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College students, among others, all over the country have been crying for some time about the irrelevance of college curricula and the meaninglessness of the goals they feel pressured into striving for. This plea is connected in my mind with a widespread sense that we are undergoing a breakdown of culture. I do not agree completely with either of these shouts of alarm, but I think there is enough substance to them to call for a reorganization of the college curriculum and I am here this morning to suggest one for discussion.

To call for reorganization does not, of course, mean that all the present subject matters are to be simply thrown out and replaced by new ones. It means that the departmental organization of subjects and the ends in view in teaching and research need to be re-structured.

The context of a new structure is set by the pervasive thought forms of our time and by the demands it is asked to meet--relevance and cultural health. By a crisis in culture, therefore, I take to be meant a breakdown of institutions, a poverty of sensibility, and the advent of a widespread relativism and pluralism in our conceptions of life and nature. Our institutions are not achieving their ends inasmuch as they are permitting, even fostering, the mushrooming of professionalized crime and of a moral climate in which the amateurs are outdoing the professionals in total volume. Our institutions are permitting too many people to starve, are not producing human values nor civil justice equally, and they are not evoking substantive debate and agreement on principle about our national role in the world.

By a poverty of sensibility I mean that we have become inured to a variety of terrible evils, accepting them without shock, outrage, and revulsion or without even a classic sense of the tragedy of human existence, but also that we are unable to feel joy, exaltation, wonder, or deeply human moral emotion except under artificial stimulation. Even the insistent, throbbing, violatingly-loud beat of hotdog bands only moves people to amorphous self-expression--thought and pure emotion being drowned in the primitive facts of sound and movement. (Such universal statements are, of course, over-statements, but they express a tendency and a climate.) Experimentation in art, music, poetry, and dance have not yet bodied forth a new sensibility in which the range and depth of human feelings are given expressive forms which can educate our sensitive awareness of the facts and possibilities of life.

For scholars and teachers in our time the basic problem must present itself as one of meanings. Old philosophies, creeds, social and artistic forms are meaningless to us, not because they were so inherently, but because, through evolution of the meanings of words and the actual operation of institutional set-ups, they do not organize facts, feelings, and values for us so as to provide clear policies for living and guide us to the realization of the basic values in human community. It is not simply that we lack facts. Science has given us more of these than any one man can master; though, of course, the quest for facts is never ending. What we need is new organizations of facts, that is, new languages, which will show the relation of facts to action and value. That is what the cry for relevance is about.

And that is what research and education must now be about: to acquire facts, to experience emotions, to discern possibilities of action, and, above all, to learn to organize and communicate them in their relations to each other so as to provide meanings which are able to direct action and experiment, and to express and reveal the human situation and those basic and pervasive characters of men and things which make a fully human life possible.

Accordingly I propose a restructuring of the curriculum in four divisions: a division of language and communication, a division of factual sciences, a division of policy sciences, and a division of expressive sciences or arts. These four names are designed to indicate the continuity of this structure with some historical divisions of the disciplines, but at the same time to suggest what is new in the principles of division.

The division of language and communication is based on the principle that there is no uninterpreted fact. Its aim is to produce skills of interpretation through forms of meaning organization or data processing. Hence it includes mathematics taught as a language--not as subject, logic as methods of invention and systematization, and rhetoric as the development of skills in finding arrangements of all kinds of materials to purposes and persons. The converse of the principle here is that forms are meaningless in abstraction from facts, for meanings depend on the reference and use of language as well as on its syntax. Hence, the division includes the native and foreign languages as concrete and living organizations of meaning. It also includes the analysis of the languages of science, morals, and art, and thus includes all knowledge just as meaning.

The ultimate aim of the division of factual sciences is to know the world--not simply as a collection of facts, but, so far as the facts allow, as an organized system which may in suitable conditions and under appropriate controls issue in a technology. It has its apex, consequently, in metaphysics, cosmology, and basic theoretic science. The recognition that science, too, is a human activity requires that its current significance be seen through the history of its disciplines. But since factual knowledge is advanced through experimentation in the light of theory, this division emphasizes laboratory skills and the acquisition of empirical knowledge. It includes those branches of what are now called social sciences which are formulable as precise subjects.

The ultimate aim of the division of policy sciences is action. Actual policy making, however, is the business of political men and moral individuals, so the practical function of the college is to collate and analyze the facts of human life in their bearing on action and to provide the general principles or theories of value and decision making, and of legislation and community organization which should govern the various sectors of life. Moral, political, and religious theory are thus at the apex, but training in the history and use of the facts of power and of the circumstances and motivations of human action is the minor term that leads to applications. Literature and art are studied in this division as imaginative testing grounds of our values and aspirations. Work-study courses provide a practicum in the development of responsibility in decision making and institution building and reform.

The final end in view of the expressive sciences is the production of concrete images expressive of the variegated perception and responses of man to his world, hence of the human situation with its tragedy and its hope. This purpose is ultimately achieved by creative artists, but in the college curriculum it is represented by studio efforts in expression and by guided experience with art works and cultural forms leading to emotional and intellectual appreciation of their values. Art is studied not for use, but for its own sake as human expression and humanizing function. This division includes the study of history and of native and foreign literatures, not now as languages or as repositories of fact, but as the works of man and as expressive of the human reality. It has its apex in liturgy as the art of the active-perceptive-feeling communication of man with being.

The administration of this curriculum is a policy question. If you were setting up a new college, it would be easy to institute the curricular structure. The difficulty would be in finding staff to fit just these divisions. The ideal is not immediately attainable since professors would have to retool and develop new approaches and new disciplines. Not all could or would do so. If you had to re-organize an existing college, you would have something to start with, since many men are already doing interdisciplinary studies and using the approaches suggested. Again the ideal is not immediately attainable since it would be difficult to tear professors away from departments organized on older lines, from buildings, and existing institutional arrangements. I am not here passing judgment, but trying to recognize, as we all must, the realities of habit, power, and economic possibility. Still the thing does not seem impossible to me with inventive leadership.

Finally, the aim of the learnings and doings as conceived here is the production of a certain kind of human being--an actor on the human stage. The play is a peculiar one for he doesn't quite choose the theatre, the machinery of the stage, nor even quite his role. Things happen that he cannot control, and he suffers. The theatre manager's policies and the director's conception are not always clear, and there are some roustabouts and hecklers who get in and spoil some of his best lines and thus render the effect of the play unclear. The audience is fickle and doesn't always give the approval he needs for a really enthusiastic job.

But his real satisfaction is in his ability to conceive with progressive clarity his relation to the play and the players, in a sense to create his role as he plays it, skillfully, with a view to the unity and effect of the play, and in so doing to celebrate the mystery of his being.

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Valparaiso University

Christ College curriculum

1. LANGUAGE (The theme of this curricular division is that all data and experience require interpretation and that therefore knowledge as interpreted data can be treated as meaning. The courses in this division emphasize the development of forms of the apprehension and communication of meaning.)
 1. Rhetoric IA and IB. Writing is taught with a view to the development of competence with literary forms as instruments to the expression in connected sequences of ideas the student has previously discussed and is concerned about. Materials used are integrated where possible with those of the Sources of Western Culture. (A two semester course taken in the freshman year.)
 2. Logic and Language. The methods of discovery and of the logical organization of knowledge are analyzed as sources of alternative interpretations of the knowledge process. Meta-disciplinary and epistemological problems of the sciences, arts, and practice are considered through the logical and doctrinal. (Normally taken in the sophomore year.)
 3. Foreign Language. The language and literature of a foreign culture is supplemented with materials on the comparative conceptual structures of languages. Students are expected to achieve sufficient mastery so as to be able to read the literature and begin to appreciate the culture whose language he learns.
 4. Mathematics. Mathematics and deductive logic are studied in their function as languages of science and as showing forth conceptual schemes which may be used in all thought.
(The study of mathematics may on the recommendation of the student's counselor be undertaken as an alternative to a foreign language by those who have sufficient background to begin at an advanced level. (Normally taken in the freshman and sophomore years.)
 5. Philosophic analysis. The analysis of meaning and consideration of the experiential basis of knowledge is considered specifically in the student's major field in a course in the philosophy of the natural sciences, social sciences, arts, history, religion, or Christian theology.

II SOCIAL SCIENCES (The theme of this division is that man is both a historical and a rational creature who through understanding of his tradition and circumstances and through wise planning has a large measure of control over his social destiny. Courses in this division emphasize those aspects of human nature, motivation, and behavior which are accessible to scientific treatment in their relation to human freedom, the achievement of value, and the rule of law.)

1. Culture and society. The sociological and psychological antecedents of objective social structures and subjective culture are studied in order to uncover its evolution and to locate precisely the issues which are important for policy formation in the development of a humane life and culture.
(Normally taken in the sophomore year.)
2. The Ideal Society. The comprehensive goals of social policy formation and the organization of social means are studied through analysis of readings in utopian literature. This course initiates a program of private study which may be pursued through courses in several departments. It issues in a senior paper.
(Normally taken in the sophomore year.)
3. Geography. The natural and social means and circumstance of human life are studied in order both to provide spatial orientation and a background against which the student can make a realistic assessment of the possibilities of social improvement in a region.
4. Essay preparation. In his senior year each Christ College scholar presents a paper setting forth in detail his own conception of the Ideal Society. For this paper he draws on materials from any discipline that he finds necessary for an adequate construction.

III NATURAL SCIENCES (The theme of this curricular division is that man can understand his world through the rigorous investigation of nature, but that inquiry is a human activity and theory is a human product, both of which, since they affect life and society, must also be understood and directed in a broader context of behavior and values.)

1. _____ 8 hours in a laboratory science are required of all Christ College scholars and associates.
2. The History and Philosophy of Science. A study of the theoretical and of the historical significance of revolutions in physics and biology and an attempt to isolate the issues of scientific theories which are crucial to a discovery of a meaningful theory of man's place in nature.

IV HUMANITIES (The theme of this division is that while the arts are sufficiently justified as expressions of the human spirit, they are also often both the testing ground of our values and aspirations and the expression of the human situation with its tragedy and its hope.)

1. History of Western Culture. An orientation in the development of Western institutions and forms of thought and feeling with emphasis on the perennial tensions between freedom and authority, reason and faith, free will and circumstances in the bearing on the development of rational science, the forms of constitutional government, and the relation between Judaeo-Christian ideals and social realities.
(Normally taken in the freshman year.)
2. Readings in Christian Thought. (Freshman)
3. Masterpieces of Literature. The forms of literary art... the classical tradition... Elisabeth's outline. (Sophomore year.)
4. Seminars in Literature. A series of (2 credit) seminars in the junior and senior years in which literary art in all its forms is used to give experiences of the range and depth of human emotions, to provide images of man and the human situation, and to identify the values under which society and culture may be united.
5. Theology and Contemporary Culture. Study of the theological revolution parallels the study of the social-psychological revolutions. The death of God... Christianity come of age... the secular city...
(Sophomore year)
6. Music and art. Every Christ College student is encouraged to take a course in drawing, painting, or art or music appreciation.
The extra-curriculum includes a variety of scheduled evening lectures, discussions, and demonstrations on music, plastic art, and architecture. Materials for listening to and viewing examples of fine art are available in the Christ College building.
7. Theology. Upper division.