

Duncan D. Campbell. *The New Majority: Adult Learners in the University*. The University of Alberta Press, Edmonton, Alberta, 1984, \$15.00 Can. cloth, \$9.95 Can. paper, 146 pp.

This may be a book for its time. Evidence of crises facing the universities in Canada, and almost everywhere else in the world, abounds. Few of the reformist commentators have acknowledged what Professor Campbell describes. That is, that over the past two decades the student body of the universities in Canada has changed. Primarily, it has changed in circumstance; that is, more part-time and non-credit students as distinct from full-time students, and in the age of the students, with increasing numbers older than the conventional 18 – 24 year age group.

It can be argued that *nothing* alters a teaching organization more than changes in the composition of the student body. If this is the case, then Professor Campbell's book is less an argument for what should take place in the transformation of Canadian universities than a description of what is taking place, and will continue to take place with increasing acceleration. But universities are complex and often contrary bodies, with high potential for unpredictable behaviour, as Professor Campbell himself points out, and there are some notable omissions in his argument for making these changes rationally, efficiently and productively.

The argument is clear. The first four chapters describe and analyze with admirable clarity, what has been and what is with respect to policy and practice in university continuing education in Canada. For his purposes, Professor Campbell includes within the meaning of continuing education all those students who are studying on a part-time basis for degrees and those who are engaged in the vast array of non-credit offerings including, as he points out, the largest, richest, and most problematic of all, continuing education in the professions. What is not quite so clearly dealt with is that while all these individual students can quite rightly be perceived and, indeed, presumably perceive themselves as continuing their education, the universities have not generally regarded them as similar. There has been a good deal of administrative and intellectual political infighting about how they should be administered and the emergence of separate colleges for part-time students (Woodsworth, Atkinson, etc.), quite separate from the administration of provisions for non-credit programs, would suggest that that distinction is, and will remain, a powerful one.

Nevertheless, the review of the development is extremely valuable. Some readers may be surprised to discover that many Canadian universities (the rhetoric of university continuing education) have always been passionately committed to serving (wouldn't it be better if we stopped using the word "servicing") the unconventional student, and indeed the community as a whole, sometimes because of highly motivated members of faculty and sometimes because of imaginative presidents and skittish legislators. For whatever reasons, the intent has been there. However, Chapters 3 and 4 ("University Continuing Education

Programs” and “The Design and Delivery of University Continuing Education Programs”) thoroughly and regretfully document the enormous gap that has continued to exist between intent and performance. The allocation of resources, academic and otherwise, the attention to planning and administration, the provision of support systems, for all of these unconventional students have been and remain wanting. In short, they have been extras to the mission of the universities, favours provided rather than responsibilities assumed. All of this is described without slighting the ability and commitment of the thousands of individuals within Canadian universities who have worked on behalf of these students. Professor Campbell comments with some care and insight on the needs of these individuals for both actual and apparent growth in competence, including professional training and access to adequate research. Those comments have some special irony at present, when the major providers of such training and resources in Canadian universities are under serious attack.

Despite all of these problems, the numbers of these unconventional students have continued to increase. Is it possible that they will continue to do so without the universities making the slightest effort to accommodate them, academically or financially? Or is it possible that that accommodation is taking place, slowly and grudgingly, and in unexpected places?

It is in Chapter 5 (“Organization and Policies”) that the crunch for the argument comes. What is there is admirably argued and presented, but what is not there may, in the opinion of this reviewer, be critical. The first omission is the matter of faculty rewards. The reward system for faculty (professional and financial) is not greatly touched by the problems of teaching. Adult students in any circumstances make different demands on faculty. Little reward with respect to research and publishing flows from the time required for making these personal and professional adjustments and, until it does (which will require major changes in the “soul” of the university), little will change with respect to serving these students adequately. In addition, as long as financial reward for teaching these students is extra to the basic salary of the academic, they and their programs will remain marginal and exposed to avid budget cutters.

The second omission arises from an earlier reference to distinctions made traditionally by universities regarding students of varying conditions. In referring to the practice of placing the financing of “non-credit programs for adult students and frequently ... credit programs ... on a net basis” (p. 103), Professor Campbell argues that “No other division of the university is required to support itself in this fashion. It is not a strategy which is justifiable in terms of organizational or economic principle, rather it is an accident of historical development.” (p. 103) This statement seems to vastly underestimate the “organizational” distinction that Canadian universities have made and continue to make between part and full-time students, to say nothing at all about those literally nameless and invisible participants in non-credit programs. Part-time credit students have never been members of the university, never been full participants in the not entirely mythical

community of scholars, and therefore have been and will continue to be treated differently as a matter of organizational principle. It should be noted in this context that the developments Professor Campbell cites as examples of the capacity of Canadian universities for change are all related to provisions for full-time students, even those cataclysmic but brief responses occasioned by the appearance of huge numbers of veterans as students in 1945. Whatever they ought to be is not a matter of numbers, but the more engrossing issue of what the university is, or ought to be. Only if Canadian universities abolish the almost irrelevant administrative distinction between part and full-time students, as Finnish universities have done, will any real progress occur.

There is, however, one group that Professor Campbell seems to neglect that may be more effective in bringing about the changes argued for than any other. This is the quietly but steadily growing body of older full-time students. All of the educational providing bodies in Canada are being relentlessly affected by such students, and slowly but surely the introduction of proper practices and attitudes for teaching adults are being stimulated by their presence. The one difficulty is that they are less attractive targets for the professional recruiting that underlies much university teaching, even in the arts. Nevertheless, because universities have no public upper age limits for most programs, and because they need these students for various reasons, they are slowly making adjustments to them, as are the conventionally aged students. But there is no guarantee, though one may hope, that these students will identify with part-time credit, or non-credit, students simply because they are closer in age. Having secured accommodation to their needs, they may in fact take sides with faculty and administrators in the existing attitudes to the other students.

The use of the word "majority" in the title conveys a reality that perhaps is not present. All of the students included in the majority are not equal in weight or inclination in terms of bringing about the proposed changes. And if there is anything the university prides itself in, however illusory it may be, it is its preference for quality over quantity.

The changes Professor Campbell argues for are cogently argued and make sense. They would do much to restore confidence in the university. All logic insists that they come about. Yet, as Professor Campbell points out, the arguments without the numbers have been current in Canada for more than half-a-century. The universities ought not to be solely preoccupied with the young. The students who make up the new majority seem to have accepted those arguments, but there is no guarantee that the universities will. They have not listened before, and it is not clear that they are really listening now. Perhaps the most we can hope for, and it is not a mean hope, is that some universities will and some won't.

What Professor Campbell is struggling with is an idea of the university, a new definition of what is appropriate to the Canadian university. It is a powerful and attractive definition of appropriateness, at least to this reviewer. And it is a

definition, the realization of which, in itself, has the potential for a genuine renaissance among Canadian universities.

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Alfred Morris and John Sizer, editors. *Resources and Higher Education*, Guildford, Surrey: Society for Research into Higher Education, 1982

Education, particularly higher education in Great Britain, has experienced more drastic cuts in resource availability from government sources than any other western country. Much of the data on government cutbacks are included in this book along with a number of ideas regarding alternatives.

The volume, eighth in a series of studies focusing "on the major strategic options — available to higher education institutions — in the 1980s and 1990s." The series has been conducted by the Society for Research into Higher Education and financed by the Leverhulme Trust.

Topics covered include student aid, privatization, public sector resource allocation, internal resource allocation, faculty employment, historical data, and proposals on how to deal with fiscal restraint. Because the papers were originally delivered orally at a conference, there is less emphasis on theoretical issues and greater emphasis on policy. Clearly, the usual mathematical and geometric models are not present but the arguments are made just as vividly.

Maureen Woodhall in her chapter "Financial Support for Students" puts the U.K. student aid program in an international context with considerable reference to Canada. Despite having the highest level of support in terms of the percentage of students receiving aid, there are criticisms particularly of the "means test". Woodhall estimates various enhancements to the present system but notes the lack of reality in such enhancement both because of the cost and the effect on demand for education. Instead, she argues for an introduction of loans to enhance available funds and as a substitute for part of the current grant system. In doing so, she fails to look at the impact of loans on demand.

For those interested in public sector allocation, John Pratt has an excellent summary of public finance allocation techniques, missing zero-base budgeting.

Allocation within academic institution is difficult given the lack of pricing mechanisms. Invariably, some units subsidize others. Geoffrey Sims emphasizes consensual budgeting and adding an emphasis to research, particularly in areas where traditionally research funds are less available. In addition, Sims appears to be impressed with encouraging entrepreneurial activity within the universities, an idea which seems to have become popular in Canada in recent years.