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What Is Indiana's Greatest Need?

Answered by President Bryan, U. G. Weatherly, A. S. Hershey,
W. E. Jenkins, H. H. Carter and W. B. Elkin.

ON education rests individual happiness, social harmony, and the salvation of the race. And in this year, more than in any other, our systems of education are being severely criticized as misconceived, misdirected, wasteful, and ineffective. At Indiana especially criticism has been severe. It is not the wrangling of a few bitter unbalanced idealists; it is the result of much study and careful consideration by men who know. Out of their experience as educators, they have seen that our present system is in many ways a failure. They have seen that the groundwork of individual, social, and universal harmony is being poorly laid. Realizing the extreme seriousness of this situation, they are striving by every possible means to prevent it.

At Indiana this seriousness is brought keenly home to us. Our present system is ineffective. Indiana is turning out A. B's. who should never have received a degree, and she is crippling the ones who are really able to get a true college education by lack of attention, opportunity, and careful direction. Indiana is not doing what a university was intended to do, many of its students and teachers are saying: Indiana is not a university.

What is wrong with Indiana University? Everywhere the question is being asked, and rightly so. When each student and teacher can cast off unthinking servitude to custom for its own sake and stand firmly for what he thinks is right, when each member of this University combines intellectual curiosity with moral courage, we will begin to have a real University, reaching the highest ideals of instruction, study, and life. Each of us—faculty, students, and members of the administrative boards—

must answer the question of most importance to us now. *What is Indiana's greatest need?*

In this article this question has been answered by several of our most important faculty members. Their opinions are varied, but there is no conflict among them. Each of their suggestions is extremely valuable. Perhaps the most valuable of these, as The Vagabond sees them, are the following:

1. Indiana must have a more select student body. This can be accomplished at present only by limiting the enrollment until there are sufficient resources to create an honor degree with proper preparation for the more able and a pass degree for the dumb and indifferent.

2. Indiana must have a teaching force that are not "mere schoolmasters but carefully picked scholars."

3. Indiana must give more attention to the social sciences, awakening the student to the great problems of the individual, the race, and the world.

4. Indiana must give more attention to the cultural aspect of life, teaching its students the ability to live as well as to buy automobiles and to sell things to people who don't need them.

These men—Weatherly, Jenkins, Elkin, Hershey, Carter, and Bryan—have studied the question for a long time. They have seen the University from many different angles. Yet their conclusions are much the same.

The statement of Professor U. G. Weatherly, head of the department of economics and sociology, follows:

"It is evident that unless regulated, the great influx of students into the universities is to continue and increase. But from the point of view both of financial support and of efficient handling the institutions cannot keep on growing indefinitely. They must therefore sooner or later begin to limit their numbers, and selection and limitation after admission is a wasteful method. Indiana has had an unusually large proportion of students who drop in for a semester or two and then disappear. This means that an undue share of our resources is used up in taking care of casuals, to the crippling of systematic and especially of advanced work. The graduate school in particular suffers, and the graduate school is the very core of a real university.

"This condition is partly the outgrowth of traditions about desirable methods and types of students which have come down

to us from the pioneer period. However fine these ideals are in the abstract, experience and the changing social order have shown them to be a present handicap. The issue now is between a continuance of this catch-as-catch-can policy and a careful picking out of students capable of serious and sustained intellectual achievement. In fine, the choice is between the educational type represented by the private commercial institution with its plausible futilities about utilitarian education and a type represented by the genuine university. I am aware that there are influential persons here who admire and advocate the first-named type; nevertheless I venture to believe that the second, though it offers fewer advantages in the way of cheap publicity, is the one that must be chosen. The present state law does not permit much selection, for all graduates of commissioned high schools must be accepted, but the law can be changed. There would doubtless be some protest against this change, for it would seem to interfere with our ideas about equality. But equality of educational opportunities does not mean that all shall try for the same thing; it only means that equal talents shall have an equal chance, without any adventitious restrictions.

"A more select, integrated student body, then, and a wise concentration of resources is, as I see it, our greatest need. And of course this logically implies a select teaching body composed not of mere schoolmasters but of carefully picked scholars."

Limitation of enrollment is proposed also by Professor W. E. Jenkins of the English department.

"For forty years or more higher education in America has tried to combine the college idea derived from England with the university idea derived from Germany, but without importing either the German preparation and thoroughness or the English stress upon individual instruction. The human product of this process seems too often deficient in quality and in individuality. We turn out good mixers and candidates for jobs, rather than citizens of the intellectual world.

"Immediately, I believe in a limitation of numbers through entrance examinations and in general final examinations as a condition for graduation. Then, as soon as our revenues permit, honor schools with the preceptorial system, leading to a distinctive degree are, I believe, indicated. Meanwhile, we can try to recover a little of the old monastic ideal of the university as a refuge from the harsh practicalities of what we call the world, as

a place where intellectual adventure is encouraged for its own sake and the rational imagination is nourished for its own satisfaction."

Professor William B. Elkin, of the philosophy department, indorsed the curriculum reform suggested in the December number of *The Vagabond*; but said that our suggestions did not go far enough.

"The chief need of the University, in my opinion, is reform of the curriculum. Greater emphasis should be placed on the biological and social sciences, and less on mathematics and the physical sciences. The study of foreign languages also, as primarily, memory work, should be restricted.

"Man has now a large and increasing command over the physical forces of nature—earth, sea, and air—but comparatively little command over the vital and social forces of the individual and of society. It is the signal disgrace of twentieth century civilization, that while man can now produce enough material goods to satisfy the reasonable needs of all the people on the globe, the two great evils, riches and poverty, instead of being eliminated are apparently increasing. The physical forces of production are fairly adequate, but the social forces of distribution are wretchedly defective. It is now truer than ever that 'the proper study of mankind is man.'"

Professor A. S. Hershey, of political science, reaches the same conclusion.

"Woodrow Wilson once said in effect that what Princeton University most needed was to be transformed into an educational institution. To me it seems that the greatest need of Indiana University, expressed in one word, is quality. Mediocrity is our prevailing note. As in many other educational institutions in this country, what we lack most is not more buildings and an increased enrollment, but a finer, more select body of students.

"I confess I am not able to see how conditions in this respect can be remedied, since the probable main cause—defective training in our high schools—is largely beyond control. Might we not, however, find a partial solution of the problem in the application of some principle of selection which would eliminate more of the weaker, thoughtless, and reluctant students, and strengthen the stronger, more serious, and safer ones.

"In order to strengthen spiritual and intellectual qualities, we should frequent libraries and laboratories rather than seek

for snap courses or easy credits. In this connection I would suggest that Indiana University does not seem to be doing her full or proportionate share in developing graduate work. The instructors, the equipment for research are here, but interest and students engaged in advanced study are sadly lacking.

"In our social activities more attention should be given to the formation of genuine friendships and the discussion of social and world problems. We should seek to become citizens of the world as well as of our own provincial communities.

"Above all, we should know that a cultural education consists in the cultivation of the higher, finer senses and the appreciation of relative values. In the last analysis the real test of an educated man or woman is the possession of taste—the ability to see the beauty in a painting or a sunset, to distinguish between a valuable or trashy book, and to discriminate between good or bad music. Unless we have acquired in good measure this capacity to discriminate between the good and bad in art, literature, science, and human beings, we cannot rightfully claim to be properly educated."

To this Dr. Carter, head of the English department, adds a plea for closer association between faculty and students and a greater intellectual curiosity.

Indiana University's chief problem, it seems to me, like that of kindred institutions, is how steadily to maintain a unified purpose in the midst of a diversity of duties. Our professional schools must continue to strive to be the best of their kind. Their object must be in part, perhaps large part, utilitarian. Our College of Arts and Sciences must seek to perpetuate still an ideal of general culture, pure science, and unapplied studies among the humanities. Yet this College of Arts and Sciences, in an age of specialization, can not be unmindful of the vocational aspirations of its students. Thus as this unit in the university, having adapted its curriculum to the needs of our day in such ways as seem wise, remains unafraid that its general aim will be lost in the midst of the concrete demands of active life, so the professional schools, without sacrifice of professional ideals, will be imbued also with purposes larger than those of mere vocational demands. Finally then, in the **spirit of learning** manifest everywhere in our institution will a unity be found in the midst of diversity. In this **spirit of learning** an intellectual curiosity, a passion for the truth, will become so absorbing among students and teachers that there

will be no room left for debate about grades received in class work. Perhaps, too, a closer fraternity, based on a common interest in the things of the mind and the spirit, will be fostered among students and teachers. Then of us here in Indiana University may be said what Woodrow Wilson said of the ideal university: "The ideal college, therefore, should be a community, a place of close, natural, intimate association, not only of the young men who are its pupils and novices in various lines of study, but also of young men with older men, with maturer men, with veterans and professionals in the great undertaking of learning, of teachers with pupils, outside of the classroom as well as inside of it The trouble with most of our colleges nowadays is that the faculty of the college live one life and the undergraduates quite a different one. They are not members of the same community; they constitute two communities . . . This separation need not exist, and, in the college of the ideal university, would not exist."

Though he offers no suggestion as to how a higher standard of morale can be brought about, Dr. Bryan summarizes all the forgoing criticism in a plea for a university made up from the association of the best people at their best.

"At the meeting of the Association of State Universities in Washington November, 1920, several members were asked to read papers on the subject "What is the Greatest Need of the University?" I elected to say that the greatest need of the University is Morale. My old master, Stanley Hall, had just written a book in which he held that the chief aim of man is Morale. Morale for a man or for a social group, he said, means tip-top condition—every element which rightly belongs being vigorously present and all working effectively together. This is Plato's ideal for a man or for a society. Plato's name for this individual and social ideal is health. This is also the ideal of Paul as when he pictures the church as 'a body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part.'

"Tip-top morale requires for one thing that those who make the University—trustees, professors, students shall for the most part be upper level human beings and for another that within the University they shall come together and work together on their own upper levels.

"I seem to be writing abstractions, but what I have in mind is our own academic saints such as Kirkwood, Hoffman, Woodburn

whose law for themselves in all things affecting the University is far higher than any one would impose upon them. And I am thinking of the best boys and girls that I have known here. It fills me with delight that in this year of grace there are such boys and girls at the heart of our University.

"A thousand things great and small are important and some of them essential for the making of a good University, but the best of these is tip-top morale, and there is no way to have this except by the association of some tip-top men and women at their best."

These suggestions are splendid. Each of us must add to them. We need more moral courage on the part of students and faculty. Instead of a mild content with the existing order, we want a more vehement exposition of its virtues *and its defects*. Too much time is spent in eulogy of the virtues of sundry dead authors, ideals of government and conduct held by men of a different age, and general high-sounding tweedlum. These things are well enough in their way, but we have before us a greater task. That we must solve fearlessly.

Two Poems

By Robert Fink

NEMESIS

Half-seen
From the corner
Come three ghosts
Unbidden,
Unwelcome,
To the feasting.

NIGHT CAMP

The fire-light flickered and dim shadows fled
Across the walls and vanished overhead,
Silent and furtive as unquiet shades,
Timid and powerless, of the ancient dead.