

visages the creation of a list of designated "national universities" which would receive preferential treatment in the support of their research laboratories and libraries and other facilities for advanced study and research. Such a list would be limited in length and highly selective, and would be made up of universities already in existence.

A fourth policy has to do with the role of higher education in helping to solve the complex problems of our great urban areas. It contemplates as a national, not simply a state or local imperative, the establishment of vastly strengthened higher educational facilities in our great cities.

A fifth policy is concerned with the nation's international responsibilities. It assumes that ultimately of greater importance to the nation's security than armaments will be its capacity to assist economic and social development in the poorer and technologically less-advanced nations of the world, and it further assumes that American colleges and universities have a centrally important role to play in this process. It therefore regards as a matter of top national policy the development of such a capacity in our higher educational institutions, again on a selective and discriminating basis.

A final group of policies relates to improving the academic quality of our colleges and universities, in every field, but especially in key subjects such as mathematics, the sciences and English language.

If it is accepted that the federal role in the development of a coherent set of national policies for higher education must now be a substantial, perhaps even a determining one, the nature of the federal planning process and higher education's participating in this process becomes of crucial importance.

The federal planning capability has not been strong in the past. It has improved considerably in recent months but still has a good way to go. Similarly, Washington's capacity to bring higher education into its planning has been limited. Little improvement is discernable here, but this is in part higher education's own fault.

NEED FOR A CENTER FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

What seems to be needed now is the creation of a new kind of focal point, or center, for higher education close to the summit of the federal government where it can influence all federal action that impinges on higher educational institutions. Such a center would be charged with the responsibility for long-range planning for cooperation with the states in devising a set of national policies, for communication with higher education, and for safeguarding the interests of our colleges and universities when they are affected by any form of federal action.

One would expect such a center to be presided over by the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, although possibly not be located within his department. Most importantly it should be set up in such a way that it has a real authority within the federal establishment in regard to all aspects of federal support of higher education. Lastly, it goes without saying, such a center should depend heavily in all its activities on men and women co-opted from the colleges and universities so that it is as much of higher education itself as it is of government.

The creation of this center, no matter what its authority or how well staffed it is, will not automatically solve the problem of what kind of a system of higher education we ultimately wish to have for the nation and what particular combination of coordinated national policies will get us where we want to go. But the center can, and should, serve as a forum where a variety of proposals, can be debated and policies hammered out.

IN THE PAST DECADE: GREAT CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

I am fully aware that discussing the need for a coherent set of national policies and the explicit use of federal leadership first to help devise these policies and then to help implement them through the leverage of federal funding, will strike many of you in this room, and many people generally, as a piece of un-American, unconstitutional and dangerous nonsense! But we must be realistic. The status of higher education in American life, its size and its financial demands have altered radically in the past decade, and the coming years will bring even greater change. If a laissez-faire approach could still work, we would all prefer it, but the needs of the nation have outgrown it. What we have to face up to now is a totally new situation, and we must bring to it a fresh eye, that we may be aware of its opportunities and alert to its dangers.