

**\$20 million**

*- increase in yearly budget of Berkeley*

**2000 teachers**

*- recruited over a period of five years for Berkeley*

SOMETHING LIKE THIS IS NEEDED

A position paper by  
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## THE GREATEST NEED IN THE U.S.A.

The American Citizen is dying. The most responsible agent in this death is the educational establishment. That which we traditionally called Common Sense in the Citizen is now passe. Only the fool pays attention to a conversation about Common Sense. The clever and sophisticated, in centers of learning, would now laugh-- would now consider a man who speaks seriously of Common Sense as a little ridiculous and quite naive.

Let us assume that the lifeblood of the Citizen is Common Sense, and that it is dying; that the clever and sophisticated are correct. And let us assume that Common Sense was but one element of what used to be called American "know how." The other element was Mechanical Ability. We will say that Common Sense plus Mechanical Ability was that relic formerly called American "know how." The pioneers, the sensible people with sleeves rolled up, the workers, captains of industry, etc. All nonsense and nauseous talk. But we have revived this antique for a purpose. There is something to be gained from doing so.

Common Sense? Who speaks seriously of such a thing now--only the fool? American "know how?" Mechanical Ability? To speak of these things--only an American version of Dostoevski's dream of a ridiculous man?

To answer yes it to testify to the degeneracy of Common Sense, not to its death. To answer yes is to testify to the pollution of education, and its failure to produce the capacity for Common Sense, but that is not to speak of the death of Common Sense. For Common Sense always exists in some form: conspiracies of silence, a "sense" of chaos, or a "sense" of the need for rebellion, etc. It has better forms: Common Sense about politics means a capacity to meet political problems. If it is strong it can meet chaos, if weak it gives way to calumny and terror, demagoguery and violence.

When Common Sense degenerates, it might be said to polarize: on one end are the clever and sophisticated who coolly observe those in the middle who are confused, and those on the other end who are doing things to destroy Common Sense. Later, the clever might also get swallowed up in the chaos, when the professional revolutionary renegade takes over with violence. But Common Sense does not die. It might not be properly led so as to face squarely the problems for which it exists, it might be criminally robbed by the press of information, it might be invited to ignore serious thought about world movements which are based on alien forms of Common Sense, and it might wish to cling to obsolete 19th century views of how to run an economy, but it never dies.

The argument here is that the relic we call American "know how" has not died. It has become rotten. One element of "know how," called Mechanical Ability, has been shot sky high by our super-technology, and the other element, called Common Sense, has degenerated into moral and political chaos.

It is likely that Common Sense in the United States will explode into crude messianism and massive violence before it will die. It might be impossible to simply "turn off popular

government," because of the desperate feeling humans have for freedom, and because the educational system touts popular government and freedom. The sophisticated might be very disappointed: the transition from the present into a future "Brave New World," or "1984," might not go so smoothly.

The point we wish to make by arguing in this manner is that American education might recently have been expected to begin vigorously raising the level of Common Sense along with our Mechanical Ability. It has not done so. The evolution of higher education since World War II has left humane learning to die. It has evolved magnificent training centers for specialized excellence, but at this time the liberal college is fifteen years behind, and almost dead. Consequently a new evolutionary course must begin. Ordinary reform will not suffice.

Peicemeal reform will not do in education. Symptomatic relief is not enough. This country is already in the dreaded beginnings of a political crisis of the first order. It is not simply a crisis of the elites in the United States: all of us are in the crisis. The degree of rationality induced into our crisis will depend imminently upon our centers of learning. With these things in mind, the most tragic and difficult problem we face as students is an American league of professional men called the "faculty." They are immersed in an insane and puzzling "conservatism," with respect to change; they show a silly and ostrich-like parochial mind with respect to the kinds of bold rational thought and action we so desperately need. It will be our job to arouse them: to force them to legitimize qualities which, during a crisis, must be added to reason: extreme boldness, courage, and endurance. For a time we must be suspicious, and even unfriendly to them: we must challenge them to move.

It has been said that the American Revolution in Higher Education has begun. Will the student revolt become more rational than the FSM? Will it use more than the high emotional qualities of courage, boldness, and endurance? Will it later join with the rationality of the faculty? Will the faculty enjoin themselves with the courage, boldness, and endurance of the students? If such questions as these are being asked elsewhere than Berkeley, they are not being asked with such meaning as they are here. The eyes of the entire nation are upon us in terms of the new student power and responsibility, and in terms of what the next step is in education. The popular mass media, the slick magazines, the scholarly and political journals, are dissecting us over and again. Dozens of books are being written about last Fall.

In the face of this situation will we be satisfied with a small magnitude of change, or will we demand substantial change? Even if one feels that it is not necessary, there is now a place on the landscape of American education for a dramatic move. It is difficult to describe, but somehow that move is of tremendous importance. It must be a bold public gesture: it must be known throughout the nation. That gesture, which might take the form of a series of events such as speeches, political acts, over a period of time, must represent a "statement" which will say "A major American University has taken, in utter seriousness, the proposition of mass education: Education for All. Action will be taken soon."

Berkeley is that place. More than any other place it is appropriate here. But the originating impulse, or the main impetus in the beginning, must come from none other than us: the students who are now in Berkeley.

On the following pages is a single suggestion. It is made for the purposes of showing the magnitude of change which is not only necessary, but possible, if we are willing to spit on our timidity and move. Other than showing the magnitude of change necessary, the plan is proposed in seriousness with respect to its main features. It is the same plan from which Chancellor Meyerson borrowed in his recent Academic Senate speech.

Before going on, a note is necessary about the cover of this paper. A rough estimate of the needs for fulfilling such a plan as suggested here, or any serious change would be in the order of the figures on the cover of this position paper. The money might easily come from the Federal Government, which is already prepared to sink large monies into higher education. The sources for recruitment of two thousand teachers will be discussed below. The most common objection to such a bold approach is that the resources are scarce. Consequently, if Berkeley got twenty million a year from the government and tried to recruit two thousand teachers, the entire American educational establishment would be up in arms crying Robber! and Greed! The answer to this objection is that if massive projects in popular education are to be undertaken at any time, now or later, the same thing will happen. But such projects must be started somewhere. Let them scream. Whenever anything worthwhile has been undertaken, people have screamed.

Part II below is the diagram of the suggested plan; Part III is explanation; and Part IV is a Conclusion.

### PART III - Explanation

There are over thirteen thousand undergraduates in the College of Letters and Science, approximately six thousand in the lower division. Sensible educators, students, and administrators, have written of the lower division as a complete waste of time. This might seem a bit exaggerated because nothing is ever "completely" anything. But in a more important sense it is a gross error to casually "write off" the lower division, as is frequently done, as a "waste of time." It is not time that is wasted, but human life. Many lives are substantially wrecked by the present system.

The main features of this plan, as represented on the chart, apply to the lower division. The upper division will remain essentially unchanged in its method of using courses and departments. It would be hoped, of course, with change of this magnitude, that the present excessive use of exams, and the poor use of writing, as methods would be greatly improved in the upper division, as well as the process of auditing classes.

Listed below is a summary of the main features:

I. Upon entering the University each student is assigned a "Don," or tutor, who will be with the student for at least two years.

II. Upon entering there would be an orientation period, the purpose of which would be making perfectly clear the choice of programs available in the lower division. These choices might be based upon certain basic criteria with respect to student needs and desires:

- a. Personal or emotional: does a student need or desire freedom or discipline in order to learn most effectively?

Part II

College of Letters & Science - 196?

Freshmen - 3500 Juniors - 4000  
 Sophomores - 2800 Seniors - 2900 Total - 13,200 (1965)

	<b>EVALUATION</b>				
Senior	Approximately 50 Departments Upper Division				Terminal Exam: department or general
Junior	When students enter the Junior year program, they will have decided to either enter a department, or continue on their own. The latter alternative would probably attract only a few. But the major responsibility of the second two years would be a combination of two things - (1) writing; and (2) a bachelor's examination (oral & written)				
	<b>EVALUATION</b>				Terminal Exam
Sophomore	European - Terminal Exam "Model"	Sarah Lawrence - Bennington "Model" (Harold Taylor)	U. of Wis. - Experiment U.C. Berkeley "Special College Program" (Meiklejohn-Tussman)	U. of Chicago Undergraduate College & St. Johns (S. Barr, Buchanan, Hutchins)	
Freshman	Increasing Structure	Possible Evaluation			
	Orientation & assignment of students to "Don" & choice of program.				

The combination of changes in this plan would: (1) make the first two years worth while; (2) eliminate departments & the course/grade/unit system from the first two years; (3) have the effect of considerably "cleaning up" the 3rd & fourth years.

- b. Intellectual or conceptual: does a student need or desire opportunities to study in general or specialized material?

The use of these basic criteria would probably not be necessary for many students. For those who are indecisive about alternative programs, they should be engaged in long interviews, discussions, and explanations of programs, and encouraged to make final decisions before the use of psychometric tools.

III. The Lower Division alternative programs. By combining the most viable "models" of undergraduate education a number of advantages accrue to students. The student can choose a program on the basis of both basic needs: free versus disciplined study, and general versus specialized study. On the chart the models are arranged from right to left according to increase in structure or discipline.

a. European. Complete freedom for either general or specialized studies, or self imposed discipline in cooperation with "Dons."

b. Sarah Lawrence-Bennington. Less freedom, but very flexible. Course system, but incomparably more sensible than present Berkeley system. Only three course required per year. Individual conferences, small classes (4 to 10), and a few classes which reach a maximum of fifty five. In the Bennington plan, students work part of the academic year on jobs provided for by the college, occasionally long distances away - across country. Evaluation is by written faculty reports instead of letter grading. Extensive reading, writing by students encouraged and developed.

c. University of Wisconsin Experimental College. This program is fairly highly structured, and although discipline is applied, not in a rigid manner. The most recent example of this type of program will be in effect this Fall (1965) in Berkeley, under Professor Joseph Tussman, Philosophy Department Chairman. One hundred fifty freshmen will enroll, and will study a series of four periods of "crisis" in Western Civilized life, one each semester. There will be only one required course each semester; it will be outside of the program - the language requirement.

d. St. Johns-University of Chicago Undergraduate College. Very highly structured, rigid "discipline of the word." Complicated schedule. The St. Johns "experience" is invariably reported as painfully intense and profoundly exciting. The curriculum is the closest in the U.S. to "classical:" Language, Math, Science, and Humanities, are studied historically by the exclusive use of original sources - no modern criticism is read. Students write very little - four theses, one each year - and conduct an extraordinary amount of discussion in "tutorials," and with other students in the "tutorial" small class system.

These models for the lower division are suggested for the reason that they are four of the commonly agreed upon "viable" ones, and because they illustrate the kind of variety - especially in terms of personal and intellectual needs in a place like Berkeley - which demands respect because it has depth as well. The only program which would present difficulty in terms of adaptation would be the St. Johns model. But even in this case students who have attended St. Johns say that the first two years are the best, and that after that there is a "diminishing return" in the value of the program, in terms of the intensity and discipline.

Such a plan can only be taken seriously if students demand it. The major obstacles in a struggle for such change would be (1) faculty support; (2) Federal support after faculty-student united front; (3) the problem of recruiting teachers; and (4) the problem of the science program.

A few words must be said about recruiting teachers. If done over a period of something like a "five year plan," and with care, the following sources can be tapped: (1) from the level of graduate students, and Instructors through Full Professor in universities the world over; (2) U.S. and world industry; and (3) retired faculty the world over. An argument against recruitment of this scale (fifteen hundred to two thousand, let us say) is that there are not enough "real" teachers. The retort to this is that there are very few "real" teachers in any faculty, but educational institutions still exist. It is a non sequiter argument - the conclusions do not follow from the evidence - that since there are few men in the world called "real" teachers, therefore we should not attempt to recruit and employ two thousand men who might well respond in an excited manner to such a bold undertaking as a major reform in higher education.

An irrefutable argument for such a plan, or at least magnitude of change, is the argument of NEED. A refutation of detractors is: "Your imagination is weak! You might as well be judged as incompetent, for no one is competent to judge a plan before it is tried. It goes without saying that in the final analysis our problem is one of will: to risk, to not take oneself so seriously, and to avoid premature criticism. In a word foolishness and timidity are the heaviest and most general obstacles to such an effort, because the merits of the plan are self evident."

This might sound arbitrary, but the major block to student life in the United States is fragmentation. Each man seems to be for himself. If a man has a suggestion and seeks both criticism and support, he receives deaf ears, because as soon as a sound notion is in public currency - such as educational reform - it seems that there are hundreds of busy bodies, all of whom become highly titillated by the possibility of their own contributions. It seems close to impossible to get rational and extended discussion if one has an idea: it is as though your fellows are all in their own private ways determined to "research" the problem through themselves, and many times it appears that their purpose in this is to shoot holes in an idea which you have been willing to present to them and even share with them decently and in the open. In this kind of situation, it seems to be impossible to induce any rationality into the matter of change: one soon become outraged; one takes a step back, and in a calculated and still rational manner decides to malign and shock, if only for the purpose of getting a fair hearing. The interesting thing, of course, is that malignant and shocking remarks do seem to elicit more response. But even in this case, it is impossible to get a response from certain quarters on the issue of education, especially our student "leaders." Whether they be frat boy political castrates in the ASUC, or FSM politicians doing "noble" things in Jack London Square, it seems that the very last thing they are interested in is their own immediate experience. They seem more interested in the hypocritical posture of using the campus: the one for economic and the other for political purposes.