

have seemed a futile, profitless exercise when it was the prevailing assumption that we could get by with an essentially *laissez-faire* approach to the provision of higher education and could live comfortably with the notion that the federal role was purely to offer supplementary financial assistance.

I would suggest, however, that the creation of some models for national consideration and debate is now a matter of the greatest urgency. The Carnegie Commission on the Future of Higher Education, under the chairmanship of Clark Kerr, is one attempt to build such a model.

Public discussion of proposals for possible sets of national policies should, if at all possible, take place before irrevocable decisions are made by the Administration and Congress about large new programs of federal aid, because new programs instituted without the benefit of a considered and articulated national plan for higher education may create patterns of funding and development that will be extremely difficult to change later.

Can a set of national policies be brought into being without federal leadership? The answer, I am afraid, is probably no—at least, not entirely. Voluntary cooperation of individual institutions is important and can have some effect. Voluntary cooperation of the states through the new Educational Commission of the States is also important and can achieve quite a bit. But it seems extremely unlikely to me that we will ever put into operation a fully adequate set of national policies without the active participation of the federal government in the devising and implementing of them. As the federal government's stake in higher education, in behalf of all the people, becomes ever greater, as its share of the support of higher education become ever larger, so its responsibility for what happens in it will steadily increase. The government will simply not be able to maintain the fiction that its role is purely that of supplementary financier. Its large appropriations will have to be based on policies, and these policies will inevitably have an influence on the nature of higher education.

What has already happened proves that. In a sense, the new federal leadership role was foreshadowed in the Morrill Act. But it was to be nearly a century before it was to be fully revealed, in the passage of the National Defense Education Act. And since then there have been numerous pieces of legislation that have added to the role immeasurably. So we are dealing now not with a hypothetical situation but with a process already begun. And since this is the case, and since our need for a coherent set of national policies seems clear, the time has come to bring into the open the question of how federal participation can best be used to help shape up the right set of policies.

I have said that no one knows what a coherent set of national policies would look like. It is easier to state some of the things it would not include. It would not, for example, imply centralized control of who should be admitted to a particular institution or who should teach at it. Nor would it imply control over the content of a given course of study or how it should be presented. These prerogatives can remain the responsibility of individual institutions and of state authorities, as they are now.

EXAMPLES OF NATIONAL POLICIES

A coherent set of national policies would, however, in the broadest terms, be concerned with the overall functions, structure and financing of higher education, the quantity of it available, its quality and the degree of access to it. Some of the kinds of policies which might be included have already been discussed here and there. Let me give some random examples.

One policy would be to establish a minimum standard of free education through the fourteenth grade, that is, through the lower division, or junior college, for all young men and women who successfully complete the earlier grades. Such a policy would rectify the present indefensible situation in which a resident of one state has this entitlement but the resident of another one does not.

A second policy would be the equalization of opportunity for access to higher education beyond the junior college stage, including upper division work and graduate academic and professional training, for any qualified—and I emphasize the word qualified—American citizen no matter what his age, sex, family or economic circumstances or place of residence. This would amount to a national policy of advancing our most talented citizens upward through the highest level of preparation for service to society of which they are capable, without limitation.

A third policy has to do with the amount of high-level graduate and professional training and advanced research capacity available to the nation. It en-