UNDERWOOD: Can you explain what you have there?

FULLER: This paper is a very informal set of notes that I have when I talk to a group of faculty members; actually a group from many disciplines. What I propose to do is read from the paper and comment along the way. It’s a fairly loose and informal set of notes in some ways, and on the other hand I think it gives you, Paul, a chance to interrupt me any time and question me because I won’t lose my place. I’ll just put my hand on the place. So I start with a quote.

“I want to present one man’s view of the battle that has been raging on academic reorganization since Fall. This was presented to this group on May 7, 1967. It is a battle, which has undoubtedly consumed more faculty time than any other since I came to OSU a quarter of a century ago. The Rose Bowl Battle and the Speakers Rule battle generated much more publicity but consumed a lot less time. The faculty stand on the Rose Bowl created a certain amount of pride among the liberals. The Speakers Rule battle was terribly embarrassing to the moderates and liberals on the faculty. I believe the Rose Bowl decision helped us keep and attract some faculty. As you all know, we lost a few dozen faculty members after the Speakers Rule battle. I know of only one case where this was the principal reason, but with many excellent men it was an important factor in the decision to leave. They’re still making offers to some staff members who turned us down, giving us as one reason the atmosphere which must be present at Ohio State in order that such a problem with reorganization would develop. I can spot several locales where the prospective candidates talked to men in these areas.

The reorganization battle has already started to take its toll. We’ve lost a few top men who give the splitting of the College of Arts and Sciences as one of the reasons for their leaving. More prevalent are the number of mature scholars we are trying to attract who decide they aren’t interested when they hear of our reorganization plans. Everyone in this room will be affected by the reorganization plan because the character of Ohio State for some period of time will be affected by this decision, and Ohio State is an important element in this community. Several will be affected because they will be moved to new environments and will have to adjust to different organizational structures, develop new relationships and new power structures. Two out of this room apparently differ strongly on a few points. Possibly in a discussion period this difference will be aired. I claimed that Marge, my wife, and I will be most strongly affected because it now seems fairly certain that the proposal will be passed, possibly with some modification, and that there will be no position as Dean of the College of the Arts and Sciences. As you can imagine we have tried to evaluate our futures and figure out what we should do. I have looked at one other position. We looked at our bank account and our retirement benefits, but with three in college next year, retirement seems impractical. However, the purpose of telling you some of our personal problems is not to win sympathy, but to give you one example of how intense and important this whole proposal is to you and to your friends in the university.

The problem of academic reorganization has been a longstanding one with few changes over the years. The first battle was fought in 1874, when president Orton in his
inaugural address insisted that we give the broadest approach to the concept of a land-grant school. There was considerable opposition to his ideas, especially from the College of Agriculture, and those people interested in the development of agriculture. After that battle, we never really departed from that concept, and our role was to change citizens rather than technicians.

Our course has always been toward increasing the liberal elements of the curriculum. In my mind, this choice was a wise one. Agricultural and mechanical colleges throughout the country have been liberalizing their curriculum, working toward a university concept for several decades. Of the A&M colleges that stayed longest in their own land-grant approach and are now shifting, not one of them has ever become a major and distinguished institution. Those of our sister institutions that have infused the idea of service with a breath of liberal education have increased their prestige. Some of those, especially with money, have been able to become distinguished institutions.

Over 20 years ago, a member of this club was the chairman of a committee that made an attempt at a reorganization study. This was Harry Vanneman. The so called “Vanneman” report was completed and recommended the creation of the College of the Arts and Sciences with all the departments found in a normal College of Arts and Sciences in order land-grant institutions pull together in a single college. These are normally considered the basic departments. The Vanneman report was given to president Bevis. It sat on his desk. This was toward the end of the Bevis’s regime and he seemed set on doing as little to cause disturbance as necessary, so nothing ever happened to this report. As a matter of fact some faculty members tried for a long time to get the report released without success. Many faculty members never did see the report. Harry at one time knew of my interest and we talked about it and he found a copy of it for me to examine.

There may have been numerous attempts at reorganization after the Vanneman report. Most of these, however, were precipitated by members of some department who got disturbed enough to turn to the president’s office and ask for reassignment to another college. In 1957 before I first accepted the job as dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, I spent some time talking over the problem of academic reorganization with the objective of strengthening the university, but he himself was obviously not strongly convinced of the importance of this move and was not willing to do much about it. My plea was not for a revolution but for an evolution. I asked that he be responsive to the opportunities that would develop with resignations and retirements. Actually several resignations occurred but changes of major importance could have been made but never happened.

I pleaded numerous times during this period for a study of these problems. Finally in December of 1959, as a result of Faculty Council action, the president appointed a committee to be known as the President’s Permanent Planning Committee. This committee was charged with the long-range planning of educational matters. It took as its first assignment the reorganization pattern. This committee worked for several years somewhat ineffectively. There was great difference of opinion on the committee and little happened.

Finally, conservations and traditionals suggested in May of 1960 that they put out a report. This report was known as the Fullington report, because he was chairman of the committee that did most of the work on it. Committee membership changed several
times and it was as a result of some of these changes that the committee was finally able to get together and develop a report. The elements that they recommended are very similar to what we’re now considering. The colleges were reorganized, set up and we had the creation of a college of humanities, life science, physical science, social science, with the disappearance of the College of Arts and Sciences. This report was distributed to faculty for reaction. Eighty-eight departments were then present at a meeting of the university, and of these only one reacted favorably. This was the department of agricultural biochemistry, which was so dissatisfied with their present location in the College of Agriculture that they were willing to accept anything to get them out of that location.

In all fairness I think it was true that they were much better off in the spot envisioned for them by the Fullington committee report. The active resistance of most departments to the plan was expressed in the letters that they wrote back to the committee, met with the committee, went into secret sessions again to try and figure out their next move. In the last years of Fred Heimberger’s services as vice president, this problem of biological sciences became very intense. Our national image in the biological sciences was actually preventing us from winning support from government grants that seemed to be flowing out to other institutions but not to Ohio State in this particular area. We were frankly told that part of our problem was our reorganization and the unwise, ungainly distribution of departments in biological sciences.

Finally the president charged right on by getting the deans together who were interested in biological sciences and trying to work out the solution that way. This was a fascinating set of meetings. I never saw such beautiful delaying actions as carried on by the deans. I’m sure that their reactions at the time had something to do with the present attitude of the Council on Academic Affairs, as they had approached this problem by trying to keep the deans out of the discussions. This is a guess. Maybe Elliot Whitaker would feel quite differently about it. Kottman was especially at avoiding meetings. For a while we would set up meeting around his schedule and then when the showdown came he would not appear at the meeting, or if he did he would appear late. This completely frustrated us and the meetings finally ended without anything being achieved.

When Vice President Weaver came to the campus, he inherited many of these problems the biological science one. Finally it was decided that the so-called Academic Program, which was Weaver’s creation, would look into the problem. Moulton had been a member of the Fullington Permanent Committee. It was natural that they pulled out the old Permanent Planning Committee that had suffered so badly at the hands of the faculty and used this as a basis of departure. Concentrating then on the problem of biological sciences, they came up with the creation of the College of Biological Sciences. This went through the Faculty Council. This and University College were created the next year in the Faculty Council.

This set the pattern for the present proposal. There was much uneasiness but still no violent revolt. The uneasiness in the faculty obviously was caused because of the creation of two colleges without sharp understanding of what this meant for the future, and how it related to the broad academic reorganization plan was not clear. My own personal reaction at this time was that the proposal of the College of Biological Sciences was a better solution to the problem in biological sciences than the one we had at the time. I also suffered from the fears of the long-range implications, and asked on the floor
of the Faculty Council that if this motion for the creation of Biological Sciences passed, it would be guarantee that a study would continue to try to bring some resolution of our problem of academic organization.

At the end of Weaver’s regime it was agreed he would put in writing his own personal views of where the Council stood in the whole problem of reorganization. The last year of Weaver’s service to the university had involved a certain amount of discussion with the Council of this particular problem. It was felt wise to draw this together in some sort of statement, so that the new incoming councilman would not have to go over the same ground that had been fought out during the year. Weaver did this, and it was from this document that Corbally started to work when he first became Provost.

He changed the name of the Council on Instruction to the Council on Academic Affairs. One of the things that he started to wrestle with was the problem of reorganization. Of course Elliot Whittaker can give us a much clearer idea of some of the discussion which occurred and which is not privileged information. This may come up in our discussion later. Remember this is a personal viewpoint based on some limited facts and obviously from the disadvantage it seemed partially as the results of many, many hundreds of meetings that went on concerning the whole problem of reorganization. I had some indication that these discussions were going on in the Council of Academic Affairs, from some of my friends who were members of this organization. The first real official knowledge of what was going on was when Corbally called the deans of the undergraduate colleges together on November 9, 1966. He drew for us a rough sketch of what was going on. The summary of this is contained in the letter of November 3 sent to the university faculty by Corbally, which obviously was already in the mail before he called the deans together. I’m now going to quote from paragraph two from Corbally’s letter from November 3, 1966, two paragraphs actually:

As you know the council on Academic Affairs, working with the studies previously completed by the President’s Permanent Planning Committee, devoted a great deal of attention during 1965-1966 to a study of the academic reorganization of the university. This work resulted in the recommendation for the establishment of the University College and of the College of Biological Sciences. During the Faculty Council discussion of the proposal to create a College of Biological Sciences, it was strongly implied, if not directly stated, that further steps in academic reorganization would be considered by the Council on Academic Affairs during 1966-1967. It is minds of many faculty members concerning the status of these next steps. In an attempt to remove as much of this uncertainty as is possible, let me briefly review what Council does intend to do this year and what its tentative timetable is. At the outset, I would stress that no decisions about academic reorganizations other than those already reported to the Faculty Council have been reached. The Council is now beginning a comprehensive analysis of the advantages and disadvantages which might follow further reorganization and is beginning the development of such proposals for reorganization as may seem appropriate. Following this preliminary analysis, opportunities will be proved to all interested faculty members to react to all or any part of any plans which the Council may develop. The Council is fully aware of the needs for wide
consultation with the faculty prior to the development of any final recommendations, which would go to the Faculty Council for action. It is our hope that a proposal that would encompass all academic reorganization which seems appropriate at this time would be present to the Faculty Council some time in March 1967. It is the feeling of the Council that we should complete our studies of reorganization this year and then turn our efforts to the task of making whatever organization is adopted work as efficiently and as effectively as is possible. You may look forward in the not too distant future to receiving progress reports on this matter from the Council and to receiving invitations to react to their reports.

In preparation for the meetings with the chairman, they were sent a copy of the following letter from Corbally in 1966:

Following our decision on Monday, October 30, 1966, I agreed to summarize my impressions of where we are at in regard to the study of academic reorganization. My summary is as follows:

1. There do not appear to be sufficient needs for further academic reorganization that make it essential that the Council continue its study.
2. Reorganization studies have created sufficient unrest to make it essential that this study and resulting actions be completed during this academic year.
3. There appeared to be substantial agreement that we should end up with four basic colleges in addition to the University College: the College of Biological Sciences, College of Humanities, College of Physical Science and College of Social Science.

I have in my own notes on this matter the following: ‘On number 2, no need for further discussion and ready to act, then a question mark and railroading. And on three where there are 4 colleges and it says there seems to be agreement, agreement with whom? Not in the faculty. It sounds as if it’s already been settled. He says he’s open to ideas expressed in other letters, sounds like it’s just a screening.’ This is a little bit of sarcasm. Going back to that matter above:

4. The above would imply that the College of Agriculture and Home Economics, of Education and Engineering would, in addition to their graduate programs, becoming like the Board of Regents has called undergraduate professional colleges.
5. If the structure mentioned in item 3 were to be developed, it appears that the following assignment of assistant departments to new colleges would be logical and would be acceptable to the department concerned: a) the College of Humanities, and the departments listed for that were; classical languages, English, German, Philosophy, romance languages, Slavic languages, division of comparative studies and East Asian languages b) College of Physical Sciences; astronomy, chemistry, geographical science, geology, physics. c) College of Social Science; anthropology, economics, geology, political science, psychology, sociology. The following departments appear to require further study in order to determine their logical place in the university framework: linguistics, journalism, social
work, business, mathematics, mineralogy, history, architecture, art, music, speech, optometry, physical education.

6. In addition to the studies of the college reorganization, the Council should consider the development of recommendations dealing with the possible inner-college faculty legislative bodies and would administrate arrangements to assist in reaching the goals of the reorganization. These statements summarize my view of where we are. It seems to me that we might now meet with the department chairmen of the departments listed in number 5 above to determine if our assumptions about our placement of them are correct. Prior to these meetings I will meet with the deans of the undergraduate colleges to indicate what is being done so that we would not create undo anxieties on their part. After clarifying our assumptions in 5, we’ll meet with the department chairman. We could then proceed to meet with the chairmen of the departments listed in 6 to ask them to begin the process of advising us concerning departmental views about appropriate placement in our proposed framework. (Let me interrupt there for a moment to say it seems to me that Corbally had done the smart thing to essentially bypass the deans. The Council made the decision to split and now we’re back to the chairman and then back to the departments themselves to get their views.)

UNDERWOOD: While we’re on that subject, do you want to give your own viewpoint as to why the opposition there was from the deans. I’m sure there were different views from the different deans, but what difference did it make to the deans whether they reported to College of Arts and Science or to the College of Behavioral Sciences, let’s say?

FULLER: You mean what did it mean to the chairmen of those departments? I think it’s a matter of personalities. When you work with a person, even if he’s a difficult person, eventually you learn to work with him, and then you have to get used to working with somebody else and readjust.

UNDERWOOD: Concern over what might come then?

FULLER: That’s one of the reasons. Then I think there are some departments that felt right along that they were misplaced and had been anxious to get out, and most of these were historical situations. Many departments, when it was primarily an A&M college grew up in serving agriculture, and then the College of Education came into the picture and art for example was art education, and so many of these placements go back to historical situations. Art for example was buried in the College of Education and the same thing was true. The only biological science that was present in the old College of Arts & Sciences was microbiology. That was a new subject and they hadn’t latched onto it over there and developed a new program. We needed a program in the university so it developed into the College of Arts & Sciences. I think the other thing that’s interesting to point out at this junction, you see the deans have been so used to, I hate to use the word “fighting” each other, that’s too strong. It was a gentlemanly exchange of respect for
each other, but we were in competition for budget, so there was no dean’s organization. The top administration had been good enough over the years so that the deans hadn’t been forced to get together to stand up against top administration and that attitude had allowed us to more or less develop our own freedom of action. That was one of the things I kept note of when I was talking to other deans. The freedom of action that I had was so much greater than many other deans in the Big Ten and the Mississippi Valley deans. You can say this is lack of strong leadership from the top and you can say it was very wise leadership, to let the power go back to the areas where it could be most sensitive to the faculty needs.

UNDERWOOD: You would have had a dean of agriculture, a dean of education, a dean of engineering, a dean of the college of arts and sciences, medicine.

FULLER: Yes. Well, no, it was in the College of Arts and Sciences. Not pharmacy, I’m sorry, I’m thinking of optometry. To go back to the Corbally letter:

These statements summarize my views of where we are. It seems to me that we might not meet with the department chairman of the departments listed in 5 above to determine if our assumptions about their place in the college framework is correct. Prior to such meetings I will meet with the deans of the undergraduate colleges to indicate what we are doing so that we would not create undo anxieties on their part as we approach the departments. After clarifying the correctness of our structure in 5 through meetings with the department chairman, we could then proceed to meet with the chairmen of the departments in 6 to ask them to begin the process of advising us concerning departmental views about appropriate placement in our proposed framework.

(“5 you’ll remember was the ones that were logical; physical sciences, astronomy, etc. And 6 then were the ones that he had questions about.”)

----End of Side 1----

FULLER: Continuing then with the Corbally letter of November 7:

At all of these meetings, we need to stress that the Council is seeking advice and we prefer to receive the analysis of various alternatives rather than to receive the results of votes. In addition we would stress that at this time we are considering departments, as they exist. We do not expect to propose the division of departments into two or more units. While this step may be necessary in the future, we will follow the general reorganization process thought these discussions. We should also stress our willingness concerned with the reaction to our proposals from the original faculty members as well as from the departments.

That is the end of the letter and I’d like to comment just a little bit on that process. Corbally was smooth. He had one quality which I admired tremendously. He could be in the midst of a tremendously stressful discussion, listening to both sides as they were expressed, and then he would make some offhand joke or comment or crack a joke and everybody would laugh and the result was to break the tension. It was just marvelous. He also had a way of moving things the way he wanted to move things, and I think it’s well shown. He already bypassed the deans. Those meetings with the deans,
there was no uniting of the deans to try to attack the problem. He kept it all very smooth and made us be gentlemen by his own good example. I think it’s rather interesting here. Notice what he’s doing. He’s scared and justifiably so. Part of the departments may want separate departments. He’s already cut that off, so that that fight doesn’t take the time and pull away from the operation of going where he’s trying to go.

The tone of this letter, unfortunately, while it may have been fine for the Council on Academic Affairs, aroused a great deal of antagonism among a number of chairmen in the College of Arts and Sciences, and, I gather, in some of the other departments outside of the college. The reason being that it looked like the Council on Academic Affairs had already arrived at the plan, even though they still claim they’re still looking for advice and still trying to learn facts and information that would fit into that preconceived idea that there was a good deal of resentment. This later precipitated several Executive Committee meetings of the College of Arts and Sciences, and also several meetings in the department and with a good deal of formal discussion.

During the week of November 14, the projected meetings of the CAA, the Council on Academic Affairs, and the chairman did take place. In my opinion these meetings tested two things: one, whether there is a substantial agreement that we would end up with four basic colleges in addition to the university college; and two, whether the chairmen whose departments were to be in the respective colleges were agreeable to being placed in these colleges. In the memorandum to the Executive Committee dated November 17, I said:

My reaction to the Council on Academic Affairs is that such an arrangement cannot be judged properly without knowing what the superstructure would be for these colleges, and what are the committees or councils, which will bind them together into a working unit to serve the needs of the students. At the undergraduate level, we are not training students to be solely physical scientists or social scientists. We hope to give them insight into all areas. We hope to give them broad training and a base for their specialization in their graduate work. Therefore the structure, which ties the liberal arts education together, is important. It is also important that the faculty have this common aim and can develop different curriculums. If this is not possible it is a danger that each of the colleges would concentrate on their subject matter and in this way may lead to a series of discrete, technical institutes rather than a university. I can envision a total picture along the lines suggested by the Council on Academic Affairs, which might be suggested. The proposed and other new colleges would bring together disciplines having the most similar basic approach. Such groupings would include all related departments, not just those presently in the College of Arts and Sciences. The suggested grouping would parallel in part the federal grouping of the Humanities foundation, and the proposed Social Science foundation. This parallelism might be advantageous in designing proposals and attracting funds. At the same time, for the sake of the students and the faculty, as a citizen, this total issue must tie these colleges together in order to preserve the liberal education. This could be done by an organization that links the subjects area colleges and the university college under one administrator in a unifying structure of common curriculum committee, counseling services, records office, honors program, and placement office. The deans of the respective colleges would of course be concerned mainly
with the recruiting of faculty involving courses and the daily budget program. I hope this brief statement will promote discussion at this meeting of the organization problem.

That’s the end of my statement at the time.

Continuing with this original document. “Meetings were held in great number. On December 8, I sent out another memo to the Executive Committee and I’ll read just part of this letter:

On the surface it would appear that the simplest way to build a strong College of Arts and Sciences would be to simply transfer the existing colleges into departments, which are components of the strong liberal arts colleges on other campuses. This might also mean that certain departments, which are now in our college, might be moved to other colleges. It seems unnecessary at this moment to identify the departments, which would be transferred either into or out of the colleges. However it is clear that those departments that are in the newly created College of Biological Sciences would be a part of the College of Arts and Sciences. Likewise it seems logical that the functions to be served by the recently created University College would best be carried on within the College of Arts and Sciences. The latter is a consequence of the fact that practically all of the courses taken by freshman admitted to the university are taught by the departments that would comprise the College of Arts and Sciences. Academic reorganization along this line is that which I believe would serve the university best.

Until the downtown newspapers reported that the creation of a strengthened College of Arts and Sciences as one of the alternatives, I had assumed that there is very little likelihood that it would be accomplished. In my more realistic moments I am still concerned about the problem of stability. The cause for this concern are threefold. It involves elimination of the College of Biological Sciences; it involves incorporation of the University College into the College of Arts and Sciences, which means rescinding actions whereby a dean and his staff are appointed; and it involves the transfer of departments from the present form, where they are all in existing colleges. All three of these are operations which might be carried out easier if there were not named administrative persons involved. Deans of the colleges are human and therefore fight to maintain as much of their areas of responsibility as possible. This is not necessarily because they are perverse, but more likely because they sincerely believe that under their supervision the departments or areas involved have the opportunity to contribute more significantly to the distinction of the university. While I hope these problems can be overcome and a strengthened College of Arts and Sciences can then become a reality, because I believed that this is the best way, I think it would be short-sighted to fail to look for an alternative, that while less satisfactory might be acceptable.

An alternative, which is not acceptable from my viewpoint, is the creation of additional autonomous colleges such as the already established College of Biological Sciences. We have enough experiences in the short time this college existed to realize that all of the problems of scheduling and transferring and all of the procedures of this nature which make it difficult for students to achieve their
objectives when two colleges are involved and are multiplied intensely by 7 additional colleges.

(In the paragraphs that follow I’m describing the major features of an alternative plan which I feel might be considered if it does in fact get to be impossible to choose the strengthening of the college of arts and sciences as proposed.)

The plan does not have the disadvantages of departing somewhat from the conventional structure. I’m using the familiar terms. Probably terms can be found to clear up this awkwardness such as dean of the college. The advantage of this are that the College of Biological Sciences and the University College can be taken only into the new organization. To those needs we’d be adding other colleges composed of nuclear departments along the lines suggested by the Council on Academic Affairs. Each of these several colleges would be headed by a dean who, after being given a budget, would be in charge of operating the college in the most effective way as possible. He would be responsible for recruitment of personnel, budget preparation, promotion, recommendations, equipment, operating expenses, travel and so forth, in short, for all aspects of the administrative procedures not carried on in the office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Later in this memorandum, the details of procedures will be discussed for you.

I will not go on and read the rest of that letter. The rest of the memorandum went on to describe the plan, which essentially produced a group of federated colleges in the overall unified counseling service, honors program and so forth. In summary I believe we must first fight hard to see if we can strengthen the College of Arts and Sciences which may help us get what we’ve wanted for so long. The College of Arts and Sciences involves basic disciplines, which in my mind is one of the reasons that our sister universities have been able to build up more top and distinguished departments that we have. Last year I fought a battle against the creation of the biological sciences for the Council on Instruction. My story was heard but there was not enough concern about the committee, not enough realization of the implication of it on the part of the faculty of Arts and Sciences to stop the creation of the College of Biological Sciences. Now that the problem has been raised again, I think that the faculty will stand up and be counted. Only a strong grass roots reaction can, in my mind, stop the drive for separate colleges. I believe the prime objective must be the creation of a small organization, which will produce the best possible liberal arts atmosphere in which we raise the fewest barriers to install the liberal arts curriculum. The secondary objective should be arranging the parts of this organization into groups with official administration. This is the purpose of my alternative plan. If we lose on the battle for strengthening the College of Arts and Sciences, we must remember the creation of a powerful federation.

On December 9, 1966, Corbally sent the following letter to the university faculty and I’ll read part of it:

The study of the academic reorganization of the university being conducted by the Council on Academic Affairs is, as you are well aware, moving ahead with some vigor. Contrary to any statements you may have read, the Council has only developed a framework for discussion and has not as yet begun the task of writing a firm and final proposal to be submitted to the faculty Council. When the Faculty Council approved the establishment of the College of Biological Sciences
in February of 1960 it was understood that the Council on Academic Affairs was to give consideration to the desirability of further changes in the organization of the university. It was also understood that no definite commitments of any kind had been made to institute such changes. In May of 1966, the Council on Academic Affairs requested to receive from Vice President Weaver and the Academic Board some kind of proposal to further the academic rate of the organization. This proposal provided the basis for initial discussions. After examining the problem which are generated by the present organizational body, Council members came to an initial agreement that some sort of further reorganization seemed to be required. This agreement represents little more than the first stage in the thinking of the members of Council and is itself subject to revision and final rejection. The members of the Council took for granted their obligation to seek the advise of the faculty on a matter of such importance. It did not seem, however, that the faculty would be approached even with the vague question ‘Do you think that reorganization of the university is desirable?’ Instead it was the view that the Council would get far more reactions and advice if the tentative framework was presented. This proposal provided a specific context in which the discussion could take place. It is this framework, which has received so much attention in the local press. This framework represents one of many alternatives and the entire matter is still open.

The letter continues but is not particularly pertinent to what is going.

I responded to Corbally’s letter with a 9-page letter that revealed the whole development as I had seen it occur and pressed for a study of the aim of the university and the determination of our aims and objectives of what the organization as it should be to first achieve those aims. I recommended two possibilities. One, the strengthening of the present College of Arts and Sciences to the ideal Federation of Colleges and part of this letter I would like to read to you because I feel that this played a very important by not clearly enunciated part in many of the operations that have gone on in this whole debate. This then is a quote from part of my letter to Corbally:

Among the very important realities, which exist in the actual arena, are loyalties. In working with faculty, especially in the climate of review of chairmen, I see this struggle between conflicting loyalties many times. In these instances my experience is reassuring concerning the sense of values of the faculty and their fundamental objectivity when they’ve had the chance to gather the facts and think through a problem. Most faculty members, when facing important issues, are able to separate loyalties and give objective opinions. In the problems of academic reorganization, we all must be aware of the natural law by which we try to separate. Unfortunately, the Lantern hinting Ohio State may eliminate part of the Commerce colleges causes the emergence of two loyalties and many faculty members in opposition to the plan objected. Of course I can only speak for the faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences since their reactions have been reported to me. One of these loyalties is to me as a dean and in some instances also as a person. Damned as a dean may be by faculty members, in some situations he is a symbol worth protecting when attacked from the outside. Some friends saw this whole reorganization plan as a scheme to get rid of Fuller. Others who are less suspicious felt that it should be opposed out of loyalty to me.
second loyalty is with the College of Arts and Sciences, an organization which seems to be working fairly well and in which faculty had been able to develop and realize some of their aspirations. The third loyalty I’m convinced is the most important one in the showdown. That is the loyalty of the faculty of the College of the Arts and Sciences to the concept of a liberal education and its importance to our students in developing citizens. I believe that with patience the faculty can separate these three loyalties in their thinking and make judgments about the best course of action to promote a liberal education. However the reaction to the unfortunate publicity on academic reorganization has raised this delicate problem. If it is not handled well, the loyalty to a college and a dean in at least two of the colleges concerned may lead to a harmful impasse.

As you see, I have many concerns, which have been aroused by events related to the study of academic reorganization. I hope that the Council on Academic Affairs will evaluate my opinion and consider taking the following course of action or something comparable variation of it, to avoid an impasse or an unsatisfactory solution to a very important problem of academic reorganization. In summary, in a covering letter to the Phase One report of the Permanent Planning Committee, President Fawcett wrote, “As we reflect on the history of the Ohio State University, its present stature, and the changing role of a large and diverse university attempting to posture itself for the task of the future, it is clear that our goals and objectives should be reexamined.” No real examination has taken place. I believe that the best organizational pattern reflects the organization rather than determine it. If we should redefine our educational goals it would be much easier to reach an agreement on the administrative structure to carry them out. Concentration on structure with reference to basic educational goals reduces the chance of acceptance on any new plan because of the necessity of change is not evident or urgent, and hence there is no conviction that the new system will be better than the status quo. We are now in the midst of the study of academic reorganization. It is logical that our first changes should be focused on two pressing problems: the continued rapid increase in enrollments which threatened to cause a breakdown in the organization; and the debilitating fragmentation of departments interested in the biological sciences. Creation of the University College and the College of Biological Sciences has been a partial solution to these problems. As yet they have not been integrated into our organization. They have also created transferability and the honors program. Approval of the College of Biological Science has also introduced a new concept in our organizational pattern: autonomous, limited, subject-oriented undergraduate colleges whose names suggest their professionalization. Its existence also suggests the pattern for further reorganization described in the president’s Permanent Planning Committee report. It creates four or more subject-oriented colleges encompassing the departments traditionally in the college of Arts and Sciences. In the view of the existing College of Biological Sciences the plan has an appealing symmetry. It assumes that the faculty are inhibited by present college boundaries from communicating with each other on professional matters of common interest and that the communication will be improved by subject groupings.
I believe the faculty talked with whom they wished regardless of administrative boundaries and that mere symmetry has no virtue in organization. I believe that our organizational study should be aimed at solving tough problems, not minor and imagined ones. In pursuing this study of the academic reorganization, I hope that the Council on Academic Affairs will draw up goals designed to help us educate our students so that they will become skilled in solving modern problems such as automation, urbanization, integration, pollution, and peace for the whole of the earth. In doing this I suggest that Council call on the many active groups on campus, the departments, schools, councils, institutes, centers, who then review their own goals that are to benefit their students to carry out their functions.”

Now going back to the original document: “By this time the pace of discussions had quickened. The Executive Committee could not be gotten together under normal circumstances, and one Monday evening several of us met at my home to have a long discussion about what we are trying to do. It was obviously that within the College of Arts and Sciences Executive Committee there was a difference of opinion as to the merits of the plan being discussed by the Council on Academic Affairs. At this time, Jack Corbally made a speech to the AAUP. This made the headlines and as you can imagine many people looked very carefully at it to see what he was saying or implying in discussing the reorganization. Depending on what part of the speech you selected as the point of departure, you could get various interpretations. In general the speech was a good one in turning no threats, but some people did manage to extract some parts and get the idea that the Council on Instruction had already arrived at a solution and were very worried with the way things were going. I find in my notes at this time many memoranda and comments which were prepared and which were never used because some of the information we were getting by feedback from the discussions were changing rapidly.

On March 7, a meeting of the Executive Committee was held to discuss academic reorganization. By this time, the Executive Committee somewhat reluctantly had reached the conclusion that some of the reorganization along the line suggested by the Council on Academic Affairs was probably going to occur. We were now striving to develop the elements of any reorganization, which would be necessary to insure a quality liberal education. Out of this meeting came seven items called organizational guidelines to insure quality education. I’ll read them: ‘One, a curriculum committee for undergraduate liberal education shared by an administrative head charged with promoting liberal education. Two, an administrative head whose principal role is to develop the liberal education. Three, a budget for liberal education controlled by the administrative head. Four, a counseling system with its related records in placement divisions that serves liberal education. Five, an honors program which embraces all aspects of liberal education. Six, Council to encourage the development of interdisciplinary area programs between all academic areas of the university. Seven, use of joint and interdisciplinary appointments to promote inner changes between all academic areas of the university.’ This then was hammered out in the executive committee meeting agreed to by the faculty. As you can see it aims at some of the things that concerned me at the moment. It was the basis on which we were going to attempt to move into the future.

On March 14 a Faculty Council meeting was held at which the Council on Academic Affairs presented their proposal. There was a good deal of resentment but
there had not been a chance to look at the document and react to it before it was presented to the Faculty Council. When the document was finally presented, there were not many surprises. As far as the Council on Arts and Sciences was concerned, six of the items that we’d indicated as necessary in any organizational pattern to assure that quality liberal education were there.

---End of Side 2---

The battle henceforth concentrated on trying to get some sort of compromise on the items having to do with the administrative head whose principal role was the development of liberal education. On the Faculty Council floor they suggested that those departments that were to be pulled together in the new combination have a chance to meet together with the Council on Academic Affairs and explain some of their worries and have a chance to react to the plan. This set of meetings was set up by Corbally because the only item left that we needed to fight for was the administrative head whose principal role was the development of liberal education. Because it would look like I might be fighting for a job for myself, it was decided that the Executive Committee would have an ad hoc committee to represent it henceforth in discussions with the Academic Council and Academic Affairs. This small committee will immediately start to have meetings and then immediately started to come back to the Executive Committees with ideas and responses to questions. They also set up meetings with the Council on Academic Affairs. Numerous substitute proposals came into the picture. Numerous variations and modifications of the original proposal were considered. Discussions went around and around in many groups and additional meetings are held.

On April 17 I sent a document summarizing my position to the faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences. Up to that time I’d been doing my best to promote dialogue between the various groups and had done very little in expressing my position except to the Executive Committee. The last paragraph will show my position at that time. ‘To the best of my ability I shall work toward defining the roles of the deans of the colleges and to coordinate the deans and roles to satisfy the needs of graduate and professional education and at the same time the needs of liberal education. If I’m unsuccessful in achieving this before the proposal is voted on by the Faculty Council, I’m still prepared to support this. I believe that the proposed plan is a considerably better plan for the development of a liberal education and the university that the one under which we are now operating. Therefore I hope you will be willing to support it as well.’

As you can imagine considering the vast differences of opinion on whether we should try to vote down the plan or seek for modification of a substitute plan in the faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences, this stand produced marked reactions. Some of my friends shook their heads in dismay, saying that for the first time I had taken a position they couldn’t support and couldn’t understand. Some of my best enemies were enthusiastic about my position and praised me for it. Of course there were friends and enemies on both sides, but I was fascinated to see some of the original reactions to my position.

On the 11th of April, the next morning of the Faculty Council, at which discussion was started on the proposal many countercurrents came before the meeting. The Executive Committee had suggested postponement to allow further discussion
between many concerned people and the Council on Academic Affairs. The head of Council had agreed to suggest this to the Faculty Council and a postponement of action was agreed to. One development that was interest showing human nature was the fact that Jack Corbally, who had taken a strong stand, ‘take it or leave it’ attitude toward the proposal gracefully, retreated from this attitude. He admitted that we should search for some compromise before facing the final vote. In my mind there was general sense that something would happen even thought there was mainly disagreement expressed with the proposal. From the 11th until the 26th of April, when the meeting was to reconvene, a great deal of activity took place. Our delegates to the Faculty Council were working along one line and with the Executive Committee along slightly took place. Our delegates to the Faculty Council were working along one line and with the Executive Committee along slightly different lines. Part of my problem was to try and bring them together. I was partially successful in this, but the joint meeting resulted in a proposal, which Jastram presented to the Faculty Council on the 26th. On the 26th, Jastram presented several motions, which were along the lines that had jointly been agreed to. The motions, however, were somewhat muddy. A few of them passed and have been incorporated into the core. The basic one for a dean of the undergraduate programs in the College of Arts and Sciences was defeated. We were still fighting the battle for the person responsible for liberal education. That is the situation as of the moment except for all of the activity which is going on in preparation for the meeting on May 9th.” That’s the end of my document.

UNDERWOOD: So this was all written before the final decision, which took place on? Do you remember what time that decision came?

FULLER: It was scheduled on May 9th. Whether that was then the decision was made I’m not sure. I’ll have to look it up.

UNDERWOOD: The final decision left off the dean for liberal education.

FULLER: Yes. Now let’s talk. That is the kind of background, which I couldn’t possibly recall, but I’ll dig some more. Right now let me say two or three things. The final document did, as I remember, also create the College of Art, and so there were five. University College remained intact as a separate unit reporting directly to the President. Biological Sciences became one of the five.

The idea came up for considerable discussion of somebody in the president’s office, who would be the dean for liberal arts, liberal education, and who would have, as I felt was necessary, budget control. One of the things, which had impressed me, was that I had a great deal of flexibility with the budget. Once we argued and agreed upon a budget, I could move money from one department to another. I kept them informed but I never had any trouble doing it. You just had to know what was going on. I felt that this was a very healthy thing because I felt the dean was close to what was going on and he learned the chairmen who were asking for unrealistic things and the chairmen who had really thought things out and came into the conclusion that he needed some money or he didn’t. I’m firmly of the opinion that this is a healthy situation and one that would strengthen the university, this kind of flexibility that the deans had, and I think others
had the same privileges as I did. What that meant was that if you had somebody in the president’s office, he would be looking at a college in talking with other people in making decisions, working for a liberal education. Once the budget was approved, we would try to do the same thing with various deans of the college, and yet we would keep together the curriculum and the honors program, the placement program, but most of all it was the curriculum, so that we would develop a curriculum that would focus toward a liberal education. If not, divide them into five separate strong pushes for biological, physical, and social sciences. We felt that without that budget under control, there would not be the need, the pressure, to keep this thing really going down the strong, liberal education way. That was the thing that I was fighting for. I got defeated on that obviously.

There was a compromise, which was interesting. They did decide on a dean of the Colleges of the Arts and Sciences which would keep all the student records and theoretically would have action in charge of the curriculum and the honor program and so forth, advising. That’s in existence now. But I think it’s very interesting to see what’s happening to the people who’ve taken that job. It’s exactly what I expected. They take the job on and they’ve had some fine people, doing a good job with that aspect of the problem, but they are constantly frustrated because they have no control, no say in the budget. I had in my own mind arrived at a conclusion years ago that one of the worst positions in most universities was dean of the graduate school because he has lots of prestige and lots of jobs of great importance to do but he has no budget, no control. That’s true in most of these positions. It’s typical and I was afraid the same thing was going to happen here because of the lack of budget control. But, this was the compromise, to try to keep that segment together in the College of Arts and Sciences. The so-called “Super Dean” was defeated and I think the college has suffered some because of this. I don’t really know. I think you’d have to make a very thorough study to know what the loss was. We did have trouble-attracting faculty in certain departments for some time because of the breakup.

UNDERWOOD: Under the present structure, if a dean has need for some money other than that which was budgeted to him or her, they have to go down to the office of Academic Affairs for that.

FULLER: And of course, that does another thing which is pretty obvious when you stop to think about it. Now you’ve got 4 more deans than you had before reporting to the office, and it now means that the office of the Provost, which is already burdened with too much just keeps getting more and more stacked on his desk. At one time this was very bad in the 1960’s because the Provost was looking for a new job. So when I left, there were four new deans and two associate deans. We’re dealing with the faculty problems, primarily the budget problems by now. Each of the new deans had either an associate dean or an assistant dean, so we had four more and of course then we had the whole battery below that: new secretaries, new budget officers. So it was not a slimming of the organization.

UNDERWOOD: I was kind of curious on the liberal education aspect. In the present structure, I’ve noticed in the last couple of years a concern about whether students are
actually getting the proper liberal education or not. For example you now have rules that students are limited in the number of 200 level courses that they can take. You’ve had students graduate who have had no more than 200 or 300 level courses. Others have obviously tried to do something about improving the liberal arts program offered. Do you feel that this is a problem that has evolved because of this new structure, that is, the fact that there is no “Super Dean” with the budget? Would that have helped in this situation?

FULLER: I think it would have helped, but let me try to cast a broader picture. I think this is a countrywide movement. It wasn’t just Ohio State. The breakdown of liberal education took place countrywide and the attempt to revive it has taken place countrywide. All I would say is that it might not have gone downhill as rapidly had there been this strength at the top administration, and it might have come back a lot faster, had there been this strength. I think that we took a strong swing away and we’re fighting desperately to get back. I think neither would have taken quite as big a swing had there not been simultaneously a similar movement nationwide, so I wouldn’t blame this organization for that big change.

UNDERWOOD: Certainly I’ve noticed that the students today are primarily professionally oriented. They’re not terribly interested in the old liberal education idea. They don’t care about whether they can quote Shakespeare or anything else. They want to know what will further them in their jobs. Again, to come back to that question, is any kind of organization going to cope with that kind of situation?

FULLER: I think the university if it’s really a top-notch university has to. It’s their rules and regulations and they have to take a strong stand or else their students will go downhill. As you know people in top jobs and industry are saying it’s the liberal education that we need. These are the ones we want, the people who can think, because things are changing so rapidly. What you learn today is going to be obsolete; so you’d better learn how to learn and how to solve problems, not how to use the concepts and facts of today necessarily as the God-given truth.

This is the story that may seem unrelated but you will see it. I’ve got an 8 year old. We decided to send her to the local public school the first year because there’s not kid her age on the block, anywhere near her age. We thought it was very important for her, being that she’s essentially an only child. My oldest one is 40 and then you go down into the 30s and then you jump down to 8. So we did this. She made a lot of friends. We discovered that she was not making a lot of headway; she did not have a particularly good teacher, and we discovered that teacher was going to be her teacher in the second grade as well as the first. We moved her to Wellington school. She fought it. She said, “Why didn’t you let me know. I want to be with my friends.” Typical reaction. She went to Wellington and after a couple weeks she began to show that she was having a good time and enjoying it. A few days, maybe a month after she had started, I was take her to school and she said, “Daddy, I’m sure glad that you know what I need better than I do.” I said, “What do you mean?” She said, “Well, Wellington, it’s wonderful. I’m learning so much and I’m having a wonderful time. Its nice parents know sometimes what their children ought to have.” Here it is. These kids don’t know the importance of a
liberal education. They do know that it’s important to have a job and how do you get a job? There it is.

UNDERWOOD: I keep trying to persuade the students around here that one of the most useful things that a reporter or that anybody could have is a mind full of trivia. They think I’m joking. I’m not joking. The fact that you don’t have to take time out to go look something up, that you can remember. But they don’t get the point. If somebody makes a speech and there’s a quote and you can recognize it, you get the significance of what they’re saying. You don’t have to go and ask. This sort of thing they don’t understand.

FULLER: That’s why I think Journalism always had a strong place in college education. It did two things. It combined what was obviously practical, a job and insisted on a liberal education. One of the things I tried to push when I was in Farleigh-Dickinson was the idea of more internships, more companies taking our students so that they can be working for a company and simultaneously taking courses. They didn’t think that these two were disassociated. They began to see the importance.

UNDERWOOD: Actually what you wound up with in the compromise did everything you wanted except the guts, the “Super Dean” of the budget.

FULLER: That’s right. And it means that now the liberal education concept, its real preservation is in the hands of two somewhat remote groups, the faculty and the dean of the Colleges of Arts and Sciences and the Provost. The Provost office has so much else to do that you can see that not too much attention is paid to that. Some of those deans that took over the colleges of Arts and Sciences were strong people. They found that it was a very difficult problem to solve. If it looks good to us we’ll do it, but we’ll only do it if we have a little bit of time.