

## WHAT TYPE UNIVERSITY FOR NEPAL

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Exactly 95 years ago the revered president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, who abolished slavery forever, freed higher education from the shackles of tradition and conservatism. When he sponsored and signed on July 2, 1862 the Congressional Act (Morill Act) which created the Land Grant Universities, Lincoln established a new pattern of higher education dedicated to the promotion of "the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life."

It is conceded by most authorities that this new type of higher education was the greatest single factor in building the United States into the great industrial nation that it is today. It is also generally agreed that higher education, previously adapted to and intended for the so-called "gentlemen" class, was by Lincoln's significant act, brought within the reach of the "common man."

Today, in Nepal, a University Commission with the enlightened leadership of the Royal family, and with the active concurrence of leading government officials, is planning a "Comprehensive University" modelled in many respects on the "Land-Grant" pattern but adapted to the needs and conditions in Nepal.

Just what are the significant features of this new type of University and how does it differ from the early European universities which were also the models for universities in the United States in the first two centuries of its existences as a nation?

Why has this relatively new pattern of university education either superceded or modified many of the older institutions in both the United States and Europe; why is it finding its way in this century into many of the countries of Asia, Africa, South

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America and Australia as they emerge from colonialism into full-fledged, independent democratic nations?

Only briefly can we describe the characteristics of this relatively new type of a "Comprehensive University" by outlining its *functions* and its *structure*. The major functions are three:

1. *Resident Instruction* for both under-graduate and graduate students in general education (basic arts and sciences) topped by specialization in the arts and/or sciences or in one of the several professional fields.
2. *Research* in every area of human knowledge, including pure (basic) research in the humanities, social sciences and physical sciences and applied research in the professional and technical fields.
3. *Extension* or adult education through which the accumulated knowledge and the findings of research are disseminated to the people for their enlightenment and betterment.

These functions, then, might well be the goal of the Comprehensive University now under consideration in Nepal. As a slogan, the proposed University might well choose the phrase "The Nation is our Campus."

Now let us look at the more common elements of *structure* in the Comprehensive University developed under the Congressional Act signed by President Lincoln. They are as follows:

1. *A central core* usually composed of a *Science College* with subject matter departments of chemistry, physics, geology, mathematics, botany, zoology and bacteriology; and an *Arts College* embracing the following departments in the humanities and the social sciences; languages and literature, fine arts (music, art), philosophy, psychology, history, economics, political science, sociology, anthropology, and geography. In some instances the arts and science colleges are combined into a single College of Arts and Science.
2. A cluster of Professional and Technical Colleges located on the same campus and an integral part of the "Comprehensive University," the most common of which are Agriculture, Engineering, Forestry, Home Science, Commerce, (Business Administration), Law, Architecture, Education (teacher training), Pharmacy, Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing. In some instances two or three professional areas that are closely

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allied such as Agriculture and Forestry or the health sciences of Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing are combined into single colleges for administrative efficiency.

3. *Research Laboratories* and *Experimental Shops* and *Farms* allied to, and administered by, the several departments of the arts, science, and technical and professional colleges.
4. And finally, a comprehensive central library and museum serving faculty and students of all departments and colleges through books, magazines, audio-visual aids (records and slides), and other collections of instructional and research materials.

Every comprehensive university need not necessarily embrace all these fields of learning nor do all land-grant universities in America follow the exact pattern as outlined. However, almost 100 years of experience in America and in other countries has shown the wisdom of this coordinated approach to higher education. The first 200 years of the history of higher education in America is replete with costly and inefficient experiences of un-coordinated higher education. It began shortly after the settlement of America when the early English and European pattern of narrow classical-humanistic learning was transplanted in the original thirteen American colonies; it was aggravated by the organization of separate colleges of technology and by the founding of separate institutions for teacher training; this duplication and inefficiency reached its peak when Medical schools were organized as commercial-profit institutions with no university relationships.

From these sad experiences of 200 years there emerged the convictions that led to the new type of University created by Lincoln's Land-Grant Act of 1862. Existing universities adopted the new pattern, some states organized completely new institutions on the comprehensive pattern, and even Harvard and Yale gradually expanded their original pattern of humanistic-classical learning by first adding science and later establishing professional and technical departments and colleges. While today in America there still exists the remnants of early duplication and lack of co-ordination, the "comprehensive" university pattern is the accepted goal of all institutions that aspire to real university standing.

What, then are the advantages of this comprehensive plan of university organization over the uncoordinated system of dupli-

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cating, separate institutions? Following are just a few of the advantages:

1. By locating the liberal arts and science departments on the same campus with such professional and technical schools as Agriculture, Engineering, Forestry, etc., it is necessary to maintain only single departments in the arts and sciences such as history, chemistry, language, biology, political science etc. These departments will serve to give a strong basic education to all students, whether they plan to specialize in the arts and sciences or in professional fields. The great weakness in our separate technical institutes has been the lack of good basic, general education. The Comprehensive University plan overcomes this weakness by making available to all students, a thorough background of general education before specialization.
2. Duplication of costly equipment is avoided by having these basic art and science departments serve all students in the university. For example, a single high quality Chemistry or Physics department, with good equipment and well trained faculty, not only serves those specializing in science or chemistry, but also offer the necessary courses for students in the Engineering College, or in Agriculture, or in Medicine.
3. Duplication of library books and other instructional materials is avoided. For example, a costly set of Encyclopedia in the social sciences will serve all students in the university thus avoiding the purchase of several sets for separate colleges located on separate campuses.
4. A single administrative office, a single registrar, a single building and grounds department, single student guidance and testing bureau, will serve the single University organization rather than having half a dozen such service departments to serve separate colleges in different locations. Equipment and personnel for such administrative functions can thus be of the highest quality at the least expense. Let us give a specific example. A good business office requires a few rather costly business machines for efficient operation. One good machine of a particular type may be sufficient to perform all the work in the business office of a Comprehensive University with 3000 students. Six such costly machines would be required to operate six separate business offices in

small, separate colleges or technical institutes each having 500 students.

We could go on indefinitely citing the advantages of the "Comprehensive University" plan but they all boil down to "better education at less cost."

How does this all apply to the present situation in Nepal? This country is at the crossroads in its higher education planning. In its proposed program of having its own independent higher education, it can take one of two roads. It can continue to support small, inefficient and independently administered colleges, both degree and intermediate, and create new separate and independent technical and professional colleges. This is the road that will lead to extravagance, inefficiency and mediocrity. Or Nepal can profit by the mistakes of higher education throughout the world, and particularly in the orient, and create a National Comprehensive University adapted to the needs of Nepal. Now is the time to select the road to be taken, and that decision will determine the course of higher education for centuries to come.

If the recommendations of the National Education Planning Commission are followed, Nepal will travel the "high road," the road to efficiency and economy establishing a "Comprehensive University." That Commission, composed of 46 leading citizens of Nepal, stated in unequivocal terms

- that there must be a national University;
- that it should be free from domination of the outside world in its curricula and examinations;
- that it should be free from political control and be administered by an independent body;
- that the University should embrace all higher education institutions of Nepal, including those already established.

These are sound fundamental principles. The Commission in its report makes 26 specific recommendations of which the most significant are the following:

1. Insofar as possible all its (University) colleges should be located on a common campus.
2. Methods of teaching should be improved to conform to modern practices.
3. A centralized academic credit system should be established and modern academic accounting combined with con-

scientious student assessment to give more flexibility in student programming and less emphasis on a final examination.

4. Tri-Chandra College should form the nucleus of the Liberal Arts and Science College. The Women's College, the Evening College and the Sanskrit College should be merged into this college.
5. Existing professional training such as Business Administration, Law and Teacher Training should become a part of the University.
6. Additional professional training should be provided for Nepal by gradually adding Colleges of Agriculture, Engineering, Home Science and finally Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing.
7. A strong central library should be established as a center for study and research.

What are the steps to be taken in implementing these splendid fundamental principles and specific recommendations of the National Education Planning Commission? Obviously these are the more important steps that are required:

First, promulgate into fundamental law a Charter for a Comprehensive University by creating a single independent governing body (Senate) with full authority to govern, administer, combine, and coordinate higher education above the high school level.

Second, in the interim before the Charter is promulgated grant the existing University Commission power to act for the government with full authority to administer, reorganize, and coordinate existing higher educational institutions.

Third, the University Commission can then take the following preliminary steps:

1. Employ administrative officers such as a Vice Chancellor, the Registrar and Dean of Studies to assist the Commission in organizing the university, framing curricula and managing the several existing institutions. Three men have now returned from training for these positions in America.
2. Finalize the selection of a site for the University, make a long time scientific plan of the University Campus and plan and construct the buildings immediately needed, such as a Science Building, an Arts Building, a Library, a College of Education Building and a Demonstration School for teacher train-

ing. A skilled campus planner and architect is now available from U.S.O.M. to assist in this planning

3. Enter into agreements with foreign governments for aid to assist in operating and equipping the University and in upgrading the faculties of the existing colleges and of new professional colleges.
4. Seek private donations from public spirited citizens and foundations for buildings, and other resources for the University.

With these steps taken by the University Commission, it would be ready to proceed in following the recommendations of the Education Planning Commission by:

1. Combining Tri-Chandra College, the Women's College, the Night College, the Sanskrit College and the Intermediate Colleges into integrated Colleges of Science and Arts with I.A. and B.Sc. courses transferred to the new University site and the Intermediate Colleges continuing to offer the B.A. and I.Sc. courses. The present Tri-Chandra buildings might well be used for one of the intermediate colleges and for the night school. Intermediate colleges outside of Kathmandu should be brought under the University jurisdiction. Surveys should be made to determine their need and quality and to ascertain whether additional intermediate colleges are needed in other areas.
2. Make the new College of Education, the Commerce Department and the Law College professional units of the University and transfer them to the new University location.
3. Make an early start in organizing new professional Colleges of Agriculture, Engineering and Home Science. American aid is now available to assist in equipping these colleges and to train faculty members to organize and operate them. These colleges should be started not later than 1958.
4. Prepare for the organization not later than 1960 of a College of Health Sciences including Medicine, Dentistry and Nursing. Training of staff members in these fields should be started not later than 1958 by taking advantage of grants for foreign study in these fields.
5. Provide in the near future for a centralized library organized to coordinate all library resources. This would encourage gifts of private libraries and the purchasing of added library resources with foreign-aid funds.

6. Necessary hostels for both men and women should of course be provided at the new University site if it is to be a truly National University drawing students from all parts of the country. Also provision should be made for health and physical education facilities and for recreational, social and other extra-curricular activities. All of these are an essential part of a well rounded education.

How many students should be provided for? That is difficult to answer. But for the present, if intermediate colleges are continued in Kathmandu and others provided where needed, and if B.A. and B.Sc. courses and the suggested professional colleges are provided by the University at a new site, the combined collegiate enrollment by 1960 might well be about 2000. Many of the students now specializing in the arts and science and in Sanskrit should transfer and complete their training in such professional fields as Agriculture, Engineering, Forestry, Teaching, Nursing, Medicine and Home Science. Even those who have already received their B.A. or B.Sc. degrees in such subjects as history, political science and Sanskrit would be encouraged to study for such professional degrees if opportunity is offered close at home. Thus the curse of "educated unemployment" which is so prevalent in neighboring countries could be avoided and this country would be provided with its necessary quota of trained people to upgrade its health, its industries, its productive economy and its living standards in the home.

The National Education Planning Commission charted a splendid course for Nepal in organizing and developing its own University. It rests now with the government and leading citizens to take the necessary steps to carry out the recommendations of the Commission. The cost will not be prohibitive because much can be saved from present expenditures for higher education by eliminating existing duplication. Further more, funds from friendly nations are available and probably will be in the future, if a sound plan for a "Comprehensive University" is launched. Universities are not built in a day. But steps outlined in this article can and should be taken now toward the gradual development of a national higher education system. No democratic nation or free society can survive or prosper if it neglects its educational program; and the leadership for the country must come from a University, adapted to the needs of the country and dedicated to the building of a free, independent, and loyal citizenship.