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A STATEMENT ON THE PLACE OF PHILOSOPHY IN HIGHER EDUCATION*

THE Southwestern Philosophical Conference, a professional society whose membership is drawn from the departments of philosophy in the principal universities and colleges of the Southwestern states, has completed a canvass of the courses of study in liberal arts colleges in six of these states. The Conference takes notice of certain tendencies affecting Philosophy and the liberal arts curriculum as a whole, tendencies which we believe to be detrimental to higher education and to which we respectfully invite the attention of the educational authorities of this territory.

First, there is a neglect of philosophic studies in a great many of the colleges and in some universities. Studies which, though having a value, can by no means fulfill the role of Philosophy, have more and more displaced Philosophy. We recognize the worth of vocational and apprenticeship studies, in their proper place, and the reasonableness of devoting some educational time to affairs of the present moment; yet all of these subjects are apt to be rapidly magnified and to occupy presently a disproportionate place in the curriculum. The liberal arts curriculum, we believe, is the principal conservator of our intellectual heritage. It requires careful safeguarding against any tendency that would introduce ephemeral, meretricious or merely popular substitutes for the studies which long experience has shown to be the most effective for preserving, diffusing and advancing our knowledge. Reconsideration of the educational policies responsible for the changes which have occurred in the curriculum, especially the changes which diminished Philosophy to its present position, is, in our opinion, a serious need.

Secondly, there is a lack of integration of philosophic studies with either humanities or sciences. Philosophy and Literature,

* A *Statement* prepared by a Committee of the SOUTHWESTERN PHILOSOPHICAL CONFERENCE, and approved by the Conference membership. Professor W. B. Mahan of the University of Arkansas is President of the Conference. The Committee members were Professor Virgil C. Aldrich, The Rice Institute; Professor Peter A. Carmichael, Louisiana State University; ~~Dr.~~ Anna McCracken, University of Kansas; Professor E. T. Mitchell, University of Texas; Professor I. K. Stephens, Southern Methodist University.