

“THE NEED FOR LEADERS” - REACTION

R. J. Hildreth

It is my judgment that North American society is now in the midst of a rapid and fundamental renegotiation of the social contract in two areas of interest to us: 1) between society and higher education and, 2) between society and agriculture. The idea of social contract was developed by Rousseau. Rousseau, along with Hobbes and Locke, regarded government as essentially contractual. It comes about, they argued, as each citizen acknowledges a reciprocal obligation between himself and society. The reciprocal obligation also holds for agriculture and higher education where the contract is being renegotiated.

The major issue in the renegotiations is what 1) higher education and, 2) agriculture will do for whom and how. The original negotiations took place at different times and different places in the past. Much of the negotiation in regard to higher education, especially colleges of agriculture, took place in the late 1800's and the early 1900's after the passage of the Morrill Act and the subsequent formation of most land grant universities. The social contract with agriculture was negotiated over a longer period of time. Developing the "rules of the game" for the settling of the western North America and the emergence of farm policy during the 1930's were two major events.

In order for the renegotiation to take place, society needs to make clear what is wanted and what it is willing to pay for. The difficulty of obtaining consensus among the various user groups of higher education and customers of agriculture and citizens should not be minimized. Both higher education and agriculture need to talk with the concerned elements of society to find out what is desired and to make clear what is possible with what costs.

The legitimacy of higher education, the value placed by the various units of society on its output, is the basis for funding and support. Legitimacy or status is given by the publics. Without legitimacy higher education cannot be sustained in a social system. No individual group can continue to perform a role unless that role is accepted by those who are affected. Similar issues affect agriculture's legitimacy.

The range of issues in the current negotiation for higher education have been usefully spelled out by Dr. Horowitz. The range of issues raised by non-ag publics for agriculture include use of natural resources, the environment, food safety, food costs and distribution and hunger and nutrition. The interest groups for this set of issues are consumers, voters and environmental groups. In the ag sector there are concerns about farm programs, trade policy, production

controls, regulation, research and extension, as well as marketing. The interest groups include farmers, farm organizations, agribusinesses, processors and distributors. The rural issues include rural employment, education, health, social services, infrastructure and quality of life. The interest groups for these issues are farm residents, nonfarm residents, rural businesses and rural communities. In the late 1800's and early 1900's these issues overlapped because the majority of citizens were farmers and lived in rural areas. Thus the rural and agriculture overlapped almost completely and farmers were a majority in society. Farmers are a small segment of society today. Many rural issues are not synonymous with agricultural issues. For example, three-fourths of U.S. farmers have nonfarm income; thus concern about the rural job market.

In the early 1950's I enrolled in a course on the sociology of leadership at Iowa State University. Ray Wakley was the professor. He summarized the ideas in the course with the following three principles: Principle No. 1 - get some followers, Principle No. 2 - keep them as followers, Principle No. 3 - do something. The focus of Professor Wakley was that leadership is the development of "followership".

What then are the jobs to be done by leaders in 1) agriculture and, 2) higher education for now and the future with the renegotiation of the social contract underway? Included in the work to be done is obtaining a clear definition of the organization mission; framing its activities and informing its members. Also needed is the creation of a flexible environment in which workers are not only valued but encouraged to have creativity, autonomy and continuous learning replace routine, conformity and obedience. Leaders will encourage innovation, experimentation and risk taking. Leaders will make new alliances outside the organization and new connections within the organization. The leader will continuously study the organization from the perspectives of outside as well as inside. Related is identifying and responding to needs of customers, constituents and persons concerned about the performance of the organization. In order to do the above the leader must be comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty and be proactive rather than reactive. Clearly the leader will need to anticipate the future and think globally but act locally. I realize this statement of tasks is incomplete. I hope it provides some vision of what leaders need to do.

Can agricultural schools play a role in meeting the needs for leaders? I call your attention to the article by Roland M. Jimmerson in the June, 1991 issue of *The NACTA Journal*, titled "Teaching Leadership: Principles and Approaches for an Undergraduate Leadership Course." Jimmerson argues that agricultural schools can do a better job of providing

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students with the skills, knowledge and perspectives to help them become better professionals, better citizens and better leaders by developing courses specifically designed to help students improve their leadership. The article has a comprehensive review of the leadership literature and describes an undergraduate leadership course.


In the summary section of the article Jimmerson suggests that helping students build non-technical skills, knowledge and perspectives requires a change in the view of teaching as a facilitator of learning rather than "professor" of knowledge. He also presents a set of principles, "The leadership principles outlined suggest a need to do better at helping our students to: 1) take responsibility for their own learning; 2) learn from their experiences; 3) collect and communicate information; 4) improve their self-esteem; 5) solve problems within a broad context; 6) understand world views; 7) apply understanding of learning and leadership styles; and, 8) understand and utilize group processes" (Jimmerson p. 50-53). The schools of agriculture can contribute to the development of leadership among the students. These students can play an important role in the renegotiation of the social contract between society and higher education, as well as between society and agriculture.

As my final point I wish to relate the role of science to the renegotiation of the social contracts. I draw upon a recent article by Donald N. Langenberg, "Science, Slogans, and Civic Duty" in *Science*. Langenberg argues that public debate and issues, which I characterize as part of the renegotiation of the social contract, rarely reflect scientific knowledge and seldom feature scientists as playing central roles. He holds that it is the unfilled civic duty of scientists and engineers to engage themselves more fully and actively in public debate and action on important issues. He points out, "When the time comes to move from debate to action, action is shaped by the perceptions and the values of the leaders of the debate. Sometime these perceptions and values reflect the relevant body of scientific knowledge, and sometimes they do not" (p. 361). He presents the adage, "perception is reality," and that societal reality is determined by perceptions through the political process. He goes on to point out that the adage "only in politics are facts negotiable" and concludes that it is the civic duty of scientists and engineers to engage themselves actively and fully in the public debate and action on these issues. In my view he is calling for leadership by scientists and engineers as well as the faculty and administration of higher education in the renegotiations underway.

In summary, let me state that the need for leaders is large and growing. Higher education and agricultural schools can make contribution to the development of leadership skills by students. Individual faculty and administrators can also usefully assume the role of leader in society.

References

Jimmerson, Ronald M. "Teaching Leadership: Principles and Approaches For An Undergraduate Leadership Course", *NACTA Journal*, June 1991.

Langenberg, Donald N. "Science, Slogans, and Civic Duty," *Science*, Vol 252, p. 361-3, 19 April 1991. 

Employing Leaders

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It is a real pleasure to be here this morning to talk about a subject that is a favourite of mine and one that we could spend many hours talking about, that being the question of leadership.

My position on the program I believe is to give you a business perspective of leadership. Specifically I'm going to look at the kind of qualities that we in business are seeking in the students that you are grooming for careers both now and in the future.

What I am going to give you in the next few minutes is a picture distilled from almost thirty years in the business world, largely the world of the big company. But as you will no doubt pick up however, my view is slanted towards a certain perspective. I will then try to bring that perspective down to the qualities that we need to nurture in the students that are in your schools and colleges today. With your indulgence we'll see if we can put a, I'm not going to say a prescription, but the elements of a road map together on the question of leadership in business.

May be some of you, particularly the deans of agriculture from Canada, were at the federal/provincial partnerships meeting in Montreal on June 4 and 5.

If you happened to be at that meeting or were watching Canada AM on television the morning of June 5, you'll remember some comments made by the nationally known business analyst, Diane Cohen. Ms. Cohen made the statement, and I echo her comments, that Canada is a nation of managers desperately needing leaders. Her comments underscore the real world of big business today. We've learned how to analyze and manage but what we desperately need are leaders with vision, with commitment, with the desire to develop new ideas, to find new ways and new strategies.

With Ms. Cohen's comments as background, let me lay out a few fundamentals as I see them, on leadership.

Firstly, I believe that leaders are born not made. I believe that managers can be made. We have talked glibly in companies about good management and our desire to groom managers to be competent. In many cases we have used the word "leader" and "manager" interchangeably but there is in my mind a major and very clear distinction. Leaders know how to do the right things, managers do things right. In other words leaders are effective and managers are efficient. I don't know how many times I have seen people do things superbly from a process point of view. It happened that the things they were doing were not the real value items for the

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