

Centennial selection

That the Centennial College is, as advertised, an experiment has been proven conclusively by events there in the past week. Faced with unwanted economic pressures from the Administration, members and teachers in the college have discussed, vacillated, realized mistakes and made some more.

Centennial College is scheduled to expand from a current enrollment of 186 to 250 for next year. Only one full time faculty member will be added to the staff, however, and a constant number of 125 freshman must be admitted. Obviously, even considering graduating seniors and others who do not wish to return to the program for another year, some students will have to be eliminated, or "de-selected for lack of a better euphemism. Between 20 and 30 students was the lowest number that would have to leave the program.

With more students wishing to return than could be admitted, members established tentative alternatives (1) subjective de-selection (2) random de-selection. One undesirable aspect of the first suggestion was the lack of criteria to judge students. An undesirable aspect of the second was its arbitrariness. But a decision never had to be made — at least not for this year.

An unofficial survey of students was taken to see how many would want to return if the Centennial course remained at six hours credit and the student could take only 11 additional hours. Result: 107 said they would return, 66 said they would not, 13 were not reached. A motion was passed in a college meeting to retain the six hour credit and limit outside University hours to 11. Second result: No more elimination problem, in fact the college can admit new upper-class students.

That system will achieve two desirable objectives. Students in CC will need to concentrate more on the college course as well as on the remainder of their course load. Insufficient participation in the Centennial course this year may be remedied by the proposal. Secondly, a new group of upperclassmen will see the benefit and value of Centennial College education while another group hopefully carries the message to the rest of the University.

Nevertheless, this means of avoiding the "de-selection" problem is appalling. Faced with the necessity (if indeed, it was a necessity) of depriving some students of Centennial College, the whole group took the back door out. Having failed to establish criteria for readmission last fall, and unwilling to do so under pressure, the students eliminated a different portion of the college in a simpler (for them) manner.

Many juniors and seniors of next year will be faced with difficult and, for some, impossible schedules. A 12-hour block is harder to work with than a six-hour block, which was an alternative to the 12-hour system discussed in the college. Engineering, pharmacy and other science upperclassmen will probably be largely eliminated.

The hours restrictions will not alter the fact that Centennial College is the best educational experience a student at the University can get. Rather than force a good and valuable educational unit to eliminate some of its members, however, the University should be creating more such units. Unfortunately, the hours decision may make the college, at least temporarily, overly restrictive and elitist, determined not by skill or work or desire to learn and grow, but by a student's major.

Jim Pedersen



“... is NOTHING sacred anymore ...?”

Bad check— return to sender

by DICK GREGORY

When I look out upon one of the many college audiences I speak to in the course of a year, I find myself feeling sorry for the young white students I see in front of me. I feel sorry for them because I know that many of their parents are writing "checks" for them today which are going to bounce ten or twenty years from now.

What keeps that observation from being funny, and what makes it doubly sad, is that I know black folks have been writing checks for their kids over the years which black parents knew were bad checks. Black parents accommodated to the white system in America, accepted the injustices and indignities, under the guise that they wanted nothing for themselves, only the hope that things would be better for their children. But that was a cop-out.

But the black attitude has changed. Black folks, young and old, are not writing any more bad checks. The checks they are now writing may never be fully honored in this country, but if they are not, it will not be because the checks themselves are no good.

WHITE FOLKS on the other hand are continuing to write checks for their kids which they should know in advance are no good. The school situation in the South is a good example. White folks in a state like Mississippi are resisting the United States Supreme Court decisions on school desegregation, keeping their children out of the public school system, and setting up makeshift, inadequate, private schools.

Little white kids all over the South have nothing to say about the current actions of their parents. But in the long run only the kids will suffer. When the white kids graduate from those inadequate, phony schools, there will not be a respectable college or university in the country which will find the kids qualified to meet the entrance requirements for higher education.

PERHAPS the symbolic significance of the "bad check" analogy is beginning to really sink in with white youth in America

and that could be a partial explanation why the Bank of America was chosen as a focal point of resentment recently in California. It is certainly true that more and more youth, black and white and Puerto Rican, are recognizing that they are the victims of the bad checks of past generations and are banding together to change the system.

Such coalitions are bound to change the controlling system in America. It is like a man who has two mean and vicious dogs in his backyard to protect his property. The two dogs are trained for viciousness and attack. Consequently the two dogs are always fighting with each other. The dogs would attack the man also if they could ever get their teeth into him.

IN FACT, the only way the man can get close enough to feed his dogs is to do it while the dogs are busy fighting each other. The dogs are so absorbed in their own fighting that they don't even notice the man's activity.

Then one day the situation changes, but the man is not aware of it. He sees the dogs out in the backyard fighting, so he goes to get their plate of food. One dog says to the other, "Let's just pretend we're fighting, and when he gets close enough with that plate of food, let's jump on him and get our freedom. After we've got our freedom, we may decide to go back fighting each other again for real. But just this one time, let's get together and trick this man."

THE SYSTEM in America has always kept the poor white man in a trick and has given him black folks to hate, to feel superior to. But that trick doesn't work anymore. The poor white man sees black folks rising while his own condition remains the same. He is beginning to understand that poor whites, blacks, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos and Indians share a common problem of oppression. Fighting and hating has not changed that condition. So those in chains are coming to realize that if they get together just once, they can get this man who's responsible for continued oppression.