Future of America: character, not war

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the moral prosperity of the young people who put their trust in it?

First, of course, we look to the undergraduate curriculum, and within it to the traditional liberal arts and sciences, to show the student how mankind has grappled with the moral issues of the past. As though our age seems to have a habit in abundance today, the human failings of dishonesty, intolerance, selfishness, and arrogance are not after all, traits that are peculiar to modern times. Such fields as history, literature and philosophy have a lot to say about the trend towards these tendencies and institutions to which the students are exposed and the current human predicament in perspective. I fear for the future of this nation.

The curriculum, of course, has little bearing on the character without the faculty. The accusation that the faculty during the last couple of decades has shirked its responsibilities--that teaching has been made at length, and on some campuses there has undoubtedly been some truth to the charge. At these institutions the rewards for faculty members have been found in lengthy publication records or in outside service activities rather than in teaching. My purpose is not to add to the indictment, but rather, to call attention to the essential role that faculty members, especially senior faculty members, must play in giving moral content and meaning to the curriculum. There are always students who can find their own way to the heart of a subject. But the great majority will get there only through the guidance, reinforcement, and deeper understanding that comes from exposure to mature and wise scholarly minds and the opportunity to interact with them. This kind of teaching, conscientiously carried out by the faculty, is one of the ways of any institutional commitment to the transmission of moral values.

Thirdly, there is the matter of integrity in scholarship. Here, it is my belief that the vague, ever-fresh-in-recent years of value-free teaching in the university, especially in the social sciences, may have done considerable harm. No one, of course, would advocate ideological teaching in the classroom, but I am suggesting a retreat from religious sectarianism. There is, however, no canon of teaching or scholarship that forbids the professor from making clear his own commitment to moral values in his teaching and in the personal statement of his life. Indeed, I would argue that such a commitment may be essential to truly great teaching. No person of intelligence looking honestly into the future today could be either other than deeply troubled. The path ahead is uncertain at best and may be beset with severe trials and terrifying dangers for the nation and for mankind. As we contemplate that future, who can doubt that we unfortunate strength and protection will lie not in the amount of arms and wealth we possess but in our character as a people? The university cannot be drafted directly into this what character will be, but its influence for good can be immense. Indeed, our universities, is not capable of making a moral commitment in itself for its members. However we may personalize the institution, it remains inert and uninterested. The commitments can only be made by people, by the students, the professors and administrators who form the academic community.

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Student choice due: activism or apathy

(Continued from page 5)
Student response to these cuts was of course a matter of concern to many in the university, especially in the recent years of value-free teaching, and the academy. The vogue -- even fetish -- in the 1960s of value-free teaching in the university, especially in the social sciences, may have done considerable harm. No one, of course, would advocate ideological teaching in the classroom, but I am suggesting a retreat from religious sectarianism. There is, however, no canon of teaching or scholarship that forbids the professor from making clear his own commitment to moral values in his teaching and in the personal statement of his life. Indeed, I would argue that such a commitment may be essential to truly great teaching. No person of intelligence looking honestly into the future today could be other than deeply troubled. The path ahead is uncertain at best and may be beset with severe trials and terrifying dangers for the nation and for mankind. As we contemplate that future, who can doubt that we unfortunate strength and protection will lie not in the amount of arms and wealth we possess but in our character as a people? The university cannot be drafted directly into this what character will be, but its influence for good can be immense. Indeed, our universities, is not capable of making a moral commitment in itself for its members. However we may personalize the institution, it remains inert and uninterested. The commitments can only be made by people, by the students, the professors and administrators who form the academic community.

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