There is no endeavor in the world that is more exhilarating and rewarding than being a member of a qualified and dedicated Graphic Design faculty working together as a team with students who are committed, talented and eager to learn. The situation begins with faculty members as students tend to mirror their instructors. The quality of faculty usually originates with the Department or Program Head based on an assumption that one good person recruits another. A noteworthy and productive educational program lasts only as long as it is recognized and supported by the administration. These are the determinates of effective education rather than money, equipment, space or the number of students or reputation of teachers or schools.

There are few good programs in Graphic Design in this country and some of the reasons are that too many teachers are themselves graduates of weak educational programs; poor instruction and curriculum usually result in graduates who are ineffectual at teaching. Administrators do not always recognize instructional abilities because they are hired mainly for fiscal or management skills. They often hire, appoint or promote unqualified people to educational positions. Within universities, teachers are more likely to be hired on the basis of academic rather than professional credentials or proven teaching abilities. Largely because of financial pressures, the educational system frequently adopts values and operates in a manner which is more consistent with business rather than educational objectives. Great improvements in education could be realized without any additional funds by simply changing institutional policies and practices.
My opinion is that there is nothing wrong with American students. Given a good learning environment, a sound curriculum, high performance standards and competent instruction, there are many students who are committed, talented, productive and deserving of a better education than most are receiving. The problems are with the educational system itself, and the quality of instruction. It has proven impossible in most situations for individuals or faculty as a whole to bring about the required reforms within their institutions. There needs to be a concerted effort to improve the quality of Graphic Design education. To accomplish this, there has to be the combined support from professionals and educators at large. Many teachers are required to function under nearly impossible conditions related to insufficient number of faculty, inadequate space, low operating budgets and institutional policies that are inhibitive to achieving educational goals.

Professional organizations such as the American Institute of Graphic Arts and International Design Center combined with educational organizations such as the National Association of Schools of Art and Design and the Graphic Design Education Association need to coordinate their efforts with educators toward a few defined goals. These goals might be considered as standards requisite for any educational program advertising itself as providing professional education in Graphic Design.

Despite working conditions in most schools, productive educational programs in Graphic Design can still be achieved by qualified and dedicated faculty. It is my intention to pass on experiences in teaching Graphic Design over a period of thirty-five years at a variety of educational institutions. It is hoped that my observations and experiences might inform or stimulate other Graphic Design teachers in a manner leading toward general improvement in the quality of Graphic Design education.

I have described step by step the evolution of problems from how they originated to final presentation. My purpose is not to instruct another teacher in how to do my problems, but rather to expose the process of how problems evolved with the hope that it might provide insight for other teachers to develop their own approach to design pedagogy.
My Teaching Years

During the summers while at Yale, I went back to Mandan, North Dakota. We lived with my wife’s parents and I taught watercolor and drawing classes using the church basement as a classroom. Most of the students were older married women and they were enjoyable to work with because of their enthusiasm.

The one thing I was most certain of after my two years at Yale was that my talents were insufficient to consider professional design practice as a career. However, the education at Yale had been extremely beneficial for me; it opened my eyes to entirely new possibilities, one of which was teaching. I had observed excellent teachers, worked in an exciting new program taught by individuals of exceptional ability. I felt a “missionary” zeal to take some of this back to the midwest. It might well be that I moved toward teaching according to the old axiom, “Those who cannot become teachers.” It was many years later that I finally realized that for me, Graphic Design was a means and never an end. Graphic Design for me has been merely a vehicle to other things which are exciting and rewarding.

My strengths grew out of being exposed to a good educational background with high standards, being able to come to grips with the educational process and having a great deal of physical energy. I enjoyed the people contact of teaching and working in the community or profession. I was able to set goals, analyze, organize and project an educational program. Being endowed with dogged persistence was helpful but it often put me in jeopardy with administrators. I have been innovative, but no one could ever accuse me of being on the “cutting edge” of design. My inclinations have been to stay with basics, and to demand commitment and productivity from students in addition to a high level of performance.

My earlier education at the University of Nebraska and The Minneapolis School of Art was not negated by what had been learned at Yale. However, those experiences took on new meaning because of what I did learn at Yale. There are teachers and experiences at the University of Nebraska and The Minneapolis School of Art which have stayed with me and contributed to my later role as a teacher.

After graduation from Yale, I returned to The Minneapolis School of Art, and since I was the only teacher with a MFA, the president frequently consulted with me on filling new positions. I recommended those people from Yale that I felt had understood the program. The president hired several graduates from Yale within a three year period. Once they were on staff, I questioned and probed them for all the “understanding” I could get. At the same time, I was visiting Yale once or twice a year for more information.

I came back to The Minneapolis School of Art as a printmaker and established the Printmaking program at that institution. At the time, Advertising Design had the largest enrollment in the school but the program itself was faltering. The teacher in charge was elderly and out of step with changes then taking place in the profession. The president called me to his office and requested that I establish a Graphic Design program. That marked the beginning of my involvement with Graphic Design education.

Administrators and faculty seldom have the same priorities, and it is this dichotomy that is destructive to faculty morale and the rewards of teaching.”

Rob Roy Kelly
Another period of learning that was most important to my own education was the time spent working with Inge Druckrey and Hans Allemann at Kansas City. Both were graduates from Armin Hofmann’s program in Basel. My feeling is that what I learned from Albers was general, and what I learned from Hofmann’s program tended to be more explicit, and it also dealt specifically with Graphic Design. To this day, I feel greatly indebted to Inge and Hans for sharing their experience with me.

All through my education, I felt that school was something I had to do, but it was not something that I always wanted to do. My energies were directed more toward meeting demands of the teacher than toward learning. This does not mean that I was not involved in doing assignments, because in many instances, there was intense and sustained effort in doing assignments. However, this commitment was limited mainly to those assignments that appealed to me. And again, my focus was more on doing than on learning.

It is difficult to admit that it was not until the last year at Yale that I began to understand the role of education and significance of being a student. It was while going through the stacks at Sterling Library searching information for myself, and not something assigned by a teacher, that I finally realized that education was my responsibility. It is only in retrospect long after graduation that many of us begin to appreciate the opportunities and value of education.

Especially in Fine Art, there is a current emphasis on mood and feeling as instruments of artistic accomplishment. As a printmaker, I went through this phase. I worked until the wee hours, drinking coffee, smoking and playing classical music full blast. It was a wonderful feeling but it did not have a great deal to do with improving my artistic production. In retrospect, there might be some educational benefit from just doing or hyping yourself into an emotional frenzy, but learning is something different. Learning has more to do with criteria, defining visual objectives and interpreting content. It also has to do with understanding what can be taught and what cannot. Skills and criteria can be learned; creativity and concepts cannot be taught as they are inherent to each individual.

Later as a teacher, I observed many, many students making the same mistakes that I made regarding school. Most believed the objective was to please the teacher and make good grades. They did not realize that assignments are given for their benefit and not the teacher. If students found the proper perspective while still in school, they became motivated, worked independently, productivity increased and they were rewarding to have in class. Unfortunately, many students do not understand educational process until afterwards when it is too late to make the most of it. If students could only see education as an opportunity rather than as a requirement, their attitude would be different and they would gain so much more from the educational experience.
With exceptions, the majority of regional art schools were founded between 1870 and 1900. The oldest being the Philadelphia Academy of Art in the eighteenth century, Maryland Institute of Art at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Cooper Union only slightly later, Cranbrook Academy in the 1920s and Art Center in the 1930s.

The earliest directors at the Minneapolis School of Art had been European drawing masters or painters. During the daytime, the art school functioned as a finishing school for young ladies studying drawing, watercolor, oil painting and sculpture. At night, the studios were used to instruct trade-people in commercial engraving and illustration, lettering or calligraphy and other trade based skills. During the 1940s, Ed Kopietz was the Director at the Minneapolis School of Art, and he came from an advertising background.

In the 1950s at most art schools, there were no departments, and even when there were, the Director had absolute power over teachers, students and curriculum. I recall an occasion where I sassied the Registrar. I immediately found myself called to the Director’s office, and just as quickly, suspended for two days. The Director had total responsibility for the school, and made final decisions on everything. Other administrative officers were an Assistant Director, Business Manager and Registrar and three secretaries. The Business Manager with an assistant usually operated the school supply store in addition to keeping financial records.

“In education, doing is more important than hearing or telling about it.”
Rob Roy Kelly

At The Minneapolis School of Art many classes were taught in museum corridors with free standing dividers between classes. A substantial number of teachers were drawn from the ranks of local PWA and WPA artists who had practiced art full time under government subsidy from the early 1930s until WWII. The student body was composed mainly of veterans, and it was overwhelmingly older and male. Curricula was dominated by Fine Arts. Even as an Advertising major, many Fine Art courses were required. What we now call foundations, was a two year program consisting of classes in basic design, color, painting, sculpture, calligraphy and drawing. The only academic course was Art History, and this was taught by painting or drawing instructors. Most studio courses were required with few electives. The school awarded certificates to qualified students after four years. Tuition was between three or four hundred dollars for an academic year.

The school closed at 5pm and no students or teachers were allowed on the premises after hours, only museum security guards. As a student and young teacher, I regularly stuck a matchbook in a basement window lock of the Morrison building before leaving at the end of the day. High bushes hid the windows, and I would return in the evening or on weekends and crawl through the window to work. I knew when the guards made their rounds and hid in the rest room. After graduate school when I was a full fledged instructor, administration gave me a key to the building. I let students in evenings and weekends to do school work. This was reported by security guards to the administration and it was an ongoing source of irritation to administrators. Finally, the president told me to stop the practice of letting students in after hours or turn in my key. I rented a small office down the street from school and turned in my key.
For faculty members, the Director’s secretary was an especially important person as she was often the intermediary between them and the Director. The majority of teachers were practicing artists and none had a degree in art. There were many part-time teachers in both Fine Arts and Advertising Design. I believe that to some extent or another, this pattern applied to most art schools, especially those which were regional. It is my impression that art schools in large metropolitan areas such as New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles operated differently and did not change as abruptly as the regional schools.

The era began with the GI Bill. One of the principal benefits was a provision for post-secondary academic or technical education. This was an amazing piece of legislation and most appropriate for the times. The war had ended, and at the same time manufacturing plants ceased wartime production, cut the workforce and began retooling for peacetime markets. Millions of veterans were coming home and would be seeking employment. The GI Bill kept many veterans off the job market for two to four years allowing time for industry to make adjustments. At the end of the war, there were approximately nine million men and women eligible for educational benefits. The scale of the program significantly raised the level of American workers and created a unique educated middle class.

Veterans inundated almost every type of educational institution from technical schools, art and music academies, and public or private universities throughout the country. Art schools expanded staffs and facilities to accommodate the sudden influx of veterans with its accompanying prosperity.

The GI Bill created incredible incentive for growth in all higher education, and it was to have an impact on post-secondary education long after it was over.

Enrollment of veterans declined about 1952 as quickly as it had begun. Schools were over-committed and faced serious problems because of the sudden decrease in revenue. Some art schools closed down. This was when the Walker School of Art was phased out. Other schools were incorporated into rapidly expanding state systems of multi-campus institutions. A number of art schools saw accreditation as an avenue to survival, and they began to move in this direction. Accreditation changed single-purpose art schools forever.

With the move toward accreditation, a President replaced the Director as chief administrative officer, and most presidents came from academic backgrounds rather than art. At the Minneapolis School of Art, the new president, Wilhelmus B. Bryan, had formerly been the Dean of Humanities at Macalester College and Dean of Students at Princeton. The Assistant Director became Dean of the College, and in rapid succession, new administrative offices were established such as Director of Admissions, Dean of Students, Director of Alumni, Director of Business Affairs and Development Officer. Ever since, the process of adding new administrative functions and administrators has continued without abatement. Department Head positions were created, faculty committees took responsibility for most academic affairs, academic rank and tenure were installed, and academic courses introduced into the curriculum. Many academic teachers were borrowed from neighboring institutions and taught part-time at the art school.
The basic introductory program was reduced from two to one year, and Foundations was staffed with full-time teachers assigned only to that program. The new academic requirements represented about one-third of the credits for graduation. This meant a reduction in the number of studio hours. The movement of art schools toward accreditation began in 1952, and in 1959 under the leadership of Dr. Bryan, the first art schools became accredited, The Minneapolis School of Art, Chicago Art Institute and Cranbrook Academy.

When the call came through to President Bryan from the North Central accrediting offices notifying us that The Minneapolis School of Art had been accredited, he immediately called the president of trustees. Mr. Bell contacted a catering firm and within the hour, a large truck parked in front of the school. An enormous punch bowl was placed in the front rotunda and there were strawberry tarts and punch for everyone. All classes were dismissed and everyone including some trustees joined in the celebration.

By 1965, most art schools seeking accreditation had achieved their goal. During this period, a number of proprietary schools became accredited in order to benefit from federal funding programs, notably, Art Center, The Oakland School of Arts and Crafts and The School of Visual Arts.

A curious aspect of the move toward accreditation was the change in art school catalogs. Art school catalogs tended to be over-sized and somewhat flamboyant with examples of student work from all levels and programs.

There was prominent listing of faculty with credentials and examples of their work. Most catalogs were in color or had a color section. When art schools began the process of obtaining accreditation, the catalogs shrunk to bulletin size and eliminated most of the illustrations of student and faculty work. This was because of competition with new art programs being established at universities. Art school catalogs were designed to look like academic bulletins. Art school catalogs today have rightfully moved back to pre-accreditation format illustrating student and faculty work in color. This is what most prospective art students want to see.

As students using the GI Bill disappeared, they were replaced by a majority of students from middle class backgrounds, and there were increasing numbers of female students. Aside from student’s interest in art, low tuition and concentration in studio courses at art schools were factors in recruitment.

In 1953, the Russians successfully launched sputnik and there was a growing paranoia in this country that the Russians would surpass this country in education. Congress enacted a number of educational bills and the government began pouring millions of dollars into higher education. One of the first government programs was student financial aid. The program stipulated that then only basis for awarding funds was need. Merit was not to be considered. The federal grants required matching funds from the institution, and the principal source for institutional funds were those allocated to scholarship.

“Merit by programs rather than by individuals makes a great deal of sense in education.”
Rob Roy Kelly
Until the 1950s, students without resources relied on tuition scholarships which were based on merit. Students knew that if they worked hard in high school and made superior grades, it would make them eligible for a variety of college scholarships. The government financial aid program forcing institutions to recommit their scholarship funds practically eliminated merit scholarships at many art schools. It is doubtful even to this day, that merit as a condition in obtaining financial assistance is at the same level it was prior to federal financial aid programs. This has had a deleterious impact on artistic or academic merit being a condition for underwriting an art school or university education.

Student financial aid was quickly followed by a series of Title Programs which provided schools with funds for purchasing equipment, buildings and enriching existing programs or creating new ones. There was substantial funding from the private sector during these same years; most of it coming from foundations. This was a period of unbelievable growth in all higher education. The multi-campus state systems were principal recipients of government funding during the 1950s and 1960s. Many state teachers colleges were incorporated as universities; small private schools, including art schools and music conservatories, were absorbed into state systems. In some instances, new universities were built from the ground up at new locations.

During the late sixties, Andrew Morgan, president of the Kansas City Art Institute, spearheaded a movement to develop a consortium of independent schools of art. The organization was formed as the Union of Independent Colleges of Art and was funded by contributions of member institutions, foundations and government funds. Dean Tollefson was the executive director throughout most of the time that UCLA was operative. During the early years, membership was fairly stable, but later, schools began to drop out while new ones joined.

I remember best the period when The Kansas City Art Institute, The Maryland Institute of Art, The Minneapolis School of Art, The Philadelphia School of Art and Rhode Island School of Design were active in the organization. Students and teachers could move from one member institution to another to either teach or attend classes. Department heads from each discipline would meet once or twice a year at some central location or at one of the member schools. Each layer of administrators such as recruitment, development, business and registrars met together as well. Presidents met frequently to develop common strategies and to formulate grant applications to foundations and government.
Graphic Design meetings would last two or three days, and educational matters related to curriculum, goals, standards and instructional techniques were discussed. We talked, argued and it was stimulating as well as informational. Up until this time, many of the teachers had no idea what other schools were doing in Graphic Design. This interaction was beneficial for me and I am certain it was equally so for the other participants. The UICA program for teachers and administrators contributed more to member institutions than perhaps has ever been realized. The sudden growth and expansion of educational programs created a huge demand for teachers. Many teachers were hired immediately after graduate school, and often there were just a few years difference in age between students and teachers. During these years, most art programs moved away from professional criteria and began hiring teachers on the basis of academic credentials. An MFA in art or design or equivalent became the standard requirement for teaching.

This practice was more prevalent at universities than at art schools. These were the years when Graphic Design programs were introduced at state universities.

Art and design programs in public universities were established within the liberal arts context. At the early stages, there were substantial Art History and other academic requirements with much less studio hours than art schools. As the period progressed, there was some modification with a reduction in Art History requirements and additional studio involvement. However, with the exception of universities that had absorbed an art school, or were trade oriented schools before becoming a state institution, state university art departments still retain a liberal arts philosophy.

This is reflected by a relatively small number of hours in the major, policies on admission and retention in the major, scheduling and student composition in classes.

It was during these years of rapid growth that public universities began extensive use of graduate students for instructional purposes in place of adding new faculty lines. Although more than forty years have passed, most state universities remain overly dependent on graduate students for instruction. This practice has had a decidedly negative impact on the quality of visual education, and there is no remedy in sight.

In this period of rapid growth and government largess, retention, promotion and tenure were awarded freely with little scrutiny. The process was only perfunctory in most cases. At Minneapolis and Kansas City, retention and promotion were the unilateral decision of the President, and they were communicated to faculty members in the letter of appointment issued each Spring. Any salary increases were made known in the same letter. At Kansas City, Department Heads recommended salary increases but the President always made the final decision. At Minneapolis as late as 1964, there was no tenure and all salary, retention and promotion decisions were made entirely by the President.

“The PhD in Graphic Design sounds more like a marketing ploy than it does a credible program of study.”
Rob Roy Kelly
I remember well an afternoon meeting of Department Heads at the Kansas City Art Institute with President Andrew Morgan. At the conclusion of the meeting, Andrew mentioned that in examining the school bulletin, he had noticed that we did not have one teacher with the rank of Professor. We discussed this and felt that it was relatively unimportant. Finally, he looked at us and said, “Do any of you guys want to be a Professor?” We all said no, we were not interested. On reflection, I think one or two of the Department Heads did want the rank, but they were not going to say so in front of the senior faculty who so emphatically had refused.

The sixties brought the first rumblings of student activism. Initially, student rebellion grew out of opposition to in loco parentis policies existing at most educational institutions. At the time, many schools and universities operated their own cafeterias supervised by dietitians. There was strict dormitory supervision with enforced policies, and institutions imposed restrictions on student activities in and out of class. Student reaction quickly spread to educational policies. Most programs had rigid requirements with few electives, and students were not permitted to cross or mix disciplines. Students began demanding to “do their own thing” in terms of program of studies and course content. These were the years that minority students began to enroll in large numbers, and they strongly impacted on educational content and student bodies.

The next escalation in student activism was social and political. The 1960s were the period of civil rights legislation which coincided with urban riots, protest marches and considerable violence throughout the country. The Vietnam war was becoming more unpopular with the general public by the day, and it was bitterly contested by young people. More young males went to graduate school during the Vietnam years than anytime since as graduate school or teaching exempted students from the draft.

There were emerging concerns for world environment, population control and social equality. Students were at the forefront of these movements. The anger of students was directed mainly at the “establishment,” what they perceived as the relatively small power blocks of wealthy and influential individuals or corporations who controlled government and industry.

In many instances, student anger was directed toward any authority. The cumulative effect of student actions was violence and destruction of campus properties, disruption and an upheaval in traditional educational and institutional policies. It became clearly evident that academic authorities were unable to maintain control or protect property, and the administrative composition and role in education was to irrevocably change because of the student rebellion. This marked the beginning of dramatic growth in the size and role of administration. Business practices and values began to replace academic ones, teachers became employees, students were customers and education a service. Efficiency became more important than effectiveness, and educational standards seriously declined.
Sex, drugs, music and the freedom to do what you want were symptomatic of student behavior. Peer group pressure became the dominant force in shaping student attitudes and behavior. A curious aspect of the time was communication through touch with all students including minority students. At times when students needed reassurance, an arm around the shoulder, a touch on the hand or knee conveyed to them that the teacher cared, accepted and was genuinely interested in them as individuals. Today, these same actions by a teacher would most likely trigger sexual harassment charges before you could remove your hand.

Another insight into students from that period occurred during a series of visiting lecturers. The first lecturer had carefully prepared his lecture and it was given without hesitation or flaw. Student response was strained and minimal. Tom Geismar gave the next lecture, and he had been extremely busy at his studio before coming, so he put his lecture together rather hastily. He had two or three slides upside down for which he apologized, and at times he rambled during his talk. Student response was overwhelming. The student reaction to the two lecturers piqued my interest enough to ask students why the different responses. They said the first lecturer was too good, too perfect, so they did not trust what he had to say. On the other hand, Tom Geismar was just like them, he made mistakes and sometimes had difficulties with verbal communication, so they could identify with and trust him.

Inflated grades were characteristic of the period and they have never normalized. Too many teachers did not want to argue about grades with students who already were angry and rebellious. At the worst, low grades could lead to teachers having tires slashed or the car spray painted. At many schools, students protested having grades, and they demanded a pass/fail evaluation. Invariably, after each grading period, some students approached teachers privately to ask by how much they had passed or failed.

During the years of retrenchment in the seventies, with declining student enrollments there was pressure on faculty at some institutions to not fail students because of tuition loss in private schools, and reduction of funding to colleges and departments at public institutions which was based on enrollment figures.

In the mid-seventies, I was interviewing at Central Michigan University for a Department Head position. In my interview with the Dean, I gave my assessment of conditions and suggested how the educational quality might be improved. After a few minutes, the Dean interrupted me to say, “I don’t give a damn about making it better, I only want to know how you can handle more students with less teachers.”

Beginning in the sixties, educational programs were fragmented to accommodate student demands, and many still are highly elective, particularly Fine Arts. Some student attitudes from those years persist even today. Student activism ended much more suddenly than it began. The movement ceased with the shootings at Kent University. In terms of student motivation, I never had a more difficult year than 1971–72. My students were completely demoralized, most of them did not finish assignments and they did not care.
The student movement was followed by what was then called retrenchment. The Vietnam War had concluded, the national debt had reached proportions that affected government spending, and federal money for education evaporated. The economy was weak and inflation began to rise. Educational institutions were over extended and student enrollments were declining. Tuitions at most educational institutions, particularly in the private sector, dramatically increased. It was during these years that many students who formerly attended art schools began to move to state universities where tuition increases had been less. Educational administrators saw conditions as being temporary. They believed that once the economy recovered, and the national debt was reduced, the government would again pump money into the educational system. This did not happen.

During these same years, the number and role of Community Colleges changed dramatically. Formerly called Junior Colleges, these institutions received new recognition because universities were experiencing problems growing out of huge first-year enrollments and equally large drop-out rates during the following two years. Some form of intermediate schooling between secondary schools and university seemed a logical response to the situation. Since that time, there has been significant expansion of the Community College system and its educational role.

The period beginning late in the 1970s brought disturbing economic changes with worsening financial conditions. There was a relatively sudden shift in the national economy from production to service and high technology. Manufacturing and steel plants closed raising unemployment to unacceptable levels; foreign competition created an unfavorable trade balance and the national debt was still growing. There was rising inflation and interest rates climbed to record levels.

At a time when higher education badly needed new funding sources, American industry was in need of extensive research and development to stay competitive in world markets. Industry and universities entered into a working relationship where industry and government contracted for research with university personnel, and universities gained additional revenue. The movement from fundamental to applied research at all universities was immediate and overwhelming. Some universities today are dependent on as much as 40% of the annual budget being derived from research.

Through the 1950s and 1960s, university faculties had become relatively complacent. Many of them had come into teaching directly after graduate school and they had little practical experience in their fields. Numerous faculty members were not professionally active. Universities had to gear up their faculties to meet the new research demands. This marked an era when there was enormous administrative pressure on faculty for research, professional accomplishment and national or international recognition. Pressure was applied across the board to all fields of study including art and design.
This administrative pressure on faculty coincided with expanded use of computers throughout universities including institutional records and operations as well as educational and research programs. Computers were not new to universities, but during the seventies, there was an explosive acceleration in their use on campus. Some schools went so far as to require students to show proof of computer ownership before they could register for classes. From the late seventies into the nineties, computer capabilities have greatly expanded. Computers have not only been essential to research activities, but they also have affected traditional instruction methods, course content and learning potential.

To improve faculty productivity, administrations introduced the merit system for determining retention, promotion, tenure and salary. Research, professional accomplishment and recognition, student teaching evaluations and service to the institution were the criteria. Grantsmanship and professional accomplishment received the highest rewards. Teaching was usually a second or third priority. Service to the institution counted for little or nothing. Teachers who might serve on two department, one college and one university committee soon realized there was nothing to be gained, and consequently refused future committee appointments. This has proven to be damaging to the conduct of academic affairs. Merit recommendations began with the department, moved to the college, and finally to the university level. In most instances, there would be final adjustments made by upper administrators. Overall, the merit system probably produced more cynicism and divisiveness among faculty than productivity. A number of teachers found the atmosphere and administrative pressures so unpleasant as to leave teaching altogether.

As might be expected with the other administrative pressures on faculty, retention, promotion and tenure procedures were tightened, and became insurmountable hurdles for many young teachers who could not meet administrative expectations for research, professional accomplishment and recognition. The administrative pressures on faculty tended to corrupt faculty integrity and traditional academic values.

As early as 1972, Kingman Brewster, president at Yale University noted in a paper on tenure: "Strong universities, assuring freedom from intellectual conformity coerced within the institution is even more of a concern than is the protection of freedom from external interference." He further stated, “...this common ethic (academic freedom) also requires protection from administrators and colleagues within the community” President Brewster’s remarks proved to be both insightful and very prophetic.

I will only briefly note the effect of Equal Opportunity legislation on behalf of minorities and women that became a factor in educational hiring during these years. The intent of the policies was well placed and overdue. However, abuses are found in how policies were implemented. When individuals are hired only because they represent a minority group or are women, I think it is wrong. I recall a Dean telling the search committee that he would not even consider any recommendation unless it was a black woman.

“Given a good learning environment, a sound curriculum, high performance standards and competent instruction, there are many students who are committed, talented, productive and deserving of a better education than most are receiving.”

Rob Roy Kelly
At many institutions, upper administration privately set quotas and pressured Deans who leaned on Department Heads who in turn coerced Search Committees to fulfill quotas. Clearly, the hiring of minority representatives and women became a higher priority than instructional quality, and this is questionable. Affirmative Action was never intended as meaning quotas.

Following the Thomas and Hill confrontation during Senate hearings, there was new legislation followed by university policies on sexual harassment. There is no question that sexual harassment cannot, and should not, be tolerated under any circumstances. However, it has often become a nightmare for faculty members. Universities were quick to establish offices and procedures for dealing with charges of sexual harassment, but only from the standpoint of prosecuting and not defending faculty members. Once a charge of sexual harassment is made against a faculty member, no matter how frivolous or unfounded, that faculty member's record is forever tainted. The only recourse faculty members have is to hire a personal lawyer, and expenses are borne by the teacher. Again, it is a needed and well intentioned policy gone awry because of administrative overreaction and implementation.

In recent years, there has been pressure on faculty to be politically correct, pc. The imposition of conformity dictated by a vocal segment of the university community is unsettling. A university campus is perhaps the last place you would expect this type of coercion to take place. pc is identified with a variety of social movements ranging from minority concerns, women's rights to gay acceptance. There is an inquisitional atmosphere connected with pc, and again, once a teacher is branded as being politically incorrect, their record is tainted. Often times, the words or actions of teachers have been taken out of context, misquoted, or are unsubstantiated hearsay. There is almost no defense against these charges.

In recent years, traditional curriculum has been under attack as not reflecting cultural diversity. There has been pressure from both within and without universities to create new programs based on the cultural representation incorporated into present day American society. Coming at a time when universities are in difficult financial straits, the demands for broader cultural programs have created additional stress on faculty members and institutions. During the late eighties and early nineties, worsening financial conditions strongly impacted on all universities. At some public institutions, faculty received no salary increases for five years. When there were salary raises, they might only be 2 to 3 percent. There were many institutions offering special benefits to encourage early retirement. In some instances, faculty were actually released and educational programs eliminated or scaled back. Operational funds were reduced and experienced much of the same devastation as salary budgets.
During these years, President Cyert at Carnegie Mellon University addressed the faculty on institutional strategies to deal with current financial conditions. He stated university policy as putting money and other resources into strong programs, combining or modifying programs that had potential for being strong, and elimination of programs that were weak and without potential. I reacted favorably to his announced strategy because at the time, the Design Department had a cohesive dedicated faculty and it was doing an excellent job of educating students. In my view, Design was a strong educational program. Two years later, it dawned on me that no one had asked President Cyert for his definition of strong. Administrative actions revealed that modification of a program, for example, meant minimizing English literature, and maximizing technical writing. His definition of strong had nothing to do with educational quality, but it had a great deal to do with an ability to generate grants and research which brought income into university coffers.

The first ten to fifteen years of this period saw educational institutions and faculty on the receiving end of generous income. There were funds for experimental programs, enrichment of curriculum, new equipment and buildings. There was relatively little stress and numerous job opportunities. The favorable conditions began to change during the early sixties with the student activist movement and social unrest.

During the years of plenty, administrative supervision was relatively lax. Teachers had more say about program development and there were ample funds for equipment and reasonable operational budgets in most cases. Departments had travel budgets or travel funds were available to them. At state universities, salaries were higher than art schools, and benefits were generous.

Most teachers had a strong sense of vested interest in the program, and this was especially true at art schools. Today there are ample financial aid programs that allow more students to enroll at universities than previously. Traditional curriculum has been modified to better reflect current social, political and industrial conditions. We have many more minority students enrolled than ever before. The majority are completing university and successfully moving into the mainstream of society. Women are better represented in administrative as well as teaching positions. While still not reaching full parity with men, there has been significant improvement in salaries for women. Universities have become important research centers which is a boon to graduate education. It also brings industry and education together for the mutual benefit of both, and creates a favorable balance between theoretical and applied research. With the aid of computers and other new technologies, there have been tremendous strides in expanding knowledge and learning potential. All of these changes represent important advances in education.

However, there has been a price for this progress. Teaching as a profession and academic values have been trampled in a most roughshod manner by legislators, trustees and administrators. Managership has replaced leadership and fiscal efficiency dominates educational effectiveness at most institutions.
Substituting business values and practices for academic ideals and procedures often results in short-term gains and long-term problems. Over a period of time, education suffers from business oriented decision making. Excellence has been undercut, redefined and even eliminated as standards have lowered. Because of inflated grading and inconsistencies by teachers in evaluating students, grades have become a meaningless criteria of student ability and accomplishment.

Excellence is claimed and exalted by every educational institution; there is a veneer of academic freedom, procedure and values. Education of youth is proclaimed as the single most important function of the institution. What is public relations and what is reality are very far apart resulting in a double standard operation at far too many educational institutions.

Excellence is often improperly identified because of questionable grading practices or by irrelevant criteria such as an ability to generate research income. Academic or artistic excellence is seldom encouraged or rewarded, particularly in the student financial aid programs. While excellence in education is professed as a goal, too many actions and practices seem contrary to that objective.

How existing financial resources are used and allocated is frequently prejudicial, misdirected, inefficient and fails to encourage productivity and excellence among teachers or students. Allocation of disproportionate institutional resources to programs generating the most research income at the expense of programs that bring in less or none weakens the overall educational environment and strongly suggests future problems. How states allocate funds to public universities, and the conditions governing their use can be greatly improved.

Legislators establishing budgets in two year increments rather than one could greatly facilitate university planning and operation. If states allocated funds to the universities without requiring remittance of unexpended funds at the end of the fiscal year, it would encourage saving, planning and more effective use of available funds.

Contrary to policies at private institutions which charge tuition by the semester, public universities establish tuition through charging by the credit hour. This policy encourages large numbers of part-time students. The policy leads to a majority of students spending five to seven years obtaining a four year degree. The practice is inefficient and wasteful for the institution. It is equally detrimental to the best interests of educational programs and students.

From the seventies to the nineties when financial conditions were at the worst, moral integrity in administration was violated with regularity. Situation ethics were characteristic of these years. Sometimes it was only “stonewalling" or hiding behind bureaucratic process. Other times it was lying, either directly or by omission. Within my own experience, I was lied to by Presidents, Deans and Department Heads. Even when lies were brought into the open, upper administration dismissed the matter as being commonplace and not of serious consequence. Abuse of position existed at all levels including teachers as well as administrators. Even when pointed out, it was rarely corrected.
There is no question but what much of the pressure and corruption that occurred during this era resulted from a variety of financial conditions. But the situation was compounded by poorly conceived policies, overreaction to social reforms, hidden priorities and a lack of foresight which reflects ineffectual leadership.

These tumultuous years represent a period of radical change in post-secondary education. In hindsight, the changes could have been much better handled with less damage and greater positive results. However, as with many realignments, the pendulum swung too far too fast leading to imbalance between existing situations and new ones. Consequently, numerous academic values and practices have been lost or corrupted. Now is a time to review, to resurrect that which is relevant to present educational goals.

The problems included educational structure without departments or leadership, weak curriculum, a liberal arts emphasis with minimal requirements in the major, understaffing and inadequate operating budgets and space. In far too many instances, Graphic Design at state universities was a student declared major with few standards for admission, retention or graduation.

These conditions still exist at far too many universities. Graphic Design as an educational program had its beginnings at the post secondary level at Yale University in 1950. Within fifteen years, Graphic Design as a program title had replaced Advertising Design at most institutions. Universities, Art Schools, Technical Schools and Community Colleges generally identify their programs as Graphic Design. However, in far too many instances, only the name was changed and not course content nor educational objectives. Many programs are still geared to advertising and illustration. The confusion in definition between Graphic Design and Advertising carries over into professional practice as well. During the 1950s most agencies abandoned the concept of inhouse artists and relied on outside studios for artwork. Many of the studios that specialize in servicing advertising agencies identify their business as Graphic Design.

The surge of American corporations during the 1950s to establish a public identity working with image or identity and communication rather than marketing gave enormous impetus to Graphic Design as a profession. Most corporations had substantial design departments and retained prestigious designers as consultants. Corporate design practices and objectives were borrowed by smaller businesses, and Graphic Design was firmly established as a profession in this period. There was a corresponding impact on Graphic Design education as systems, grids, human factors, symbol and letter form design, typography, communication, formal values, and eventually, design history were addressed as concerns or new courses. The new educational focus was a direct outgrowth of design emphasis in business during the 1950s and 1960s.

“The initials for basic design are BS, and we all know what that stands for. Unfortunately, that is what much of basic design has become today.”

Rob Roy Kelly
In the 1980s, the American Institute of Graphic Design established regional chapters becoming a national organization. AIGA chapters have replaced the old Art Director’s Clubs in many major cities. In recent years, the Society for the Typographic Arts has reorganized as the American center for Design and it is moving toward becoming a national organization. Even though most educational programs and professional studios work under the designation of Graphic Design, there is a great variance in what they do, and in performance standards. There is still insufficient distinction made between Graphic Design, Illustration and Advertising Design. The educational requirements for each are quite different.

Advertising is based on marketing goods or services, and the objective is to sell. Therefore, if a design results in increased profits, it must be regarded as good design. Advertising is a service that is usually defined by the client. Marketing research, trends, novelty, and clients’ wishes influence much of what an Art Director does on the job.

Graphic Designers are visual communicators and problem-solvers. They work with human factors, research and analysis. Graphic Designers are strongly grounded in theory and formal values. They are more prone to recommend to the client than to ask what the client wants. They prefer to work at a professional level rather than as a service to clients. Graphic Designers frequently work in marketing but they are not limited to it. Graphic Designers often collaborate with other professionals such as architects, engineers, industrial designers or others.

Graphic Designers work in industry, marketing, promotion, publishing, television, packaging, exhibit design, education and government. I prefer Graphic Design to Advertising as an educational program because of the wider latitude of job opportunities for graduates.

The institutions that have had the greatest influence on Graphic Design educational programs, largely as models or sources for teachers, have been Yale University at the graduate level, University of the Arts (formerly The Philadelphia College of Art and Design) at the undergraduate level and the Kunst Gewerbeschule in Basel. In advertising, Art Center, Pratt, Parsons and the School of Visual Arts have had an equal impact.

By the 1990s, most of the individuals who have been pivotal in Graphic Design education since WWII have died, retired or retirement is imminent. The distinctions between Graphic Design and Advertising which were strongest in the fifties and sixties are now blurred. The large influential corporate design departments no longer exist. Unfortunately, the ultimate criteria for design today seems to be success in the marketplace.

The future of Graphic Design education is now being shaped by technology, mainly the computer. It is unclear how this is going to affect traditional values and change pedagogy. It is equally uncertain who the new leaders will be and what directions Graphic Design is moving. An important consideration at this time bears on whether educators can subject the computer to its proper status as a tool, or whether its application will be rampant and dictate form rather than execute it.