

## A REGISTRAR LOOKS AT HIS JOB

EZRA L,

**Mastery in any field includes a mastery of its relations to other fields. If it has been within the power of Providence to create an unrelated function, Providence seems never to have exercised that power. It is not within the field itself, it is in the relation that it bears to other fields that we find the purpose of its creation. The value of a department in any organization is in proportion to its contribution to the objective of that organization. The value of the registrar's office must be estimated on the basis of its contribution to the objective in higher education.**

**If in the light of this basic principle, emphasis on the relation to others, and to the objective, if we are to take a look at the registrar's job, we must define:**

**1. A college or university**

### **2. Its types or divisions of functions**

A university is a place; it is a spirit; it is men of learning; it is a collection of books; it is laboratories where work in science goes forward; it is the source of the teaching and beauties of literature and the arts; it is the center where ambitious youth gathers to learn; it protests the traditions, honors the new and tests its value; it believes in truth, protests against error and leads men by reason rather than by force.

**In answer to the question, "What are the types or divisions of functions of a college or university?" from other studies we learn that they are much the same in all colleges and that there are at least four groups or types that may be stated briefly as follows:**

- 1. The general supervision of the institution as a whole**
- 2. The direction of the academic and professional activities**
- 3. The supervision of the social, ethical, and spiritual life of the school**

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGIATE REGISTRARS

4. The management of the business and material affairs of the college

In determining the registrar's field, it will simplify our problem to eliminate all groups of functions that are commonly accepted as being outside of his field. They are usually governed as follows:

1. The general supervision of the institution, by the president
2. The social, ethical, and spiritual life of the school, by the dean of men and dean of women
3. The management of the business and material affairs of the college, by the bursar or business agent

This leaves one group, the *academic activities*, for further consideration. As a basis for allocating the functions in this group, we requested data from 341 institutions, limited to those having a college of arts and sciences. The questions submitted both to deans and to registrars did not call for the practice of the institution, but for the judgment of the officer as to which should perform the duties listed. We sent the registrar an additional blank, asking for the practice in the institution. In both we considered only the major functions as a basis for defining the work of the registrar.

It is understood that in a small college the president may take direct supervision of part or all academic activities of the college, but if all these activities are to be delegated to other officials in the institution, we find that they naturally fall into two groups, the *instructional* and the *non-instructional*. From the statements of opinion and of actual practice, it appears that the functions of the dean are to be found in the instructional group, which includes the following:

1. Coordination and improvement of instruction
2. Nomination of the faculty
3. Planning the curriculum

and that the registrar's field is in the non-instructional group, including the following functions:

#### 4. Correspondence with prospective students

##### 5. Statistical analysis of data in the registrar's office.

(For reference, see Appendix, p. 335)

The information gathered from 323 institutions that answered the questionnaire showed that in the institutions of less than 1,000 enrolment there was more variation in both opinion and in practice than was found in institutions of more than 1,000. In the smaller institutions a number were of the opinion that many of the academic activities should be handled by a committee. While the non-instructional activities may be assigned to more than one officer, such as officer of admissions, personnel officer, etc., it is generally conceded that the registrar's work lies in that field. It may include only a part or all of it.

While we may agree as to the registrar's field, a wise president, if he serves the interests of his institution, will have to give the work to the man who will give the best service. A standardized plan would create a dog-in-the-manger policy, to the detriment of the institution. You cannot standardize the job until you can standardize individuals.

*Technique of the Work.* If I were teaching a class, I would give a great portion of the time to the mechanics and the material part of the work, but in painting a portrait of the registrar's job, with emphasis on the relation to others and the objective, these material things are only the tools with which we work. If you are new in the work and wish to know more about the technique, a good plan is to write other registrars about their calendars of work, the content of their annual reports, their office equipment, etc., and much valuable information may be obtained from the proceedings of the registrars' meetings.

*A Changing World.* We have been warned for several years that we are coming into a changing world, and that we must adjust our work to the educational program of the

the faculty. The things that we teach in one generation the next generation may spend its time proving incorrect. Frequently a man gains a reputation on something and then someone else will become famous by showing that it is wrong. There is a story of an engineer on the Hudson Valley Railway. The company that built the road, 25 years later was spending millions of dollars, under the same engineer, taking out the curves. Someone asked the engineer why he did not run the road straight in the first place and he remarked that he had made his reputation on the curves. The Government spent millions of dollars teaching the farmer how to make two blades of grass grow where one had grown before, and now it is spending a like

THE RELATION TO OTHERS OR THE LABORATORY OF  
HUMAN EXPERIENCE

The relation to others and the objective of the institution lead us to deal with the things that are of more permanent nature; the things that were true in the past, that are true today, and that will be true in the future. So I will ask you to come with me for an informal visit to the laboratory of human experience, where we come in contact with the faculty, students, administrators, and patrons of the school (and in some cases with the legislature). In preparation for this visit we should understand how they live in different worlds, their visions and their interests, limited to their own fields. "A carpenter, a botanist, an ornithologist, a hunter, and a geologist, walking through a forest would not see the same things. The ornithologist might hear every bird note; the botanist with equally keen ears might not have an auditory sensation of sufficient intensity to affect consciousness." A milliner may think of a passing bird as an ornament for a bonnet; a fruit grower, as an insect killer; a poet, as a songster; an artist, as a fine bit of coloring and form. We all feel that deflecting force of our experiences and our interests and

titude. **Our interest in self and in our own field is well illustrated by statements received from deans and registrars in answer to my questionnaire. I give you the benefit of one from each group:**

**From a Dean. "It is also true that while the statistical analysis of data in the registrar's office should be made primarily by the registrar himself, the application of these data to the broader purposes of the college or university should be made by the dean."**

**From a Registrar. "In an institution the size of ours, we see little need for a dean."**

**Two years ago, in discussing a problem in history with a friend in New Orleans, the same thought was emphasized in a very striking way. My friend stated with some emphasis that what this country needed was an unbiased history written from the Southern viewpoint.**

**The truths of our world are determined by what we see, but we for the most part see only those things which we can join to something in our line of experience. Other things do not exist for us. Their truths are not a part of our world. If we keep this in mind in dealing with students and parents, in after years they will meet us with a smile that will do us good.**

**About thirty years ago I happened one day to visit the offices of two school superintendents with whom I was well acquainted and we talked over some of their problems. Each had heard some uncomplimentary remarks about himself. One replied in kind and the other said, "Well you tell those persons that I am their friend whether they are my friends or not." Twenty-five years after that, in a large group of people, we stood with uncovered heads at the unveiling of a monument to one of these men. And I don't have to tell you which one.**

*Pretensions Fatal to Happiness.* **In dealing with our complex problems, giving up many pretensions is absolutely necessary to happiness. Laying aside the burdens of these pretensions will give us a chance to enjoy ourselves. People will judge us by our success in playing the character we as-**

sume. <sup>M</sup>any of our pretensions become a burden and are not of the slightest use to us. Most of us are surrounded by experts in the various fields of knowledge who would gladly help us if we would only ask them. We have learned a valuable lesson when we have learned that people are more interested in those whom they help than help them. It follows that if we are not as much interested in others as we should be, there may be a reason for it. times when you imagine a person is not friendly to you or to your work, present him some of your problems and ask his advice and watch the result. We will all make mistakes and unconsciously may wound the feelings of others. The best of people may sometimes make an enemy: but it is the foolish person that wants to keep an

*The Value of a Modest Statement.* There are a few things that young registrars should remember. When we start out in life with some purpose and a good deal of vigor, we sometimes overdo a thing. If you will pardon some references, when I began teaching school, I taught a five months' public school and then a three months' private school. I wanted a good school, and out of that ambition came one or two experiences that will help you to understand the value of a modest statement. I went to an acquaintance that had four boys and said to him, "School begins at a certain time and I want you to send your boys to school." He remarked that he never could pay for it, and while I thought he was telling the truth about it, he had good boys and I wanted them in school. I told him that he owed his children an education and if he neglected to pay that now, in a few years he could never pay them, but he could pay me any time. And, with a good deal of I said to him, "If you have to make a choice of dying in debt to a school teacher or to your children, I would advise you to die in debt to the school teacher." Well, he had had drink or two that I hadn't noticed and he walked up to me and hugged me and said, "I'm going to take your advice as long as I live." And he kept his

About the same time I had a few boys who smoked. I

thought it was a useless, filthy, expensive, and dangerous habit, so after thinking about it I made a talk, which was a little too strong. Nearly forty years after that-I began teaching very young-I went over to my home county and at the fairground met some of those boys. They were then men, prosperous and in good health. We sat under the shade of a tree. They were smoking, every one of them. Well, one fellow took a cigar out of his mouth and commenced making my speech, that I didn't know anyone remembered. He commenced by telling how much you could save in forty years by not smoking, and the time was nearly up and I got afraid he was going to ask me how I had invested my savings.

There was an innocent minded boy in the school-this was why they remembered it, and as usual they colored the story a little, but in the main it was true. I had read them the account of the death of General Grant. Some of you will recall the newspaper accounts, that he died from a cancer on the tongue caused by smoking. When I got to that point and emphasized that danger of smoking, this boy stood up at once and announced that he was never going to smoke again, and he asked that he might go home right away and tell his Uncle George about it before he smoked again. You can see what effect that would have on a group of real boys.

*The Difficulty in Measuring Human Achievement.* In dealing with the problem of interpreting the data in the registrar's office, much depends on the purpose of your investigation, whether you keep your work first and your own interest second; whether you undertake to get every element that enters into a problem. I think I might add here that it is safe to say that we rarely have all the elements that should be included in a problem. In many cases when we think we have solved a problem, further study develops the fact that we had only reached a place to begin. I heard this thought graphically expressed, when a boy, by a German engineer. The first traction engine that came into our county attracted wide attention. A neighbor boy asked the engineer how long it would take him to learn all about that engine

He replied, "Oh, about three weeks, and then in six months you wouldn't know a darn thing about it." That we may understand each other, may I give three illustrations?

(a) In the Land Grant College Survey we found that in zones bounded by concentric circles, with the institution as the center, the attendance decreased in proportion to the distance of the zone from the institution. Later we assigned the problem to a graduate student, taking into consideration other influences, such as the population, the number of accredited high schools, the wealth of the community, the occupational distribution of the inhabitants, and the location of other colleges in the section. After a study of these combined influences, we discovered that in most states, after the first hundred miles, a large part of this circle was out of the state; and when we counted that portion of the state that was within that area, we found that after the first fifty miles distance seemed to have no significance. There is another big factor that seems never to have been taken into consideration, the influence of graduates and friends in sending students to the institution. The study was made only for Kentucky, and I am not prepared to say whether the findings would be true of all other states.

(b) As chairman of a committee of the Southern College Association, the problem, "to discover and recommend a scientific marking system that would eliminate the personal equation and place it on a thoroughly scientific basis," was assigned to me.

For five consecutive years we have reported on different phases of the marking system, first on the variability of marks and; then, a series of studies of the causes of variability. By accident, while making a study for the Kentucky College Association, we discovered that the influence of sex might have a bearing on this. We then gathered information on about 3,600 freshmen in the various colleges in Kentucky, divided: them according to sex and also according to the sex of the instructor. We found that women graded boys 30 per cent higher than men graded

(c) Last fall I spent three days listening to reports of tests and measurements and personnel studies at the Educational Conference of the Educational Records Bureau, in New York. These people were all modest in their statements; they seemed to be groping to find their way. They had come to the point that most people reach when they have exhausted their efforts and have not quite reached their goal. There was a note of uncertainty. Mr. McConn struck a responsive chord when he suggested that the work for the present should be given amateur rather than professional status. After reflecting on my own experiences and reviewing the work of the week, I came away wondering if we are not trying, with a mechanical standard, to measure something in the spiritual world. Is it possible to measure accurately human intelligence or that inward urge that brings men to great things? It may be that Moses never literally stood before the burning bush, but every person in the world that has led his people in a righteous cause has theoretically had that experience, that somebody or something has touched his life and ennobled it and has given him a power that no one suspected. An intelligence test given to Moses before he saw the vision and one given to him afterward might not have shown him to be a changed man, but something had happened in his life that developed a power that moved the world. Unless the thing we teach and the things we do are reflected in the life of an individual, it is wasted effort.

We have relied on our own strength. In our own name we smote the rock of science and expected a revelation of its secrets to gush forth. We have been disappointed. Science has left mankind bewildered. The spiritual world has not kept pace with the material. I quote from President Hutchins, "We are in despair, because the keys which were to open the gates of Heaven have let us into a larger but more oppressive prison house. We think those keys were science and the free intelligence of man. They have failed us. We have long since cast off God. To what can we now appeal?"

THE OBJECTIVE

Let us come now to the closing thought. This fall, approximately 200,000 young people are expected to enter the freshman classes of our colleges. Their philosophy and attitude are of more importance than the content of the textbooks they are to study. We little realize the power for good or evil that may be influenced by this army of young people. If knowledge is power and that power is not on the side of right, it would be better if it had never been created. A teacher teaches more of himself than of his subject.

Let us close as we began-that in the relation to others and to the objective, we find the purpose of our creation. I understand that we have not defined objective in so many words. I am wondering if we cannot illustrate it in the life of an individual; if it is not found in the answer to the question as to what we should like to have said of us when

He left us with a greater interest in doing things well;  
With a better approach to our problems;  
With a truer philosophy of life. He has enriched our lives  
and Helped to make the world a better place in which to  
live. He has never poured poison into any man's cup  
Nor left a scar from combat.

APPENDIX

The allocation of administrative duties from the standpoint of the judgment of the deans and registrars as to the proper distribution, and the practice as reported by 323 registrars. (This material is the basis for the findings in the foregoing report and is printed here for reference, Table I.)

The registrars and deans are almost unanimous in their judgment that coordination and improvement of instruction, nomination of the faculty, and planning the curriculum, are in the dean's field of administration.

A large majority of deans and registrars favor the registrar's handling admissions, registration procedure, correspondence with prospective students, and statistical analysis of data in the registrar's office.

*Exceptions to the*

One dean thinks the registrar should have charge of coordination and improvement of instruction and planning the curriculum. Only three deans think that they should have charge of registration procedure, and one thinks he should have charge of records and transcripts.

One registrar thinks he should have charge of coordination and improvement of instruction. Three registrars think the dean should plan registration procedure and two think the dean should have charge of records and transcripts.

In institutions of over 1,000 there are seven functions in which the registrars and deans are practically in complete agreement. The dean should have the coordination and improvement of instruction, the nomination of the faculty and the planning of the curriculum. The registrar's field is admissions, registration procedure, academic records and transcripts, and statistical analysis of data in the registrar's office. (Table II)

*Exceptions to the Above*

Only one registrar is of the opinion that he should have part in the nomination of the faculty and four believe that they should have a part in planning the curriculum.

Only three deans and one registrar think the dean should direct registration procedure.

Nine deans and four registrars think the dean should handle admissions. One registrar thinks the dean should make transcripts. There is quite a difference of opinion as to personnel records and editorial work on the catalog.

Deans and registrars are almost in complete agreement in allocating to the dean, coordination and improvement of instruction, nomination of the faculty, planning the curriculum. They agree that the registrar's field includes admissions, personnel records, statistical analysis of data, and editorial work on the catalog. (Table

*Exceptions to the Above*

Four deans and one registrar think the dean should handle admissions. One dean thinks he should have charge of registration procedure. Three deans think they should have charge of correspondence with prospective students. Four registrars think the dean should have editorial work on the catalog.

In asking for a statement of practice in the institutions, we included only the functions that are frequently assigned to the registrar

*In Institutions of Less than 1,000*

For every dean who handles admissions, we find seven and for every seven registrars there are five "other officials or committee." (Table IV)

*In Institutions of More than 1,000*

For every thirteen registrars who handle admissions, there are one dean and two "committee or other official." (Table V) "Permanent records and transcripts" is the only function handled 100 per cent by the registrar.

In institutions of more than 2,500 enrolment, all of the functions listed are largely handled by the registrar, with the exception of

Approval of students' programs  
Honorable dismissal  
Schedule of lectures and

TABLE I

ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS ALLOCATED TO THE REGISTRAR, THE DEAN OF THE COLLEGE AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS

Function	IN THE JUDGEMENT OF 84 Deans* should BE ALLOCATED			IN THE JUDGEMENT OF 92 Registrars* Should BE ALLOCATED TO:		
	DEAN	Registrar	COMMITTEE OF OTHER OFFICIAL	DEAN	Registrar	Committee of 1 OTHER OFFICIAL
Coordination and improvement of instruction.....	76	1	6	80	1	8
Selection of the academic faculty. . . . .	64	-	16	77	-	12
Planning the curriculum .....	70	2	12	62	9	19
Admissions.....	13	51	19	10	74	8
Registration procedure .....	5	61	18	3	81	7
Academic records and transcripts.....	1	79	4	2	90	-
Personnel records .....	31	35	16	20	56	14
Editorial work on catalogs and bulle						

\* Where the totals do not balance, it is due to the fact that the question was not answered in every

**T A B L E II**  
**ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS ALLOCATED TO THE REGISTRAR, THE DEAN OF**  
**THE ' COLLEGE AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS**  
(Institutions having an enrolment of more than 1,000)

FUNCTION	IN THE JUDGMENT of 105 DEANS' SHOULD BE ALLOCATED TO:			IN THE JUDGEMENT of 122 REGISTRARS* SHOULD BE ALLOCATED TO:		
	Registrar	COMMITTEE OR OTHER	DEAN	REGISTRA	COMMITTEE OR OTHER	
Coordination and improvement of instruction .....	10	5	10	14	13	
Selection of the academic faculty.. . . .	0		5	105	14	
Planning of the curriculum .....	92	10	10	120	14	
Admissions .....	99	6	0	121	21	
Registration procedure .....	93	94	95	69	12	
Academic records and transcripts.....		19		67	2	
Personnel records.....		93	4	97	28	
Editorial work on catalogs and bulletins.....	40	39		111	32	
Correspondence with prospective students.....	28	48			16	
Statistical analysis of data in the registrar's	4	62	1		6	
		89				
		35				

\* Where the totals do not balance, it is due to the fact that the question was not answered in every

TABLE III  
 ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS ALLOCATED TO THE REGISTRAR, THE DEAN OF  
 COLLEGE AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICIALS (Institutions having an  
 enrolment of more than 2,500)

FUNCTION	JUDGEMENT of 35 REGISTRARS* SHOULD BE			JUDGEMENT of 35 DEANS* SHOULD EX		
	In THE			IN		
	DEAN	ALLOCATED TO: COMMITTEE		DEAN	ALLOCATED To: COMMITTEE	
REGISTRAR	OTHER OFFICIAL		REGISTRAR	OTHER OFFICIAL		
Coordination and improvement of in						1
struction.....	32	-	3	33	-	2
Selection of the academic faculty. . . . .	32	-	3	32	-	2
Planning the curriculum .....	33	-	2	32	-	2
					32	
Admissions.....	4	25	6	1	35	
Registration procedure .....	1	31	3	-	35	-
Academic records and transcripts. - . . . .	-	35	-	-	21	6
				6		
Personnel records.....	11	14	9			

\* Where the totals do not balance, it is due to the fact that the question was not answered in every

TABLE IV -  
 ALLOCATION OF NON-INSTRUCTIONAL ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES, BASED ON THE PRACTICE IN  
 104 INSTITUTIONS HAVING AN ENROLMENT OF LESS THAN 1,000 AND 124 INSTITUTIONS  
 HAVING AN ENROLMENT OF MORE THAN 1,000

FUNCTION	LESS THAN 1,000			MORE THAN 1,000		
	DEAN	REGISTRAR	COMMITTEE OR OTHER OFFICIAL	DEAN	REGISTRAR	COMMITTEE OR OTHER OFFICIAL
<i>Admissions</i>						
<i>Freshman.....</i>	11	78	15	7	91	24
Advanced standing.....	19	68	16	19	76	27
<i>Registration</i>						
<i>Procedure.....</i>	5	85	14	3	111	8
Assessment of fees.....	6	31	66	3	57	62
Approval of student programs .....	38	37	29	72	21	30
<i>Permanent Records and Transcripts</i>						
Recording grades .....	-	104	-	-	122	2
Transcripts.....	-	104	-	-	122	2
Honorable dismissal .....	9	83	12	13	98	12
<i>Correspondence With Prospective Students</i>						
.....	5	55	40	12	86	26
<i>Editorial Work</i>						
<i>Catalog.....</i>	26	37	41	16	49	48
Schedule of lectures and recitations.	21	46	35	21	64	37
<i>Minutes of Faculty.....</i>	1	39	62	6	58	69
<i>Commencement</i>						
Checking candidates for degrees....	7	90	7	12	96	16
Preparation of commencement program.....	18	20	63	14	49	59
Recommending candidates for de	21	50	21	50	42	21

TABLE V  
 ALLOCATION OF NON-INSTRUCTIONAL ACADEMIC  
 ACTIVITIES, BASED ON THE PRACTICE IN 46\* INSTI-  
 TUTIONS HAVING AN ENROLMENT OF MORE THAN  
 2 500

FUNCTION	DEAN	REGISTRAR	COMMITTEE OR OTHER OFFICIAL
<i>Admissions</i>	3	30	12
To freshman class .....			
To advanced standing.....	8	22	15
<i>Registration</i>	-	43	3
Procedure.....	1	25	20
Assessment of fees.....			
Approval of students' programs..	30	6	9
<i>Permanent Records and Transcripts</i>			
Recording grades.....	-	46	-
Transcripts.....	-	46	-
			2
Honorable dismissal .....	8	36	
<i>Correspondence with Prospective</i>		24	21
Students.....	1		
<i>Editorial Work</i>	4	17	25
Catalog			
Schedulof .....			
ectures and recita			
tions .....	8	22	14
<i>Minutes of Faculty.....</i>	3	23	19
<i>Commencement</i>		35	5
Checking candidates for degrees .	6		
Preparation of commencement			
Recommendation program.....4		18	24
of candidates			
for degrees .....	22	15	9

\* Where the totals do not balance, it is due to the fact that the question was not answered in every instance.