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HIGHER EDUCATION AND NATIONAL PUBLIC POLICY FORMATION

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The history of this country makes it perfectly clear that the federal government recognized it had a stake in public higher education. The government recognized that learning how to do things in engineering, in agriculture, and in other areas in public institutions of higher education and the passing of this knowledge along to the general public deserved federal financial support. The Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890 and other subsequent legislation such as the Smith-Lever Act are convincing evidence of more than a hundred years of federal interest in cooperative efforts with the individual states in public higher education. Sometimes these have been combined efforts, sometimes unilateral.

THE LAND-GRANT CONCEPT

The land-grant concept of resident instruction, basic and problem-solving research, and extension in the broadest sense, is a model which has been copied by most public and many private institutions of higher education in this country and in many other countries of the world. A number of examples of overseas programs conducted by our member institutions could be cited to substantiate that statement.

The idea that the benefits of education do not accrue solely to the individual recipient but to society as well is generally accepted, certainly by institutions of public higher education.

The idea that democracy thrives in the environment of an enlightened electorate has been part of our heritage.

In his presidential address to the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC) at its annual convention in 1969, Dr. Fred H. Harrington made the following statement concerning public institutions of higher education:

Well, what should be say for ourselves? We can stress the unique values of public higher education. They are clear, strong values, and they fit this age, with its demands for opportunity, for relevance and

*The writer incorporated ideas he obtained from Dr. Ralph K. Huitt, Executive Director of the NASULGC, and for which he is grateful. The arrangement of the material and the responsibility for its inclusion are the writer's.

involvement; and with its current thrust toward solving the problems of poverty and prejudice, the problems of the environment and the world.

With that as a background we can now proceed from the philosophical concepts to the more concrete.

It might be profitable to ask ourselves several questions:

1. Can public higher education influence public policy?
2. If it can, what is the modus operandi? How does one proceed from the philosophical to the actual practical application?

In answer to the first question the initial reaction might well be, heaven help us if it can't. A quick summary from the 1971 Congressional Directory indicates that of the 100 United States senators serving in the First Session of the Ninety-second Congress, 55 received all or part of their higher education at one of the member institutions of the NASULGC. In October of 1969 the association published the following material based on a *Fortune* directory, *Poor's Register of Corporations, Directors and Executives*, and alumni records:

A survey of leadership of the 500 largest industrial corporations reveals that more than 250 presidents and chairmen of the boards of these commercial giants attended state and land-grant institutions. Though representing less than five percent of the nation's more than 2,200 colleges and universities, the 113-member institutions of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges educated major officials of 228 of these corporations.

Further study revealed that graduates of public colleges and universities are directing a large percentage of the nation's 50 leading banks, life insurance companies, merchandising firms, transportation companies and utilities. Specifically, among the top 50 in each field, state and land-grant institutions educated: 24 heads of banks; 34 top executives of insurance companies; 25 major officials of merchandising firms; 25 transportation company heads and 41 leaders in the utilities field.

Certainly those in important and policy-making positions have been exposed to public higher education and have some first-hand knowledge of how it operates.

For over a hundred years institutions of public higher education in this country have influenced public policy in higher education. They have had a definite impact on what the federal government thinks about higher education. There are some concrete examples of legislation in which our association and frequently our sister associations have played a significant role. The Higher Education Facilities Act, the Higher Education Act of 1965, and particularly the G.I. Bill following World War II when tremendous demands were placed

on the institutions of higher education. In the last instance the influence ranged from the basic philosophy of the legislation to nuts and bolts of operational procedures.

WHERE THE STRENGTH LIES

The real weight or strength comes from the people out in the country, the people who stop by to talk with their congressmen or their senators. The extension specialist or the county agent may help make them aware of the needs and may discuss alternatives in the solution of problems which directly affect them, but the individual conference with their representatives over a sustained period is where the strength lies. This is far more effective than the crisis operation of last-minute letters or wires, which may on occasion be counter-productive.

Strength for other aspects of higher education lies with the presidents of our member institutions coming alone or bringing some of their administrative officers with them to sit down with or have lunch with their congressional delegation. These are the persons who can state what the needs are and which are the most urgent. These meetings are probably most successful when they deal with a discussion of national needs and how these translate to local needs. This kind of program is most effective if it is carried on with some frequency over a long enough period for the persons to get to know and respect each other. The whole process takes patience, perseverance, and people.

THE ASSOCIATION ROLE

What is the role played by an association such as ours—alone or in concert with other groups interested in higher education? We can be of service in several areas:

1. Developing intelligence. Members of our staff must keep informed on what is happening to matters of concern to our member institutions. We can then pass this intelligence along in our newsletters.

2. Keeping the country informed. We need to keep the news media aware of our needs and by our contributions through newspapers, magazines, television, radio, and various journals we can reach a readership more extensive than our own limited membership. It is extremely important that the public understand our needs and our problems and our accomplishments.

3. Providing liaison between the Washington community and our member institutions. This is a two-way type of communication. When legislation is in the preparatory stages or later when the specifics

of operational procedures or the rules are formulated we can obtain the reaction of our member institutions. We can then pass along what they regard as their highest priorities and how they feel about certain aspects of higher education. We frequently can identify well informed individuals who can appear before congressional committees during hearings. In turn we can inform our constituency what the Congress regards as unmet needs or what their order of priorities is, and some of the programs competing for funds.

4. Identifying specialists. Policy is made by specialists. This is a most important fact of political life. One of the important liaison services an association such as ours can render is the identification of these specialists in the different areas. Policy in the Congress and in the Executive is made by specialists. Special committees and sub-committees of both the Senate and the House are composed of members who are outstanding specialists in almost every topic imaginable. These are the persons who guide the formulation of legislation.

SOME EXAMPLES

Having discussed the philosophy and how it works in a general manner we may now proceed to some very specific examples in the field of foreign assistance. The case history method has long been recognized as an effective teaching technique. If we apply it to several aspects of U.S. foreign assistance that have been endorsed by the NASULGC, and others as well, it will illustrate how public education can influence public policy. Since private education and private enterprise and the foundations have contributed to the endeavor, it would be both immodest and dishonest to claim that public education alone has been responsible for what we consider to be some important steps in the right direction.

The association through its senate has endorsed the position that military and supportive assistance should be separated from development and humanitarian assistance. It has also endorsed the position that capital assistance (the banking or loan function) should be essentially distinct from technical assistance in the general development assistance area.

There is general recognition that certain technical assistance programs would benefit from some capital assistance. The lending operation itself frequently requires some grant financed technical assistance particularly "for projects related to its lending operations."

No exhaustive search was made to find out who first suggested that military assistance and development should not be parts of a

single foreign assistance act. Recent events will illustrate the point without that attempt.

The January 1969 NASULGC Task Force Statement (the task force was chaired by Dr. John A. Hannah, now Administrator of AID but at that time President of Michigan State University) suggested a reorganization of foreign assistance with a new and distinct organization to deal with development assistance.

Another Task Force on International Development appointed by President Nixon and headed by Mr. Rudolph A. Peterson, President, Bank of America, held extensive discussions with members of Congress, business groups, university experts, and associations including the NASULGC, journalists, civic organizations, voluntary agencies, and foundations. It asked for and received copies of the various reports we and others had prepared on foreign assistance.

And on September 15, 1970, President Nixon in his message to the Congress on "Foreign Assistance for the Seventies" included the following statement:

Reform #1: I propose to create separate organizational arrangements for each component of our assistance effort: security assistance, humanitarian assistance, and development assistance. This is necessary to enable us to fix responsibility more clearly, and to assess the success of each program in achieving its specific objectives. My proposal will overcome the confusion inherent in our present approach which lumps together these separate objectives in composite programs.

And on February 25, 1971, in an extensive report to the Congress by President Nixon on U.S. foreign policy for the 1970's the following statement appears:

This year I will present to the Congress the design of a new International Security Assistance Program. It will be reorganized to gear it more effectively to the purposes of the Nixon Doctrine:

—It will clearly separate out our security assistance from other forms of assistance to enhance the integrity and effectiveness of each.

—It will pull together all types of security assistance into one coherent program. This will make it possible to coordinate them more efficiently and to exercise stronger policy guidance and program direction. . . .

As many of you are aware several White House task forces were appointed to prepare the legislation on foreign aid which the president presented on April 21, 1971. A special study group appointed by the International Affairs Committee of the association was invited to appear and present its view during the preparation of the legislation. This proposed legislation consisted of two bills—one embracing

international security assistance and the other international development and humanitarian assistance.

A few more steps will bring us to the present. On July 20, 1971, Dr. Morgan, Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, introduced H.R. 9910—a bill to amend the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, and for other purposes. One of the provisions of the bill which has been passed by the House is as follows:

(e) In addition to the officers otherwise provided for in this section, the President shall appoint, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, one officer for the purpose of coordinating security assistance programs. . . .

As you are aware, foreign assistance has not yet been authorized by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. And H.R. 9910 does not go as far as the proposal in the April 21 message. But it is a move in the direction of separate administration of military and development assistance. Perhaps when the Congress has time for careful consideration of the April 21, 1971, proposals (and there are indications that hearings are planned for later this calendar year) the actual separation may occur. Certainly the evidence indicates progress.

Similar documentation for the proposal to separate capital assistance from technical assistance and the incorporation of this separation in the proposed legislation could be presented, but it would simply be redundant.

Although the mission has not been accomplished, real progress has been made and the prognosis is positive.

There is a lesson for us. The progress did not occur quickly, rather it was the result of many individual efforts and many group efforts over a long period. The effort consisted of individual letters, visits, and conferences with members of the Congress, diligent and persistent educational efforts, not a last-minute deluge of wires and phone calls. And work remains to be done. To borrow another quote from President Harrington:

There it is—the public university, the center of action and controversy, freedom and opportunity, relevance and involvement. There is much to do.

PART II

*Struggle for Control of
the Food System*

