

Wagner Prexy Sees No Conflict With Island Community College

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Wagner College is not concerned about competition from the projected Staten Island Community College, Wagner's president, Dr. David M. Delo, said today.

Dr. Delo commented that the new city-operated college will fill a need in the community. He said, however, that it will not compete with Wagner as it will

be a different type of institution.

Speaking this morning to new and old students at the first all-college convocation of the new school year, in the college gymnasium, Dr. Delo said:

"Wagner is a liberal arts college with a strong religious environment supported by the church and by private individuals. The new community college will be devoted primarily to terminal technological curricula of two years' duration.

"Because of the traditional American separation between church and state, the same type of religious emphasis of which we are so proud here at Wagner cannot be included in the community college program."

CONTRASTING and comparing the functions of the two institutions, Dr. Delo said that "the new college will be a distinct boon to a great many young people on Staten Island who desire the type of curricula which will be offered but who are not interested in the type of liberal arts curriculum offered by Wagner College."

"I think, therefore," he stated, "of the community college and Wagner as pursuing parallel paths in their own fields of interest and competence. The organization of this new institution is a fine thing for our community and I hope it proves to be successful."

Utilizing Oscar Wilde's line from a well-known play, "Dis-

content is the first step in the progress of a man or nation," the speaker outlined the differences between unhealthy discontent which inhibits progress and a healthy discontent with the status quo which leads to progress and constructive action in both individuals and organizations. Using the growth of higher education in America as an example of this progress, Dr. Delo pointed out the increase in the percentage of college graduates and the anticipated doubling of the college population by 1970.

"THIS POSES a very serious problem for the colleges and universities of the United States," Dr. Delo said. "It affects particularly the balance between private institutions and tax-supported institutions. In 1948 approximately one-half of the college students in the United States were attending private institutions—today the percentage is considerably less because as the number of students increases, the private institutions are unable to secure all the funds needed for dormitory and classroom buildings and the other facilities which are required."

To meet this problem of expanding college enrollment, two choices are open to private institutions like Wagner College, the speaker explained. "First," he said, "they can try to take in as many students as their bulging walls will hold, offering various types of voca-

tional programs to fit a wide variety of interests and thus lose their intrinsic and individual character as first-rank liberal arts colleges of high standard."

"The second choice, is to place the accent on quality; not to maintain the status quo, but to grow slowly enough so that the physical facilities and the size of the faculty will match the size of the student body. In addition," he pointed out, "these institutions will refuse to sell their academic birthrights for a mess of enrollment potage and while maintaining high standards and breadth of curriculum they continue the study of their offerings from the standpoint of greater effectiveness."

Choosing the second course as the "only road for Wagner College to take," Dr. Delo explained that in order to pursue this course Wagner "must constantly examine the quality of our program. We must always remember," he said, "that a college exists to secure a reaction between faculty and students; between a group of scholars and intellectual leaders and a group of maturing, growing individuals—the students."

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Without Conflict

Competition is admittedly vital in the American way. But through the years of proposing and planning a government-aided college on Staten Island, many community leaders have been uneasy about the effect of this competition on Wagner and Notre Dame Colleges. To gain a new college, Staten Island didn't want to lose one, possibly two, existing colleges.

Now the fear has been wiped away to a large degree by a statement by Dr. David M. Delo, Wagner president.

The community college, to be opened in the fall of 1956, will not compete with Wagner, said Dr. Delo. In fact, he added, the new college will fill a community need. The curricula of the old and the new colleges will be different. The new college will be city-operated; Wagner (and this might be said of Notre Dame as well) will remain a liberal arts college with a strong religious environment.

The Island's college situation next year will be "complementary" or, if you will, "supplementary."

And the big point, of course, is that the main competition will be against know-nothingness and not against each other.

EDITORIAL