

“The Present Governance Structure”

[Memo to the Seminary Relations Committee of Christ Seminary-Seminex
March 10, 1980]

Robert W. Bertram

Date: 10 March 1980
To: Seminary Relations Committee
From: Robert Bertram
Re: Present governance structure

General weaknesses of the goal-setting process

1. By leaving the goal-setting to whoever takes the initiative for that, rather than to those whom the community elects as its delegates, we tend to exclude those members of the community who - often precisely because of their competence and dedication - are already too bound by other responsibilities to be able to initiate still another assignment for themselves. But if instead they are elected to such an assignment by their peers, they are more apt to undertake this new responsibility.
2. Conversely, if only those can set goals who are in a position to see those goals through to completion, then that takes time and energy for administration way beyond the responsibilities they already have - e.g., as teachers and students. Under these circumstances what actually tends to happen is that the original goal-setting is left more and more to administrators whose very job-descriptions are already set up precisely for such goal implementation. In short, this tends to centralization and elitism.
3. To the extent that that occurs, the community as a whole has less and less responsibility for setting its goals at first hand. The trouble is, such community-affecting goals cannot be implemented by administrators alone - unless perhaps more and more members of the community are redeployed as administrators. So eventually the community at large does have to be appealed to, to help implement those goals after all, goals which the community had a relatively small part in setting.
4. At that late point in the process community members may not feel much ownership in the task. The temptation then is to coerce their cooperation by recourse to authoritarian measures.

In the present Seminary Relations Committee

1. the concern seems to be not that the goals are being inadequately administered--hardly! -- but rather that the goals are already too predetermined by the time the committee members (who have been elected by the community) enter the process.
2. So the real problem is not even this: are the existing goals good or bad (they might actually be excellent) but rather whose goals are they? Whose all?

3. The need, therefore, would seem to be that the committee itself should be responsible for identifying the most basic seminary relations goals in hopes that a sense of community investment in those goals might be re-rooted and broadened.

4. To find ways to make that happen will require determination and, at least as important, patience.