

THIRD NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EXCHANGE OF PERSONS

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Report of Workshop # I - 5 HIGHER EDUCATION

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According to the background paper some three thousand professors and administrators were reported to have been exchanged in 1957-58. The chairman emphasized that the workshop should devote its attention to means of improving programs involving the exchange of such people rather than to considering the general objectives of such programs. The workshop agreed that the U. S. colleges and universities might well be urged to consider and develop basic institutional policies affecting the participation of U. S. professors in foreign programs as well as the provision of programs for distinguished academic visitors from abroad on American campuses. The Committee on Educational Interchange Policy is preparing a set of questions which U. S. colleges and universities should consider in establishing a college policy with respect to its total international exchange program. In the discussion such specific questions were raised as to an individual institution's policy in granting leave for professors who are asked to take on foreign assignments for one or more years. Should such assignments be considered a part of the sabbatical leave policy of the institution? Does a foreign assignment for the U. S. government or for a private organization adversely affect a professor's salary increment, promotion, or retirement?

In view of the increasing number of foreign academic visitors to academic institutions the workshop considered the cost to individual institution in arranging programs for visitors. MIT, it was indicated, had 800 visitors last year and other institutions reported that substantial amounts of money and manpower were required to arrange meaningful programs for these visitors. In view of the difficult financial problems which face U. S. colleges and universities the question of supporting financially these activities out of tight academic budgets was considered. Government financial support, it was felt, should not be sought unless private resources were inadequate to carry the cost of this additional activity.

The workshop emphasized that the exchange of senior professors was most meaningful if the individual concerned--American or foreign--had a specific assignment in the other institution. One participant suggested that the senior foreign scholar should visit an educational institution for either two years or four months. In view of the significant variations in educational operations in most countries, it was agreed that a teaching assignment alone was usually

unsatisfactory. If research, consultation, independent writing, etc., could be added to the foreign assignment a senior scholar would probably have a more fruitful experience.

The problem of finding able people for assignments in foreign countries is particularly acute in the U. S. in view of the shortage of good personnel in American colleges and universities. The importance of presenting to U. S. students the challenge of foreign service as a career and public responsibility² was emphasized.

Individual colleges and universities in the U. S. who are seeking foreign professors should be encouraged to use the Conference Board of Associated Research Councils, the Cultural Affairs Officers of the U. S. embassies and foreign alumni who have studied in the institution to secure leads to those who can contribute to the American college.

Important as contributions of the U. S. Government is to exchanges of professors and administrators between U. S. and foreign countries the group agreed that most of the responsibility for developing such relations should be carried by the individual colleges and universities in the U. S.