

8-1953

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Recommended Citation

McNichols, Donald, "Freedom In the Classroom" (1953). *George Fox College Journal, 1952-1966*. 20.
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George Fox College

JOURNAL

VOL II

AUGUST, 1953

NO. 1

"Here equity would be heard in our land, and righteousness would stand up and take place, which give not place to the unrighteous, but judgeth it."
Journal, George Fox, 1655

Freedom In the Classroom

BY DONALD MCNICHOLS, DEAN

Events during the past year have given rise to many controversies regarding the rights and obligations of the college teacher. His duty has always been to discover and disseminate information, thus his is a position of trust. Unfortunately, many scholars in American classrooms have betrayed the confidence of society by using their academic methodology as a cloak to screen their activities in guiding youth into anti-American attitudes.

In consequence of this situation, American people experienced a fear of the process of impartial investigation, or the academic process, as it is more commonly known. Scholars and educational organizations have been quick to defend their method which resulted in a continuous flow of articles in educational periodicals on the subject of academic freedom.

The Problem

The core of the problem faced by the public is, "How can the student be protected from harmful influences?" While for the honest teacher, the problem is, "At what point does informing a class about varying points of view become orientation?"

It is easy to understand how college teachers with in-

tegrity must feel. They have only one defense, which is "Trust me"! Intellectual honesty dictates the method; to abandon this principle is to embrace dishonesty. Yet, despite misunderstanding and criticism, they should ever be grateful to the American public who cherish democracy to the point of challenging its opponents. This democratic way of life provides the only milieu in which scholarship can survive.

An Attempted Solution

In attempting to resolve the problem of how to protect the student, college and university officials have attempted screening the teachers, principally by the loyalty oath. But sensing failure in this, there is a growing tendency to limit the directional activities of the teacher through prohibiting specified collateral material, a step that aroused much opposition from the teaching profession.

The problem as thus stated has occurred more frequently on the level of the large university, both tax-supported and private institutions. Their constituencies are in part responsible for this condition; they have long demonstrated unconcern for what was being taught in the classroom, but now once aroused they tend to be overly suspicious. Irrational steps taken to correct the menace of subversive influence in the classroom can only jeopardize the functions of the university. No group can afford to lose sight of the teacher's problem in this process.

The Program at George Fox

In contrast to this attitude, the constituency of the Christian college has always been concerned with the material of the classroom. These institutions in turn have continuously believed that the very nature of teaching imparts a point of view to the student. Whenever a presentation is weaker than that, it ceases to be teaching and becomes only reporting. Many institutions, on the other hand, assume that no human factor exists in the total formula of gathering and presenting data, that this is a purely impartial process. George Fox, like other colleges with similar objectives, exercises caution in the selection of instructors as one method of protecting its students. Not that its staff will be all of one point of view, but that they will teach with conviction and aid the student in his own Christian commitment.

Such an attitude does not rule out the view of James Bryant Conant who stated in 1947 at the University of Minnesota, "When universities are anything but quiet asylums for those who wish to sleep in peace, they are noisy forums of debate. The process of deriving truth requires this."

Freedom in the classroom guarantees the forum for the exploration of varying points of view. Those who fear this activity do not realize that any view worthy of acceptance should be strengthened by honest comparison with other views.

The philosophy of the Christian school movement frankly states that educational experience is complete only when the heart is trained simultaneously with the mind and the body. Thus such colleges as George Fox do not attempt to strain out certain ingredients of information and prevent their reaching the classroom, rather the emphasis is placed upon wholeness and completeness.

This is not intended to imply that such protective measures exclude the possibility of error. But the screening of teachers on the large scale simply verifies the position maintained continuously by the Christian college; namely, that the college classroom is too great a potential influence for good or evil to be left unprotected.

Furthermore, the situation of teaching and learning is so complex and assumes so many facets and forms that the greatest source of protection resides in the integrity of the individual professor. This institution seeks to offer its students instruction from individuals whose professional competence and Christian outlook enable them to employ classroom freedom in its truest and loftiest form—by bringing the student to experience reality and be motivated by men's highest ideals.

CALENDAR

Opening of 1953-54 School Year

September 7-9—Faculty Preschool Conference.

11—Dormitories open for Freshmen.
Beginning of Freshmen Orientation.
Opening Football Practice, 2:00 p. m.

13—Special Church Service for Freshmen.

14—Freshmen Registration, 1-5 p. m.

15—Registration for all other Classes.
8:00 p. m., Student Body Mixer.

16—8:00 a. m., Classes Convene.
6:45 p. m., First Student Christian
Union Prayer Meeting.

17—7:30 p. m., Coeds' Big and Little
Sister Party; Mixer for Men.

18—8:00 p. m., Faculty Reception in Honor
of New Students.

October 5 - 9—Christian Emphasis Week.

Published bi-monthly by George Fox College at Newberg, Oregon, by the Public Relations Office in cooperation with the Office of the Dean.