

SPECIAL FEATURES/CONTRIBUTIONS SPÉCIALES

The *Journal* as an Institution of Higher Education in Canada 1971–1986: a Partial Review

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Context

Among the many manifestations of the expansion in the sixties of postsecondary education in the Western world was the unprecedented growth in the numbers of colleges and universities in Canada. Of the Canadian universities listed in current editions of the *Commonwealth Universities Yearbook*, nearly half have been established in the last thirty years. The extent and rapidity of this expansion is confirmed by numerous indicators, from rising student numbers and participation rates to growing institutional budgets and research activities. In the same period, we have witnessed the introduction of new journals and periodicals whose aim is to record and assess the causes, conditions and effects of the proliferating changes in higher education. We have seen, too, the emergence and development in Canada of higher education as a distinct field of study.

Five years after the appointment in 1964 of Robin Harris as Professor of Higher Education in the University of Toronto, fifty academics and others interested in the field met prior to the Annual Conference of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada and initiated discussions which led shortly thereafter to the establishment of the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education. The purposes of the new Society, whose first annual meeting took place on 29 May 1970, were “to encourage independent and critical study of issues and problems in postsecondary education in Canada and to collect and disseminate information about these activities.” In pursuit of these goals, the Society undertook to sponsor “a journal of Canadian higher education in which [would] be published scholarly articles on a variety of topics and in a variety of academic disciplines related to higher education.” In the first issue, 1971, the Editor expressed his confidence that “higher education in Canada [had] come of age” and noted that by “providing a Canadian forum specifically devoted to the publication of the results of scholarly research and reflection on higher education in Canada, the Journal [hoped] to stimulate such research and reflection.”

The comprehensive bibliographies compiled by Harris and his associates, read in conjunction with Edward Sheffield's review for CSSHE and SSHRC of research

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on postsecondary education in Canada, reveal how extensive the local research literature on higher education has become in recent years. Defined by the Editor as “an essential link in the network by which scholarly ideas are communicated,” the *Journal* remains the only Canadian periodical with a specific focus on higher education: in the past fifteen years it has published over 250 articles and other contributions, nearly all of which deal with higher education in this country. Given its history, status and special purpose, we are justified in considering the *Journal* as an established institution with distinctive goals and activities, one which shares numerous characteristics with the prototypical institution of higher education, the university. Both university and *Journal* serve complex purposes and numerous constituencies – the university, supported by fees and grants, has its mission statement, faculty, students, programs and the like, while the *Journal*, sustained by subscriptions and subsidies, has its goals, contributors, readers, papers, and so on. ...

What does a partial analysis of the *Journal* in its first fifteen years reveal about selected aspects of research on higher education in Canada? The study presented here as one answer to that question is partial in two ways: firstly, it is based on the personal perspectives of one reader; secondly, it is concerned with only that part of the research record published in the *Journal* (which, as Sheffield’s review amply demonstrated, is only one source of relevant information and analysis). After discussing the purposes of the *Journal*, I summarize distinctive features of the contributors and of the methodologies used and topics treated. The paper concludes with an assessment of the impact of the *Journal*, followed by suggestions for the future. The use throughout this review of the university: *Journal* analogy serves to justify considering the *Journal* as an institution (and thus as a proper object of study), to identify common relationships which transcend differences in vocabulary and to suggest that issues facing the one will subsequently confront the other.

Purposes

The university commonly expresses its goals in a wide variety of documents which specify or at least suggest activities in different parts of the organization. Such documents range from public mission statements approved by the governing board, through academic calendars and course outlines to, eventually, specific verbal instructions about methods and objectives presented by faculty to students in the privacy of their classrooms. The relationship between these statements and the activities sponsored by the institution of higher education (such as the quality of the undergraduate experience or the impact on theory of a particular research project) is neither normally, nor indeed readily, assessed in more than very general terms.

As an institution, the *Journal* also has both expressed and implied objectives. The former are noted explicitly in three types of documents. Firstly, and most

publicly, they appear inside the front cover of the *Journal* itself for the information of readers and contributors, in terms which emphasize “medium of communication” and “Canadian higher education.” They are also recorded in the Society’s original (1970) *Proposals for a Journal/Projet de revue* and, finally, in the Society’s subsequent submissions to the relevant federal granting council for financial support. These documents reveal that a central purpose of the *Journal* is to encourage the study of issues in order to identify “solutions to the pressing questions about the role and worth of higher education in Canadian society.” In pursuit of this objective, proponents of the *Journal* intended that it be scholarly rather than technical, an intention consistent with their declared interest in including among their contributors and readers “members of institutions of higher learning – faculty, students, administrators and trustees, officers of government as well as others in business and industry.”

Complementing these statements of general purpose are definitions, developed by the Editorial Board on the basis of their analysis of the prevailing types of research in education as an applied social science, of the varied forms such research in higher education may take. Initially, these were defined as “original scholarly pieces either philosophical or methodological and [...] historical on specific topics of major current interest” and as “original scholarly pieces reporting the results of research projects in the field of higher education in Canada or dealing with research methodology on particular aspects of higher education.” In the late seventies, this binary definition was replaced by the categorization expressed in the following: “The Canadian Journal of Higher Education publishes five basic types of scholarly literature: policy or ‘think’ papers, development of methodologies and research design, reviews of literature, results of quantitative research, and historical and philosophical studies.” The latter studies were not, however, included in the categories eventually established for evaluative purposes. During this period, published papers met the Editorial Board’s general criteria: they were deemed to be “original and significant, logical and readable.”

These public and general objectives not only establish the primary interests of the Board; they also include its perception of the major sub-fields of higher education as a field of study and enquiry, and propose thereby a means of categorizing the variety of forms relevant research may take. The implied objectives, corresponding, according to the university: *Journal* analogy used here, to “the hidden curriculum,” are revealed by an examination of the nature of the contributions selected for publication, of which more anon.

Contributors

A principal preoccupation of the university is to select highly qualified members; enhancing the quality of faculty appointed and students admitted is judged essential in advancing the work and reputation of the institution. At the same time, faculty and students select those institutions most likely to provide the resources

and conditions they judge favorable to their personal and professional goals. In the case of the *Journal*, who chooses to contribute to its program, to work in this field of study?

To date, authors and reviewers represent about 75 per cent of the universities listed in such compendia as the *Commonwealth Universities Yearbook*. Not unexpectedly, the largest universities are represented by the highest number of contributors. Among the other institutions represented are federal and provincial government agencies and, to a lesser degree, community colleges. British and American universities predominate among the relatively few non-Canadian institutions represented; in many such cases, however, the authors so affiliated collaborated in their research with scholars working in this country. The *Journal* therefore involves as contributors academics from a broad range of postsecondary institutions and agencies.

Nevertheless, the recent listings of Society members – indicating as they do that nearly all 600 are associated with universities and colleges as scholars and/or administrators – confirm that it has not proven possible to attract formally to the *Journal* the students and trustees, not to mention those outside academe in business and industry, originally included among the intended participants. Nor, until very recently, have women been active contributors to the *Journal*; with rare exceptions, they are absent throughout the seventies but do appear in greater numbers since the mid eighties (four of eight contributors to the first issue of Volume XVII (1987)). The impetus for this change, seen also in the composition of the Editorial Board, originates, as many other pressures do, outside our institutions of higher education.

More influential in shaping the field of study which is the principal focus of the *Journal* are the academic training, experiences and interests of the successful contributors. Predominant among these are university administrators, such as presidents and deans, whose contributions are often characterized by reflection and/or exhortation, and members of faculties of education, including higher education, whose approach is normally more descriptive, occasionally investigative. Most notable among the remainder are economists (in both university and government departments), sociologists, and those involved in instructional development (many of whom are psychologists) and in institutional research. The high level of involvement of social scientists is associated with a marked 'contemporary and local' emphasis in most contributions, together with a very limited number of historical and comparative studies. In the course of the last fifteen years, the early predominance of the educationist and the administrator has waned, while the perspectives of the social scientist and institutional research officer have become popular, indeed characteristic.

Among the recurrent issues now being actively debated in higher education are access and participation, considered principally but by no means exclusively with respect to their effects on the relationship between students and institutions. As far as the *Journal* is concerned, access to its pages is in fact – and not necessarily for editorial reasons – limited to academics. Participation within this exclusive group

is likewise restricted: the relative absence of scientists and humanists as contributors, for example, is noteworthy. As we shall see later in this review, the perspectives and activities of the disciplines in which these colleagues work are similarly absent from the topical discussions reported in the *Journal*.

Methodologies and Topics

In most institutions of higher education, the lecture constitutes the principal means of transforming educational purpose into student learning. The most popular method of research used by contributors to the *Journal* is the empirical, descriptive study. Here, the writer's observations are often linked to one or, rarely, more of the following, listed in the order of their frequency of occurrence: public policy, practice at comparable institutions, methods of research, and theory appropriate to the contributor's discipline. Given the close relationship that binds method and topic, the analysis of methodologies proposed here includes reference to program features, that is, to the topics presented. Two types of observations may be distinguished, direct and indirect, the latter being based on the writer's consideration of the opinions of others rather than on empirical description or reflective enquiry....

Observation studies focus on existing units, groups or systems involved in higher education. In such descriptions, the dominant themes are strategic planning and resource allocation; the elements most commonly involved are student and faculty numbers and financial resources. The usual purpose of the authors is to describe (occasionally, to promote) intra-institutional means of improving the linkage between existing components of the system studied, without calling into question the different elements involved – the conception of higher education underlying such papers is conservative rather than radical. Whether the intended improvement is achieved or not is not usually made clear, since the contributors emphasize the comprehensiveness of their description (or in several cases, model) rather than the efficacy of application in specific, let alone general, cases. Few writers look more than cursorily at the social and intellectual relationships linking student and instructor in what, in most institutions, is the basic organizational unit, the academic department. Observations of actual units or systems are likely to be presented by those responsible for developing the innovative change which is the subject of the paper, whereas ideal models (devised to modify existing relationships) tend to be developed by those active in institutional research. It is only in the latter case that theory may be appealed to in support of the observations offered: it is more common to refer to practice in other institutions or jurisdictions.

A second type of direct observation study is illustrated by contributions dealing with extra-institutional issues. During the period 1971–86 two such issues recur with notable frequency, institutional or system relationships with government, particularly in its financial aspects, and employment opportunities for graduates. The tone here tends to range from description to prescription, with the latter characteristic of senior administrators' presentations. As before, recourse to

theory is rare, as is the application of recognized research methodologies. In spite of these reservations, it is fair to judge effective those presentations concerned with extra-institutional themes which define and select the issues for review according to a well-defined scholarly perspective. Exemplary in this regard are the end-of-decade reviews published five years ago; their authors attempt the sort of informed synthesis whose absence contributes to the fragmented impact of many unit or program descriptions.

Indirect reports, normally based on questionnaires, occasionally supplemented by interviews, have become in the latter half of the period under review here the predominant mode of research presentation. Here, writers invoke in more or less direct ways method and theory derived from the social sciences. Of the fifty or so articles based on this mode of enquiry, half are concerned with student opinion, half the remainder with faculty views, on a range of issues.

Through all the student opinion surveys runs a common theme whose form not unexpectedly varies according to the career status of the students at the time their opinion is sought. Scholars are thus most obviously interested in the students' aspirations while in high school, their needs and values (including on occasion their satisfaction with teaching) during their university years and finally their values as graduates and their satisfaction or otherwise with their first post-graduation employment. Such reports as these on student opinion are usefully read in conjunction with reports on student performance data, even though these two types of study, opinion and performance, are not normally linked in the discussions presented in the *Journal*. These and other surveys, while interesting as summaries of opinions about well-defined aspects of the student experience and valuable for the 'implications' and 'discussions' which follow the data presentation, are limited in several respects. Frequently, respondents are members of a single institution, even a department within an institution—business students at Laval, psychology students at UBC.... There is little linkage between the studies presented that is not methodological in nature: it is not common, for example, to look at the relationship between student opinion and success as determined by faculty assessments—explicit comparisons of opinion and performance are rare. There are, moreover, few longitudinal studies of such topics as changes in student perceptions or achievements, or the effects on the student experience of modifications in institutional policies and practices. The studies of A.M. Sullivan on teaching are among the only exceptions to this rule. Not infrequently, the survey contributions are more readily and explicitly linked to their particular methodological tradition than in substantive ways to the specific characteristics of the individuals polled, the general features of their institutional setting, and the overall relationship between student and university, particularly in its qualitative, non-statistical aspects.

These remarks apply also to the surveys of faculty opinion. For the most part, such studies are limited to identifying either interest in or reaction to professional development activities; the faculty point of view on other institutional or community issues is neither sought nor discussed. As we might expect, such

reports are contributed by scholars involved in institutional instructional development programs, which are in turn frequently directed by academic psychologists. Several studies involve faculty from numerous institutions; in this respect, they differ from student surveys. Such studies emphasize what is available and current in professional development; only occasionally is reference made to what is desired or planned beyond this domain. They tend also to be descriptive, not historical or evolutionary in focus, and do not usually attempt to link opinions and perceptions to recent general analyses of the academic profession in Canada. Only exceptionally do we encounter attempts at preliminary syntheses, that is, for example, studies which include both faculty and students as sources of opinion on aspects of life in the institutions they share. Furthermore, any performance surveys are limited to student performance almost exclusively; three exceptional contributions concerning faculty performance will be noted at the end of this essay. Because of the sorts of limitations mentioned, generalizations about students and faculty based on *Journal* articles are not readily accessible. In other words, the *Journal* may now contain some of the material we need to undertake, for the university sector at least, the type of analysis developed in the early sixties by John Porter in his study of social class and power in Canada. However, the difficulty of identifying and substantiating reliable generalizations underscores again the lack of a comprehensive theoretical framework or pattern to guide the fitting together of all or many of the parts of the relevant mosaic.

To the university curriculum, devised for the education of students, corresponds the research program presented to *Journal* readers. Whatever the methodological perspective of the authors, and however their contributions are classified, several clusters of topics predominate. Chief among these are papers which focus on faculty and students.

Faculty themes include conditions of appointment (workload, collective bargaining, academic freedom) and professional development, including reference to the evaluation of teaching, but with practically no comment on research and service. While faculty are on occasion treated in aggregate terms, such treatment is common in the case of students, not only when specific rates are the object of analysis (participation, retention, ...) but also when general characteristics and aspirations are under study. Again the portrait that emerges is limited in scope and tonality: we learn a great deal about students and faculty in their financial implications for universities, but very little about their involvement in curriculum, in politics, and practically nothing about the perspectives of scientists and humanists on the internal and external issues of yesterday and today, let alone tomorrow! I return to these limitations in a final section, following an assessment of the impact of the research published in the *Journal*.

Impact

The influence on the individual and on the community of the activities sponsored by Canadian institutions of higher education varies according to "a multiplicity of

factors” which, where they have been identified, are revealed by research to be related in very diverse and complex ways. Institutional effects range from personal and intellectual to societal and financial and beyond...., as the general analyses of commentators such as Howard Bowen (*Investment in Learning*) and Paul Axelrod (*Scholars and Dollars*) have noted. What has been the impact on theory and practice of the research reported in the *Journal*? How can this be assessed? How, in turn, can even preliminary answers to such questions assist the *Journal*'s editors and contributors in cultivating more productively the extensive field of study which is the Society's *raison d'être*?

The primary effect of the *Journal*'s influence is seen in its development in the course of the past fifteen years into a recognized institution of higher education in this country, attracting the sustained attention of contributors and subscribers and, after external review by experts in the field, the financial assistance of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Following the example of the leading universities and colleges in the system, it has become increasingly selective – approximately one submission in four is now selected for publication – and, within certain subfields, authoritative. The economists' contributions are a case in point: all references to the *Journal* in the discussion paper *Ontario Universities 1984: Issues and Alternatives* prepared by the Bovey Commission cite articles dealing with the economics of higher education. The same Commission also sponsored the preparation of a paper on *Universities and the supply of graduates to the professions* whose authors refer to several relevant *Journal* articles. A further example is seen in the mention made in Christopher Knapper's "decade review of College teaching" in *Canadian Psychology* (22, 2(1981) pp 129–145) of nine pertinent articles published in the *Journal* during the seventies. Needless to say, the contribution of the *Journal* to our understanding of other aspects of higher education is sympathetically reported in the papers published following their presentation at the 1981 annual meeting of the Society. Robert Pike's "Thematic review of sociological research on higher education in English Canada" is exemplary in linking the perspectives of *Journal* contributors to other research in the author's academic discipline. Since 1981 in particular, published papers cite previous research reported in the *Journal*, as scholars see the periodical not only as a means of communicating their own research but also as a source of information and ideas for further reflection and study.

Consideration of similar factors respecting impact may help place these generally positive remarks in a wider context. For example, the rate of citation of *Journal* articles in historical and cultural periodicals is extremely low. There are only two references to *Journal* articles in Harris' comprehensive *History of Higher Education in Canada* published in 1976. In the 1981 *Supplement* to his *Bibliography*, the same author cites only 45 of the 130 *Journal* articles published during this period, placing most of these in the section devoted to "Current trends and problems". Contributors to international journals such as *Higher Education* and *Minerva*, both of which contain in the relevant period about twenty contributions from scholars working in Canadian universities, rarely refer to the

Journal, even when the subject is higher education in Canada. About American publications such as the *Journal of Higher Education Change*, the same can be said: here, not only are *Journal* articles not cited, there are few references to any aspect of higher education north of the border.

The most visible impact of the research presented in the *Journal* is thus to be found in its contribution to the documentary background to subsequent studies conducted by other local scholars, usually in the same (or a cognate) discipline. To date, surveys of readers and contributors, seeking information about influences and enquiries, have not been undertaken. As a result, it is difficult to trace the dissemination of the new concepts and practices which the *Journal's* pages contain; few longitudinal or follow-up studies are reported there. The impact of the *Journal* may in fact be stronger than this partial analysis reveals. In some respects, the *Journal* resembles the classic lecture – as a means of communication, it is essentially “one way only;” there are no more than a couple of direct responses (in the *Journal*) to the 250 articles which form the basis of this review. How can the contribution the *Journal* might make to higher education in Canada be strengthened?

Suggestions

Canadian institutions of higher education are currently under pressure not only to retain the policies and practices which are deemed to protect their distinctive purposes, but also to articulate their goals and functions in ways which will ensure sustained government and community support for institutional activities. Whereas in the sixties the guiding principle for action was “growth” – in students, faculty, budgets, institutions – the present chapter in the history of higher education in this country deserves the title “the search for linkage.” In recent years we have witnessed, for example, the development of several provincial or regional systems of postsecondary education, the formation of consortia, the establishment of cooperative ventures such as the Corporate-Higher Education Forum, ... To the increasing recognition given to multi- and trans-disciplinary teaching corresponds the growing interest in joint research projects. To cite a typical example: the provincial government recently named seven “centres of excellence” for Ontario: these centres, involving eight universities and 100 companies, are intended to promote more effective collaboration between government, university and industry, and to lead to enhanced rates of industrial growth. Scholars are thus moving from ivory tower to market place in search of support and opportunity. This phenomenon, the extension of the university into new areas of activity, which leads in its turn to the strengthening of formal and informal links with government, business and industry, has implications for the *Journal* as an institution of higher education. Some of these are identified in this final section.

In light of the analysis presented here, the founders' intention to involve non-academics as contributors to the *Journal* can now be judged far-sighted. Yet as we have seen, their objective has yet to be reached: the result is that higher

education as a field of study, as defined by the contributions published in the last fifteen years, has numerous underworked areas which already justify (and will increasingly require) cultivation. Consideration should therefore be given to identifying and implementing ways of engaging the participation in relevant research and reflection on higher education of members of the constituencies listed in the original proposals for a journal. Here, the techniques adopted may well resemble, in their general form, those now practiced by universities and colleges whose current interest in qualified applicants and generous alumni has led to changes in the way terms such as 'marketing' and 'promotion' are perceived by scholars and used to guide institutional action. A market survey, sponsored by the *Journal*, could well assist it in reviewing its goals and achievements, and thus in improving its capacity to make its case confidently and forcefully to its readers and its sponsors: this is particularly important when their definitions of 'research periodical' do not completely coincide.

Comparable extension is desirable too in the representation of the scholarly disciplines actively contributing to our understanding of higher education as a field of study and action. Change here will enrich the mix of methodologies and perspectives brought to bear in the field. We also need to extend our range: the relative absence of discussion about teachers, students and curricula in the liberal arts and the natural sciences, not to mention such professions as law and medicine, weakens the *Journal's* claim, presented most directly in its submissions to SSHRC, to represent higher education as a field of study. The broader the range of research coverage of university and college activities, the more likely it is that pertinent definitions of research and relevant results of enquiry will be influential in the communities the *Journal* seeks to serve.

As these remarks, and others presented in the course of this review suggest, the current representation of disciplines and methodologies and the range of topics studied by *Journal* contributors constitute one means, among others, of defining higher education as a field of study in Canada. They also constitute an agenda for further study. Firstly, opinion poll studies may be conducted on all members of our institutions, in countless combinations. While such replication, at all levels, departmental, institutional and beyond, would no doubt increase the amount of information available, it may have only this effect, and not lead, as some believe it should, to sustained efforts to enhance the quality of life of the members of our institutions of higher education. Secondly, such analytical, somewhat isolated studies as those presented call more and more urgently, as their numbers increase, for preliminary syntheses of the information available, so that generalizations useful for both conceptual and practical purposes may be identified and tested.

In my opinion, there is a need to move to a comprehensive analysis and assessment of current and desired institutional-societal relationships, both within and beyond provincial and regional systems. As the agencies involved in education at all levels redefine their roles and relationships, conceptually related topics such as 'institutional accountability', 'program review' and 'faculty evaluation' will have to be linked to more general syntheses than now appear to be

available. Recent changes in institutional practice such as increased attention to alumni, growing involvement of faculty in student recruitment and developing public relations efforts indicate that there is general awareness of the significance for effective societal and institutional functioning of such 'boundary' activities as those noted.

There are two specific topics which deserve attention. The first concerns what Pike in the review already cited identifies as "the nature and formation of public attitudes towards postsecondary education". A necessary complement to such studies is the analysis of the reciprocal interactions of public perceptions, government policies and institutional activities. In some ways, it is the very success of universities that makes urgent this research and the sensitive application of demonstrated findings to the policies and practices of the relevant institutions in our community. It is only after further enquiry has identified and assessed the current pattern of relationships that community and university will have a realistic chance to address, in ways considered appropriate and effective, the internal and external issues identified by *Journal* contributors as urgent and important.

The second issue deserving study is only very occasionally mentioned in the pages of the *Journal*. I refer here to the intra-institutional corollary of the society-university relationship, the curriculum, to which only a dozen of the 250 scholarly contributions are in any real way devoted. In a paper presented to the Society in May, 1972, William Sibley noted the prevalence of "a mood of apathy, a feeling of frustration and impatience" and cited curricular reform as an issue which "attracts less interest and concern: there seem to be left few true believers to espouse its efficacy and significance". What was true of "the current university scene" described in his presentation is also true of contributions to the *Journal*. Although the curriculum, as the link between student and teacher, is a specific aspect of the university-society relationship, indeed a metaphor for it, it does not attract sustained interest. It is indeed ironic that the *Journal* contribution which deals most directly with such a substantive curricular issue as "the enhancing of moral reasoning ability" concerns "postsecondary education in prison" [X, 1:29]. A more recent contribution on "the humanities and higher education" excepted [XIV, 1:41], there is remarkably little substantive discussion in the pages of the *Journal* of the nature and goals of university curricula. The formative role of the curriculum in student development, the effectiveness of co-op programs, the place of science and technology in the undergraduate experience there is no information on such topics, from student, faculty or public perspectives.

This lack of attention to curriculum constitutes an invitation to scholars in Canadian institutions to undertake the sorts of modest research envisaged by Arthur Sullivan, who notes: "Those who work in educational research must realize that each cannot [...] discover and chart a complete continent all by himself. Educational researchers must realize that there is satisfaction and glory enough in discovering small islands and in charting small bays" [V, 1:11]. Comprehensive syntheses of the type advocated earlier for university-community studies would clearly be premature, at least if we assume here that the level of activity reflected in

the *Journal* is at all typical. Descriptive and evaluative studies might eventually be complemented by historical reports identifying trends, thus allowing observers to establish typological frameworks, which themselves might suggest further comparisons and, if deemed appropriate, institutional action. The value of such a historical perspective for curriculum studies is argued in a recent examination of the views of Henry Cassidy and Harold Innis, entitled "Social Science Research in the University," whose author asserts that

Social science research in Canada during the past thirty years, often influenced by developments in the United States, has become much more quantitative, specialized and present-oriented and has increasingly avoided the historical and theoretical approach that inspired Innis [X, 1:106].

Such remarks apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to many of the scholarly contributions to the *Journal*. While such quantitative approaches are necessary – as current research funding policies indicate – the absence of complementary qualitative analyses remains noteworthy. There is thus a need for comprehensive syntheses concerning the nature of the relationships linking community and university and trends in these, and for analytical and philosophical studies of the undergraduate curriculum and of the structural and developmental implications of changes in it. Such an agenda need not displace existing emphases in the *Journal*, but may be viewed as complementary to the present popularity of topics which, undeniable though their interest and significance may be, are seen in some cases as susceptible exclusively to social science modes of enquiry. One trend now emerging in writing about higher education in this country, if the latest volumes of the *Journal* are at all indicative – as I believe they are – supports one of the directions implied above. This trend, to consider topics in a national rather than the more usual local perspective, is seen most clearly in the titles of several articles published in 1984, but is evident as well in the treatment of the topics defined thereby. It is just such an increasingly comprehensive perspective on context which will further improve public perceptions of our activities and thus enhance government support for them.

This support is, in my view, more likely to be forthcoming if we can justify our claims on government funds, for example, by referring to recognized indicators of institutional quality. However, it is fair to report that there is a notable absence of conceptual analysis based on Canadian perceptions and practices and, further, that this is paralleled by a paucity of information (published in the *Journal* at least) about quality relative to either a general conception or a specific assessment or standard. As far as interinstitutional comparisons are concerned, there are three exceptions to this generalization, two of which are based on quantitative analyses of citation indexes. The comprehensive report by H.G. Grubel on economists and the institutions with which they are affiliated [XI, 1:27ff], the briefer study of scholarly productivity by J.P. Rushton and S. Meltzer [IX, 3:74ff], and the report of the institutional research conducted by Charles Bélanger and Robert Lacroix at the Université de Montréal on measuring the effectiveness of research grant getting [XVI, 1:25ff] are the only references in the *Journal* to comparative measures of quality which go beyond classroom or institutional boundaries. Thus,

there is no systematic, reflective analysis of current definitions and perceptions of quality and of the variations in them according to the societal and educational constituencies involved. That there are varying perceptions within and beyond the university, is revealed by the nature of the frequent comments in the *Journal* respecting ‘accountability’, ‘review’, ‘evaluation’ and the like. Given the intensifying pressures on institutions to be accountable – and on their members to be professional – the study of indicators of quality and of its manifestations in institutional practice and in student experience, to mention only two areas, will continue to require the sort of analysis and reflection which are already characteristic of the best quantitative contributions to the *Journal*.

Likewise there is a need to strengthen confidence in local work in the field by concentrating on its distinctive and effective features, when these are seen in comparative perspective. What are the sources and conditions of significant change that deserve emulation or adaptation in order to enhance institutional activities? How can policies and practices in cognate institutions and systems, theories and methodologies, improve our capacity to assess and develop local programs in research, teaching and public service? That the *Journal* and the Society are interested in these and other issues is seen in such diverse actions as the emphasis given to the thematic organization of the Annual Conference, the decision to publish (1983) a cumulative index of articles, ... The introduction of the *CSSHE Professional File*, “to present solutions to a current problem,” addresses very directly the social development goals of the founders of the *Journal*. Since this periodical is clearly susceptible to the influences affecting other institutions of higher education, more and more actively concerned about resources, participation, quality, ... it is time to ask how the *Journal* will define its future role as a research publication.

At present, many significant contributions to the *Journal* arise less from the sorts of scholarly or theoretical concerns characteristic of research in physics and biology (for example), than from the institutional responsibilities of the authors. Thus an institutional project, reported to the relevant local sponsor, may become the subject of a presentation at a conference and later of a submission to the *Journal*. Sibley’s discussion of “Strategic planning and management for change” [XVI, 2:81ff.] is a recent example of this process of development. A comparable model is Cynthia Hardy’s special feature on “The management of university cutbacks” [XIV, 1:59ff.]: here, the process links thesis to paper to submission. Contributions of this type, which are numerous, are perfectly consistent with the main purposes of the *Journal* as stated, and need no defence when their quality meets the assessment criteria established by the Editorial Board.

However, papers which combine empirical analysis and theory testing or development and which conform thereby to recognized definitions of ‘scholarly research’, remain relatively rare in the *Journal*. A recent example is a paper devoted to “Measuring the intellectual development of college students: testing a theoretical framework” [XVII, 1:27ff.]. Efforts to encourage such research should accompany transdisciplinary studies, given the present emphasis on reports whose

unitary focus makes useful practical or theoretical generalization difficult. It is desirable at this point in the *Journal's* development to promote the development of theoretical perspectives which combine the now isolated insights of individual economists and psychologists, to name only two well-represented disciplines.

In a recent review contributed to *Change* [Nov./Dec. 1985, p.51], Patricia Cross of Harvard's Graduate School of Education identifies two major dimensions of educational research as part of her assessment of four research monographs. She asks: To what extent does the research, firstly, contribute to the accumulation of knowledge, to the refinement of theory, and secondly, support improvements in practice in institutions of higher education? Such questions have arisen also for the *Journal's* editors, as they have sought to characterize and evaluate the growing number of submissions received. The categories implicit in the titles on the contents page are evidence of this effort: editorial, article, special feature, review, report, documentation... As noted previously, the introduction of the *Professional File* confirms this. Using the two dimensions indicated, Cross then presents a typology, consideration of which suggests one approach to the issue of role definition for the *Journal*.

Given the twin research and development goals currently serving as guiding principles, the *Journal* might seek to promote and publish research reports contributed by those who deserve qualification in the Cross typology as *reformers*. Their research rates 'high' on both dimensions noted in the preceding paragraph. *Pragmatic* research, 'low' on the knowledge-theory side, 'high' on improvement, may be more appropriate for the *Professional File*, while *academic* research, the converse of the preceding, should, where it remains within a traditional, single-discipline analytical framework, be referred to that discipline's learned journal. However, as the relevant 'decade reviews' illustrate, there is a place in the *Journal* for creative syntheses which bring together the insights about higher education developed within specific social science methodological and theoretical traditions. The final category in the typology proposed by Cross is named for those whose research is 'low' on both dimensions – the *poets*. Their perspective is at best fleetingly represented in the first fifteen volumes of the *Journal*, which, overall, lacks the stimulating leaven of style and insight which poetry can provide in life and in higher education!

By way of a conclusion, I offer these observations. Popular syntheses, whether of very general scope such as Naisbitt's *Megatrends* and Toffler's *The Third Wave* or of more specific focus such as Eagleton's *Literary Theory* and Peters and Waterman's *In Search of Excellence*, all emphasize the rapidity and variety of the changes to which individuals and institutions are currently subject. They also stress the necessity of linking description and theory with practice – as frequently and deliberately happens in medicine and in other professions. Interest in protecting the autonomy of our institutions of higher education and concern about academic freedom need not lead only to scholarly detachment, as desirable as that remains today; they should also provoke intellectual engagement in contemporary educational issues so that a more equitable balance is maintained between

describing the present and shaping the future. It would, for example, be interesting, as part of any evaluation of the contribution to educational practice of research of the type reported in the *Journal*, to identify the sources of changes in academic practices and in the means used to justify the activities in research, service and teaching sponsored by our colleges and universities. Since education is not a discipline in the conventional sense of the term, such an assessment would require the participation of scholars in economics, psychology and sociology, as is now the case. It should also involve those whose focus on historical and ethical perspectives, for example, might assist in the articulation of elegant and powerful conceptions of higher education where reflection and action, conservation and innovation are conceptually and practically linked.

With respect to the *Journal* itself, I endorse the remarks of Boris Ford in his final editorial for *Universities Quarterly* [40, 4 (Autumn 1986): 343]; they constitute a challenge to include both *reform* and *poetry* in Canada's first research publication devoted exclusively to higher education:

Higher education is in great need today, as never before, of a periodical that is 'consistently stimulating, exploratory, cogent, authoritative, consequential, and enjoyable' – and whose critique of educational policies and developments is informed by a humane concern for culture and society.

Is it as realistic as it is desirable to see the research already promoted and published by the *Journal* over the last fifteen years as the foundation on which to build in the future a reputation consistent with the terms of this challenge?