

cal experience and expertise to the professional school and will continue to be used "despite certain disadvantages to employing them, and restrictions on their numbers imposed by some accrediting bodies."¹³ Professional education increasingly encompasses different kinds of faculty, administrative, organizational, institutional, and instructional development.

The education of professionals has been extended beyond the boundaries of graduation with the development of continuing education programs increasingly involving the collaboration of professional schools and professional associations. Continuing education has become a feature of licensure renewal with some mandatory programs that designate the number of hours a person must take to maintain a license. The use of professional school faculty for such programs is one way in which schools can continue to maintain faculty size and "academic vitality while serving society more broadly than in the past."³

Most professional schools have adopted some aspects of the responses mentioned here, and increasing attention is being directed toward them. There are a host of fiscal implications and limitations not touched upon here that will have to be examined and discussed. What is clear is that the decline in enrollment and the problems it presents need to be addressed by effective institutional and administrative response reflecting the essence of professionalism itself.

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Attitudes of Preprofessional and Liberal Arts Students

Robert E. Pollack, Ph.D.

The college of which I am the dean is a small and very selective one, the ivy part of Columbia, a vast and complicated urban research university. Any dean of any college, but especially a college embedded in a great university, has an obligation to his or her students to know them well enough to serve them. Knowing our students as we do, we are pleased as well as obligated to preserve and protect them. In particular, we gladly take on the task of opening the doors of their future for them.

Of course, the very first thing we can do as deans is to listen and to try to understand, as our students tentatively unveil their ambitions. Each of my students has the obligation to choose his or her own next step. But by listening, we do pick up a bit about the general atti-

tudes of our students. Indeed, this sense of students' attitudes has at times put me and my staff at odds with our students' families and with our students' own less brave impulses.

Some Recent Trends

Thus, though I can give you no more than a bit of data on national trends, I can inform those data with my sense of our own students' choices. I have gone to the Higher Education Research Institute for my information on national trends among colleges. The institute publishes an annual survey called "American Freshmen, National Norms." All of my figures today are taken from the 1985 edition.*

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Figure 1. Trends in Freshman Values, 1967-1985

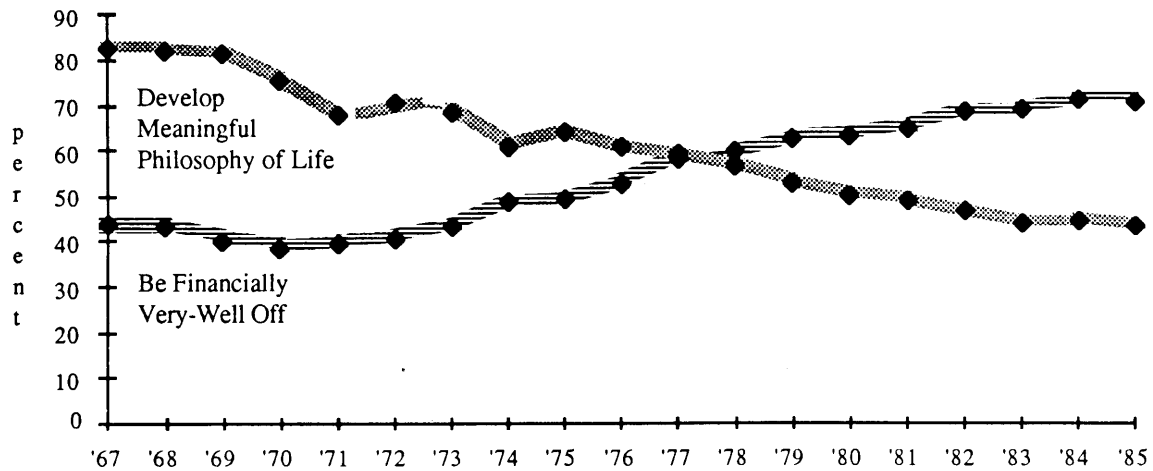
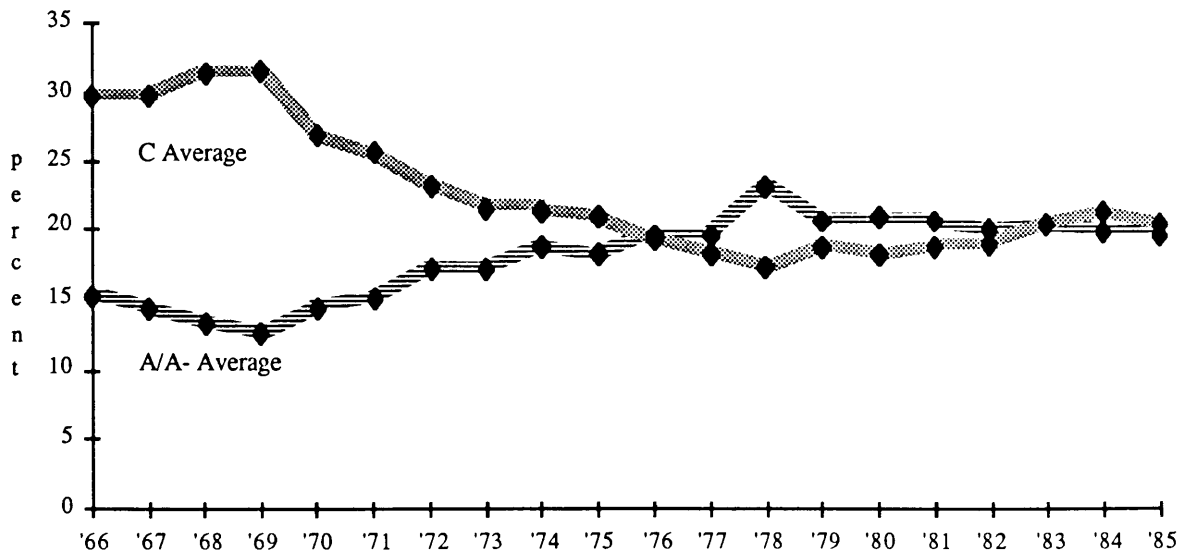


Figure 2. Trends in High School Grades Among Entering Freshman, 1966-1985



Risk Taking. Let us begin by looking at the most general sort of choice students make, or think they make, when they come to college. Which is more important: to be financially very well off or to develop a meaningful philosophy of life? Of course, one might argue that neither is possible without the other, but the trend is clear (Figure 1). With each passing year since 1978, an ever-increasing number of freshmen picked love of money over love of ideas, and why not? That, after all, was the way the country voted in 1980 and again in 1984. As another trend, high school grades for entering freshmen have improved almost every year since 1966 (Figure 2).

There is no reason to make a direct causal connection between these two trends, but why not at least try it out? I see a connection this way: both trends indicate a falling off in the willingness to take chances. The grade data may represent inflation on the part of the graders; but even so, that would have to be in part a response to demands by high school students and their parents. No risk, if you please.

Let us turn to an internal control. How do these freshmen see themselves in political terms? Fifteen years ago, about twice as many persons put themselves to the left of center as put themselves to the right, leaving about half the sample self-located in the vast middle of things (Figure 3). The fraction, about one-fifth, who are on the right has remained remarkably constant, while the fraction on the left has fallen by a factor of two, leaving a pleasing symmetry of self-selection, with more than half of the students in the middle. I would have interpreted these data the same way whether the left or the right had slid toward the middle: once again, fewer risks.

Now let's see what some real attitudes are by examining the percent of freshmen who agree somewhat or strongly with a number of political positions. More than half of the students take positions on disarmament, taxation, and pollution that would be seem to me to be to the left of the national position (Figure 4). On the issues of abortion and school busing, opinion is about evenly divided. I cannot make much of these

Figure 3. Trends in Freshman Political Preference

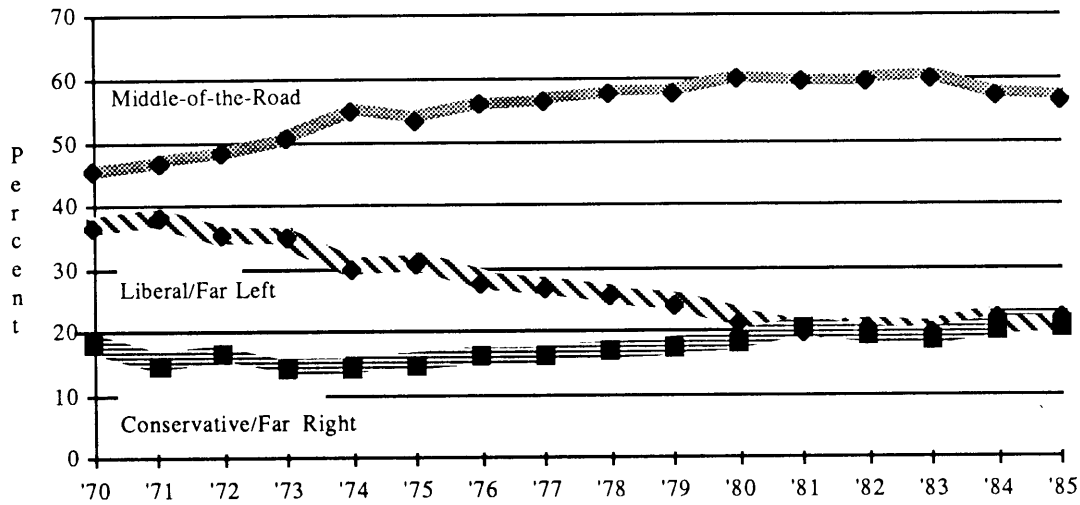
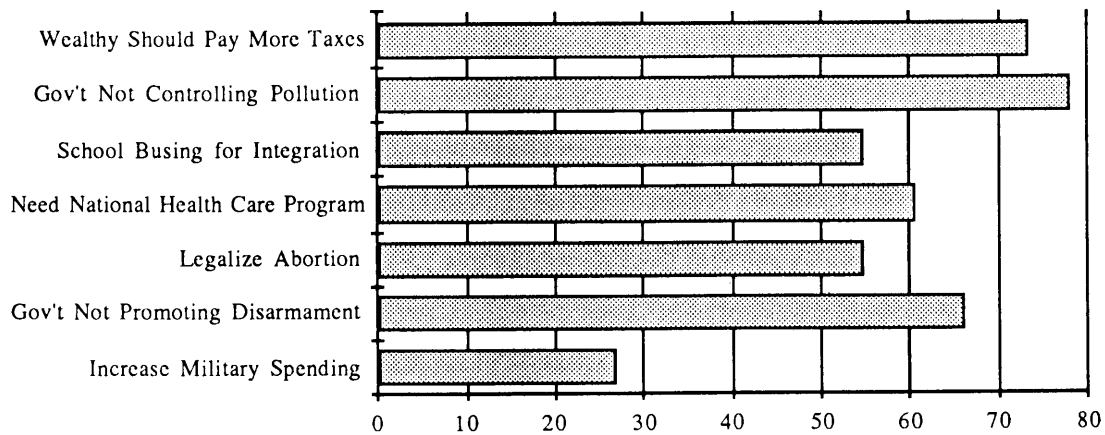


Figure 4. Freshman Attitudes on Political and Social Issues

(percent who agree somewhat or strongly)



opinions. Given the self-reporting of freshmen as increasingly centrist, I wonder whether high school freshmen are not a bit innocent of the location of the country's political center.

To summarize these four figures, we may ask, "How does life look to most college-bound youngsters at 17?" As the joke goes, the race may not be to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but that's the way you bet. Nor is that merely a joke. This is a tough world, in which money can buy you most everything. But if they want safety, we want more than safety for them. How they can get that money without losing the first purpose of their education—to be quizzical, to be curious—that is the question for us. How do we get our youngsters to be brave?

Career Attitudes. Figure 5 presents eight-year trends in the percent of freshmen choosing computers or engi-

neering as a career. Note that this is an early career choice, not a choice of majors. The actual percentages here are frightfully low in each case. Next, note that the choice has become less popular in each case for each of the last four years. Why is this? The government is pouring a large amount of money, albeit military contract money, into companies that employ computer experts and engineers. Their job market is excellent. Yet the choice is made less often each year. The results in Figure 6 may help explain this odd reticence about engineering. Here, freshmen give their preference for selected majors. In the past five years, *all* science-based majors have become less popular, not just the computer and engineering options. But so, too, have choices to enter the humanities, the arts, and education. Business majors wax as others wane. Of course, at a liberal arts college like Columbia, where there is no "business"

Figure 5. Trends in Freshman Values, 1967-1985

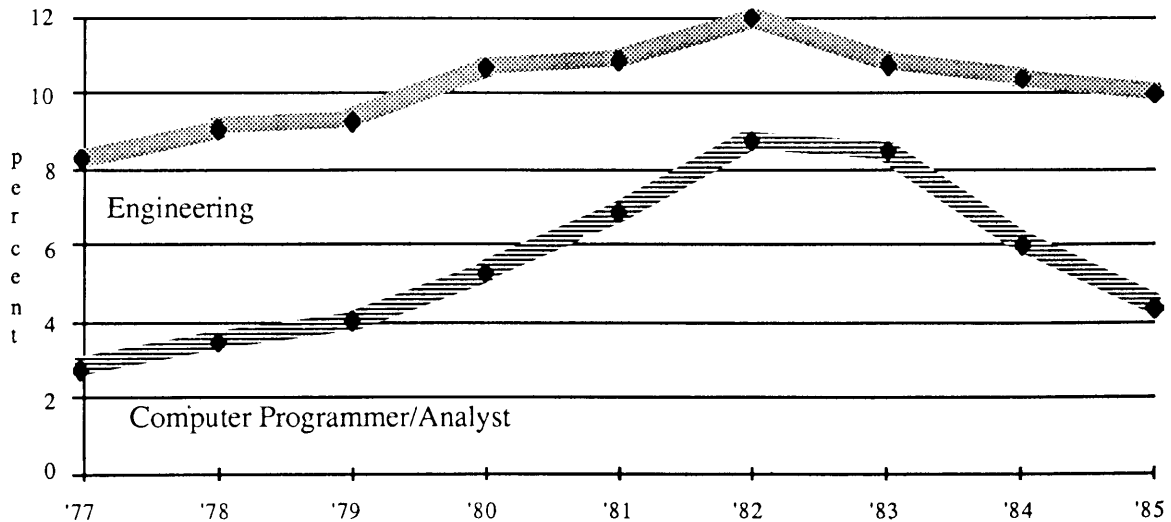
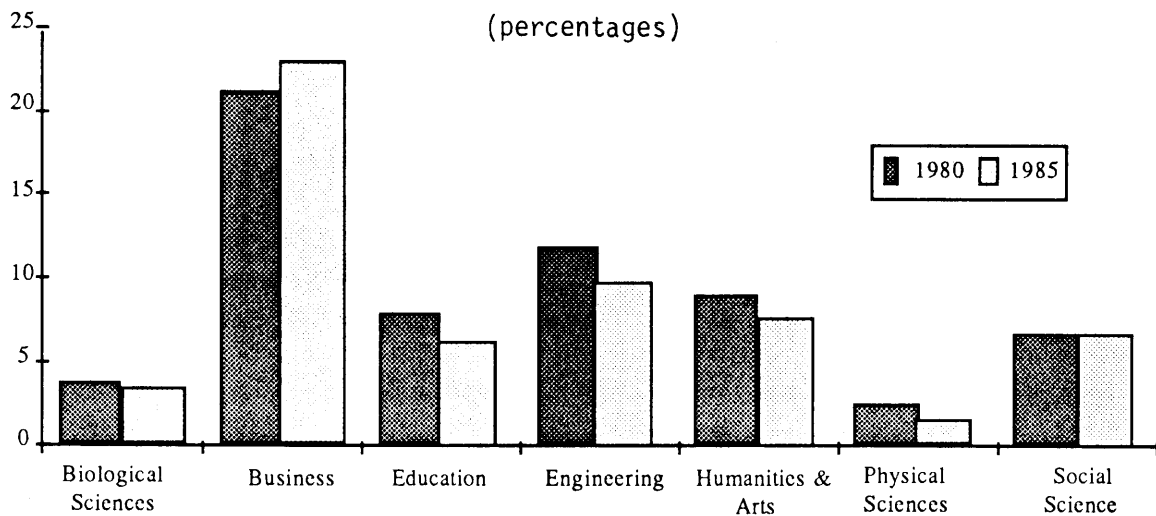


Figure 6. Freshman Preferences for Selected Majors, 1980 and 1985



major, the distribution would be different. The downward trend in science still obtains.

Some Observations

I believe that there is another phenomenon at the base of all of these. As a nation we are failing to teach our children well. That is not news. Every few months one serious group or another issues a report saying so. But the reports have not fixed the problem, nor will they. From kindergarten to 12th grade, teaching is less and less rigorous. Some would say English teaching has suffered the most, but I see that science teaching has gone down fastest and furthest. By the time they get to us, our brightest youngsters are less and less able to write a clear sentence, and less and less able to solve a simple problem in logic or geometry.

The attitudes I have shown you are a nationwide yearning for safety by the brightest of our young people. This wish for safety is coupled with an ever-de-

creasing base of knowledge in science and mathematics. The combination is hurting us badly. True education never can be safe. I think the yearning is a result of a deep failure in their education, a failure that occurs well before college begins.

The critical failure is this: their teachers are not prepared. The country has entered into a downward spiral, what lab jargon calls a positive feedback loop. Our best students do not often enough wish to become educators. As a result, there are fewer and fewer good teachers. As a result, the level of our best entering students falls. The problem to be solved is how to break this feedback loop. First, we must begin to educate for intellectual risk at all levels. We must see that curricula teach youngsters how to question, as well as how to answer. Career choices are constrained by one's internal sense of what is possible and of what is permissible, as well as of what is desirable. We must work to see that questioning, which is the heart of true education, is made more permissible and desirable within the curric-

ula of our primary and secondary schools. This will mean hassling local school boards and changing textbooks, and it probably won't be possible without a lot of leadership from state and federal political leaders.

Second, primary and secondary school teachers have to be given more autonomy, as well as more money. Autonomy, the right to decide what your job is and how to do it, is a precious commodity. Doctors have it; nurses don't. Professors have it; high school teachers don't. Can this be justified in either case? Not by me.

Third, we must open the professions that teach to the groups in our country that now are least well taught. These groups have lost the most already, and every young man or woman from them who sees this and who wants to rectify it must be found and supported to the fullest extent of our resources.

Let me close by making one last observation. All of the problems I have mentioned are national ones. But

all of them affect most heavily the poorer and the least well-established people of our country. This country has no greater hidden resource than the talent locked up inside the young men and women whose families are poor. We have a patriotic obligation to liberate that talent whenever and wherever we can.

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The Future of the Professions

Eliot Freidson, Ph.D.

The professions have enjoyed a position of high public esteem for some time. They have had an important influence on legislation and enjoyed high economic rewards. But since the 1960s, it has become clear that the relation of the professions to the political economy is being renegotiated. Change is occurring so rapidly and on so many fronts that it is difficult to keep track of it. In general, the consensus is that the Good Old Days are gone, and that the future can only be decline.

My own position is qualified. On the one hand, I cannot have very much sympathy for those decrying the disappearance of the Good Old Days because I believe they were days of largely unrestrained license, days in which the professions were fairly free to regulate their own affairs in the public interest and failed to do so. The political and economic pressures that now exist are a direct outcome of the failure of the professions to take responsibility for themselves and the integrity of their work. Those pressures, however, are still mild and reluctant, remedial rather than revolutionary. This means that there is still a great deal of leeway for the professions to take responsibility for themselves, should they have the capacity to do so. Decline is by no means inevitable at this point in history. Indeed, forecasts of doom are based on generalities that do more to obscure what is going on than to analyze the critical elements of change.

So it is with some of the theories that have been advanced on the fate of the professions: essentially, they overlook critical details that belie their conclusions. In this paper I shall review those theories and the evidence that bears on them, and go on to suggest what I believe to be a more accurate view of the immediate future of the professions.

Deprofessionalization and Proletarianization

The notion of deprofessionalization is based on the assumption that professors are distinctly different from other occupations, but are losing those distinctions. They have had a special position of public esteem and trust that, according to the theory, is being lost. They also were marked by a "competence gap"—the difference between their specialized knowledge and skill and that of their clients. That is also being lost because of the increased education of the lay public and the greater accessibility of professional knowledge to the public. In addition, professions have had a monopoly over the right to perform the tasks associated with their work; but, proponents of the deprofessionalization thesis argue, many traditionally professional services have become so simplified and routinized that either lay people will be able to perform them themselves, or lesser, nonprofessional occupations and even computers will take over their performance. This portends the collapse of professional monopoly. The outcome of all this is a reduction of the professions to the status of mere expert, unprotected by any special mystique and public esteem. Active and informed consumers will seek serv-

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