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## TERMINAL PROGRAMS IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOLS

By Dr. CARL E. SEASHORE

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

A TERMINAL program leading to the master's degree is a program of study designed specifically on a one- or two-year basis as distinguished from the master's degree program leading toward the doctorate, which is designed for the first year on a three-year basis.

The terminal program is tailor-made, designed to fit the individual needs of the student in relation to personal and professional objectives. It is sponsored by a professor who gives particular attention to the organization of terminal programs. It, therefore, becomes student-centered as opposed to subject-centered. It represents a vocational or semi-professional bent but should be distinguished from purely technological courses and be dominantly of a liberal character but

with a vocational aim. The member of the staff who directs the work takes responsibility for the maintaining of standards and a happy balance between concentration in an area and reasonable spread of work within a chosen field, the securing of the privileges involved and personal direction of the thesis. The work on the thesis and the organized reading are designed to introduce the student to bona-fide graduate methods of study. The terminal program ensures adequate consultation between student and staff at the time of registration and personal guidance throughout toward a well-conceived objective.

The primary purpose of this type of organization is the standardization of two types of master's de-

gree. The appropriate implementation of this organization will indicate to the world that universities now recognize a double function: (1) furnishing the highest preparation for a scholarly career for which the doctorate represents the conventional standard and (2) preparing for useful occupations and citizenship, and enrichment of the good life, through one or two years of liberal studies at the graduate level. Incidentally the terminal program may serve as a proving ground for students who discover themselves in this work and then transfer, duly motivated, to the standard plan.

The doctorate has been the center of interest and pride over standards in the graduate schools up to date and the master's degree has been treated in a very slipshod manner as an unnecessary step, as requiring work which does not belong in the graduate school, as drawing an inferior class of students and as merely another undergraduate year. It is safe to predict that in the near future the graduate schools will have ten or fifteen times as many candidates for the master's degree as for the doctorate. It is, therefore, high time that these schools evaluate their objectives in order to offer adequate facilities and fair treatment to good students who wish to plan a one-year program, by recognizing their responsibility of preparing for citizenship and useful living at this level.

For the purpose of maintaining adequate standards, freedom in adjusting the program to the needs of the student, discriminating educational guidance, and conservation of the time and energy of the faculty, there should be a threefold choice for routing students in the graduate schools. At the time of admission the student may be given a choice of one of three plans to be followed: (A) the Standard plan, specifically designed for the maintenance of liberal and rigorous standards leading to the traditional advanced degrees, (B) the Terminal plan, providing for specially designed terminal schedules leading to the master's degree, and (C) the Free-lance plan, not leading to any degree. The student may be given the choice by his own tentative declaration at the time of first registration, and readjustments in the choice of plan may be made later on the basis of accumulating experience and achievements. The record of choice can be kept by merely writing Plan A, Plan B, or Plan C in a corner of the registration card.<sup>1</sup>

The separation of the standard and the terminal masters' degrees will be a reciprocal advantage. The standard degree can then be used as a certificate of clearance for the doctorate, whereas the terminal degree can be used as a record of general education or a certificate of qualifications for a specific occupation. Each calls for a different type of direction and staff

interests, although the standards for admission and candidacy for a degree should be the same for both. The old notion that a student who needs only a master's degree as certification for his job is an inferior student should be abandoned and high standards of achievement should be maintained. The standard graduate schools should take the lead in setting up a model for the terminal degree which can be adopted by the best colleges that are competent to offer specific terminal programs.

#### SOME REASONS FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF TERMINAL PROGRAMS

In recent years certain very radical changes have taken place which indicate the necessity for standardizing a master's degree and providing for the encouragement and direction of graduate work for students who are not going to proceed to the doctorate. Among these are the following:

*Rise in Educational Level.* The enrolment in our secondary schools has increased more than 4,000 per cent. since 1880. Registrations in colleges and universities have increased, similarly, by leaps and bounds. For practical purposes a college education is no more now than a high-school education was a few years ago. The doctorate is more commonplace now than the bachelor's degree was fifty years ago. There are now more post-doctorate students in the universities than there were candidates for the doctorate at the beginning of the century. There have been corresponding advances in professional and technological training. Standards for the doctorate and professional degrees are well established, but there is now urgent need for organization of graduate work at the level of the master's degree to meet the demands of mass education at the graduate level. This takes the form of terminal programs.

*Semi-Professional and Vocational Demands.* The American college was launched to provide for three professions—law, medicine and the ministry. Out of this beginning has come our vast program of liberal education. But we now recognize that the pursuit of pure arts and science has taken on a professional, vocational and avocational aspect, as in research, teaching, the applied arts, government and industry. As Professor Whitehead has said, there is no place in higher education for learning that is not useful. The master's degree has too long been looked upon as an ornament. There is, therefore, demand for liberal curricula that have a practical trend in time-limited programs.

*Progress in Science and Technology.* The undergraduate advance in the humanities, pure sciences and technology must be paralleled by provision for the

<sup>1</sup> From "Three-Way Organization in the Graduate School," *Journal of Higher Education*, 15: 7, October, 1944.

pursuit of them at the graduate level on the part of large masses of students. With a vast increase in demand for graduate work, it is essential that we distinguish between those who are to become scholars at the doctoral level and the much larger group of those who are entitled to well-considered plans at the level of the master's degree.

*Leisure and Unemployment.* The new-found leisure demands higher education for leisure. The increasing unemployment arouses cravings for training at higher and higher levels, for the enrichment of personality, the cultivation of avocational activities and a larger and larger share in the good life. Thus the demand for education for leisure is finding a place in liberal education at the graduate level.

*Increase of Wealth.* The increasing national and personal wealth demands expansion in scientific technology. We have seen these demands rise from the trade school, the vocational high school and technological institutes at the college level, and we are now called upon to make provision for the liberalizing of the technologies by creating love of knowledge and increasing the power for research through graduate study. The increase of wealth makes it possible to employ semi-expert technicians in every area for the advancement of knowledge and professional services.

*The Spread of Knowledge.* The phenomenal spread of knowledge in modern times has led to the lengthening of the standard periods for education. There is a cry for leadership on a higher and higher scale in the implementation of growing knowledge in every field of human activity. This involves not only vocational training but a distinct liberalizing of the vocational and technological point of view which demands the facilities of the graduate school.

*Social, Moral and Political Intelligence.* We are now in the midst of the expression of democracy and preparation for the defense of democracy. There is a growing demand from all walks of life for a certain amount of orientation for leadership at the graduate level. The feeling of need of education for citizenship, and particularly for leadership, in the organization of peace at home and abroad is vitalizing graduate study and diverting scholarly interests from the purely intellectual pursuits to the organization of knowledge for the exercise of citizenship from the level of home-making to that of countless forms of high public service. Master's theses are being written as self-orientation for jobs.

*Adult Education.* Not only do students move on to higher and higher levels for a capstone over their undergraduate education but adults in all walks of life are beginning to recognize the need and the facilities for the type of orientation they can secure at the

graduate level without necessarily proceeding to the doctorate. Recent science has demonstrated that adults in advanced occupations can learn as well as students in college. The craving for keeping intellectually alive is going to draw many mature people into the graduate schools.

*The Fine Arts.* The cultivation of the fine arts has now moved into the graduate schools, whether pursued as a profession or as an avocation. Students, young and old, are going to come to the universities as clearing-houses for the cultivation of the fine arts, the master's degree being required for teaching in the high schools and similar training being necessary for all types of communal activities and developments. Painters, composers, poets, playwrights and players are finding a new door open for the advancement of their learning. Universities have given but little attention to direct research on the application of the fine arts, but all the above characteristics of the present day tend to bring them to the front in a planful approach to the application of principles of beauty in useful objects and situations throughout life.

#### FIELDS FOR TERMINAL PROGRAMS

Practically every department in a university is now giving instruction of the general type here recommended, but only half-heartedly encouraged or organized. It would be very easy to set up formally fifty or a hundred specific programs which could be recommended in a standard university: such as courses certifying the requirements in many specific branches of education, engineering, social service, physical and biological sciences, psychometry and clinical psychology, and a large number of new types of training for technicians in medicine, fine arts, journalism, law and commerce. Then there is a large number of students who have no vocational interest but can only give a year or two to liberal graduate work which ought to be designed with some care.

I would not encourage the cluttering of catalogues with such detailed announcements, but would publish an announcement for entering students somewhat to this effect:

There are no fixed curricula leading to the terminal master's degree. Each student's program is designed so as to take into account the qualifications, needs, and aspirations of the individual for the limited time available. At registration time the student indicates to the Dean of the College the general character of his plans and purposes. The Dean then introduces him to the member of the faculty who would be most competent as a consultant for the direction of the work planned, taking all relevant factors into account and serving as educational guide in the program.