

The present disturbances in American society come from basic failures of key institutions and require a 360° approach to social reconstruction. The progressive forces within American Universities must treat each successive failure and threat of the various institutions -- whether through acts of militarism, racism, sexism, legal persecution, pollution, or other malfeasance -- both symptomatically and generically. The progressive forces cannot permit each different case in an unending succession of cases to be used to convert a horrible example into a momentary diversion.

The deliberate attempt in the Presidency to tie the failure of national policy in Vietnam to the troubles being experienced by American Universities is malicious in intent but right in principle, for the progressive forces in American Universities are today the largest and most important source of opposition to misgoverning authorities in every form.

In anticipation of reactionary attempts to destroy the only base from which major and systematic criticism of the misgoverned institutions of the country can come, the progressive forces within the Universities must be alerted to their responsibilities.

These social responsibilities belong to each and every discipline of the University in cooperative association within and among all Universities, and in association also with the clientele of each discipline in the larger society, economics with finance, biology with pharmacology, political science with the military and government, the administrative sciences with bureaucracy, mathematics with the computer industry, schools of literature and drama with the performing arts, and so on, until every degree of the social order is the target of its proper University discipline.

Until the University establishments are themselves thoroughly reformed, they should be the object of reform by every discipline. They must become de-bureaucratized, open to all who wish to study, fully representative of all persons who create their dynamics, and directly helpful in the solution of the problems of the world's people.

Simultaneously each University discipline can select from its scope those areas that are most closely connected to the most aggravated problems of society, and encourage members and allocate resources specifically to solving those problems within the consensus of the truly humane sciences and arts.

Within each University, but apart from its authorities, a Conference of Social Change should be established from these specifically dedicated resources, to assist with liaison, cooperation, and the focussing of effective action.

To these ends, the Politics Department of New York University cordially invites its students, its faculty, political scientists elsewhere, and all other disciplines of the University to form Conferences of Social Change, and to allocate major portions of their budgets, scholarships, research, and theses to work that directly applies their special knowledge by the most effective means of change to the largest problems of mankind.

Submitted by  
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