

GOVERNOR'S EDUCATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

HIGHER EDUCATION AND WESTERN IOWA

Adopted January 7, 1971

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
GOVERNOR'S EDUCATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
HIGHER EDUCATION AND WESTERN IOWA

One of the projects of the Governor's Educational Advisory Committee has been a study of the suggestion that Iowa needs a four-year institution of higher education located in Western Iowa. In this investigation, the Committee has considered many things including: (1) existing facilities both private and public, (2) present and future needs, (3) student migration statistics, (4) previous studies relating to this problem, (5) State and regional population trends, (6) present and future State capabilities in regard to financing higher education, (7) possible interstate tuition reciprocity arrangements, (8) growth of the area schools, (9) proposed expansion of extension services from existing regents institutions, (10) possible benefits of a new institution, (11) the future of private colleges in this section of the State, and (12) long-range enrollment projections.

As a result of this study, it seems apparent to the Governor's Educational Advisory Committee that circumstances have changed or are changing rapidly in Western Iowa and the whole State with respect to the need for expansion of capacity for higher education. The basic change has been the rapid drop in birth rates in Iowa in recent years. Coupled with this decline in birth rate has been the continued movement of young families from rural to urban areas. These two factors seem to point to a leveling off, or even a drop, in college enrollment in the decades ahead for the State as a whole, and especially for Western Iowa.

The new system of Area Community Colleges in Iowa, six of which are located in the western part of the State, is providing an entirely new and growing resource for higher education in Iowa. Due to the large investment in the community college system, the anticipated leveling off of enrollment at the present regents institutions, the signs of excess capacity in high quality private higher education

institutions in Iowa, and the financial problems faced by all state and local government, the Committee feels that it would be prudent at this time for the General Assembly to forego any commitments that may result in excess capacity in higher education. In view of these circumstances, the Committee has reached the following conclusion:

1. At the present time, the State of Iowa does not need, nor could it adequately support, a new four-year institution of higher education to be located in Western Iowa, or any other section of the State.

This conclusion is reached in full consideration of the fact that there has been a void of higher education opportunities in Western Iowa. This section of the State lagged behind in local support for what were formerly liberal arts oriented junior colleges. As a result, a few of the area schools in this part of the State are also lagging behind in the development of strong arts and science programs. To encourage this needed growth, the Committee recommends that the Department of Public Instruction be authorized to aid selected area community colleges in Western Iowa so they will be able to strengthen their two-year arts and science programs. The Committee also endorses the Regents' plan to experiment with an extension center for Western Iowa which would primarily offer graduate work in close cooperation with the private colleges and area schools in the region.

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