

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

IJS - 7 THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMITTEE I: 44 Canfield Gardens,  
AN INTRODUCTION London. N.W.6.  
England.  
October 1st, 1971.

Mr. Richard Nolte  
Executive Director  
Institute of Current World Affairs  
535 Fifth Avenue  
New York, N.Y. 10017  
USA

Dear Mr. Nolte:

We Americans have, after the Revolutionary and Federalist periods of our history, looked to British institutions for examples of possible remedies to defects which we see in our own. For example, critics of the relationship between the President and Congress or the President and his Cabinet (such as Woodrow Wilson in Congressional Government) have speculated longingly about the adaptability of ministerial responsibility and parliamentary prerogatives to the American situation.

This Anglomania in the tradition of criticising American institutions has been especially evident in the discussions of those who have thought seriously about the relationship between the federal government and higher education in the United States. The model of the University Grants Committee, which is the British institutional device for dealing, at least in part, with this relationship, has had a special fascination for American critics, myself included. But this fascination has rarely resulted in a detailed study of this institution.<sup>I</sup> It is for this reason that I begin my newsletters on British education with an introduction to the British University Grants Committee. (hereafter cited, U.G.C.) But this newsletter is only an introduction, for during the coming year a number of newsletters on the operation of the U.G.C. will follow.

The official tasks of the U.G.C. are set out in its terms of reference, which were formulated at its inception as an advisory body to the Treasury in 1919:

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I. (R. O. Behdahl's book, British Universities and the State, Berkely, 1959 is an exception; however this analysis is more of a paen than a critique.)

To enquire into the financial needs of university education in Great Britain; to advise the Government as to the application of any grants made by Parliament towards meeting them; to collect, examine and make available information relating to university education throughout the United Kingdom and to assist, in consultation with the universities and other bodies concerned, the preparation and execution of such plans for the development of the universities as may from time to time be required in order to ensure that they are fully adequate to national needs.<sup>2</sup>

The important message of this paragraph is communicated through the choice of concepts indicating connective relationship: "advise," "make available," "in consultation with." The U.G.C. was to be a conduit between state resources and universities. But this paragraph tells us little about how the U.G.C. was to perform this role. It is crucial to understand that this brief paragraph, which was an internal Treasury memo, constitutes the only written instrument outlining the duties of the U.G.C. These terms of reference are the only authority governing an agency which is today responsible for the allocation of almost £200 million among 44 universities.<sup>3</sup> Only in the United Kingdom with its history of unwritten canons of authority would one find such an informal foundation for such an important institution.

Over the years the U.G.C. has evolved from an informal group of advisers to a strong organization. However, the traditional vision of the proper role of the U.G.C. seen by those inside and outside of the organisation seems to be generally consistent: it is essentially that of a "buffer" or "shock absorber." Yet, over the past decade even this perception of role has changed. In its report to the Government in 1968, the U.G.C. acknowledged its more active role:

Increasingly, therefore, the University Grants Committee has come to be regarded (we are tempted to say, recognized) as having a more positive function than simply to be a buffer or shock absorber. It still is those things; and it is the interpreter of the Government to the universities and of the universities to the Government. But today it is more than this...<sup>4</sup>

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2. (p.iii. University Development 1962-67, Cmnd.3820, London 1968.) ((hereafter cited "Univ. Dev."))

3. (see section 589, p.186 of Univ. Dev.)

4. (see section 562, p.179, Univ. Dev.)

This is not to say that the Committee aspires, still less that it should rightly aspire, to a detailed planning of each university's development or to a detailed oversight of such planning. But it is to say that in the increasing complexity of university affairs there should somewhere be a broad strategic picture. And it is today regarded as the Committee's responsibility to sketch that picture.<sup>5</sup>

How the U.G.C. attempts to combine the multiple roles (and metaphors) of buffer, shock absorber, interpreter, and artist of the university landscape must be the concern of the student of political institutions. But it is also becoming a matter of public concern in Britain. A number of respected academics, including Professor Max Beloff at Oxford<sup>6</sup> and A.H. Halsey and Martin Trow<sup>7</sup> are quite critical of the U.G.C.'s ability to play all things for all people.

The general issue is whether the U.G.C. can balance the competing claims of the various roles in a manner which is consistent with university autonomy and public accountability. To begin an evaluation of the success of the U.G.C. in this endeavor, we must look at how the Committee is organized and how it operates.

## I. THE ORGANIZATION OF THE U.G.C.

### A. THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

Before looking at the details of U.G.C. organization, we must clearly understand that it is one among a number of different centers of responsibility for post-secondary education in Great Britain. Some of these multiple centers of responsibility are collected into the Department of Education and Science. The U.G.C. was transferred from the Treasury and then from the Lord President of Council's domain to the Department of Education and Science in 1967. In the Department each of these centers has responsibility for one or another of the component parts of the system of higher education. The Council for National Academic Awards certifies university equivalent degree programs in technical colleges and colleges of education, which are supported by direct grants from the Department and local educational authorities. There are national colleges and

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5. (ss.568, p.180, Univ. Dev.)

6. ("British Universities and the Public Purse," Minerva, Summer, 1967, p.527.)

7. (The British Academics, London, 1971.)

institutes in commercial, technical, and creative arts which are independent bodies dealing directly with the Department. Many of the technical colleges, colleges of education, and colleges of further education are controlled by the county educational authorities, which also control the state primary and secondary school system.

Also, much fundamental research in all sectors of higher education is supported by the Science Research Council, which is an independent government body.

So, the U.G.C. is responsible for only one sector of higher education in the United Kingdom; but, as one would expect, the bellwether sector for all of higher education. An analogy to the U.G.C.'s responsibilities for the United States would be if one federal authority were responsible for the funding of the large multiversities and most prestigious liberal arts colleges but all other institutions were dealt with by other public and private bodies.

Although the U.G.C. does deal with national policy concerning universities, it is not the decision making authority for overall national policy in higher education. The claims of the U.G.C. must be worked out in competition with other institutions of higher education in the Ministry of Education and Science; however, these claims represented by the U.G.C. are the claims of all universities, not particular universities. The competing claims of the particular universities are worked out by the U.G.C. itself.

#### B. MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANISATION

The U.G.C. is composed of twenty-one members; twenty part-time, drawn mainly from academics with a few businessmen and industrialists, and a full-time chairman.<sup>8</sup> The Committee is now self-perpetuating: when one member's five year term expires, the U.G.C. either reappoints him or selects a new member in his place. The permanent Chairman during most of the 1960's was Sir John Wolfenden. The current Chairman is Mr. Kenneth Berrill.

The Committee meets monthly, except for the month of August.

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8. (See Appendix I, a list of the membership of the U.G.C.)

The U.G.C. is organized into nineteen subcommittees composed of experts in various fields of education, chaired by a full member of the U.G.C. These subcommittees advise the U.G.C. about particular issues concerning specific disciplines.

The staff of the U.G.C. is drawn now from civil servants in the Department of Education and Science, who are assigned to the Committee. Approximately one hundred staff members are involved in the work of the U.G.C. Unlike civil servants assigned to other jobs within the Department, these are expected to have first loyalty to the U.G.C., not to the Department as a whole.

The staff is organized into two general functional divisions: those involved with recurrent grants to universities and those dealing with capital construction grants. In order to understand the reasons for this division, we must now turn to the actual operation of the U.G.C.

## II. OPERATIONS OF THE U.G.C.

The U.G.C. handles the funding of universities in Great Britain through the mechanism of a five year "settlement" with the Government. This settlement concerns the number of students to be educated in that period and at what price. This money is then allocated among the universities for the five year period<sup>9</sup>. In addition, the U.G.C. operates a revolving quinquennium for purposes of capital grants for construction. Each year the universities bring construction requests to the U.G.C. for projects to be completed five years in the future; the U.G.C. then requests and receives money from the government for construction and allocates it to the universities.

Since the recurrent grant quinquennium is the overall planning and policy unit for the U.G.C., we must consider its operation in some detail.

### A. THE RECURRENT GRANT PROCESS

The process of preparing for the quinquennial settlement between the Government and the universities provides the occasion

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9. (Allocation is not the best word here. The U.G.C. does not actually dispense money; it only suggests to (tells?) the Government how it ought to be spent. The Department of Education and Science acts as accounting office.)

for the U.G.C. to sketch the "broad strategic picture" which it sees to be its task. The terms of the quinquennial settlement will determine the quantity and quality of university education in Great Britain for the next five years. For 80% of the money used to support university education comes from the Government, and 75% is determined by the advice of the U.G.C. Therefore, the procedure for determining the gross grant and the specific allocations is the setting for tough bargaining among all parties to the settlement.

The exact procedures followed by the U.G.C. are in constant evolution from one quinquennium to the next. Mr. Neville Williams, a principal in the Recurrent Grants Section of the U.G.C. secretariat, outlined the procedure followed in preparation for the quinquennium which is now ending during a conversation with me at the U.G.C.

First, the universities were invited to submit proposals for development in terms of prospective student numbers and any particular qualitative improvements desired. Then the U.G.C. moderated the total projection of increased enrollments and put a price tag on these numbers based on a weighted national average cost per student. The estimated total enrollment for 1972 was then taken to the Ministry with the Pound Sterling price for growth to that number over the quinquennium. The bargaining process between the U.G.C. and the Government ensued. Out of this process came a total budget for a slightly reduced number of students; however, the price tag per student was not significantly modified. The reduction in the overall budget request was accomplished by reducing the projected expansion of the university system.

It is worthwhile noting here that the whole budgetary process is based on a premise of expanding the university system; and this has been the case for the past two decades. So the reductions involved in the budget paring during the past quinquennium have only been reductions in rates of expansions, not reductions in overall budgets.

Once the general settlement was reached, the U.G.C. staff went back to the university submissions and adjusted the enrollment projections for each institution. Then an average expenditure-per-pupil estimate was made on the basis of the actual budgetary history of a particular university. This figure was then compared with a zero based estimate: that is, one which assumes that all universities start from the same point and allocated resources on a simple national average of costs per student. Discrepancies between the historically based average and the zero-based average were then adjusted by the U.G.C. However, these discrepancies were not very great, according to Mr. Williams.

It is important to emphasize that most of the settlement was allocated by a student cost formula which was objectively set. Once the student number at a particular institution was decided upon the size of the grant was substantially determined by a simple arithmetic calculation. This reliance on an objective formula decided the allocation of approximately 98% of the total settlement and about 80% of the money for expansion (all but \$5 million in the last quinquennium).<sup>10</sup> These figures will surprise many who picture the wise men of the U.G.C. allocating the resources on the basis of qualitative judgments about different institutions. Most of the money was allocated objectively without any comparisons whatsoever.

The 20% of the new money (or the 2% of the total) which was allocated on the basis of qualitative judgments was distributed on the basis of recommendations of the subject matter subcommittees of the U.G.C. However, the U.G.C. staff admits that there has been no real attempt to articulate criteria for these qualitative decisions. This lack of criteria for judging competing claims can exist because of the U.G.C. policy of conducting all policy discussions in complete secrecy. The universities were not told exactly how their requests would be judged, nor were they told after the fact how their allocation was decided upon. The only information which the universities received before-hand was a short memorandum of guidance to all institutions about vague priorities of the U.G.C. (See Appendix II,) And once the grant was allocated, the U.G.C. sent along a letter of transmittal which studiously avoided any detailed comment on the university's application. The writing of these letters was the final procedural step in the recurrent grant allocation process. These letters were known for what they did not say, not what they communicated. Although at the moment I have not had access to copies of these confidential letters, I hope to see some examples at the universities themselves.

Mr. Geoffrey Caston, who is in charge of the U.G.C. recurrent grant staff, justifies the secrecy and lack of justification of U.G.C. actions in terms of a hypothetical deal between the U.G.C. and the universities: the U.G.C. offers the universities recurrent grant money without strings in return for not having to justify to the universities why one university gets more than another. He goes on to emphasize that most of the recurrent grant money is allocated by a national average cost-per-student formula. (Although one must note that the formula is devised without any consultation with or justification to the universities.) The argument continues that since comparative

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10. (These are Mr. Williams' rough estimates.)

judgments are so insignificant justification is not necessary.

However, in spite of the commitment to the bloc grant principle -- giving money without any conditions upon how it will be spent -- the U.G.C. does indeed appear to enforce limitations after the allocation expenditures by the procedures for allocating the money in the first place. A university cannot in fact say that it will spend more per student than other universities in a particular subject area unless it makes a very special case. And beforehand it will not know what that case must be. The chilling effect of anticipating what will be acceptable in terms of a national average must limit the parameters of university requests.

The response to this objection is that universities are free to reallocate the resources by doing away with one line item of their budget in favor of another. However, this response does not really justify not telling universities, in some detail, the grounds upon which their applications will be considered. Making explicit the standards of evaluation would make the invisible restraints apparent so that they were open to criticism. Without such explication, the universities are like puppets, not moved by the puppeteers but dangled at the ends of invisible threads. They are allowed to blow freely only within the constraints of the length of threads over which they have no control.

Although the vast majority of the money made available to universities is in the bloc grant, there are some earmarked grants in the quinquennial settlement for particular areas of national interest. In the past decade earmarked grants have been made for programs emphasizing studies of certain foreign areas.

Once the recurrent grant is made, there is no real control over the expenditure of the money. However, this total lack of monitoring is not apparent to the university observer; indeed, the opposite is the case. The members of the U.G.C. and its subcommittees make official visitations to each institution over the quinquennium. These visitations appear on the surface to be "inspections." However, Mr. Caston was quite adamant in excluding inspection from the purposes of these visits. He listed three functions for the visitations: 1) the visits give members of the U.G.C. an opportunity to know what the constituents in the universities see as their problems; 2) they give the members of the U.G.C. an opportunity to share with the universities their view of the political facts of life with which the universities must deal at the national level; 3) the preparation by the universities for the visitations forces the universities to examine



critically the future plans of each particular institution. If Mr. Caston's assessment is correct, then the visitations play an important role in the development of the "strategic plan" but in no way serve an "inspection" function.

And, on the basis of conversations with Mr. Williams, who deals with the financial aspects of recurrent grants, it is quite clear that there is no substantive auditing of university performances in terms of what they said they would do in their quinquennial budget applications. The only audit is one which looks at whether the books are balanced and whether the university has admitted the number of students it said it would. There is no formal institutionalized system of accountability to the U.G.C. for substantive performance; so in terms of direct controls, there is no violation of institutional autonomy. II

Once the recurrent grant is made to each university, it provides the budgetary framework for that institution during the next five years. However, every year the U.G.C. goes to the Government for a supplemental grant to cover inflation during the past year through an increase in the next year's budget. There is always a grant, though not always equal to 100% of the inflation. Inflation is measured by a U.G.C. index of university costs. This settlement does not include increased professional staff costs through wage settlements, for such settlements are made directly with the government and the funds necessary to meet them are transferred immediately to the universities through the Department of Education and Science.

I have been describing the recurrent grant process as it has occurred in the past. The details of the current exercises for 1972-77 are still being formulated. However there has been one important change already. When the universities were asked to prepare quinquennial estimates in May of last year, each institution was told the U.G.C.'s estimate of the number of students to be admitted to that institution over the quinquennium 1972-77 and was advised to key submissions to that number. The total projected student population for 1976-77 is 320,000. This figure is based upon a study of the capacity of the physical plant of British universities. There will undoubtedly be other changes in the recurrent grant process as it progresses during the next twelve months; and the character of these changes will be the subject of a newsletter in 1972. However, this particular change

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II. (The controller and Auditor General also audits some university and U.G.C. books for the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament. This procedure is very controversial, although in fact it has become innocuous. See pp188-189. Univ. Dev.)

-- giving the universities a student population estimate at the outset based upon a study of physical plant -- raises the issue of the relationship between investment in physical plant and the recurrent general support grant which is the subject of the quinquennial review. Before we can address this question, we must consider the capital grant side of the U.G.C. operation.

## B. CAPITAL GRANTS

In addition to providing operating funds for the universities, the U.G.C. allocates money for construction of new facilities and the rehabilitation of old. Indeed, much of the professional staff of the U.G.C. is involved in this aspect of its operation, which has contributed to the picture of the U.G.C. as the controller of, not the buffer for, the universities in Great Britain. On the capital grants the U.G.C. takes an extraordinarily active role in the actual development program of the universities.

The capital grants process involves rolling quinquennia; that is, every year the U.G.C. considers applications for funds which will result in completed buildings five years in the future. Only once every five years does the capital grants quinquennium coincide with the recurring grants period.

Each year universities come to the U.G.C. with shopping lists of proposed new construction and rehabilitation. The U.G.C. then evaluates the proposals in terms of detailed criteria which it has developed for the space per student necessary for each particular type of building.<sup>12</sup> The detail of these specifications has led critics of the U.G.C. to complain that it controls university decisions down to what sort of knob to put on the bathroom door. Although somewhat of an exaggeration, the detail of the specifications has created some inflexibility in the approach to design and construction of university facilities.

Staff members at the U.G.C. are worried about the detail of specifications. Mr. David MacDowell, Assistant Secretary on the capital grants side, told me that he and others are attempting to develop a formula which would allocate money to each university on a per student basis. Such a formula would then leave to the university the decisions about how to spend the money on a particular building. This formula would be more complicated than the recurrent grant formula, for it would be based upon the space

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I2. (See, "The Appraisal of Development Plans, U.G.C. internal document, Sept. 1969.)

needed per student for the whole range of activities which students would engage in. However, should such a formula prove workable, one of the areas of greatest friction in U.G.C./university relationships would be removed.

Under the present system it appears that many of the most important decisions about construction grants are taken by the staff without the close and critical supervision of the Committee, which one finds in the recurrent grants operation. This may result from the technical character of decisions involving buildings. To this point Mr. MacDowell replied that the U.G.C. makes the general policy decisions about standards to be met by university buildings. However, even these standards and the basis for them seem to require a great deal of detailed technical information for evaluation. These observations may be unfair and must be tested by further investigation. Nevertheless, it seems quite clear that the decisions taken by the U.G.C. which most interfere in the life of the universities may be the very ones which are subject to the least critical policy scrutiny by the members of the U.G.C. This particular point becomes very important when one considers the relationship between the capital grants decisions and the recurrent grants process.

#### C. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAPITAL AND RECURRENT GRANTS

Only once every five years do the decisions about capital and recurrent grants coincide. Indeed, just this year the Government decided to withhold early approval of the capital grant request for 1976-77 until it had the recurrent grant request in hand too. In every year after the recurrent grant is approved, the capital grant allocations are made for a year about which no recurrent grant decision has been made. This means that the U.G.C. then must project a hypothetical number and quality assumption on which building grants are based. But these hypotheses are created without the extensive policy review which is the essence of the recurring grant process. When the time comes for the recurrent grant settlement, it is then substantially based on a student population figure arrived at by a study of physical capacity which is set by capital grant decisions during intervening years.

Of course, notions of capacity change. In preparation for the current exercise, a change of conception of laboratory capacity has led the U.G.C. to decide that there exists substantial unused capacity for Science students. There will be more Arts building construction in order to maintain an overall ratio of arts to science students of 45:55.

The only way to solve this possible imbalance in capital and recurring grant decision-making would be to make the recurring grant process a rolling quinquennium as well, at least in terms

of overall student numbers and distribution of subjects pursued. This development is being discussed by the U.G.C. staff.

Although this particular problem may be easily solved, there still remain a number of important issues which cannot be so easily disposed of.

### III. POLICY ISSUES FACING THE U.G.C.

This introductory examination of the activities of the U.G.C. indicates the continuing tension between institutional autonomy and planning and financing by a state agency. In terms of the recurrent grants, institutional autonomy seems relatively unimpaired, perhaps because the oversight function seems to be much less energetically pursued. Of course, there is the ever present economic constraint on such autonomy; (not enough money to do everything) but this constraint does not distinguish British from other national universities. Yet on the capital grants side, there is significant intervention in the universities. Dealing with the institutional autonomy is the continuing most crucial problem for the U.G.C.

Mr. Caston suggests that ever greater reliance on objective formulae will contribute to enhance institutional independence of the universities. Yet the promise of objective formulae as protectors of university independence depends entirely upon the procedure followed in developing them and the substance of them. Whether or not the universities have a significant voice in the formulation of the objective rules will become increasingly significant. Also important will be whether the reliance on objective formulae makes the U.G.C. less flexible as a planning agency dealing with the unique problems of particular institutions.

The past success of the U.G.C. as a planning agency is difficult to assess. It has met many of its gross number goals; however, it has not articulated specific performance goals for universities as a whole by which they and it can be evaluated. And in regard to numbers, today there appears to be an imbalance between science and arts students which is inconsistent with the stated projections of the U.G.C.

Of course one must expect there to be an inverse relationship between a planning agency's success and the independence and autonomy of the institutions with which it must deal. The U.G.C. has self-consciously traded-off planning controls for the independence of its constituents. How this trade-off will operate in the future is an issue which we must watch with interest.

A problem related to the autonomy/planning tension is the procedure for making comparative judgements among competing university claims for limited resources. Presently where these claims are not decided upon by a relatively objective formula

equally applied to all institutions, the decisions are taken in what appears to be a conceptual vacuum. No justifications for these decisions are given to the universities. And worse, no canons of evaluation are explicitly offered to the universities for guidance in developing their proposals. The initial memorandum sent to universities concerning applications for quinquennial grants is very vague. (See Appendix II.) and no detailed comment follows. This lack of explicit criteria has two detrimental effects: first, it makes difficult the task of evaluating the success or lack thereof of the universities; secondly, it makes helpful criticism of the U.G.C.'s action more difficult.

One reason that the U.G.C. has been allowed to make decisions without providing detailed justification for them is that the university economy has been on a growth curve. As long as most institutions are receiving more money, few complaints will seriously be pressed. This growth strategy will, in the foreseeable future, come to an end for economic reasons. When this decline comes to pass the whole approach of the U.G.C. to the task of allocating money will be forced to change. Stable state politics and economics will not happily allow decisions without justifications.

Another issue which can be raised about the activities of the U.G.C. is that of the responsiveness of it to the needs of, on the one hand, the university community and, on the other, the society as a whole. This is a complex question of accountability.

Whenever one has an institution which selects its own membership and then acts without formal scrutiny from its various constituencies, then he casts a cold eye on the substance of its performance. At this point I am not competent to offer any evaluation of its substantive record.

Yet there does seem to be a prima facie problem of representation in the composition of the U.G.C. : a problem of representation of the university community and of the society as a whole. The present Committee is composed predominantly of university faculty-- indeed senior faculty-- and some businessmen. From the side of the university the membership ignores the diversity of the community: where are the students, technicians, and non-tenured faculty without whom one would not have a university? And in terms of the larger community, it is difficult to assume that businessmen and industrialists can adequately represent the interests of the factory worker, immigrant, professional man, and farmer.<sup>13</sup>

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13. (In the context of this argument, when I use the concept of representation I do not intend to suggest any strict and inflexible account of the concept, which is itself quite complex. I only mean to suggest that the composition of the U.G.C. as presently constituted does not seem to reflect the diversity of the interests involved.)

It could be argued that these diverse interests are represented by the government with which the U.G.C. must deal; however; it is a cardinal principle of the relationship between the Government and the U.G.C. that the Government will not involve itself in the actual allocation decisions of the U.G.C. So the invocation of the Government as representatives does not adequately respond to the problem of representation as it affects all of the activities of the U.G.C. It is just this concern over accountability and representation which has prompted the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee to ask for Parliamentary auditing of university expenditures.

On the university side, there has been little real protest. However, in the interest of the continuing independence of the universities and of the U.G.C.'s future as a viable institution for university support from the public purse, the problem of representation on the U.G.C. must be listed on any agenda for future reform of the U.G.C.

Other issues involving the U.G.C. which I can only mention here but deserve further analysis, include: How does the U.G.C. deal with the impact of its decision on other social institutions? (e.g.; what happens to a town when you build or move a university in it?) How does U.G.C. policy affect the innovators in the university? Is the U.G.C. an agency for change or only an agency for maintaining the status quo at a more expensive and a larger level? Do the policies of the U.G.C. affect the freedom of the individual in the universities? These questions, along with those already discussed at some length, deserve much more discussion.

## CONCLUSION

The U.G.C. as a committee of wise men dealing with the Government on behalf of the universities and with the universities on behalf of the government has been possible only where there is a consensus in the society about the role of university education and in the universities about what a university ought to be. This consensus is that universities should be elitist institutions training a leadership group through a traditional, rigorous, and theoretical educational experience. That a consensus has existed in Great Britain in the past is demonstrated by the past success of the U.G.C. and its relative immunity to criticism. But whether this consensus continues to exist or whether it will be maintained in the future must be an open question. There are indications ranging from the movement to establish a privately funded "Independent University" I4 to student complaints about U.G.C.

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I4. (See H.S.Ferns, "Towards an Independent University", Institute of Economic Affairs, London, 1970, and newspaper reports about plans actually to establish a private university supported by private donations and student fees)

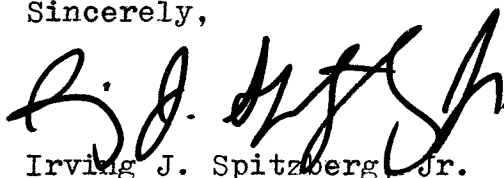
policy, that this consensus may be breaking down in Britain just as it has done in the United States and many other countries. Should this consensus dissolve, then there will be demands for profound changes in the character and operation of the U.G.C.

The most exacting test for the U.G.C. will be whether this institution, whose legitimacy and authority rests upon a short paragraph from the Treasury and the trust and goodwill of both Government and university, can adjust to a world where trust and goodwill are replaced by skepticism and tolerance. My guess is that the doomsayers of the U.G.C. are quite wrong and that it will adjust to these new conditions. Perhaps we shall see something of this adjustment in the present quinquennial exercise and reaction to it.

For the present let me conclude by suggesting that Americans who look to the U.G.C. for a model must be aware of the different social content which the United States would offer. This caveat is not to say that we do not have much to learn from the U.G.C.; it is only to indicate that the U.G.C. must be changed to accommodate a context of conflict and diversity instead of consensus and relative uniformity. The very problem which the U.G.C. itself will be facing in the coming years.

Finally, let me remind you that this newsletter is intended to be nothing more than an introduction to the U.G.C. and its problems. The conclusions are provisional. These are first thoughts, not last.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "I. J. Spitzberg, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Irving J. Spitzberg, Jr.

Received in New York on October 8, 1971.

## APPENDIX I

### UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMITTEE

(1ST JANUARY, 1971)

Mr. Kenneth Berrill (*Chairman*)  
Sir Robert Aitken (*Deputy Chairman*)  
Professor G. A. Barnard  
Professor C. E. H. Bawn, C.B.E., F.R.S.  
Professor J. Black  
Dr. G. S. Bosworth, C.B.E.  
Miss E. J. Bradbury, C.B.E.  
Mr. S. L. Bragg  
Professor A. J. Brown  
Professor C. C. Butler, F.R.S.  
Dr. D. Cook  
Professor R. C. Cross  
Professor J. Cruickshank  
Professor Alun Davies  
Professor J. Diamond, C.B.E.  
Mrs. Jean Floud  
Mr. H. R. Galleymore  
Professor N. C. Hunt  
Professor D. Lewis, F.R.S.  
Professor P. G. Stein, J.P.  
Professor Sir Charles Stuart-Harris, C.B.E.



**APPENDIX II**  
**PRELIMINARY MEMORANDUM OF GENERAL GUIDANCE ON**  
**QUINQUENNIAL PLANNING, 1972-77**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. In many universities the complex task of preparing plans and estimates for the coming quinquennium, 1972-77, has already begun. At various stages in the process the U.G.C. will be in correspondence with universities, individually and collectively, endeavouring to set out guide lines and to discuss particular problems. In December, 1966 the Chairman of the U.G.C. wrote collectively to all universities setting out the 1967-72 picture as he then saw it and this was followed in November, 1967 with a "Memorandum of General Guidance" which is still fully operative. The U.G.C. (and the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals) believe it would help universities in their planning to receive at this stage a memorandum setting out in a preliminary way the 1972-77 position as the U.G.C. now see it. The memorandum must necessarily be tentative and the figures given in it must be particularly so, if only because Government decisions on student numbers in the 1970s have not yet been taken. Nevertheless it is hoped that this preliminary general memorandum, plus the individual letters to each university, may prove useful in helping to establish a planning framework. It is of course expected that individual universities may wish to discuss with the U.G.C. aspects of this memorandum which affect their particular case, and the U.G.C. is very willing to join in such discussions and to approach the whole problem in a flexible manner. Nevertheless, it is clear that at the end of the day the quinquennial programmes for which the U.G.C. will be able to provide grant support must aggregate to a total programme for the country as a whole, which is acceptable to the Government.

**TOTAL NUMBERS**

2. Each university is being sent, as a working hypothesis, figures representing suggested capacity for full-time equivalent student numbers in 1976-77 divided, on a load basis, between arts-based and science-based departments. These suggested figures were arrived at after consideration by the U.G.C. of many factors including

- (a) the U.G.C.'s recent survey of the physical capacity of university buildings as they will be in 1973-74 when the currently authorised building programmes are completed;
- (b) the availability of university sites for new buildings;
- (c) a comparison of recurrent costs;
- (d) the complex of relevant academic factors.

3. The total of the 1976-77 working hypothesis figures for all universities represents a total capacity of about 320,000 places for full-time equivalent students (i.e. including provision for part-time undergraduate and postgraduate students and post experience or other students undergoing courses of less than one academic year to the extent that they occupy space which might otherwise be used by full-time students). Sandwich course and other similar students are only provided for in these totals to the extent that they are present in the university during the year. The expectation is that all these figures may need to be revised after discussions have taken place with individual universities and with the Government; but in the view of the U.G.C. they provide a reasonable point of departure at this stage.

**MEASUREMENT OF STUDENT NUMBERS AND UNIVERSITY CAPACITY**

4. The comments about buildings which are being given to each university, with the suggestions about student numbers, are intended to indicate the type of provision which the Committee would consider to have a high priority,

\* Published in U.G.C. Annual Survey 1966-67 (Cmd. 3510), January, 1968, and in U.G.C. Quinquennial Report: "University Development 1962-67" (Cmd. 3820), November, 1968.

to enable each university to reach the capacity level proposed for 1976-77. The capacity figures relate to the *current* pattern of university activities. Changes in that pattern (e.g. in the length of the working week, re-arrangement of terms or in the proportion of part-time or sandwich courses) would affect the capacity of a given stock of buildings and might form one aspect of discussions between the university and the U.G.C. on its plans for 1972-77. Quinquennial estimates returns submitted in due course will need to show full-time, sandwich type and part-time (including short post experience, etc.) numbers separately, both in terms of the number of students involved and the full-time equivalent load.

**ARTS-BASED AND SCIENCE-BASED NUMBERS**

5. For the university system as a whole the proposed 1976-77 full-time student numbers are split between arts-based and science-based students in the proportion of 45 per cent and 55 per cent, which is the distribution expected in 1971-72. The figures therefore provide for a rise of about 30 per cent over the expected 1972 levels of 108,000 arts-based and 132,000 science-based students. The swing from A-level science in the schools has made it difficult in the past quinquennium to keep to this 45:55 proportion and there is no guarantee that it will get significantly easier in 1972-77. In their discussion of their 1972-77 plans universities will need to bear this constraint in mind. Proposals for science-oriented courses with flexible entry qualifications and a fairly broadly based curriculum in the first two years of study could obviously help to ease this problem. From the point of view of future employment of graduates, expansion of broadly based courses is likely to be of value in many subject areas, both arts-based and science-based.

**POSTGRADUATE NUMBERS**

6. No indication is given in the "working hypothesis" numbers of the proportion of postgraduates. This is for later discussion. In general however the U.G.C. do not anticipate that the overall proportion of full-time post-graduate students paying standard fees within the total number of full-time students should rise above its current (1969-70) level of a little under 18 per cent. They would, however, for much the same reasons as are given in the 1967 Memorandum of Guidance, expect to see a further rise in the proportion of postgraduate effort devoted to part-time and short-course postgraduate and post-experience courses, many of which make relatively small demands on the physical capacity of universities and sometimes generate substantial fee income. The U.G.C.'s short-term "pump-priming" grants for two or three years to encourage industry/university collaboration of this sort will continue for the present quinquennium. The U.G.C. hopes to be in a position to continue to make new grants of this type in the quinquennium 1972-77.

**BUILDINGS**

7. In distributing student numbers the Committee has had to provide first for the full utilisation of the 1973-74 capacity revealed by its recent study. There are three building years between 1973-74 and the end of the quinquennium in 1976-77 and the exercise has been to raise the 1973-74 capacity to the suggested capacity figures for 1976-77 in such a way as to achieve the 1976-77 capacity in the 45:55 Arts:Science proportions. The capacity survey has shown that to do this means providing in the three building starts years 1972-75 predominantly new Arts and Social Science buildings rather than Science buildings (other than medicine). The building indications given in the letters to individual universities are conditioned by this. Proposals resulting from these indications and from any further discussions will be considered for a place in a building programme when the Government has determined the amount of a capital resources to be made available after 1971-72.

**RECURRENT COSTS**

8. It seems probable that the settlement for 1972-77 will contain strong pressure to reduce unit costs. Statistical analysis by the U.G.C. shows high

(iii) *Business and Management Studies*

The Committee expect that those universities which are already substantially engaged in management education will submit plans for its expansion as part of their developments for the next quinquennium, whether or not they are in the areas to which priority will be given in the distribution of C.I.M.E. appeal funds. In view of the shortage of teachers of these subjects (both for universities and technical colleges) and the need for concentration of resources the Committee would not expect universities which are not at present teaching in management studies to set up new departments or courses.

As in the past, priority will be given to the development of postgraduate courses in management studies, but the Committee would be interested to see proposals for the further development of business studies at undergraduate level, particularly in association with other courses, for example in science and technology. This might take the form of joint degrees, or of a business studies element in other degree curricula.

(iv) *Education*

As a result of the compulsory training requirement there will be an increasing number of graduates for whom initial teacher training places will have to be found. Additional places for graduates will need to be provided both in universities and colleges of education. As far as universities are concerned, expansion of one-year courses of initial training should be concentrated in existing departments to enable these to reach a size sufficient to sustain a *reasonable* level of other activities, including higher degree and research work, without resulting in high unit costs. Priority should be given to schemes for increasing the flow of Mathematics, Science (particularly Physics) and French teachers to schools; and to reviewing the development of the B.Ed. degree. Consideration should be given to the possibility of alternative forms of graduate teacher training; to a restriction, in the smaller departments, on the number of teacher subjects covered, and to the need for universities to take more part in the organisation and provision of courses for serving teachers, particularly short part-time courses.

(v) *Law*

Further guidance will if possible be given after the publication of the Ormrod report on Legal Education later this year, and consideration of the U.G.C. enquiry into the special problems of Scottish Law Faculties. (See Annex.)

(vi) *Mathematics and Computing Science*

Instruction in mathematics and computing is desirable for as many students as possible. At the same time some research students in mathematics with narrow fields of interest may find opportunities for employment limited. The severe shortage of high level research workers in computing science means that large scale developments in this area must continue to be possible in only a few centres.

(vii) *Social Studies (other than Law)*

A large expansion in this area is probable and the biggest need is for expansion in applied social sciences. One particular area is in the training of professional social workers. There is a need for new and varied courses in social administration, directed more towards short post-experience and immediate postgraduate courses than towards higher degrees and longer diploma courses. However, important though this is, the numbers required are not large and the Committee would expect these courses to be concentrated in a few universities.

(viii) *Town and Country Planning*

No need has so far been identified for a further large expansion in the supply of Town and Country Planners. The Committee therefore expect that the next quinquennium will be a period of consolidation rather than expansion in this subject.

unit costs correlated with small average size of departments (i.e. there are significant economies of scale). Roughly speaking, by cost criteria, the *average* size of the Arts and Social Studies Departments in any university should not be much below about 100 full-time equivalent students and Science and Technology Departments should not *average* less than about 120 to 150. There are often advantages in being considerably bigger than this and in almost all fields the enlargement of existing departments in those universities which currently have them is more economical than the creation of new departments in the subject in other universities. The U.G.C. are, of course, ready to consider some new developments which involve new departments or new institutes but will have to look at such proposals very carefully. The U.G.C. is most willing to discuss unit costs (national averages, marginal costs and the reasons for deviations) with individual universities, but will necessarily have to examine in detail justifications for exceptionally high costs and in particular proposals for expansion which are expensive in relation to expansion possibilities elsewhere.

9. In general larger departments have the great academic advantage of making it easier for staff to preserve time for their research while meeting the necessary teaching commitments. But the teaching commitments depend to some extent on the number of course options offered and the likely pressure on resources during 1972-77 makes it necessary to look carefully at proposals for new options in just the same way as at proposals for new departments. The U.G.C. are vitally concerned with the time and facilities available to the academic staff for research and similar activities and regards the integration of teaching and research as an essential characteristic of a University. In the past few years the staff:student ratio has moved from a peak of 1:7.6 (unweighted) which applied in the years 1963-66 back, in 1969-70, to the 1:8.1 level which was current during the period 1957-59. It may be about 1:8.5 at the beginning of the 1972-77 period. Only if developments are concentrated, as suggested, in existing departments and on about the present number of options, can some further modest decline in the staff:student ratio be compatible with the maintenance of teaching standards and the preserving of time for research.

PARTICULAR ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

10. In general, the observations made in the corresponding Section (C) of the November, 1967 Memorandum of General Guidance still seem appropriate. Further observations which might be useful are as follows:

(i) *Agricultural Economics*

It is expected that in the near future the universities concerned will be advised of the Committee's recommendations in regard to Agricultural Economics following the special enquiry by their Agricultural Sub-Committee.

(ii) *Arts*

In considering developments in the less common languages it should be borne in mind that at present student demand is small and is in general well catered for by existing facilities which can, if necessary, take more students. This is also true of Russian. Except in special cases, therefore, the Committee would not encourage the institution of degree courses with a new language as the main content. It is not, however, intended to rule out some modest provision, by the attachment of a post to an existing department, in cases where the additional language would make a particularly valuable contribution to the department, or to the university generally.

Combined courses in Arts, or in Arts combined with Social Studies, offering a range of options, need to be developed with care. If properly planned, the combined courses can make economic use of existing resources as well as providing valuable new initiatives, but the proliferation of options in such courses can confuse students and become extremely expensive in staff time.

#### APPOINTMENTS BOARDS

11. Career advice to students from an early stage in their courses is likely to be of increasing importance as the range of posts in outside employment which graduates will have to fill changes, as it inevitably must, to include many types of post hitherto filled mainly by non-graduates.

#### TRAINING OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS

12. The Committee are anxious that further progress should be made in the universities to arrange for the training of university teachers.

#### EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

13. Universities selected as "high activity" centres for the present quinquennium are to be asked to report on their findings to date. The outcome of these reports is expected to be circulated by the end of this year to all universities and it is hoped that some of the research data they will contain will be of help in planning developments in this field.

#### COLLABORATION WITH OTHER SECTORS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

14. The 1967 Memorandum of Guidance urged universities to collaborate wherever possible not only with nearby universities, but with other institutions of higher education in their locality. Since that time a good deal has been achieved in this direction particularly in relation to the newly-designated Polytechnics. The Department of Education and Science policy is that degree courses in further education establishments in England and Wales ought, as a general rule, to lead to degrees of the C.N.A.A. and not to those of a university. Academic links of a less formal or binding kind are however welcomed as are mutually advantageous arrangements for the joint use of physical facilities or staff. Collaborative action to devise courses involving contributions to the teaching by both university and polytechnic perhaps involving students of both institutions, are in general to be welcomed both by the Committee and the D.E.S. The question of payment, both ways, arising from such arrangements was dealt with in paragraph 9 of the 1967 Memorandum of Guidance.

#### STUDENT RESIDENCE

15. It seems likely that the capital resources available for financing the provision of additional residential accommodation during the next quinquennium will be limited. The successful launching of loan-financed residence schemes in universities over the past two years suggests that this could make a major contribution towards meeting the problem of student residence, provided that some "topping up" assistance were available from public funds. The Committee are pursuing this matter with the Government, and a separate announcement will be made as soon as possible. It remains clear however that unremitting effort will be required to increase the number of lodgings.

#### CONCLUSION

16. As has already been said, the present memorandum is necessarily preliminary and tentative and the Committee is most willing to hold discussions with individual universities on any aspect of it.

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14th May, 1970.

#### ANNEX TO APPENDIX II

##### LAW (ENGLAND AND WALES)

In the Preliminary Memorandum of General Guidance on Quinquennial Planning 1972-77 it was stated that further guidance on Law Education would if possible be given after the publication of the Ormrod Report on Legal Education in England and Wales.

The Ormrod Report is not likely to be available until the end of the year. The U.G.C. has however been in touch with the Ormrod Committee and the following preliminary guidance to universities in England and Wales is given with their agreement.

It is likely that, in future, entry to the legal profession will be increasingly through a first degree in law. This trend and the value of a university degree course in law as a general education suggests that it is desirable for the number of places in university law schools at least to keep pace with the general expansion in Arts and Social Studies, by about one-third, during the 1972-77 quinquennium.

It is desirable, on educational as well as on economic grounds, for the increase in the numbers to be achieved principally by the expansion of existing schools of law. In particular, those which are at present small and whose resources may not yet have enabled them to build up fully adequate law libraries could well expand at more than the average rate. The University Grants Committee would not in general wish to encourage universities not at present offering degree courses on law to introduce this subject. There may however be one or two universities with fully developed schemes which the Committee would be ready to consider.

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23rd September, 1970.