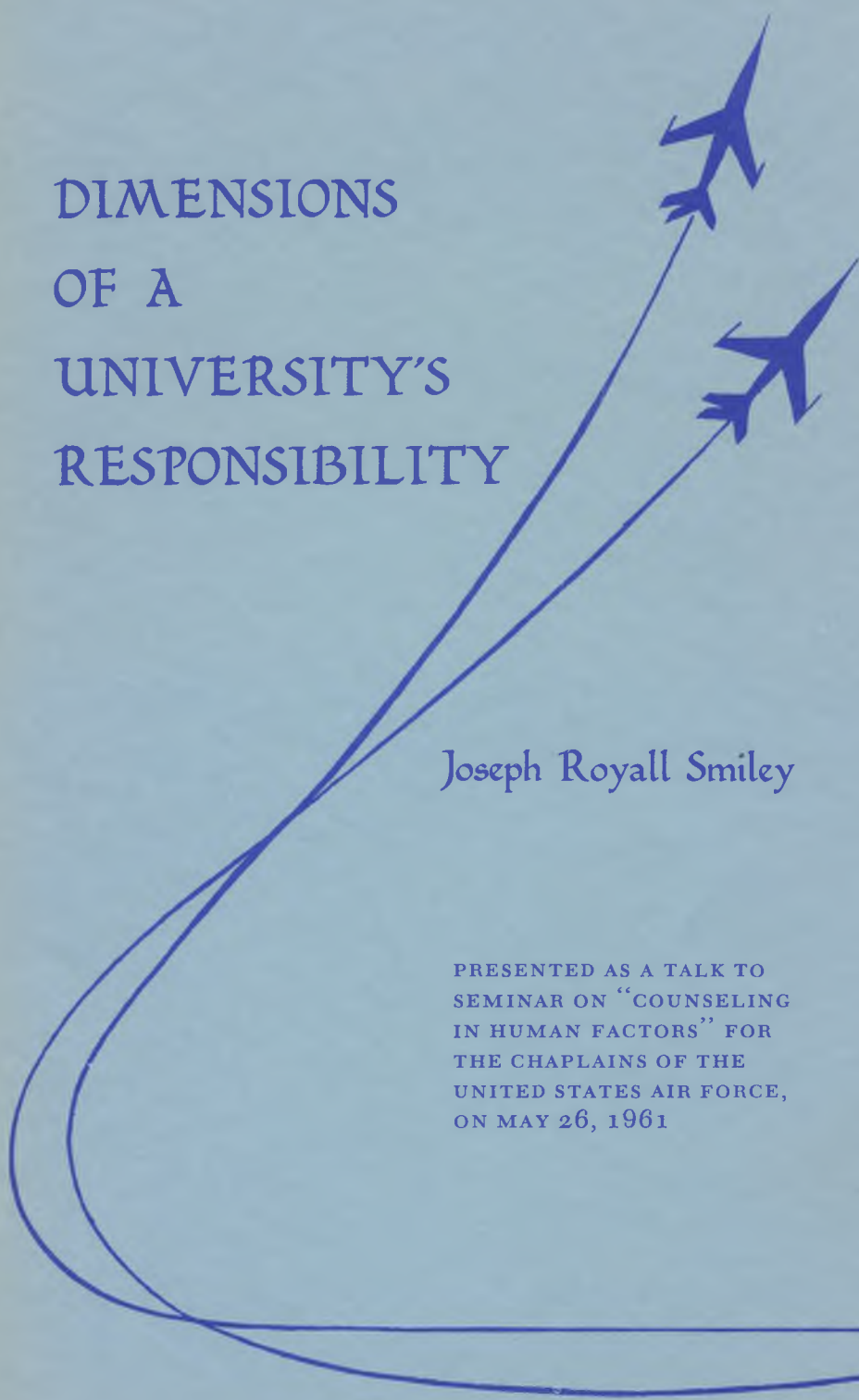


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DIMENSIONS  
OF A  
UNIVERSITY'S  
RESPONSIBILITY

Joseph Royall Smiley

PRESENTED AS A TALK TO  
SEMINAR ON "COUNSELING  
IN HUMAN FACTORS" FOR  
THE CHAPLAINS OF THE  
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## Dimensions of a University's Responsibility ---

**A**S ALL OF US know, from the earliest beginnings of the university concept, the medieval curricula, the trivium and the quadrivium, were built around the liberal arts and sciences. This has properly continued to be so, for man without a deep and unbroken knowledge of his cultural and intellectual heritage would be plunged once again into the darkness of isolation and ignorance. The rise and fall of ancient civilizations, the very renaissance when our university tradition became firmly established, when man recaptured and strengthened his link with his past—these confirm the necessity of bringing each suc-

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ceeding human generation abreast of what has gone on before.

But gradually as the universities grew in importance and began to gain fame for certain disciplines such as Bologna for law and Paris for theology, the scholars undertook to discover new truths and relationships and interpretations and man's knowledge began to grow apace. By the early eighteenth century when Halle and Goettingen flourished, the older ideal of the "uomo universale" was becoming increasingly difficult to attain. Man's accumulated knowledge had become too extensive for one head to contain, and the inevitable trend toward ever narrower specialization was on its way.

I mentioned Halle and Goettingen specifically because they were the models of the American university. The older Eastern colleges began in the nineteenth century to enlarge considerably upon their traditional aim of teaching only what was already known and, exactly one hundred years ago, Yale granted the first Doctor of Philosophy Degree in America. It is the changing role of the American university in the last century upon which I wish especially to comment.

The image of the Ivory Tower, of the traditional walls where, as some wit has suggested, the ivy creeps on the outside and the faculty creeps on the inside, the remoteness, the aloofness, the totally impractical concern of the scholar—these impressions were destined to fade, when, in the second half of this last century we are describing,

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the Congress passed the Morrill or so-called Land-Grant Act in 1862. It provided for instruction of the masses not only in the liberal but also in the "mechanic arts," in the language of the bill, and in agriculture and related subjects. As a result, new state universities were founded and others already in existence began to flourish, and the trend toward bringing the Ivory Tower closer to the market place had begun.

I shall not undertake to rehearse the details of the progression that has led us to the posture we occupy today, but I am compelled to emphasize the enormous strides particularly in mathematics and the sciences from the impulse of the second world war. Because of the needs of Government at all levels, of industry, business, and the professions, the brains of the university are being focused upon a staggering variety of the problems of society. As one colleague has recently phrased it, the erstwhile absent-minded professor is today likely to be absent in body as well, perhaps in a distant city or laboratory where his consulting fees far exceed his university stipend. Through on-campus conferences, meetings, seminars, and short courses, our constituents are depending more and more on us to shed new light on general or particular problems. In the land-grant institutions, through farm and home agents, through state-wide agricultural and extension services, the people and the college or university are growing ever closer together and the results cannot be anything but salutary for all concerned.

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Thus, as we look back over the history of the university, we find the initial obligation was teaching. The next was research and now a third dimension—service—has been added. It is our fascinating task to undertake to keep these in proper balance—to fulfill all these responsibilities to the limits of our support and resources. If, in your case, we have succeeded in broadening and giving depth to some of your concepts of man's mind and of his behavior, it is because we have been able to blend the teaching skills of our faculty with the important results of their researches to provide for you a service we hope will be a benefit as you return to your assignments around the world.

Yours is of course the highest vocation, and by one of the basic convictions of the founding fathers of our republic we are prohibited from training young men to follow it. Yet as a public university we are proud of our hospitality to the various denominational foundations which surround our campus and in which our students find a welcoming continuation of their spiritual affiliations. Through our general and pre-professional curricula, through our pleasant association with groups such as yours, we relate to the traditions of our New England institutional forebears whose principal task was education for the ministry.

We hope each of you has gained something from your sojourn among us, and I am sure all my colleagues join in extending every good wish for your continuing success in your dedication to your high and selfless calling.

