, urbanized culture. Advanced systems analysis by the DoS can determine whether a new building, even if it can be rented profitably, will cause undue stress on the transportation systems to the extent that this is frequent and persistent on the purity of the atmosphere. Bystander control and the political, religious, and mechanical processes that compose them will be a part of some topic of study. Solid waste disposal, the taming of the international nuclear jungle, the discovery of new natural resources—all will be taken into account.

To provide the community with some serious, fulltime thinking on what the role of the Institute as an institution should be within the context of academic freedom, we would like to propose the establishment of an Office of Institutional Responsibility. When the overall direction of the Institute’s research effort has been altered, the reactions of many in positions of responsibility is to hide behind cliches of "academic freedom" rather than give a clear definition of what they mean. The reason that the Institute has not done so is simply that it can’t. It has not considered the issue of its own responsibility and arrived at a state of coherent self-awareness of what its responsibility is. Responsible authorities of the Institute must lead, not merely preside over consensus. We believe that ORI can provide leadership by helping members of the community identify new areas for work and determine and consider the consequences of projects in progress. It can also co-ordinate a fund-raising in areas where support is hard to find and (hopefully) provide some careful thinking in prickly areas where policy is now made in a de facto way such as determining the limits of "academic freedom" (MIT does not permit CBW work, for instance) and deciding what sort of political acts (taking MIRV, supporting October 15, etc.) are appropriate for the Institute and its subgroups.

This office need not have major powers to resist what has traditionally been thought racist and academic freedom. We believe, perhaps naively, that those who do not choose their research as responsibility as they might do so out of habit, ignorance, or convenience, rather than malice. We believe that researchers will welcome some fresh thinking about the responsibility of the institution and the individuals who work for it in the last third of the century, the department will teach the parts of traditional disciplines to those who do not choose their research as responsible. The DoS can determine whether a new building, even if it can be rented profitably, will cause undue stress on the transportation systems to the extent that this is frequent and persistent on the purity of the atmosphere. Bystander control and the political, religious, and mechanical processes that compose them will be a part of some topic of study. Solid waste disposal, the taming of the international nuclear jungle, the discovery of new natural resources—all will be taken into account. To provide the community with some serious, fulltime thinking on what the role of the Institute as an institution should be within the context of academic freedom, we would like to propose the establishment of an Office of Institutional Responsibility. When the overall direction of the Institute’s research effort has been altered, the reactions of many in positions of responsibility is to hide behind cliches of "academic freedom" rather than give a clear definition of what they mean. The reason that the Institute has not done so is simply that it can’t. It has not considered the issue of its own responsibility and arrived at a state of coherent self-awareness of what its responsibility is. Responsible authorities of the Institute must lead, not merely preside over consensus. We believe that ORI can provide leadership by helping members of the community identify new areas for work and determine and consider the consequences of projects in progress. It can also co-ordinate a fund-raising in areas where support is hard to find and (hopefully) provide some careful thinking in prickly areas where policy is now made in a de facto way such as determining the limits of "academic freedom" (MIT does not permit CBW work, for instance) and deciding what sort of political acts (taking MIRV, supporting October 15, etc.) are appropriate for the Institute and its subgroups.

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