

We Get Letters

Assault on the Ivory Tower

Dear Editor:

Thank God for Dr. Joe Keating's Ivory Tower Review. By kneeling at the feet of this master, we are finally able to understand everything that is wrong with our profession.

1. No chiropractic college has ever produced any significant research.
2. No one in chiropractic education recognizes the importance of research.
3. The academic deans of our colleges universally lack any understanding of the importance of "scholarly rigor."
4. Our college presidents pattern their administrations after feudal lords and rule by the whim of the moment without regard to academic excellence.

Well, we certainly do have a problem, but now that we've recognized it, fixing it should be easy. We really need to take only two action steps.

First, get all those ignorant chiropractors off the faculty. Yes, I realize we'll probably need to keep a few in the technique department for a while. That's okay though; they can be held at the academic rank of "instructor" and kept away from research and administrative responsibilities. They won't mind. They don't understand those things anyway.

At present, our faculties include a number of PhDs, EdDs, and the like. That might sound good, but, unfortunately, many of them have an excellent understanding of chiropractic. We'll have to get rid of them and find some new ones who don't know an adjustment from an enema.

Soon we'll gain such academic prestige that we'll even be able to attract a few MDs to run our diagnosis departments and clinics. Gosh, won't it be great. I'll bet that we can even replace those DCs in the technique department with physical therapists. After all, they know all about manipulation, don't they. Maybe if we are really lucky, we can get a DO to chair the department.

The second step is the one that puts the frosting on the cake and in one stroke brings us from the middle ages to the 21st century. It's so simple. How could we have failed to recognize that by the simple act of eliminating our philosophy departments, we can become "real doctors."

Did Dr. Keating actually say all those things in his column? No, not exactly, though I suspect he thought them as he wrote. Would those action steps make him happy? I desperately fear that they would.

Are research and academic excellence important to the future of chiropractic? Of course they are, but let's look at our academic affairs realistically. Let's admit that in an ideal world, we would have done considerably more research than we have, and that some of what we have done has been less rigorous than we might like. Let's admit that we've made mistakes in faculty development. Let's even admit that our colleges are still not perfect, although the best of them are incredibly good.

Let's recognize the progress we've made in recent years. Our colleges are committed to providing excellence in education, research, and patient care. Although not all of us recognize its importance, we have made tremendous strides toward acceptance by the scientific community.

Come now, Dr. Keating, enough of the muck-raking and wild accusations. Why not join us as we take our profession into the 21st century to fulfill its destiny? We will accept, even welcome, your criticism, provided it is specific, realistic, and constructive. We have no use for negativism, unsupported generalities, and self-aggrandizement at the expense of the schools we love and the profession to which we have dedicated our lives.

Let me remind Dr. Keating and those who share his views, that cutting-edge research in the physical sciences appears about to prove the philosophical basis of chiropractic. Not a bad example of using research to prove what we already knew was true.

David R. Odiorne, BS, MS, DC, DAAPM
Lewiston, Maine

MAY 1993