

# THE LIBERAL ARTS FIND A DEFENDER

*Mull, Also*  
Columbia Report Challenges  
Early Specialization at  
Cost of General Studies  
*NY Times*  
RELATION TO LIFE URGED

Bell, of College's Faculty,  
Asks Course in Problems  
of the World Today

By FRED M. HECHINGER

Columbia College began yesterday a defense of general education on its own campus and throughout the country.

Daniel Bell, a professor of sociology, appointed by the dean of the college as "a committee of one," opened a sharp counter-attack against the viewpoint that general education must be sacrificed to the demands of earlier specialization.

The report, which is expected to be debated by faculty members at Columbia and throughout the country, specifically challenged the opinion expressed earlier by Jacques Barzun, dean of faculties and provost at Columbia University, that the liberal-arts tradition in the colleges was dead or dying.

Instead of abandoning the college years to specialization, Professor Bell said, colleges should expose undergraduates to Greek and Roman history at the start of their college studies, and they should be required to relate their general education when they reach their senior year, to such questions as urban renewal and world economy.

## Expansion Proposed

In his appeal for the re-establishment of the once central position of the liberal arts, Dr. Bell urged the following:

¶That Columbia College be expanded by 50 per cent from its present enrollment of 2,700 to about 4,000.

¶That all students be offered a new set of general education courses in their senior year in which they would relate the liberal arts to such specific areas as urban renewal, the development of new states, the problems of the public bureaucracy and the philosophy of science.

¶That the required freshman course in contemporary civilization be extended from one year to one and a half years, with special stress on Greek and Roman history in the first term.

¶That every student, in addition, should be required to take a one-term course in economics, sociology, government, anthropology or geography.

¶That all students should take a two-year mathematics, physics or mathematics-biology sequence.

## View of High Schools

In a 312-page analysis called "The Reforming of General Education," Dr. Bell challenged the growing belief that improvement of the high schools has made much of the colleges' general education program obsolete or redundant.

He charged that the high-school reforms had not been nearly as effective as was often contended. He warned specifically that many students entered college with woefully inadequate knowledge of English.

"The hue and cry to shorten the college years to speed the boy into sophomore standing and spin him into graduate school in his senior year—these are not only destructive of the college; they are, more sadly, destructive of the student himself," Dr. Bell said.

Dean Barzun said on the telephone yesterday that he had not read the report. He added: "I am sure Dan Bell has done a superb job. If there is some disagreement with what I have said, so much the better for the fun of the debate."

Despite his defense of general education, Professor Bell asserted that much of the present program was in need of change. He described the present science requirement as "a mishmash."

## Minimum Standards

Dr. Bell called for the abolition of freshman English. But to make this possible, he said, all Ivy League colleges should require certain minimum writing standards for admission.

The current "modishness" of offering college-level work in the humanities in high school, "will quickly wear out," he declared, because students at that age lack the maturity to draw meaning from such studies.

Dr. Bell described as his most radical departure from past general-education programs the proposal of a "third tier"—after acquisition of general cultural background and the study of a discipline—in which the liberal-arts experience is made relevant to modern life and contemporary problems.

For example, students majoring in the social sciences would, in their senior year, take a course in "the development of new states," relating economic, political and social theories to the development of a society from rural to industrial life.

Similarly, students majoring in science might be required to take a senior course that examined the philosophical and social impact of science on contemporary problems.

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