

*Morales-Carrion*

UNITED STATES DELEGATION  
TO THE  
SECOND MEETING OF THE INTER-AMERICAN CULTURAL COUNCIL  
Lima, Peru, May 1956

POSITION PAPER

Subject: Study on Short Courses

PROBLEM:

To determine the position the U. S. should take in regard to recommendations made in CAC-E-2, Rev. 2:

1. that Governments should study the advisability of establishing a system of correspondence courses on vocational and technical education, and of securing the cooperation of private industry in establishing vocational schools;
2. that Governments rebuild their secondary schools so that
  - a. students have freedom to select their own vocational training;
  - b. the administration of all levels of training will be coordinated;
  - c. citizenship training will be emphasized;
  - d. vocational and academic education will be properly balanced and graded;
  - e. teachers for vocational education will be prepared in Higher Normal Schools.

U. S. POSITION:

The Delegation should take the position that this study, based on four replies to questionnaires does not adequately represent conditions or opinions in the several American republics, and should oppose adoption of the recommendations.

Instead the Inter-American Cultural Council would do well to support the findings and recommendations of the Inter-American Seminar on Vocational Education held at the University of Maryland in 1952.

DISCUSSION:

The term "short professional courses" was not used by the Inter-American Seminar on Vocational Education. This use of the word professional in connection with vocational training would be confusing and unacceptable in this country, both to vocational leaders and those in the professions of medicine, dentistry, education, etc. Furthermore, courses of one to four years are seldom referred to as "short." We commonly think of short courses as being from a few weeks to a few months in length.

The report states that "short professional courses" "means... training that is predominately technical...enabling him to work as an assistant in the traditional professions...." This is misleading in terms of the list of occupations on page 2. The list leads one to believe that the Committee had in mind vocational courses; i.e., courses that would provide a person with marketable skills, abilities, and judgments in the occupations listed. Thereafter, however, the content of the report seems to indicate another type of training, the vocational objective being submerged. While we would agree that the development of a spirit of good citizenship and aesthetic values are important, the report appears to put the emphasis on attainment of the latter objectives rather than vocational objectives. As one reads on he begins to question whether the idea is really to train journeymen electricians, mechanics, and other skilled workers or to train people who will have a knowledge about the listed occupations in contrast to those with the know-how to the extent they can earn a livelihood at their chosen occupation and thereby contribute to the country's economic and social development. This impression is given by reference to correspondence courses, the proposal to train vocational teachers in normal schools and the absence of proposals based on commonly accepted principles of vocational education in this country, such as the use of advisory committees, training on the job, use of occupationally competent instructors and others.

Although the specific recommendations in the report seem harmless, they are confused and uncoordinated, and should be opposed as a less clear statement of objectives than the report of the Inter-American Seminar on Vocational Education held in 1952 at the University of Maryland.