The General Conference will review the situation at its 17th session in the fall of 1972. This review will take account of the results of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm and discussions of relevance to the General Assembly and the work of the International Coordinating Council.

Thirty-one research themes in four groups have been proposed: (i) those related to the natural environment that is little modified by man; (ii) those related to the rural environments used primarily for agriculture, forestry, and other uses not involving major technological transformation of the landscape; (iii) those related to urban environments or subject to major technological modification by urban-industrial society; and (iv) those concerned with the effects of pollution and related phenomena on the biosphere. Relevant research by nongovernmental agencies may be supported.

The "Man and the Biosphere" program will encourage member nations to identify and develop institutions necessary for its implementation. With its sister program, "Man and His Environment," it will undertake to promote and stimulate educational activities in environmental sciences at all levels.

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Science for Nonscientists

I would like to second the plea made by Palmedo in his letter of 23 April for greater attention to the teaching of science to nonscience majors in college. In all of my own 7 years in college, even as a science major, only one course, an elective not even recommended by my department, concentrated on such questions as: How did science evolve as a human endeavor? In what older traditions does it have its roots? Why is it thought of as "Western"? How is an individual in a culture with a scientific tradition different from one living in the tenth or first century A.D.? How does the discipline of a "scientist" differ from that of a lawyer, judge, inventor, gambler, painter, poet, cook, and so forth?

Teaching sections of art students bitter about having to take my required science course has convinced me that these most refractory and frequently brightest of my students eagerly seek real understanding of science and its cultural impact, how it affects and is a part of their own time and their own humanity. To the nonscience students, science taught as a discipline may possibly be intriguing, like the rules of winning chess, but it is irrelevant. How can we be surprised that a young artist or writer . . . resents being taught how properly to shuffle electrons and wired mathematical symbols in his chemistry or physics course? He never sees his own interest there; why does it surprise us when the products of his mature hand ignore or denigrate science?

Palmedo's proposal for an organized effort toward upgrading college science education for nonscientists is well made. Many excellent courses and syllabi have already been worked out, but they are ignored or not well known. Reluctance of biologists, physicists, chemists, and the like, who are our college science educators, to go beyond the borders of their prized but narrow specialties is a powerful force against widespread adoption of the interdisciplinary approach Palmedo advocates. Perhaps a prestigious committee's report and recommendations would provide impetus to a wider recognition of the need for effective science education of the nonscientist.

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Palmedo's analysis of the problem of science courses for nonscientists is satisfactory, but his proposed solution has been tried many times (*1*). Giving prestige and other emoluments to the calling will do more than any committee, however exalted. Science for nonscientists can be raised higher in the academic pecking order by simply giving it departmental status equal to that enjoyed by classical subjects. An interdisciplinary operation or one within a department is now the rule and is evidently not doing the job, else Palmedo and others (*2*) would not be so concerned.

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2. F. Reif, *Science* **164**, 1032 (1969).