

ceiving so little careful attention, that there is so little real discussion—I was about to use that tattered word dialogue—between the two parties at such a crucial moment. Yes, it *is* extraordinary that in an age when a plethora of communication has become one of the curses of society, when a government *says* it wants to hear the views of higher education but still does its planning in an aura of secrecy, and when all the sectors of higher education are busy framing essentially self-serving statements for delivery in Washington, we still lack a high-level, dispassionate, non-political debate on the future of higher education. The inauguration of such a debate is surely the first priority for both Washington and for the colleges and universities.

SOME EFFECTS OF GREATLY INCREASED FEDERAL AID

The question of what effect substantially increased amounts of federal aid will have on the higher educational enterprise will, of course, depend very largely on how this aid is given. Under some circumstances the effect could actually be minimal.

It is, for example, tempting in view of the present financial crisis, especially of our private institutions, to come out in favor of some formula for general, across-the-board federal support for all institutions on a non-selective basis. But a considerable possibility in this form of support is that it may be largely self-defeating simply by causing a further inflation of costs. The federal government could sink several billion dollars a year in this manner with little to show for it by way of a general strengthening of higher education. Everything that is wrong about the enterprise as it is now would simply be perpetuated, only on a more costly scale.

In any event, it is clear that the possible effects of such an approach are sufficiently little understood to require a great deal more study of it before any decision is made in Washington to adopt it.

A prior question, however, to this one is whether a shortage of money is the sole problem in higher education. If a noninflationary way could be found to provide general support, would this be all that is required? Or is there also a fundamental structural problem? Has the nation reached a point in its development when it must have a more orderly, more coherent and more efficient national provision for higher education? And if this is so, should the leverage in federal support be deliberately used to bring this about?

There is, I believe, considerable recognition now not only by experts but by the public at large that higher education in this country, despite its successes, has in recent years failed to meet many of the nation's most pressing needs. It has, for example, not been able to provide all of the kinds of research and public service required of it. It has not been able to produce all of the specialized professional and technical manpower required of it. It has not been able adequately to serve the needs of the economically disadvantaged. It has not been able to provide enough classrooms, laboratories, or dormitory beds. So, the nation, through the federal government, has in effect moved into the field with massive federal funds to achieve specific national purposes. And in the urgency of the hour many of the old ideological arguments against federal aid have been forgotten.

It is my view now, looking into the future, that the pressures on the United States for at least the balance of this century are going to be so great, and our colleges and universities so absolutely central to the society's well-being, in ways that dwarf anything we have yet seen, that we can no longer afford the luxury of an unplanned, wasteful, chaotic approach to higher education. I believe, therefore that, like it or not, we must now use every means at our disposal deliberately to develop a coherent, articulated set of national policies to guide its future growth along lines that can be counted on to meet the nation's needs fully, effectively, and in good time. To do less than this is to court disaster. Implicit in this statement, of course, are two important assumptions: first, that the values to be found in educational planning are similar to those in other fields, that is, that good planning leads to efficiency and coherence; and, second, that it is appropriate, at least in part, to look to higher education for the systematic meeting of pressing social needs.

A COHERENT SET OF NATIONAL POLICIES

What, then, will such a set of national policies be like? The sad truth is that no one knows because the design of even a preliminary model for discussion purposes has not been a task the society has ever set itself. Naturally not. This would