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## A Letter from the President of AGLS

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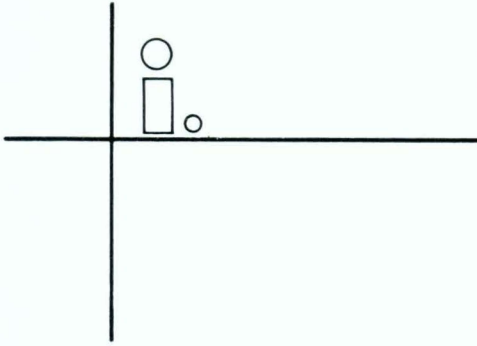
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## A Letter from the President of AGLS

Most of us who are members of The Association for General and Liberal Studies maintain steadfastly that the college curriculum should pursue a goal beyond that of preparing the student for his professional career. We think that education must do more than turn out efficient cogs for the creation of new knowledge, for the production of material goods, and for the conduct of government. We believe that men are, or should be, more than careers; hopefully they are also intelligent citizens who are perceptively aware of their cultural heritage, who diligently comprehend ethical and social values, and who understand and respect both the powers and the limitations of twentieth century science and technology.

Now, of course, many of our colleagues who are not members of AGLS will subscribe to this same ideology concerning the aims of education. Yet despite the espousal of a credo for general education by us and our colleagues, the real thrust of our educational enterprise is otherwise. Our colleges and universities function to emphasize differences rather than commonalities in our scholarly orientations. Grants and special support for research and course improvement are more easily obtained when the project is more narrowly defined. And academia abounds with professional societies most of which serve the concerns of relatively narrow disciplines. For example, in physics one easily finds a half dozen societies designed to minister to his particular interests, broadly or narrowly but all within physics; moreover, there are at least an equal number of physics journals which one might reasonably be expected to take. And in the above I have not intended to include certain broader but still provincial organizations such as The American Association for the Advancement of Science or the Federation of Atomic Scientists. Certainly AGLS members will have little difficulty in describing a similar abundance of professional societies belonging to their own disciplines.

Yet, in this well-organized climate within which higher education operates, we find campus unrest and we hear charges that our courses are irrelevant. In view of the great social inertia which perennially impedes solution of basic human problems—war, hunger, disease, ignorance, tyranny, crime—perhaps the education that we purvey is irrelevant. But no one, I think, will maintain that basic human problems have reasonable solutions which do not involve appropriate education as an essential ingredient. The question then is not *can* but *how can* education be made relevant.

It is here that the generalist must have his day. What we require is not that the education of our citizens be more specialized and abstract, but that it be more mundane, interrelated, and applicable to the daily life of the whole man. The Association for General and Liberal Studies is a unique professional society which intends to foster interrelation, meaning, and relevance. So perhaps we have a highly significant role to play in response to the present ferment in higher education. This is our challenge and we would all like to meet it.

But AGLS in order to be most effective will need the collective wisdom of all its members. May I therefore invite you to correspond with me and/or other members of the Executive Committee to give us your views of how to make AGLS a vital force in educational reform? This is your organization and we want its meetings, its publications, and its other functions to be as responsive as possible to your needs.

Malcolm Correll,  
University of Colorado  
President

