

Reviews

Satadal Dasgupta, Harry Love, Richard St. Jean, Linda Trenton, *Attitudes towards University Goals*. Charlottetown: University of Prince Edward Island, 1975. 206 pp.

Leon F. Loucks, M. Mujeeb-ur-Rahman, Barbara Stevenson, *Towards a University Community: Goals in Perspective*. Charlottetown: University of Prince Edward Island, 1975. pp. 82

These two very interesting reports were submitted to the Senate of the University of Prince Edward Island in 1975, after a Senate Committee on Objectives and its research sub-committee had been at work for over a year. The report of the research sub-committee, *Attitudes towards University Goals*, describes in detail the responses received to a questionnaire about university objectives devised by the committee and based on the Institutional Goal Inventory developed by the Educational Testing Service of Princeton, New Jersey. The questionnaire was distributed among administration, faculty, full-time students, part-time students and alumni of the university. Another questionnaire devised by the committee, designed to discover attitudes to the university and opinions about its goals, was distributed among members of the Island community.

The survey of the university community shows a high degree of agreement among the five sub-groups about what the goals of the university are at present. More surprisingly, there is also substantial agreement about what the goals of the university *should* be. Some areas of disagreement were predictable (or at least conform with one's stereotypes!): administration, for example, rated accountability/efficiency ninth among the twenty outcome and process goal areas, while the other sub-groups ranked it thirteenth-fifteenth; part-time students were much less concerned about democratic governance, ranking it eleventh while other sub-groups ranked it third to sixth. Full-time and part-time students rated vocational training higher than administration and faculty did (five vs. 13-17; interestingly, the alumni agreed more with faculty and administration, ranking vocational training eleventh). There are some surprises: all student sub-groups (full-time, part-time and alumni) gave advanced training a much higher should-be rating (6-8) than did administration (14) and faculty (16). No group rated off-campus learning higher than 17.5 and only the faculty considered cultural and aesthetic awareness to be of even medium importance although, somewhat inconsistently, all five groups considered intellectual and aesthetic environment to be of great importance. It is also interesting to note that, though one of UPEI's forebears had strong religious ties, *all* of the sub-groups rated traditional religiousness as *least* important of the twenty goal area.

The community survey showed a generally favourable attitude to the university and its personnel. Only two of the six personal characteristics considered as variables proved to be statistically significant: both level of education and level of occupation were inversely proportional to the favorability of the respondent's opinion of the university.

Rather amusingly, respondents who actually had children in university tended to have a lower opinion of university students than those who did not.

It would be very difficult to fault either the tests, which seem to have been well designed, or the committee's analysis. Extensive use of very clear tables and graphs makes the presentation of this immense amount of data amazingly comprehensible. It is very heartening to see the talents of university faculty members turned, so effectively, to a problem of the university. The report would serve as a good reference to anyone planning to embark on a similar study, and as a very interesting and thought-provoking read for anyone interested in attitudes of and about university communities.

Towards a University Community is the report of the Committee on Objectives. It contains 42 recommendations, the implementation of which is meant to further the goals of the university as defined by the research of the sub-committee (described above) and as highlighted in submissions received by the committee.

The style of the report is rather irksome – mixed metaphors and scare quotes are proliferated in the introduction, for instance –, but it becomes less obtrusive and more direct when specific recommendations are discussed.

The committee recognized the futility of simply legislating goals but did not entirely avoid the trap themselves; some of their recommendations are that the university should “recognize the importance of . . .” or “implement policies to ensure that . . .”. But most of the recommendations are more helpfully specific. Rather than discuss the many recommendations which seem to be well thoughtout, sufficiently specific, possible to implement and potentially beneficial, I should like to comment on some rather distressing – though maybe inevitable – general tendencies and also a couple of the most interesting recommendations, which should be of wide interest. The committee recommends the creation of four new jobs in the university, most of them administrative. Some of these may well be necessary – I am prepared to be persuaded about the Academic Vice-President and the Ombudsman –, but it does not seem obvious that a small university with a student services department should also need a Dean of Studies or that a university with small departments and reasonably diligent faculty and chairmen should need a Research Officer. The committee does not explain why the needs of the University are better served by having these new posts. It seems to me that if the problem is one of communication and coordination, then the introduction of more university officials is more likely to exacerbate the difficulty than to solve it.

The Senate is also urged to establish three ad hoc committees on certain matters (probably not a bad idea) and three standing Councils (Arts, Science, and University Life), which would be new layers in University government and which are not justified to my satisfaction in the report. It seems undesirable and counterproductive to complicate the university structure unnecessarily.

Two of the committee's other recommendations who a great disregard for economy: it is suggested that faculty should be given the option of retiring at 45, with benefits, if they are unwilling to undertake any further studies the university may require of them; and it is suggested that extracurricular activities and facilities should be subsidized by the university (this in a time when it is generally believed than ancillary services should be self-supporting). In the current economic climate, it is surely impossible for the university to consider these proposals seriously.

Established as it was at the height of university democratization, the University of Prince Edward Island involved students and faculty to quite an extent in the major decisions in the university. It is interesting to see that the committee, seven years later, is recommending that departmental chairmen should no longer be elected and is also recommending that departmental chairmen should be able to "review and assess" mark distribution in their individual departments. This effort to undo the "emasculatation" of chairmen does not represent a backlash against democracy and involvement, though; the committee still recommends the involvement of students and faculty in the tenure committee.

While this second report will be of principle interest to members of the University of Prince Edward Island (in contrast to the first, which is an interesting sociological study of and about a university), it will also be of interest to those involved in planning similar committee studies in their own universities or those who are interested in other people's solutions to nearly universal problems.

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Dennison, J. D., et al., *The Impact of Community Colleges: a study of the college concept in British Columbia*. Vancouver, B.C., B.C. Research, 1975. 184 p.

The emergence of the British Columbia community college system, which now comprises fourteen colleges operating on twenty-five campuses, is one of the most remarkable developments in Canadian education during the last decade. Full-time student enrolment in the new colleges grew by 500 percent between 1967/68 and 1974/75. During the same period university full-time enrolment in British Columbia grew by about only 15 percent. Here it must be noted, of course, that university-transfer programs are an integral part of the community college system in British Columbia.

In their highly informative report Professor John Dennison of the University of British Columbia, Alex Tunner of B.C. Research and their colleagues Gordon Jones of Vancouver Community College and Glen Forrester of B.C. Research give us a variety of glimpses into the impact of the new colleges on individual and social life. The authors devote nearly half of their volume to providing information on the socio-economic origins, the opinions, expectations, concerns and interests of students. Information is also provided on community views concerning the colleges, on the college faculty and on financial aspects. There is a helpful section on the research methodology utilized.

While about 70 percent of community college students in British Columbia enrolled in university transfer courses, less than 10 percent actually transferred. For those who transferred, the new colleges appeared to be providing the preparation required. For those who sought employment on graduation, the colleges appeared to be serving with equal effectiveness. Slightly more than half of the employers, or potential employers of college graduates, rated helping students to learn to think constructively and critically as the most important function of the colleges. A little more than one-third of the employers regarded the learning of specific skills for a trade or profession as most important.