2005

Reorganization, CLAS, and Professional Schools--A Note

Yatin Bhagwat  
*Grand Valley State University*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/gvr](http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/gvr)

**Recommended Citation**

Bhagwat, Yatin (2005) "Reorganization, CLAS, and Professional Schools--A Note," *Grand Valley Review*: Vol. 28: Iss. 1, Article 5. Available at: [http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/gvr/vol28/iss1/5](http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/gvr/vol28/iss1/5)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@GVSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Grand Valley Review by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@GVSU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gvsu.edu.
Reorganization, CLAS and Professional Schools—A Note

In the midst of the intellectual cacophony during the reorganization process an emotional debate took place at our university. As the breadth of professional fields offered by the university continues to expand, the arts and humanities and to some extent the sciences fear being outgrown. Representatives from the arts, sciences and humanities suspect future increasing domination by the professional schools. My goal, in the next few paragraphs, is to highlight the importance of the education provided by College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) to students pursuing professional programs.

Materials First, Materialism Later

Every faculty member at this university is engaged directly or indirectly in the creation of human capital. The professional schools teach students structured phenomena such as listening to the human heartbeat or the beat of the internal combustion engine. In contrast, CLAS teaches the students to think critically, examine, weigh and organize thoughts. Many members of the CLAS believe that professional schools, and to some extent rightly so, tend to be materialistic. CLAS members provide the materials—intellectual materials to assess, assimilate, organize and communicate. Without these skills our students will be dysfunctional professionals. The professional schools need CLAS more than the CLAS members imagine they are needed. It is essential that students comprehend the symbols C, F, and Cl represent Carbon Fluorine and Chlorine respectively before they think of them as ticker symbols for Citicorp, Ford Motor and Colgate-Palmolive. Unless the students understand their materials they cannot afford to be materialistic. Students at our university must understand the periodic table in a philosophical sense together with a materialistic sense. CLAS alone is capable of fulfilling the dual roles. Continuation of the CLAS to play an ever-increasing role of teaching the intellectual materials—scientific and literary, historical and the current, political and international in an apolitical way is essential for successful development of young minds gradually maturing in our institution.
Yeaming-Learning-Earning Continuum

Our university community is the catalyst in the developmental process of young minds—intellectual and professional. Statistics reveal that most of our math and history majors concomitantly aspire for the teaching certificate; i.e., they learn to earn. The harshest critics of professional schools and the ardent admirers of liberal education will concede that in the modern world one cannot divorce earning and learning. The goals of the general education program that predominantly reside in the CLAS are to instigate intellectual curiosity and critical thinking in student minds. This is expected to generate yeaming for knowledge in these minds. As the yeaming proceeds on continuum, it facilitates stronger learning in the arts, sciences and the professions—education, business, engineering and so on. This leads to better opportunities for learning. Yeaming-Learning-Earning continuum is also a cyclical process whereby the earnings from learning will fuel greater yeaming for knowledge and fame and provide incentives for alumni to make significant contributions to the betterment of the university. Students cannot aspire to be leaders in their professional fields without a solid foundation in the arts and humanities.

Some of our alumni, who are likely to assume leadership positions of school district superintendents, nursing home administrators, corporate chief executives, and production engineers, need the dexterity to understand human minds to be able to lead successfully. Education in the humanities and the professions may not be viewed as mutually exclusive phenomena. They are not substitutes. The professional schools to a large extent view education in the humanities complementary to their central mission.

Collusion and Collision

As the reorganization process continued, intra-faculty, and inter-faculty—administration collusion was evident. Pragmatism may require faculty to collude instead of collide occasionally in broader public interest. Although collusion between firms is frowned upon by the Federal Trade Commission, collusion between diverse groups of faculty can lead to synergies and better achievement of one of our goals—develop graduates within a reasonable period of time to face the challenges of the outside world(s) with integrity and strength. All groups of faculty must realize that without focus on student development the university’s value will drop precipitously due to taxpayer-parent resistance. It is in the interest of the public and our common interest that we shed our differences and work towards the common goal of nurturing and developing human minds. Our terminal degrees will lack luster without the institutional arrangement known as the university and will lose their value if we fail to create value of some form for the region and the state.

Let us not be too concerned with the dilution or concentration of voting power in academic governance while we are all engaged in student education and welfare.