

The President Speaks

ALISTAIR W. McCRONE, *HSU President*

Readers will recall that the Fall, 1980, issue contained a transcript of a lengthy interview by Editor Tanner with President Alistair W. McCrone. The President agreed at that time to respond to occasional questions in the same spirit of open inquiry, but in a more brief format. This fall I submitted questions to the President concerning two issues brought to my attention by faculty members. Below are the questions and President McCrone's response. If you would like to "hear" the President speak on an issue, submit your question to the Editor (confidence will be retained if requested).

Tanner: "President McCrone, it is rumored that you are strongly in favor of switching HSU over to the semester system. I have two questions: (1) Is this true?"

McCrone: Yes.

Tanner: (2) What advantages do you foresee in adopting such a change?

McCrone: Some of the advantages which I see are as follows:

- (a) The Semester Calendar requires only two rather than three registration procedures, final examination procedures, and grade-filing procedures each year. The time thereby saved is available for academic dialogue between students and faculty rather than being consumed in bureaucratic activity.
- (b) In a semester of typically sixteen weeks (compared to a quarter of eleven weeks) there is more time for reflection upon material studied, and discussion of it between professor and student.
- (c) If a student becomes ill for several days during the quarter calendar, it is exceedingly difficult to make up the lost work before the end of the quarter. The semester allows much more time for readjustment to such unpredictable exigencies.
- (d) Similarly, in field courses or other courses in which special events or field trips are part of the curriculum, in the event of unexpected cancellation it is exceedingly difficult to make up the time lost and the experience lost under a quarter calendar as compared with a semester calendar.
- (e) A semester calendar allows longer time between testing periods and therefore a more relaxed pace of learning than is possible than under the quarter calendar.
- (f) Under the semester calendar there is greater time to pursue course work in greater depth than is possible under the quarter calendar.
- (g) Under a quarter calendar, there is scant time to acquire books on inter-library loan. The semester calendar allows more time for borrowing books from distant libraries.
- (h) The semester calendar allows more time for the professor to become personally acquainted with the student, and therefore better able to appreciate the uniqueness of the student's abilities and learning capacities and perspectives.
- (i) The semester calendar provides more time for emphasis on the student's growth, development, skills, and for coming to feel "at home" with new sets of academic concepts.
- (j) The semester calendar allows more time for the students in a class to become more acquainted with one another and thence learn from one another.

- (k) The costs of administering a semester calendar are less than for the quarter calendar.
- (l) Under the semester calendar, students have better opportunity to recover from a poor start in any given course.
- (m) The quarter calendar is comparably more difficult for freshmen who need time to become adjusted to University methodologies and habits.
- (n) The quarter calendar tends to overemphasize examinations.
- (o) I have heard students and faculty claim that the quarter calendar is very much like being on a treadmill, with scant opportunity for relaxation and reflection.
- (p) Under the semester calendar there is time for better adjustment to available educational materials, such as textbooks, instructional media, and so forth.
- (q) Generally the semester calendar allows more time to acquire thorough understanding of

subject matter, and enhances higher rates of student persistence and achievement.

In short, the manifold advantages of the semester calendar far outweigh the advantages of the quarter calendar.

Tanner: "President McCrone, is it true that each year you barter and bargain with other Presidents in the CSU system for a slice of the money allotted the entire system for promotions?"

McCrone: I can't imagine where such a far-fetched notion originated. The answer is "no." Our System does not work that way.

Tanner: How then is the money allotted?

McCrone: The money is allotted on the basis of a System formula.

Tanner: Do you believe HSU gets its "fair share" of the funding?

McCrone: Arithmetically, yes. Functionally, no.