

[ The CIA asked University of California administrator Earl Clinton Bolton, who was spending some time at CIA headquarters, to suggest ideas on how to improve relations between the Agency and academia. ]

[Academia 01, p.1](#)

5 August 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: [deleted]

SUBJECT: Agency-Academic Relations

This is an attempt to make some observations and suggestions about Agency-academic relations. In doing so I am grateful for the stimulus furnished by your outline. Although I believe I have addressed myself to most of the questions you have raised I have done so in free form rather than by a point by point consideration. I have also used "head notes" for purposes of organization and in an attempt to highlight the crucial questions in the subject.

**Justifying an Agency-Academic Relationship:** Let me stress at the outset that I believe Agency-academic relations are for the most part very good. Though I have no quantitative data to support such a conclusion my guess is that 99% of the members of the academy would be willing to assist the Agency if properly and skillfully approached, and that only a small fraction of that other 1% would be angered by an invitation to assist or would attempt to embarrass the Agency in any way.

However, on occasion when a university or an individual has acknowledged any contact with the Agency there has been some outcry by a few vocal members of the academic community.

In a later part of this paper I suggest "an affirmative program" designed to improve the Agency's reputation in academic circles and thus decrease the risks (costs) of association with the Agency. However, until either the passage of time or an image bolstering plan changes the cliches of the moment an educational institution or individual electing to assist the Agency may be on the defensive.

In my view the best way to defend association with the Agency when such a defense is necessary is:

1. By relating work for the Agency to one of the traditional functions of a university; and

[Academia 01, p.2](#)

2. By basing the defense or rejoinder on long established academic values.

**The Functions of a University:** There is almost universal agreement that universities do (and properly should) engage in the following basic functions:

1. The preservation and transmission of knowledge to their constituency (i.e. the so-called **teaching** function); and
2. The testing of that which is currently accepted as "truth" and the discovery of new truth (i.e. the **research** function); and
3. The performance for society's benefit of those functions which can best (or exclusively) be performed by a university (i.e. the **public service** function)

Authorities will differ as to whether a sub-function e.g. the training of a leadership elite to be innovative and responsive should be included under "1" or "3" above, but there is little disagreement that what higher education is all about is encompassed within these general goals.

The Agency should phrase its requests to academia in such a way that the service being sought relates as clearly and directly as possible to one of these traditional functions and when necessary the university and individual scholar should explain involvement with the Agency as a contribution to one of these proper academic goals. It should also be stressed that when an apologia is necessary it can best be made: (1) by some distant academic who is not under attack, (2) in a "respectable" publication of general circulation (e.g. Harpers, Saturday Review, Vital Speeches, etc.), and (3) with full use of the jargon of the academy (as illustrated below).

**Traditional Mores of the Academic:** Every profession develops a certain ethical or philosophical penumbra which is more or less sacred and which protects from attack the most vulnerable or least understood rites of that profession. This body of doctrine usually develops by "common law" and is subsequently codified. (Incidentally the codified dogma never precisely articulates the full scope of the protective doctrines; hence there is sufficient vagueness in the total traditions of the profession to provide a skillful polemicist with formidable ammunition for defense.)

### [Academia 01, p.3](#)

Two doctrines fiercely protected by the academy are "academic freedom" and "privilege and tenure." The former is the absolute right of the scholar to investigate any subject within his competence, in any lawful way, at any time. The latter doctrine holds that a fully initiated member of the profession has certain irrevocable privileges, including but not limited to, the right to continue his association with the university until retirement without fear of termination except for a very few egregious offenses.

When attacked for aiding the Agency the academic (or institution) should base a rejoinder on these sacred doctrines. For example, a professor's right to undertake classified research is unassailable if he stands on the ground of academic freedom and his privileges as a scholar. And he should be reminded that although his derogators may undertake a good deal of no loud rhetoric they really cannot impair his tenure.

**Contracts and Grants:** I have discussed [several words deleted] the matter of research arrangement between the Agency and academic world. Here are some of my further ideas on the subject.

1. Shouldn't the Agency have an insulator such as Rand or IDA? Such entities have quite good acceptance in academia, do excellent work and provide real protection against "blow back." Such an independent corporation should of course have a ringing name (e.g. Institute for a Free Society), should do work for the entire intelligence community, and should really have a sufficiently independent existence so that it can take the heat on some projects if necessary.
2. In my opinion we are in a cycle in which we are moving away from institutional involvement in classified contracts toward a time when no classified research will be allowed on campus even by a professor acting on his own. The Agency might want to try to anticipate this trend by offering off-campus leased space to scholars doing work for the Agency.

#### [Academia 01, p.4](#)

3. The indirect cost rate which is allowed by BOB Circular A-21 is regarded by academic people as being unfair to the university. This "overhead" rate does not allow adequate recovery of actual hidden costs. Your contracting officer ought to be encouraged to adjust the established rate upward by a point or two as an incentive to institutions of higher education to take work.
4. As a general rule contracts and grants should be made only in response to proposals which "originate" with the principal investigator on the campus. The real initiative might be with the Agency but the apparent or record launching of the research should, wherever possible, emanate from the campus.
5. (Here is a declaration against interest.) It seems to me that there are few instances in which it is indispensable or even necessary to contract with an academic entity rather than the principal investigator directly. Therefore because of the increased complexity of the transaction of the institution is involved I would suggest that virtually all of your contracts and grants be made directly to the individual. Perhaps personal service agreements could be used to replace traditional contracts and grants for sponsored research.
6. Would it be possible to substitute some new designations for words such as "classified," "secret," "confidential," etc? Perhaps labels such as "limited access research," "not to be discussed with others without prior permission of the Agency," etc. could be used. My point is that such terms as classified research have become so emotionally charged that they provoke an irrational response before substantive content is even

considered.

### [Academia 01, p.5](#)

**"The Image": An Affirmative Program:** Good public relations means excellent performance publicly appreciated. Because of the nature of the Agency's work discussions about performance must be limited, and efforts to gain public appreciation minimized. However I think it is possible to improve acceptance among that "public" which is the academic world.

To accomplish such a result would require a positive, long-term public relations plan. My impression is that the Agency has excellent press relations, but is not affirmatively interested (probably intentionally) in overall public relations. As to the academic community I would suggest that a very well considered, affirmative public relations program be developed.

The evolution of a public relations plan follows well recognized steps. These steps are suggested by the following questions.

1. How do we appear to the target group (academia) today?
2. How do we want to appear to that target group five years hence?
3. What steps should we take to get from phase 1 to 2?

It is of course unlikely that the goal in 3 above will just happen by accident; the goal is obviously more likely to be reached if there is a plan.

It is difficult to suggest implementing techniques without first knowing the precise future image the Agency would like to have in the academic world. However, I believe the following suggestions would generally improve that image among academicians.

1. Follow a plan of emphasizing that CIA is a member of the national security community (rather than the intelligence community) and stress the great number of other agencies with which the Agency is allied in advancing national interests. Several such agencies (FBI, AEC, Secret Service, State Department, etc.) have spent much time, money and thought on telling their story. In my view the Agency will benefit by some "transfer" effect.

### [Academia 01, p.6](#)

2. Establish at Yale the Walter Bedell Smith or William J. Donovan Lectures or Chair on Intelligence as an Instrument of National Policy. (Try in as many ways as possible to establish the study of intelligence as a legitimate and important field of inquiry for the academic scholar.)
3. Invite qualified and sympathetic scholars to take their sabbaticals at the Agency. They

would work not as consultants, for that is a very different function, but on subjects and in a manner traditionally followed by a professor on his sabbatical.

4. Permit a few carefully nominated and selected doctoral candidates to spend a year at the Agency working on their dissertations. The unclassified materials in the library are a rich source of materials for genuine academic research. The candidate would of course have to recognize the Agency's right to review the finished document for accidental leaks.

5. Provide a handsomely funded post doctoral one-year opportunity for selected scholars. (The John McCone Fellowships?)

6. Publicize any effort of the Agency to make scarce materials available to scholars. (Could the story of the Hoover Institution -- Agency arrangement be told by a distinguished scholar of Chinese affairs in a publication of general interest to academics?)

7. Stress in recruiting, articles and speeches that the Agency is really a university without students and not a training school for spies. There is as much academic freedom **within** the walls of the building and among those competent on a given subject as on any campus I know. (I haven't detected the slightest tendency on the part of anyone to resist saying what he thinks.)

[Academia 01, p.7](#)

8. Encourage Agency representatives who attend academic meetings to clearly identify their affiliation.

9. Do all recruiting off campus and try to time these visits so that the probability of reaction is decreased e.g. during the summer, between semesters, after the last issue of the student paper is printed for the semester, etc.

[Back to home page](#)