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Dissent part of good University, University of Montana vice president says

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DISSENT PART OF GOOD UNIVERSITY,
UM VICE PRESIDENT SAYS

MISSOULA--

Good universities have always been places of dissention and dispute because ideas are so important within institutions of higher learning, the University of Montana's vice president for research told a Missoula women's group recently.

Dr. Norman E. Taylor, in a speech entitled "Student Dissent" before the United Presbyterian Women, said concerned people gather at universities, and dissent is therefore inevitable and expected.

Bad universities are typically very orderly places, he said.

"If we fail to listen to the legitimate needs of dissenters, we open the door for militants," Dr. Taylor said, but he added that a very real hazard in accommodating even modest student demands is that the administration is often accused of being "soft."

Dr. Taylor said the academic community cannot be a pure democracy like the political community, because "all are not equally qualified to teach others, and authority comes with knowledge and experience." He said failure to understand this often leads to student dissent.

"What we need at the University is change, not escape," he said. Quoting H.G. Wells He said, "Human history is a race between education and catastrophe."

Dr. Taylor said social conditions in America are improving much faster than most dissenters realize. The average per capita real income has doubled every 20 years since 1860, he said, and within the last ten years the number of people living below poverty level has dropped from 22 to 11 per cent of the population.

He said students' demands for a voice in planning their own education are legitimate. "Dialogue between students and the administration leaves nothing to fear," Dr. Taylor said. He added that dissent at UM is not unusual and is to be expected in any university composed of concerned students.

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