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Recruitment

The term "recruitment" may relate either to the usual search for personnel already serving in other institutions, or to the larger effort to attract young people to the academic profession on a national scale. This chapter relates chiefly to the latter theme.

No mechanism has ever been set up in this country in order to coordinate supply and demand for academic personnel. The ratio between them is a complex matter, since supply is affected by professional traditions and standards as well as by the relative attractiveness of the profession, while demand reflects many circumstances both within and without the halls of higher education. The two factors seem to have been in imbalance over most of the last twenty-five years, what with personnel surplus during the 1930's, a shortage during World War II years, and some surplus again after about 1947. Such trends, moreover, represent only average conditions; there can be simultaneous shortages in one academic field and surpluses in another.

Even in 1947, predictions were made of impending shortages. Although young men were still having difficulty at this time in finding college appointments, concern shifted entirely to what loomed ahead. It is unnecessary to repeat here all the calculations and predictions made over the last decade *re* population growth and the increasing demand for a "college education." These added up in 1955 to the estimate

that about 485,000 new "college teachers" would be needed by 1970.¹

One aspect of demographic trends, however, merits emphasis. This was the estimate that between 1940 and 1960 the national population in age group 0-10 would increase about 73 percent, in group 10-19 about 27 percent, but in group 20-34 only 3 percent!² In other words, the potential population source for academic staff would be smallest just when the source for students was beginning to expand on an unprecedented scale. It is no wonder that the President's Commission on Higher Education (1948) urged that "aggressive" recruitment of academic personnel should be undertaken immediately throughout the country.³

Such personnel has long been recruited from among students in graduate and professional schools. But what was now envisaged was an effort to attract students in undergraduate colleges and, even before that, in the high schools. Certain special fields—law, medicine, engineering—had done something of the sort for years, and recent international developments are arousing demands for expanding the ranks of scientists. But most academic people have made no such efforts. Some, doubtless, were unaware of future needs, others probably felt that competitive appeals were undignified, and still others doubted their efficacy.

¹ In 1900, only 4 percent of the appropriate age group was in college; by 1955, the percentage was 30 and was still rising. In the latter year, there were some 2.7 million "college students," and estimates place the number in 1960 at 3.2 million, and for 1970 at 6.4 million. In 1955, the total number of "college teachers" was estimated at 190,000—averaging 1 to 13 students. Assuming the same ratio, it was predicted that about 250,000 would be needed by 1960, and 495,000 by 1970; *Graduate School Today and Tomorrow*, 1955, 7. For somewhat different estimates in 1957, see *Higher Ed. and National Affairs*, VI, No. 5, 2.

² *Expanding Resources for College Teaching*, Amer. Council on Ed., 1956, 12.

³ *Higher Education for Democracy*, Washington, 1948, IV, 27.

The situation here is not a simple one. In the first place, academic careers must appear promising if men or women are to be attracted to them. Yet present needs come at the end of a decade of declining relative income for faculties—in contrast to rising income in skilled trades and in certain professions. Meantime, the demand for highly-trained persons in other areas, as in industry and in government, is increasing. It is not surprising that when seniors in Harvard College and Radcliffe were recently questioned about the possibilities of college teaching, 73 percent of them objected to the salary prospects.⁴ The solution here obviously lies in higher salary scales.

While some seniors are deterred from seeking academic careers by the ultimate prospects, others who would risk these are diverted by an immediate lack of funds. In 1953, for example, there were 73 undergraduate students at Pennsylvania who were majoring in History. Of this number, 30 thought seriously of going on to graduate work in the field, but 13 of the 30 gave up the idea for financial reasons.⁵ The answer here, presumably, lies in more adequate scholarships. Promising, in this connection, is the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Program (1945), recently expanded (1957) by a Ford Foundation fund of \$25 million. The Program plans to recruit a thousand potential college teachers each year over the next five years.

Over against financial limitations may be placed the intangible attractions of an academic career. But there are also intangible difficulties to be faced. A former Dean of the Harvard Graduate School declares, for example, that it is difficult to recruit college teachers because—as a guild—they

⁴ *N. Y. Times*, May 26, 1957.

⁵ History Dept. Survey, 1953, 18.

have so little control over their own institutions.⁶ This is a personal opinion, but it implies, as far as it may be valid, that greater faculty participation in institutional affairs would aid in recruitment.

Any other difficulties of which faculties are aware may also deter recruitment, in so far as these become known to seniors or graduate students. It does not help, for example, if word spreads that young men are overloaded and face long delays in promotions or salary advances.

Faculties as such, for the various reasons suggested, have not taken the initiative in seeking to enlarge their ranks. They are conscious of the professional disadvantages, and some of them believe that these should be fully explained to all potential candidates.⁷ (As a matter of fact, few of the staff interviewed at Pennsylvania showed much concern about the national recruitment problem.) Hence, planning in this, as in other aspects of higher education, has been chiefly undertaken by administrators, professional educators, and the officers of certain foundations. These groups are more aware than are most staff members of national trends, and—at the same time—may be less inhibited by concern about the limitations of academic life for those who actually live it.

Faculty members might say that if salary and other conditions were adequately improved, recruitment would take care of itself in a *laissez faire* academic world. But the groups just mentioned are convinced that such means need to be supplemented by conscious promotion. Thus, the American Council on Education has issued—or will soon issue—a pamphlet presenting the attractions of an academic career, and

⁶ Howard Mumford Jones, in *The Graduate School Today and Tomorrow*, 65.

⁷ R. W. Werry, "With the Tongues Not of Angels but of Men," *A.A.U.P. Bull.*, vol. 33 (1947), 499; note also *Jour. of Educational Sociology*, vol. 26 (1953), 187-193.

a related pamphlet for present faculty personnel. The Council also plans to encourage recruitment "on the campus level." The Association of American Colleges has a somewhat similar program in mind.

When a few academic men *are* brought into conference on this theme, differences in perspective emerge. If recruiting is to be attempted in the colleges or even in the high schools, the question arises: How and when are individuals likely to consider an academic future? Do they first decide to teach on a certain level—as is done by some who seek high school appointments—and then pick a subject that promises opportunities for this? Or are they first attracted to a subject which, subsequently, they decide they would like to teach in college? The latter process is usually preferred in higher education, where respect for "disciplines" survives. But the more the non-academic planners think of the need for "college teachers"—any and all teachers—the more they are apt to seek recruits for this profession as such. This way lies some danger of attracting mediocre persons who select their fields in terms of expediency.⁸

The way to recruitment, meantime, can be eased by drawing newcomers from larger groups than have heretofore been considered fully acceptable. These include, for example, (1) those who have received no graduate or professional training, (2) those whose advanced training falls short of the doctorate, (3) non-academic personnel, such as those in high schools, in government, and in industry, (4) women, (5) so-called minority groups, and (6) emeriti. With the possible exception of the first named, these potential sources should be considered on their merits, though many will in practice look

⁸ See, e.g., "Teacher Supply and Demand . . .," *NEA Research Bull.*, XXXIII, No. 4 (Dec., 1955), 158; also *Expanding Resources for College Teaching*, 19.

upon them only as last resorts. A few comments on each are in order.

One of the current suggestions for meeting a shortage of academic staffs is the proposal to use selected upper-classmen as teaching assistants. Whatever the merits of this from a pedagogical viewpoint, it is also a device for enlarging staff—at little or no cost. The arrangement would not in itself recruit permanent staff, but it might interest some student-teachers in going on with graduate preparation for teaching careers. Similar limitations and possibilities could be claimed for a related proposal: to select some individuals upon graduation for full or part-time teaching during the ensuing year.

Much attention has been accorded proposals for training programs which would not take as long as does the acquisition of a doctor's degree. The initial impetus to such proposals may have been provided by the realization that Ph.D's were soon bound to be in short supply. It will be recalled that estimates call for some 485,000 new college teachers between 1955 and '70, but only 135,000 new doctorates are anticipated during the same interval. Some observers even claim that only one doctorate will be produced for every five which would be needed if the old training tradition were to be maintained.

Matters are made worse by a decline in the percentage of Ph.D's (60 percent in 1940) who go into teaching. At present, about 40 percent of all college teachers hold this degree, but it is freely predicted that this ratio will fall to 20 percent by 1970. One authority on personnel reports that the country already lacks enough good people in higher education—in lieu of which we are confronted by "built-in" mediocrity.⁹

⁹ M. H. Trytten, in *The Strength to Meet Our National Need* (A Report to the President's Committee on Ed. Beyond the High School), 1956, 35.

If Ph.D.'s cannot be secured in sufficient numbers, then some less protracted training must be arranged. And what could be more natural than to make a virtue of this necessity? At any rate, as soon as the prospect of shortages appeared, critics declared that this degree was unnecessary or even undesirable—at least in its present form.¹⁰ College teachers must therefore be drawn from those who take either a modified type of Ph.D. or some sort of M.A. Various proposals are made for adapting the latter degree to this end; for example, by relating it to broad learning rather than to specialized research, and by readjusting the time schedule involved.

Much can be said, under present circumstances, for enlarging the pool from which college teaching personnel can be drawn. And there is every reason why the faculties at Pennsylvania might experiment with teaching procedures which may simultaneously provide more staff on the assistant level and recruit for higher-level training. In addition, the possibility of evolving a special M.A. for "college teachers" merits serious consideration. But it does not follow that the University should recruit *its own staff* on the basis of such a program.

Our personal view is that a real university should require adequate research or professional training for all its full-time staff above the assistant level. The only alternative in such an institution is to set up distinct teaching faculties of whom no such requirement need be made. This alternative has some merits and might be preferable—as a last resort—to a cumulative infiltration of all departments by teachers who lack creative interests. But the arrangement does not appeal to us at present for Pennsylvania.¹¹

¹⁰ This theme will be discussed in Chapter VII, below.

¹¹ See Chapter I, above.

Although most departments recruit beginners from the graduate schools,¹² certain faculties draw mature staff from extramural sources. Schools of commerce, for example, appoint some men from business circles, while education faculties lean heavily on public school personnel.¹³ Best known of such patterns is the appointment of part-time teachers of clinical medicine from the local profession. The suggestion is now made that, in the impending emergency, other faculties might canvass extramural sources more thoroughly than has heretofore been attempted.

Most departments, if under pressure to find staff, will presumably think of these possibilities themselves. Yet old habits may have to be overcome in the process. Science departments, for example, may be able to find men in local industries who would make able part-time teachers and who qualify—at the same time—as creative workers. And humanistic departments may occasionally locate a high school man who has creative leanings or who may be an unusually effective teacher. It is unfortunate for both high schools and colleges that such persons are not more commonly encountered.

In principle, it should also be possible to draw greater numbers of staff from the so-called minority groups, but in practice this is rarely feasible. Negroes, for example, are occasionally given university posts; but even if all prejudices

¹² Aid in seeking personnel, especially for junior ranks, can be secured from placement offices of about 288 American "universities." The National Institutional Teacher Placement Asso. (N.I.T.P.A.) is preparing a directory of placement officers. (Sec., Miss M. Helen Carpenter, Univ. of Colorado, Boulder, Col.)

¹³ In 1955, from 45 percent to 55 percent of appointments in 56 private "universities" were made directly from the graduate schools; and these institutions drew about 15 percent of new teachers from business. Present or former teachers colleges made about 40 percent of their appointments from public school ranks; "Teacher Supply and Demand in Degree-Granting Institutions," *NEA Research Bull.*, XXXIII, No. 4, 149.

are overcome, the number of well-qualified colored persons is so small that it can hardly enter into an institution's calculations. Eventually, if greater opportunities are accorded the race, this situation may change and, in that case, every advantage should be taken of the resulting opportunity.

Women, of course, represent the greatest potential source for staff which has never been fully exploited. In 1955, they made up about 22 percent of all faculties throughout the country;¹⁴ but the ratio varied with the type of institution. In small, independent colleges, for example—which presumably included some “women’s colleges”—women constituted about one-third of the faculties; and in “teachers’ colleges” the ratio was a little more than one-third. But in “private universities” the figure was only 13.7 percent. Within the latter, moreover, the ratio varied with different colleges; being high in schools of nursing or of home economics, and low in most other undergraduate colleges and in professional schools. At Pennsylvania, the ratio is below the average for private universities, as will be noted in a subsequent chapter on “Faculty Distribution.”

There is no question but that most administrators and professors, outside of “women’s colleges” or of such special schools as were mentioned, are more inclined to appoint men. This is explained on various grounds; for example, that (1) students of both sexes prefer them; (2) unmarried women are poor emotional risks, and married women poor professional risks; and, in any case (3) few qualified women are available.

Although there may be some valid points here, our opinion is that most of them are rationalizations. Despite the long history of feminism in this country and the oft-reiterated de-

¹⁴ Although they make up about one-third of the total labor force in the U. S.

votion to democratic principles, American society is not yet as willing to accord professional status to women as is, say, that of Russia.¹⁵

While it may be true that at any given time a department cannot find a qualified woman, there would be more such if there had been greater opportunities in the past. Individual women as professors have demonstrated how effectively they can pursue both original work and teaching. Even male students will recognize such ability once they have time to adjust to the situation.¹⁶

To some extent, supply-demand ratios may force a greater use of women in future faculties, though it is no compliment to turn to them as a last resort. (It will certainly be unfortunate if colleges appoint second-rate men in preference to first-rate persons of the other sex.) And if more women begin to be appointed, more will probably undertake advanced training. Such studies as that conducted by Dr. Althea Hotel for the American Council on Education may provide a better picture of the whole situation here. Meantime, departments need not seek women as such: all that should be asked is that they appoint the best person in view regardless of sex.

The last potential source for recruitment is that of the emeriti. This is an important pool for universities which retire staff members at relatively low ages—at 67 or even at 65. The logic of the situation today should encourage such institutions to make the retirement age more flexible—as high as 70 for at least some individuals.

Age 70 is already fixed at Pennsylvania as the retirement

¹⁵ In Russia, e.g., 70% of medical students are women, and the latter hold 15 to 20% of the top academic and administrative posts in the medical field; J. R. Paul, "American Medical Mission to the Soviet Union," *Soc. Monthly*, vol. 85 (Sept. 1957), 152 ff.

¹⁶ See, e.g., comments of Prof. Eleanor Metheny, Univ. of Southern California, in *The Graduate School Today*. . . .

point and the opportunity to use men beyond that age is very limited. But distinguished men who retired earlier elsewhere are sometimes available. The faculty of one well-known law school is composed entirely of such persons. Even if emeriti are appointed only on a year-to-year basis as lecturers, they may add strength and dignity to a department. Unlike some older men still on tenure, moreover, emeriti need not be utilized unless it is clear that they are fully equal to the occasion.¹⁷

Sooner or later, one may say in conclusion, departments at Pennsylvania will encounter difficulties in finding well-qualified beginners in their respective fields. If the requirement of a doctorate is maintained, this time is not far off; indeed, vacancies are already reported in some institutions.¹⁸

If, meantime, little effort has been made to recruit young people before the shortages become pressing, it will already be too late to meet demand without dangerous delays. The efforts now being made to alert academic circles to the national problem therefore seem commendable.

Administrative officers at Pennsylvania might well call the attention of faculties to this problem, both in terms of recruiting beginners and in relation to the use of such other sources for personnel as have been mentioned. After all, recruitment must in the last analysis be done on "the campus level."

Faculties might, of course, remain indifferent—complacent

¹⁷ The National Com. on the Emeriti, Inc. (1025 Conn. Ave., N.W., Wash. 6, D. C.) prepares the "Emeriti Census" of those available to institutions. The national A.A.U.P. is also planning a directory of such emeriti (1785 Mass. Ave., N.W., Wash. 6, D. C.).

¹⁸ Among 656 colleges and universities surveyed in 1954-55, some 245 reported vacancies, especially in the physical sciences and engineering. About 70 percent of public universities and land-grant colleges reported vacancies, 51 percent of private universities; *N.E.A. Research Bull.*, XXXIII, No. 4 (Dec., 1955), 149-153.

in the thought that shortages in any guild may work to the advantage of present members. But this is not likely to be the case. Strong faculties are devoted to the future of their fields and of their institutions, otherwise they would not be where they are. If assured that administrators and trustees are doing everything possible to attract personnel by improving salaries and other conditions, the staff will probably do all that *they* can to encourage qualified persons to enter the academic profession.