PLANNING GEOGRAPHY IN THE CURRICULUM OF A NEW COLLEGE*

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Many college professors complain about the academic organization of their college. Most would like the opportunity to revise it, and the revision would probably vary directly with the academic field of the reviser. A reviser from the field of geography may probably suffer from the same self-centered characteristics that produce biases by one in any discipline, but the eclectic nature of the field of geography should encourage understanding of other fields and open, at least, the possibility for an objective job.

AN ACADEMIC PLAN

The following academic plan has been conceived by the planning staff at the California State College at Palos Verdes. A geographer had a hand in it as one of the initial seven (later nine) on the staff, and, as a result, the field of geography is well represented. As a first step in the analysis, a succinct description of the total plan is made in order that the framework upon which geography and other fields are developed may be understood.

1. The academic plan is organized around the liberal arts and sciences. No professional schools or divisions are planned in the undergraduate curriculum, though there is some undergraduate provision for applied arts and sciences which I will mention in connection with the interdisciplinary or interdepartmental major. This liberal arts and sciences framework is divided into three major parts called schools: Humanities and Fine Arts, Natural Sciences and Mathematics, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. Departments are organized under these three major divisions. The departments are traditional in every sense of the word, are limited in number to 16 traditional ones,[1] and include, for example, geography and economics in the social sciences, physics and chemistry in the natural sciences, and English and philosophy in the humanities and fine arts.
2. The basic characteristics of the curriculum include the following:
   a) A set of required basic studies courses, largely freshman and sophomore oriented (though they are carried into the upper division in each school), which are presumed to cover all fields of knowledge. They are breadth studies, taught by traditional discipline departments and given course names and departmental prefixes.

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[1] The 16 departments are English, art, music, foreign language (may be divided later), philosophy, biological sciences, physics, chemistry, mathematics, economics, geography, history, political science, psychology, sociology, anthropology.

b) Each student must have two majors: One in a discipline and one in an interdiscipline. Discipline majors are traditional in that they come from departments such as geography and philosophy. They do, however, take advantage of significant new trends and developments and are often innovative. The interdisciplinary majors are those made up of courses from the regular departments and each is put together by a faculty committee made up of members from appropriate departments. They are presumed to overcome the occasional accusation that there is too much college emphasis on a single field. It is within these interdisciplinary areas that it is possible to give a student some contact with the more professional applied arts and sciences. Such an interdisciplinary field as the Structure and Development of American Business or Earth and Space Sciences makes professional contact for the student possible, but the contact is through a liberal arts and sciences framework which allows the disciplines most closely related to decide what courses are appropriate for undergraduate training in this "professional" area.

c) The third part of the undergraduate curriculum is the one-fifth of the student's time left for elective studies. Electives may be used for greater depth and breadth in the majors and for pre-professional work or may be selected on a student-interest basis.

3. The graduate program, which will probably be rather large, is developed within the administrative framework of the three major schools. Graduate degrees in disciplines will be handled by schools and departments. Certainly the Department of Geography should be primarily responsible for a master's degree in geography. There is a potential problem of organization, however, in the applied arts and sciences in what may be described as professional types of programs. Such advanced degrees as those in teacher education, business, engineering, or other applied fields, are less easily placed in the heirarchy of organization. For these areas of graduate interest, there will be established a graduate institute. Each institute is placed under the administrative line of one of the three major schools and provides some kind of released time for the director.

Within this framework, geography appears in the undergraduate program, as a contributor to the basic studies program, as a discipline major, and as a part of certain interdisciplinary programs. In the graduate area, geography will develop its own M.A. degree and be an important element in certain institute programs, such as, Environmental Design and Urban Studies, Business Management, and the Earth and Space Sciences.

The Contributions of Geography as Related to the Emphases Within the Field

From the foregoing description, geography does appear to be capable of a number of contributions to the academic plan. There are spatial ar-

rangements of features which when interpreted help us to understand problems involving other spatial arrangements. We are also aware that the relationships between physical environment and man deserve our interest and consideration. Geography has spent many years studying these relationships and has developed experts in their interpretation. Certainly geography has as good or better an opportunity to contribute to the curriculum in the framework herein described as it would in any other setting. Other developments within the field, however, pose problems that beg an investigation before the final plans for the nature of the program in geography can be made.

Principal Problems

Geography, like many other disciplines, seems to have two categories of problems: Those which have been with the field for many years and seem to be never-ending, and those which are new. The old ones have to do with physical versus cultural geography, regional versus systematic geography, the placement of geography in the administrative organization, and the confused or denigrating attitude of the general population toward the field of geography. The new ones are based largely upon differences of opinion as to methodology within the field.

Our plan calls for geography to be administered as part of the social sciences. At the same time, however, there is considerable evidence that the association of geography and the physical sciences should not be broken completely. It is thus necessary to consider how geography may be related to the other physical sciences, particularly the earth-space sciences. In our plan, the interdisciplinary program helps solve this problem by requiring a physical geography course of all majors in the earth and space sciences.

How to change the attitude of so many that geography is countries and capitals to be studied in the elementary grades only is a great puzzle. Time, good works, and public relations seem to have unctuous qualities, though they heal our problems slowly.

The second category of problems relates to the current conflict within the field of geography, and it is here that a great struggle for position is being waged. Traditionally, geographic specializations have usually been described as physical geography, economic geography, settlement geography, or political geography. If more specific differentiation seemed necessary, such specialties as climatology, geomorphology, industrial, or urban geography have served to separate scholarly interests. To modernize our terminology and make possible another analytical basis upon which to staff a geography department, I would like to suggest the following classification of geographic specialization: humanist, diffusionist, theorist, and computerist. Whether or not such terminology can be justified is a question—but let me explain briefly, at least, how it may be possible to characterize each of these groups.

The first, the *humanists* are those geographers who have been part of the profession for many, many years. Their principal contributions have been in communicating the field to others through descriptive writing and fairly highly emotionalized teaching. Their literary style is often creative. They are frequently great salesmen for geography. Where writing and

teaching have been of a scholarly nature, geography has profited and thousands of students have been inspired. But their impact in the profession of geography at this time seems to be at low ebb.

The second group, which I have called the *diffusionists,* is a significant and well developed segment in geography that has solidified its role out of recent conflicts within the profession. These conflict lines have probably been most solidly drawn between theoretical geographers and those who see the development of culture through the diffusion of ideas within areas and regions. The word diffusion itself suggests that it is difficult to touch all the variables in a geographic problem, let alone expect to control variables or study one aspect of a problem in isolation from other aspects. Scholarly scrutiny of the literature (in all appropriate languages), careful field study, and analysis of the chronology of occupance mark the geographers counting themselves in this group. Diffusionists have been centered pretty largely, it seems to me, on the West Coast and have recently become much more competitive with geographers in other groups.

A third group I have chosen to call the *theorists.* This group seems to have come largely from the economics-oriented geographers who have become acquainted with the successes economists have had in developing a theory that goes with the field and who have followed developments in regional economics. Theorists have found that mathematical equations are often helpful in building theory; they have experimented with model buildings, and have generally moved nearer to many of the methods of the natural sciences. Their contributions have accelerated in recent years and have begun to show up among other groups of geographers. The significance of their position in the profession was evidenced when at the "kick-off" meeting of the recent national geography convention in Columbus, Ohio the topic was "The Spatial Organization of Economic Activity."

Economics, with its multitude of data in the behavior-generating mediums of exchange, stands out among the social sciences in theory building. Jevons described such data in this way: "A unit of pleasure or of pain is difficult even to conceive; but it is the amount of these feelings which is continually prompting us to buying and selling, borrowing and lending, labouring and resting, producing and consuming; and it is from the quantitative effects of the feelings that we must estimate their comparative amounts."[2] Furthermore, it has a long history of theoretical development from the early seventeenth century to the present.

The geographer theorists, with far less historical assistance, are putting together a cogent theory of geography. They are producing a new organization of the field. They are classifying variables in such a way as to discover their behavior under model conditions. They are selecting and trying methods from other disciplines that lead in both theoretical and applied aspects of their field.

From this theorist group comes another segment which depends to a very large extent on handling numbers for its research. Perhaps an ap-

[2] William S. Jevons, *The Theory of Political Economy,* (New York: MacMillan, 1871-1879) p. 12.

propriate name for these "fortran followers" is the *computerist* group because they usually feel it is more valuable to their problems to use the computer to develop matrices and ranking systems and to compare with deviations and covariation, than to spend a greater share of research time in the field, or on maps and other devices commonly used by geographers. Evaluation of "computerists" and their contributions usually raises emotions. Some of our colleague-practitioners are accused of "computer-doodling." Such an accusation may at times even be justified; but justification of criticism is most real when results generated from a computer are limited because the data used were invalid. Or, as my neighbor cynically refers to the input-output function of a computer, "garbage in, garbage out."

No doubt each of these groups has a contribution to make. Even the computerists, newer than the other categories, are making a contribution to geography by regularizing spatial relationships and giving them some greater currency with modern science.

Individual geographers may, of course, combine talents to produce new categories or sub-types of those groups listed. A political scientist not long ago told me that, in his opinion, the good quantifier-theorist political scientist was one who had moved into these interests from a "traditional" background. Combinations of the groups posed here and traditional specialties will no doubt continue to develop. From such mergers should come geography's contribution to the revolution in discipline alignment, research cooperation, and teaching effectiveness.

The time does come, however, when the academic plan must be submitted and first appointments made. Many of us feel that all interests of the field should be satisfied and that the optimum is being approached when such is the case. For the more pragmatic, however, it will no doubt be recognized that if all of these features of geography are promoted and developed within the department, one may reach an end to fiscal feasibility and be faced with a choice of reducing breadth of program or being satisfied with mediocrity of professional talent. Promotion of all approaches and all interests in geography may really lead to a "customer-is-right approach." Whatever is asked shall be done so long as it enhances size of classes and subsequently the size of the faculty. Our answer to this problem is, I hope, a narrowing of offerings in factual accumulation and an expansion in the application of theoretical concepts to model and then real conditions. Theorists move in these surroundings, their research seems at the heart of modern geographic inquiry, they are occupying more and more journal space, and I see no reason why theorists cannot teach as well as anyone else.

While I may expect that our teaching and research emphasis will turn out to be principally economic geography, it is probable that my only real opportunity to have an influence on this pattern of development is the inital appointment. Oliver Wendell Holmes said it this way, "The great thing in the world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving."