

# Agnew Urges De-Emphasis of College Degree

By John Hanrahan  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Vice President Spiro T. Agnew last night criticized the nation's emphasis on higher education as the key to success and called for restoring the manual arts "to their rightful place of esteem."

The emphasis on college degrees has helped cause campus unrest and has alienated many young people, Agnew said, in that it has "prolonged the period of dependency . . . disenfranchised our young adults . . . discriminated against non-college youth and directed others, in disregard of their desires, into higher education . . ."

Agnew called for the government, business and academic communities and parents to reorder their thinking to bring about "major academic reform" by de-emphasizing the need for a college degree to achieve a good life.

In a speech prepared for delivery in Pikesville, Md., to a dinner of Theodore S. Agnew Scholarship Fund, named for his father, the Vice President said that the Nixon administration "is taking a hard look at youth policies."

"The educational community should ask whether encouraging ever-increasing numbers of young people to attend college—when 40 per cent already do—benefits the lower half of the intelligence scale," Agnew said.

"We should question whether society's demand for college attendance compounds social antagonisms between those who go and those who do not. For if everyone is expected to attend college, life will only be harder on those who simply cannot achieve in an academic setting."

Agnew warned that "a revolutionary look at our institu-

ate work should be accelerated or spaced out over the years, whether more money should be invested in adult education and enrichment and whether existing primary and secondary school programs are "creating enough outstanding citizens."

"The answers require courage and cooperation from every sector of our society," Agnew said. "There is little point in questioning the value of graduate degrees in the soft sciences if businessmen continue to treat these degrees as keys to open the inner doors to better jobs."

"There is no point in discussing black studies without an objective reordering of educational priorities by the black community. There is no hope for major academic reform without the support of America's academicians. There is no chance for change if parents revere the college degree as a symbol of their parental success . . ."

"All too many" students now in college, Agnew said, "have little interest, ability and use for what constitutes a college education." Denied participation in the "real community, the youth seeks to politicize the only community he has—the academic one," Agnew said.

Many of these students, Agnew said, "would be better off with a high-level vocational education which is closely linked to a work program which gives scope to their needs for physical activity and visible, tangible achievement."

Agnew criticized demands for black studies, black dormitories, special black grading systems as often being "smoke-screens, evading the basic failure in black primary and secondary education." Many black college students "have been admitted to college just because they came from inner city ghettos," he said.

tions of education" is necessary in order to prevent "revolution within our educational community." He said society should be prepared "to ask daring questions . . . (to) consider bold solutions."

"We have neglected vocational and technical education for the elegant ornament of liberal arts," Agnew said. "Certainly the social sciences are important but they are not sacrosanct. And in our society, which needs skilled labor, we must restore the manual arts to their rightful place of esteem."

Repeating a theme he used as governor of Maryland, the Vice President said the nation should ask itself whether the four-year college degree is necessary in all cases, whether there are better ways to combine secondary and undergraduate programs, whether gradu-