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The Wall Street Journal Article on Raymond College

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Ahead of Its Time Without Much Fanfare, University of Pacific Tries Some New Ideas It Pioneers in Breaking Down Its Colleges Into 'Clusters,' Offering Three-Year Degree Blue Jeans and Bangalore

By WILLIAM WONG

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

STOCKTON, Calif. — As far as Patricia Schedler and many of her colleagues are concerned, Amos Alonzo Stagg should never have come to the serene, ivy-covered campus of the University of the Pacific.

They don't dislike the late Mr. Stagg, who became a football legend as coach at the University of Chicago and who later coached Pacific's teams from 1933 to 1946 (when the school was called College of the Pacific). It's just that everything else the university has done seems to be obscured by the long and hallowed Stagg shadow. "Football — that's our national image," sighs Prof. Schedler, who teaches in UOP's Raymond College. "This is sad and woefully inaccurate."

Indeed, over the past decade, UOP has done quite a bit that deserves attention—little of which has had anything to do with football. The university has taken some bold academic strides, stepping out ahead of its time. It has been "innovative when it wasn't in vogue to be innovative," one Pacific official says. It has also quietly achieved some things other schools have only been loudly talking about.

Educators point in particular to two UOP experiments that have been pioneering moves in American higher education. One is the three-year bachelor's degree, and the other is the fragmentation of an old, established liberal-arts unit into small, personalized "cluster" colleges that stress an interdisciplinary approach and more independent study.

Little Ado About Much

"Considering all the criticism and unrest, there hasn't been a great deal of innovation in American higher education in the last decade," declares Clark Kerr, former president of the University of California and currently chairman of the Carnegie Commission on the Future of Higher Education. "Looking at the University of the Pacific in that context, one would have to say that it has done as much or more experimenting than any established university—and it's done it quietly, which is one reason why it has succeeded," Mr. Kerr adds.

What's more, the University of the Pacific has shown that a private university with a small endowment (\$4.5 million) can achieve academic distinction, even while economic pressures mount. Those pressures have hurt countless other private universities, an increasing number of which are operating on deficit budgets or using capital endowment funds for everyday operating purposes. For example, New York University, the nation's largest private university, recently announced program cutbacks and staff dismissals for economic reasons.

Pacific, however, is in "moderately good health," according to a 1971 accreditation report by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The report said UOP "has done a remarkable job just to have survived, given the enormous variety of tasks assumed and the lack of major sources of financial support other than tuition revenue."

For the first time in five years, Pacific began a fiscal year on Sept. 1 in the black—by a skimpy \$3,100. The current fiscal year budget of \$20.9 million shows a larger reserve, \$79,247, despite a drop in enrollment. UOP accomplished that only after taking a drastic step, however. It didn't grant a proposed 4½% salary increase for faculty and staff, a move that saved some \$480,000.

The Boldest Experiment

At a time when larger universities were convulsed with student unrest and institutional self-hatred, Pacific quietly matured from a typical small Methodist-related liberal-arts college with 2,200 students in 1960 to a full-fledged university with 5,200 students today. (Student protests have occurred at Pacific, but they haven't exactly been apocalyptic. In fact, Pacificans proudly note that in one of the worst—a 1970 antiwar paint-trashing spree—the protesters were considerate enough to use washable paint.) For a university its size, Pacific today offers a wondrously wide range of educational opportunities, educators say.

Perhaps the boldest, most distinctive—and most expensive—experiment by Pacific has been the "cluster" colleges. In 1959, UOP's president at the time, Robert E. Burns (who died last year), set the theme by saying, "Let us grow larger by growing smaller." The result: three cluster colleges, which were lauded by the 1971 accreditation report as being Pacific's "distinctive pockets of excellence." They've also won approval from the Carnegie Commission. "Pacific has already done what we're recommending others do," Mr. Kerr says.

UOP wasn't the first U.S. college to create a cluster system. The birth of the cluster college in the U.S. generally is credited to Pomona College, near Los Angeles. In 1925 Pomona expanded by creating a second college, and today there are six independent colleges clustered together, known as the Claremont group.

University of the Pacific is distinguished, however, in that it was the first established university that broke down a larger unit—in this case, its liberal arts college—into smaller cluster colleges. (Pomona and its sister colleges have actually banded together to become cluster colleges.) "UOP is a pioneer in dividing up a single institution," Clark Kerr says.

Distinctive Curricula

A number of other universities and colleges have followed the Pomona and UOP lead, including the University of California at Santa Cruz and the University of California at San Diego. But Dean E. McHenry, chancellor at the Santa Cruz campus and head of the 1971 accreditation report of UOP, says he believes

UOP's cluster colleges are different from many others because UOP's "have more distinctive curricula within them. A lot of their courses are taught only for their students," rather than for the entire university.

UOP's three cluster colleges are undergrad—
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Ahead of Its Time: A University Tries Some Education Innovations

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uate units designed for no more than 250 students each and a relatively large faculty (about 15 to 20). The idea is to personalize education and to allow students to shape their own education with fewer requirements and more independent study, so as to avoid the student-as-a-number impersonality that helped spawn student unrest in the 1960s. The three clusters emphasize the liberal arts, each taking a different, and, for the most part, innovative approach. One, for example, sends its sophomore class to the Far East to study Asian civilization. Another is taught entirely in Spanish.

Raymond College is the oldest of the three, established in 1962. The accreditation report singled it out as "one of the most distinguished liberal-arts colleges in the nation." In its early days, Raymond emulated Oxford and Cambridge. Students and teachers lived and learned in an "enforced togetherness," but then "people just got on one another's nerves," one insider recalls. The strict living arrangements have since been scrapped.

Raymond's hallmark has always been its rigorous academic life. "Raymond really challenges you to learn," says Adam Englund, 19, a freshman. "It's opened up to me a kind of learning that I'd never thought about before." Carolyn Costin, 18, adds that Raymond "gives you the feeling that you want to learn everything."

Classes are small, usually no more than 15 students per class. Courses are approached from an interdisciplinary point of view, rather than from a strict departmentalized vantage point. Students operate on a pass-no fail "grading" system, which means that if a student doesn't pass a course, he can retake it or choose another course in its place; if he does neither, the course simply doesn't show on his record. No courses are specifically required, but students must complete 21 courses in order to graduate, which should take only three years rather than the customary four. (In the normal four-year program at other schools, some 30 to 35 courses are required.)

The three-year bachelor's degree was a pioneering move by Pacific. A number of other institutions have picked up the idea, and the Carnegie Commission last year recommended that still other colleges should adopt it. Berndt Kolker, Raymond's provost, emphasizes that Raymond's program isn't an accelerated four-year curriculum, but rather has been specifically designed for three years of broad, liberal-arts education.

In short, Raymond students are given a great deal of freedom of choice and a good deal of individual attention. The attention has always been there, but the freedom hasn't. The original curriculum was highly structured. Students were told which courses to take. Nonetheless, they did well (gaining admission to prestigious graduate schools, scoring very high on the graduate record exam), but there was discontent. The dropout rate was "uncommonly high," and recruiting of new students was difficult. Two years ago, the curriculum was loosened considerably—with solid results: Raymond this year has a 90% student retention rate.

Beyond the rigorous academic life, the manner in which Raymond students, teachers and administrators interact undoubtedly contributes to the overall good spirits. An outsider is immediately struck by the casualness of the place. Beards, jeans and hiking boots adorn teachers as well as students. Everyone is on a first-name basis. A student thinks nothing of interrupting a faculty member's lunch to ask for a cigaret. In the provost's office, another student casually plops into the provost's high-back swivel chair—while Mr. Kolker ("Berndt" to students) himself sits on a table.

Raymond's dining hall is where all the conviviality comes together. The food won't win gourmet raves, but the round tables facilitate good conversation. There's a piano in one corner, and students often entertain diners with classical pieces and show tunes. Until recently faculty members could eat free in the dining room, a move to encourage their presence. Even though that privilege has been lifted, fac-

ulty members still come.

One gets the impression that Raymondites really like one another. "The faculty members are really nice, helpful people," says Penny Paulus, 21, a senior from Salem, Ore. "There are quite a few I respect tremendously." Adds another student, Debbie Nikkel: "We have a much more human relationship with our teachers here" than she has experienced elsewhere.

It makes for a cozy atmosphere. But it has also made Raymond and the other two clusters objects of criticism. Raymond students, in particular, have been accused of being "a bunch of intellectual snobs," and those outside the clusters have charged that the small, expensive clusters are "being carried" by larger units of UOP.

This criticism, which has waned in recent years, hardly disturbs Raymondites, however. Raymond professors say they can really be teachers here and that publish-or-perish pressures don't dictate their academic lives. "Most faculty members here don't play faculty games or get involved in faculty politics," asserts Roderick B. Dugliss, a Raymond professor. Prof. Schedler says, "We're very satisfied with our jobs."

Students seem equally sold on Raymond. Debbie Nikkel, for example, transferred to Raymond from the College of the Pacific, the old established liberal-arts unit on campus, because she became "extremely bored with the textbook approach to education" there. At COP, she says, she spent most of her days on extracurricular activities, but at Raymond, she studies hard. "I'm really excited about school now," she says.

For student Charles Sprague, Raymond is "a supportive community." He left Raymond after a year and a half for financial reasons and spent one term at a state college but couldn't stand the separation, so he re-enrolled at Raymond this fall. "Most of my friends are here," he explains. "I know most of the professors here personally, and I know how their minds work. There was nothing like that kind of contact" at the state college.

Raymond's two sister cluster colleges—Elbert Covell and Callison—also claim unique niches in innovative education. Nine-year-old Covell College was the first bilingual liberal-arts college in the U.S. All courses are taught in Spanish except for classes in English as a second language (about 40% of Covell's 168 students are from Latin America). Course offerings focus on the social sciences, particularly

economics and business administration.

Six-year-old Callison College also emphasizes the social sciences and humanities with particular focus on "non-Western" civilization. Thus far, all Callison sophomores have spent their school year in Bangalore, India, but because of political factors in India this year, Callison—and other American colleges—didn't send students there. Instead, Callison is sending its sophomores to Japan this year.

The cluster colleges and their flexibility have created an atmosphere conducive to change around the campus, officials say. COP, the original and much larger liberal-arts unit (2,100 students), liberalized its curriculum two years ago. The tiny school of engineering more than doubled its enrollment (to 123 from 54 in 1970) after instituting a popular work-study program. The school of pharmacy recently accelerated its eight-term professional training, while changing the stress in its curriculum to a "biological" orientation and away from the more traditional "chemical" approach.

How long the University of the Pacific can continue its expensive innovative ways is questionable. "We're a luxury kind of education," Provost Kolker concedes, referring to Raymond College and the other two clusters. Officials know they can't realistically forestall a faculty and staff pay raise for a second year in a row or continue raising annual tuition, which is currently a fat \$2,660.

Yet tuition is the main source of UOP's income, accounting for 58% of its revenues. The rest comes from auxiliary enterprises such as dormitories and food service, government grants, gifts and the like.

Faculty salaries currently range from about \$10,000 to \$20,000 a year.

President Stanley E. McCaffrey says that he doesn't want to cut back on any of the innovative programs that have brought distinction to Pacific over the past decade. In fact, he says, "my desire and intent is to continue and strengthen the clusters."

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