

# BELOIT COLLEGE



BELOIT, WISCONSIN

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

31 October 1964

Dr. Wilmer Stratton  
Chemistry Department  
University of Illinois  
Urbana, Illinois

Dear Wilmer:

Here's my summary of the MACTLAC session for which I was recorder. I've sent a carbon to Dick Ramette so he can send you any revisions he would like to have made. I thought the Lake Forest meeting was a great success. You and the discussion leaders had a lot to do with this outcome.

Best regards,

Edward C. Fuller

1964 MACTLAC MEETING

Report of the 4-A Discussion Group

10/31/64

Faculty and Student Research in Liberal Arts Colleges

Discussion Leader: Richard Ramette, Carleton College

Resource Person: James E. Finholt, Carleton College

Recorder: Edward C. Fuller, Beloit College

The following questions were raised by the discussion leader. May intensive experimental work done by a college teacher sap his energies which might be more profitably employed in keeping abreast of chemical literature? Does the desire for continuing financial support for a research project prejudice the teacher in favor of getting publishable results rather than providing the best experience for his students? Do students have to fit in to a research project in a way which narrows their outlook on chemistry as a whole? Can a professor in a liberal arts college make a truly worthwhile contribution to the discovery of new knowledge?

As a basis for discussion, the leader suggested a spectrum of the purposes of scholarly work ranging from great emphasis on research (on the left) to maximum emphasis on professional growth in field, non-provincial experience, self-respect as a chemist, setting a scholarly example for students, carrying over into one's teaching the knowledge and attitudes developed from research, emphasizing research on subject matter consistent with courses taught, using the results of research in courses taught, directing one's efforts only toward teaching (on the right).

There was general agreement that scholarly work might well include writing textbooks, revising course notes and syllabi, and devising new laboratory experiments as well as seeking for new knowledge in the laboratory. No teacher can engage in all of these activities and each must determine the ways which will be most valuable to him in keeping his intellectual vitality at a high level.

Experience in research is valuable to a student if he can become fairly intensively involved - one afternoon per week is generally not much good, while full-time summer programs are especially successful. Undergraduate research is good preparation for graduate work, though the former has quite different goals from the latter. Though publishable results are of little import to the student, the teacher must have them if he is to get continuing financial support from granting agencies. Getting a part of a chemistry teacher's salary paid by a research grant may enable a college to have a larger staff in chemistry.

Wilmer Stratton

31 October 1964

In summary, every chemistry teacher in a liberal arts college must struggle to keep intellectually alive. If he likes research for its own sake he should do it; if he likes involving students in research projects, he should get them into his lab; if he prefers to use his ~~extra~~curricular time to read current literature and to revise his courses, he should do this. The prime requisite is that he keep growing in his understanding of chemistry. Groups such as MACTLAC should seek new ways of supporting all such activities.

ECF