

MULTIMEDIA BRIDGE--AAHE, MARCH 5, 1972

"Things fall apart; the center cannot hold.
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world."

These words were set down by the Irish poet William Butler Yeats some fifty years ago. They have come to be quoted more than any other lines he wrote. For the words tell about a troubled time and carry a feeling of frustration, and it's our time and frustration too. Only perhaps it's more aggravated, on a larger scale, and even further from the center now than then.

What is the center of higher education? Is it the curriculum? Is it the physical campus? Is it the people who form the learning community? Is it the aura of respect which civilization accords to scholarship and learning? Is it all of these--and more? Can that which unites us in common purpose hold? Or will the strains of the expanding campus tear us from our center to loose anarchy upon the world?

We are here this week talking and listening and wondering about something called the expanded campus. What is it that expands, moves out, removes its walls, and offers itself to segments of our population for the first time? We will talk of the infinite variety of new people to be served--the Third World, the women, the counter

culture and the culture of middle America, and the adults who form the vanguard of the lifelong learning movement. And we will talk of new ways to serve them--of independent study, of off-campus degrees, of ethnic studies, of learning contracts, of cooperative education, and of skills centers.

Continued effort has been made this year to give us all the opportunity to listen and to question some who are new to higher education. We are not where we would like to be in involving ethnic minorities, women, and students in our program, but we are not where we were either. Steady progress is being made as our association expands its interests and the rate of participation from previously silent segments of our institutions.

In one sense, higher education expands by extending itself to meet the special needs of new kinds of students. But the theme of this conference is also intended to convey the picture of the campus, the college, the university, taking its knowledge and its people into the community. We will talk and think together about what it means to step from the ivory tower into the streets--there to confront the problems of drugs and wars and poverty and pollution.

But we have our own grim realities, too. The conflict between expanding social responsibilities and diminishing budgets is real, and it seems that we shall have to learn to live on less while remaining true to our purposes.

But we shall recognize that it is our purposes rather than our procedures which form the center that must hold. We

shall argue and debate the merits of our procedures--of tenure, collective bargaining, faculty evaluation, governing patterns, departmental structures, new calendars, and inter-institutional cooperation.

In the next three days, with old friends and new, we will attempt to digest information, to exchange ideas, to challenge old habits. Perhaps with renewed spirit and imagination, we can then build a bridge over the troubled waters--one that will carry us to more effective ways of teaching and learning. About the time William Butler Yeats wrote about the falling apart of things, another poet, John Masefield, wrote a poem about the University. It was a love poem. It went like this: