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PROPOSAL FOR A NEW, EXPERIMENTAL, UNIT OF STUDY
AT DE PAUL UNIVERSITY

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Objectives

To shape units and programs of study to meet the distinctive needs of particular groups of persons. This objective assumes that over and above the purposes now served by the University's various academic programs there are needs for specially tailored study which is different from existing programs and is subject to change that is as rapid as changes in the social, economic, and humanistic environment. In traditional academic programs the student is expected to develop predetermined competencies; in this unit the programs are expected to be formed to fit the competencies a group of students needs.

To establish an administrative unit for the precise purpose of experimenting with different approaches to learning and different methods for marking achievement in learning. Established course structures and programs leading to degrees have proved their value; new approaches to learning, however, are constantly being developed and there should be opportunity within the University to apply these developments or devise ones distinctive of DePaul without the restrictions that tradition and outside agencies have imposed on the other units of the University. Well "developed" colleges and universities have relatively fixed patterns for learning and degrees, whereas "developing" institutions are more open and flexible. DePaul would do well to have both the "developed" and "developing" aspects.

To place these highly specialized programs and experimental approaches to learning in a single unit for better direction, planning, and control. What is done in this new unit will be related to programs or disciplines in the other colleges of the University and theoretically one or another college could organize what is being proposed for the new unit, but the practical problems would be almost insurmountable.

To give new impetus and a new organization through which DePaul can continue to fulfill its distinctive and traditional role of offering opportunities of study to persons who otherwise would not be able to realize certain career or personal goals.

Mission

Career Development. The lives of many persons have been enriched by mixing various occupations or productive employment with formal college education, a mixing that might continue through much of life. As the productive years of a person's life lengthen and career demands change more rapidly, the individual and society will benefit from programs to meet the following needs: a) opportunities to acquire the competencies required in fields that are expanding such as those related to computers, rehabilitation, environment, para-medicine, etc.; especially for former students who "stop out of college", to quote the 1971 report of the Carnegie

Commission on Higher Education, or persons with little or no college who wish to enter or shift careers, such as women who desire positions outside the home; b) up-dating in careers which require new learning and new methodologies to advance or even to remain current; c) specialized studies for persons who wish to assume positions or follow avocations in the community, their church or other organizations that will permit them to assess community problems and work toward their solution.

2. Personal Interests. Operating on the premise that a person's ability to learn persists throughout life and that new interests develop later, this unit shall offer, as needs arise, studies that are not only career oriented but also humanistic, e.g. in art, literature, mathematics, philosophy, etc. Whatever studies DePaul offers in what is traditionally known as "continuing education" would fall under the mission of this new unit.

3. Degrees and Certificates. If there is sufficient student interest, this unit shall set up degree programs, master's as well as bachelor's, within the general policies of the University but differing considerably from the degree curricula elsewhere in the University. For the successful completion of shorter programs, the unit would offer appropriate certificates.

4. Individual Courses on or off Campus. As needs arise, this unit would be authorized to set up any type of study on campus that would not parallel a course offered in any of the colleges or schools, even though this new area of study is not directly related to a degree or certificate. For sufficient reason this unit would offer courses of study off campus, even study that parallels offerings on campus.

Distinctive Characteristics

1. This unit is not to be independent of the sources of knowledge in the established disciplines; it is simply to be more responsive to new sources of learners and the context of the social fabric. The new unit is, therefore, not peripheral to, but a logical extension of, the established disciplines and colleges.
2. This unit will offer more steps to mark and encourage student achievement, certificates and perhaps the associate of arts. These may have value independent in itself, or they may be used as steps toward a degree. To the extent possible credentials thus set up will more closely conform to ability and skilled learning, following the recommendation of the Carnegie Commission that appropriate credentials replace the outmoded role of degrees in some fields.
3. More recognition will be given to learning that takes place during skilled labor or other experiences off campus, and attempts will be made to evaluate this learning and relate it to certificates and degrees.
4. Much of the learning will be organized into "modules", the equivalent of credit earned in a given number of traditional courses, perhaps four to eight. Each module will form a complete unit in which the learning may be sequential or cumulative.

5. There will be more opportunities for inter-disciplinary approaches to learning, particularly the combination of professional studies for careers, e.g. business and law.
6. The programs or courses of study in this unit will be more individualized: the study will be tailored to meet the needs of a particular group of students. After this need has been met, the course or program will not be offered again, even if it has been offered only once. In fact, the more fixed and permanent any program of studies for academic credit becomes in this unit, the more reason there is to transfer it into one of the regular colleges.
7. There will be more freedom to experiment with different approaches to learning such as work-study combinations, different lengths of study rather than the quarter or semester, different locations, different types of "credit", etc.

Organization

1. The dean of this unit with his staff will be the only permanent personnel. This dean should be particularly qualified in the ability to systemitize and control programs that are quite disparate, open to experimentation but committed to educational standards.
2. The director of particular programs or courses would change with the programs. Any educator inside or outside DePaul could devise a program and serve as its director if the program is approved. The University would encourage members of its own faculty or others who are imaginative, innovative and familiar with changing needs of society to submit and direct programs.
3. The unit would engage faculty from other DePaul schools or colleges, or it would be free to recruit faculty outside the University on a part-time basis. Policies would be set up according to which DePaul faculty could for certain types of instruction in this unit receive credit as part of the regular faculty load, and additional compensation for other types of instruction.
4. Most of the students in this unit would be part-time. They might be admitted without the qualifications required for admission to other colleges. At least some of these students, under conditions to be determined, would be permitted to enroll for courses offered in other colleges, particularly if they wish to earn a degree. In such instances they would be allowed more electives than provided in structured, discipline-oriented programs; have more flexible components for general education requirements; be permitted to enroll for courses at interest level rather than at a prerequisite, chain of courses arrangement.
5. Housed in this unit and under the authority of its dean will be:
 - a) specialized courses and programs organized to meet distinctive career needs

- b) courses and programs that are basically non-credit and non-degree (e.g. C. P. A. Review)
- c) extension courses or programs
- d) continuing education courses and programs
- e) programs that are offered in cooperation with outside agencies other than other accredited educational institutions (e.g. seminars in addiction)
- f) institutes or centers the University might wish to set up to deal with social or other problems (e.g. environmental studies)

6. As experimental the courses and programs in this unit will be studied and evaluated carefully with the University maintaining an open mind in: a) incorporating the functions of this unit into previously existing colleges; b) giving this unit a permanent organization; c) terminating it as a self-destruct organization.

Budget

Initially a relatively modest budget for administrative and instructional costs would be assigned to this unit, perhaps 50% of the University College administrative budget.

After the first year this budget would increase with the growth of programs, but after this first year this unit would have to be self-supporting.

Location

The administrative offices of this unit would be in the Lewis Center. Its courses and programs could be offered on either campus or off campus.

Name

This unit would be called THE EXPERIMENTAL SCHOOL OF DE PAUL UNIVERSITY - unless someone thinks of a more appropriate name.

(Rev.) John T. Richardson, C. M.
January 21, 1971

cc: A. J. R. Cortelgon
J. Karpman