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THE ROLE & PHILOSOPHY OF THE UNIVERSITY IN RELATION TO INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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It could be said that the most tragic failure in American society is the myopic mono-cultural white middle class interpretation of laws, social habits, and cultural values. Nothing can be more tragic than the failure to recognize and respect human differences in other cultures.

The Anglo-American has developed a dogma of the survival of the strongest, a struggle for existence and a legitimate struggle between men. Utilitarianism and material slavery brought forth an equality of the mediocre. The egoism of Nietzsche was to be found in the American "Übermensch." It was a negation of Art and Culture.

What has Public Education done to rectify these inequities? Unfortunately, American Public Education has merely followed the mono-cultural, monolingual, white, middle-class model that American society has perpetrated: Chicanos are not melting into any pot, nor will they ever. How can anyone be so naive as to think of Chicanos in the same vein as the Polish, Irish or Germans? Yet, American education has created a very efficient "push-out" rate and has kept Chicanos with a deplorable 7-1 years of total education. How many of

these indigenous Americans will have an opportunity for a college education? With the "push-out" rate of 85%, not very many.

One might ask at this point—what is wrong with the present structure of the traditional university? The answer is simple—basically what is wrong with society. One of the problems is overspecialization, which causes the myopic mentality so familiar among educators today. The curriculum is so fragmented that in the end it is quantitative measure and accumulation that earns the sheepskin. The problem is serious since professors cannot interrelate beyond their own specialized disciplines. Interdisciplinary studies like Me-Chicano studies at the University of Mich-Flint provide a bridge that fills that educational gap. Since it pervades all disciplines, it attempts to interrelate all branches of knowledge.

Interdisciplinary Programs cannot afford to isolate themselves. There is no more certain and expedient way to failure. Ethnic programs should not be designed solely for the ethnic group but for the non-ethnic majority as well. The problem is not with the minorities but with the uninformed majority who, likewise, are victims of American education.

The University, nonetheless, is the last hope for society and change. The molding of minds is indeed an important task. The University has a clear responsibility to the people and the community. It must be flexible, innovative, and, above all, democratic. It must create new programs, departments, and degrees and not allow itself to collect dust in our changing times. Relevant Education does not refer only to Education for today but for tomorrow as well. Universities need not segregation but integration of disciplines. Universities need to broaden, not to narrow, the minds. It is the only way that educators can acquire a true perspective of man and society.