

## CREGIER SUGGESTS AN ALTERNATIVE

The following proposal is based on curricula at Goddard College, Plainfield, Vermont; Franconia College, Franconia, New Hampshire; Mark Hopkins College, Brattleboro, Vermont (where I taught in 1965-6); and Antioch-Putney Graduate School, Putney, Vermont.

Probably--but not necessarily--a university program in the natural and physical sciences, as well as in the "pre-professional fields, would have to be more structured.

### I. Academic Year.

The university is open the year round, on a trimester schedule, except for one or two-week breaks at the middle or end of terms. The basic unit is the four-month trimester (probably January to April, May to August, September to December). Students may begin their studies at the start of any trimester, temporarily interrupt them at the end of any trimester, terminate them when they feel ready to be examined for the degree. There are no freshmen, sophomore, etc., levels.

Faculty ordinarily teach two of every three annual trimesters, the third being free for advanced study, research, travel or "re-creation."

### II. Degree Requirements

There is a degree, presumably the Bachelor's, but otherwise most of the formalized course-hours-grade-credit system is eliminated.

Students ordinarily complete seven or eight trimesters--requiring about four years--before being examined for the degree, but may spend more time in preparation if needed, less if not. The academic program may be speeded up by attending university all year, completing studies in as few as 2 1/3 years, but most students leave the university for at least one free trimester a year. During some of the free terms, students may participate in work-study programs integrating academic programs with practical experience.

### III. Teaching Methods.

During his first trimester at University each entering student participates in a Core Curriculum. This consists of 1) a seminar conducted by a team of teachers from different disciplines, which examines several contemporary social problems from the viewpoints, and using the methodological tools, of these disciplines; and, usually, 2) one or more skill-improvement courses (tutorials) in reading, writing, speaking, logical analysis, and use of learning resources, wherever standard achievement tests

have shown the student to be weak. Should the tests indicate that the student meets university standards in all these needed skills, he skips this part of the Core Curriculum and enrolls in a field of concentration, which is usually not done until his second trimester.

If additional training in basic skills is needed, the student continues his skill-improvement tutorials into his second trimester and, if necessary, beyond.

At the beginning of his second trimester, the student who has not done so, selects a field of concentration from those offered (dependent on qualified faculty, adequate library resources and necessary equipment), and is assigned to a faculty tutor in his field. The first term of a field of concentration is a trial period, at the end of which a student may transfer to another field or select a new tutor. If the trial period is completed to the satisfaction of both the student and tutor, the two will probably work together for the rest of the student's university studies.

During the trial period, the student is exposed by his tutor, in individual or small-group tutorials, to some of the basic problems he will encounter, and disciplinary tools he will use, in subsequent study in the field of concentration. Toward the end of the trial period, if the student is prepared to continue in his chosen field, he and his tutor plan a program of study upon which he will be examined for the degree. Each program of study is tailored as much as possible to the wishes and needs of the individual student, and may be modified later as required.

During the greater part of his University program, the student works very closely with his tutor, ordinarily meeting with him for an hour or more every week or two, individually or with a small group.

Learning methods are unstructured. For the most part students engage in guided independent study -- reading, language, laboratory, field projects, work-study projects, inductive experiments -- under the direction of their tutor and other

faculty. Various disciplinary and interdisciplinary seminars and group projects

are offered from time to time on the initiative of faculty or students.

### IV. Evaluation.

The student is examined upon his programs of study

whenever he feels he is ready, usually after completing his seventh or eighth trimester. There are two methods of examination. For a "pass" degree, the student and his tutor conduct a thorough self-evaluation of the student's study program. For an "honours" degree, the student is examined in some depth by a committee consisting of his tutor, one or more other university teachers of his choice, and one or more specialists in his field of concentration from outside the university.

Students who fail the degree examination may repeat it after at least one trimester's additional study under tutorial direction.

There are no grades other than -- for the degree examination -- "pass", "pass with honours" and "fail". In preparation for his eventual degree examination, each student keeps a detailed record and qualitative evaluation of his work in progress, and a similar written evaluation is made periodically by his tutor. Both of the evaluations become part of the student's permanent university record along with his examination results.

FIRST, THERE WAS EXAMINATION APPEALS, THEN COURSE EVALUATION... AFTER THAT, STUDENTS WERE SITTING ON TENURE COMMITTEES NOW, THEY WANT TO RUN THEIR OWN STUDENT UNION... I THINK I'M GOING TO VOMIT!

