

# Walker Says Professors Must Take Responsibility

President Eric A. Walker told a panel of college educators yesterday that "if academicians wish to achieve professional status, they will have to demonstrate their willingness to accept professional responsibility."

Walker participated in a discussion on the subject, "A Professional Code Worthy of the Academic Profession" at the 45th annual meeting of the Association of American Colleges in Kansas City, Mo.

Academic competence is a faculty responsibility as are curriculum, calendar revisions, effective programs of educational experimentation and the designing of truly significant service and general education courses, Walker said.

"If the academic profession is to protect the academic freedom so necessary for discharging the responsibility to search for and teach truth, it must protect itself from academic license," Walker said.

He said that the continued fragmentation of the curriculums in our colleges and universities is only one indication of faculty failure in accepting its responsibilities. He cited the need to teach teachers how to teach.

A faculty member's competence lies in one particular area and in other areas he is no more qualified than any informed layman, Walker said, and when he speaks on any subject it is generally assumed that he speaks as an expert of the institution.

"Because of this, the individual professor must accept as a personal responsibility the obligations to make it abundantly clear when he is speaking for the institution and when he is speaking as an individual. He must also make it equally clear when he is expressing opinions in his particular field of competence and

when he is taking advantage of his privilege as a citizen to express an opinion on any topic.

In short, Walker said, he should recognize the limitations of his knowledge in order to avoid abusing his privileged position. The profession at large should assume the responsibility of protecting itself from abuses of academic freedom, he said.

"The faculty is obligated by the freedom it claims," Walker said.

Walker then turned to the tenure policies of the profession and suggested that we take a new look at the tenure regulations. If faculties are to assume the responsibility for professional competence, they must also assume responsibility for establishing standards by which competence can be measured, he said.

"We must recognize that some sort of evaluation will have to be made of the teacher's work. Some teachers will be hired, others will not; some will have to decide on some sort of basis who will and who will not be granted tenure," Walker said.

The question of salaries for teachers will also have to be decided, Walker said, unless the raises and promotions are to be based solely on seniority.

Most basic of all, without some sort of mechanism for evaluating faculty competence, the responsibility for protecting the quality of the faculty cannot possibly be discharged, he said.

"The responsibility for establishing the criteria by which their work is measured rests clearly with the faculty," Walker said. The evaluations should also be used to reward merit and excellence, he said.

## Veon to Speak at NYU

Dr. Dorothy H. Veon, professor of education, will speak on Saturday at the New York University Faculty Club.

She will complete a series of nine talks which have centered around the theme, "New Patterns for Business Education."

## The Lectern

# Greatness of a University Hinges on Intellectual Courage

By J. MITCHELL MORSE  
Assistant Professor of English

The subversive notion that excellence is undemocratic dies hard. It is subversive because it implies that a democratic society must be a mediocre society—this is in fact the view of such outspoken enemies of democracy as T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Evelyn Waugh, Aldous Huxley, George Santayana and Jose Ortega y Gasset—and it dies hard because it flatters our natural laziness. But it was not the view of Thomas Jefferson or the other founding fathers (with the exception of Hamilton); it is rather a degenerate conception of democracy that seems to have grown out of populism.

The populist movement, a late 19th-century upsurge of farmers, labor and small businessmen against the economic policies of the trusts, the monopolies and the big city banks, promoted many needed reforms but also encouraged the growth of an inverted snobbery: the snobbery of the poor toward the rich, of the unkempt toward the well-groomed, of the uncouth toward the well-mannered, of the uneducated toward the educated. J. Gordon Coogler, perhaps the greatest unconsciously humorous poet who ever lived, seriously addressed his sweetheart thus:

You'll never see this form clad in gaudy apparel.

Nor these feet playing the dude in patent leather shoes. That was an example of the horny-handed pose: any clothes but overalls were "gaudy," and correct speech was an affectation. Cultural backwardness came to be considered an indication of moral rectitude; in the popular apprehension, intellectual interests were unworthy of honest, hard-working, upright men and women. What is subversive here is the notion that



Dr. J. Mitchell Morse

American workingmen are, must be and should be stupid.

This is a very dangerous notion for us to cling to in the present state of the world. It was not nose-picking intellectual vacancy that made this country great; it was not mere earnest uninspired routine drudgery either; this country was founded by a roomful of intellectual giants—such a concentration of brilliance as the world has rarely had the good fortune to see; it succeeded because the people were proud, not ashamed, to be led by men with ideas, well-read men who were intellectually adventurous; and it rose to world leadership because at every crisis its people produced a leader who had brains. We did not slouch our way to greatness; if we are now in danger of becoming a second-class power, it is not from any lack of wealth or resources but from our defensive scorn of uncommon men, our plebeian suspicion of new ideas, our lazy and cynical preference for the second-rate with its easier demands.

We even take a perverse pride

in our shortcomings. At some colleges and universities, every new idea that would require some intellectual effort by students or teachers is met with the stale, smug statement, "This is not Harvard"—as if that were something to be proud of, or even to be complacent about. Harvard owes its eminence to the fact that it wants to be Harvard. Every university of any size could be Harvard if it dared to want to. But to be first-rate takes a certain self-confidence, a refusal to submit to popular judgement. Li'l Abner went through Hell for several weeks because, as he said, "Ah can't face th' laughter o' th' boys at th' stable." But Harvard is not so easily intimidated. It values intellectual excellence, and it does not defer to the tastes or standards or quaint notions of the uninformed. It is known for the intellectual boldness of its faculty and students; it is more concerned with investigating reality than with following popular opinion.

That is as it should be. The highest end of man is to split hairs with elegance and precision; to be aware of subtle differences, to record nuances, to capture and master realities that are not apparent to the untrained eye, the untrained ear or the untrained mind. America is now suffering from a lack of men willing to devote their lives to hair-splitting. The whole world is suffering for lack of them. That is what Julien Benda calls "the treason of the intellectuals"—our new tendency to come out of our studies and laboratories, our ivory towers if you prefer, to seek more obvious rewards and more popular prizes. We are ludicrously eager to be honored for things that are not worthy of honor, by those who are not qualified to judge.

The results of our servile acceptance of popular standards are plain to see. Our newsstands are

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