

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA THE ANNENBERG SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS

3620 WALNUT STREET CS  
PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19104  
TELEPHONE: 215 243-7041

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Harry C. Coles, Esq.  
Merrill Panitt  
Triangle Publications, Inc.  
100 Matsonford Road  
Radnor, PA 19088

Dear Harry and Merrill:

The more I think about the Fleming memo of December 5 the more I believe that it lacks direction and substance. It does not even have any mechanism to keep the project on any course, once the grant is made. Coming out with anything like that can only be greeted with dismay and derision in the knowledgeable parts of the academic community on whom the project will have to depend for credibility and support if it is not to become a second-rate substitute for correspondence courses.

Many people in that community know that at least some of us on the Task Force (especially myself) have been through the college telecourse fights of the fifties and sixties. They know that we must know that the project as originally announced seems to have been conceived in an historical and educational vacuum. Except for those motivated by the hope of cash for whatever they want to do anyway, incredulity and suspicion of naivete or worse has been the general view among the best informed university people ever since the announcement. Now, especially after the Kalba Bowen report, we will be seen as disregarding its implications as well as the educational needs of the country if we proceed with the current plan. I think that we owe the Ambassador (and ourselves) to try to avoid that embarrassment. I do not believe that we can recommend the Fleming document.

It seems to me that Bill McGill is uneasy and unhappy with the current direction. Minow himself is looking for something more inspiring. Would you approve the setting up of a \$150 million business on that basis? A business that you will cut loose from your control but that will continue to bear your name and to reflect on all your enterprises (including our School)?

When the media and our colleagues descend on us for an explanation, how will you defend our actions? Now is the time to anticipate the troubles sure to come. Those of us who expect no money but only credit for doing a good thing are responsible to the Ambassador for seeing more clearly. We should not rubber stamp a charter that will make Mr. Annenberg and the rest of us look confused and ridiculous for all the good intentions, time, trouble, and money involved.

The question is, is there anything we can recommend that is also acceptable to our colleagues on the Task Force and that reflects the original impulse behind

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our charge? I think yes, even if there is no fully satisfactory way to rescue an essentially flawed conception. Even the best I can come up with will puzzle knowledgeable people ("Why this? Why now?" they have been and will be asking), but at least it should reflect some recognition of realities and not appear just uninformed or self-serving, or both.

What we need is a document and agreement that we can explain and defend, as we will be called upon to do. The document should reflect an understanding of the history and current situation of educational technology and telecommunications. It should use at least some of the insights gained from the main thrust of the Kalba Bowen study as well as from other current major documents that bear equally on our charge. And it should set up a more serious and responsible mechanism than the Fleming memo does.

This is The Annenberg School's one and only chance to attempt to set a course for its money that cannot be simply ignored after the first year. We need a charter that will assure some visible new contributions for years to come instead of only adding a few million dollars to the bottomless pit of CPB's financial needs.

The argument that inflation cuts into young people's ability to go to college has no support in fact. Inflation has shifted enrollment into state and community colleges but has not generally resulted in placing college out of reach of any more qualified and motivated young people than before. Even if there were such aspirants, no telecourse will be accredited by any institution without the payment of tuition. Thus telecourses represent no great savings nor any response to general need. Most of the people who take them are those who also take campus courses but find telecourses and home-learning more convenient or necessary because of lack of mobility. If we do not want to fly ridiculously in the face of known facts, we must be careful to target our audience realistically, even if that does not appear to save American education from (imaginary) disaster. Finally, we must give at least some slight recognition of knowing what the real problems are.

To save time and advance matters, I drafted a document to replace the Fleming memo. It incorporates as many features of that memo as possible, but also changes some of its main provisions. I believe that my statement responds to the original impetus in a form that promises distinction, flexibility, some assurance of maintaining direction and quality, and the best hope of bringing more credit than criticism to the project.

Please let me know what you think, and feel free (as if I needed to tell you!) to revise or reject. I feel strongly about our responsibility to join only in recommendations we can fully approve lest we let down the Ambassador and waste what potential this project might actually have. I hope that we can work out something we really believe can do the job in the next day or two. The next step would be to share it with McGill and possibly Minow who I think are also ready for something better.

Sincerely yours,



George Gerbner  
Professor of Communications  
and Dean

## TOWARD AN ANNENBERG HIGHER EDUCATION PROJECT

### Report and Recommendations of the CPB/ASC Joint Task Force

The Task Force has concluded a series of meetings and consultations and has received the report of an intensive study of the factual background of its charge. Our deliberations and the evidence before us have led us to reexamine and refine some early assumptions. We are now prepared to recommend a course of action that we believe to be responsive to the original impetus behind our charge and to offer the best hope for distinctive and significant new contributions.

The Kalba Bowen study commissioned by the Task Force has documented the present status of college course offerings by television and other telecommunications means. It noted that 71 percent of higher education institutions are engaged in some form of telecourse production and/or distribution. It pointed out that public access to a wide variety of college courses by television is generally available. An abundance of course materials of great diversity, much of it of high quality, is also available to the willing student, college, or broadcaster. A community college is within reach of most people. The ability to complete a degree program is not materially affected by the availability of telecourses because the degree-granting institution must charge tuition for the credit. It becomes important, therefore, to carefully and realistically define the goal and target audience of the project.

The Kalba Bowen report also noted some promising new directions, experimental programs, potentials, and target audiences. It delineated some issues and options to be considered. Some of these require resolution

before the project is launched in order to give it distinctive, shape, direction, and promise. Others can be resolved in the course of operational exploration and experience.

Our recommendations benefit not only from the facts assembled by the consultants, and of course the experience of members of the Task Force, but also from another major recent study and document in American public broadcasting and education. We are referring to the report of the second Carnegie Commission under the chairmanship of the chair of our Task Force, William McGill. In order to fully appreciate the contribution of the Carnegie II report to our task, a brief overview of educational broadcasting is necessary.

The spectacular growth of educational television (and radio) occurred at the time of the post-World War II educational expansion, responding to the pent-up needs and population shifts of the depression and war years. In 1945 the FCC first set aside radio frequencies for educational broadcasting. In 1949 the National Association of Educational Broadcasters set up headquarters in Washington D.C. and began servicing member stations with program material, research, and publications. Shortly thereafter the Ford Foundation began to support educational television, leading eventually to the establishment of a production center and National Educational Television. In 1952 the FCC reserved 242 television channels for education. In 1960 the Eastern Educational Network was born. In 1962 Congress passed the Educational Television Facilities Act providing major financial support for growth.

By the mid-1960's the educational thrust was well established. The 1967 Carnegie Commission called for a change in direction and mission. The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 was a response to the Carnegie I report and other pressures. Its principal feature was the establishment of the

Corporation for Public Broadcasting to finance program production for national distribution, and the shift from a primarily educational emphasis to a broad public and cultural mission with particular emphasis on the needs of minorities.

By 1977 public broadcasting had become established as a major American institution and a cultural and educational force. Another Carnegie Commission conducted an 18-months inquiry into the needs and requirements of further development. Its report, released in 1979 (A Public Trust; the Landmark Report of the Carnegie Commission on the Future of Public Broadcasting), should be considered as a companion to the Kalba Bowen study. It is compatible with the findings of that study and contributes certain considerations the Kalba Bowen study was not asked to address.

Carnegie II recognized the promise and limitation of broadcasting in education. Media tend toward central management. American education is based on the principle of local control. Nevertheless, largely as a result of the efforts of the 1950's and early 1960's, "The link between public broadcasting and education is strong. One-third of teachers nationwide use television regularly in their classrooms. The typical public television station devotes about 40 percent of its broadcast schedule to instructional programs...and countless of additional hours to programs of broader educational appeal." (P. 255.)

Carnegie II also pinpoints the specific needs and opportunities for further development. Here are the most pertinent passages of the report:

"Our proposals for a strengthened and adequately funded public telecommunications system are based upon this significant role for education. We believe that stations should have the prime responsibility for the effort, through their own local programs

and services, and especially by pooling funds for regional and national activities. The linkage between stations and educators at the local and regional levels is important in ensuring responsiveness to local educational needs and local control over curricula. At the same time, we believe it to be essential that the system build a strong national component that will finance serious research on the functional characteristics of television and radio as instructional tools and will also finance programs to test and demonstrate this potential. (p.256)

"Significantly greater resources--both financial and creative--must be devoted to producing innovative and conceptually sophisticated instructional programming. The role of the broadcast media in continuing education and lifelong learning must be developed. And new technologies offering the potential greatly to aid or greatly to simplify the learning process must be exploited. For instance, it is not clear to the Commission that broadcast technology will continue to prevail over alternative means such as videocassett and videodisc equipment in delivering educational programming to tomorrow's schools and homes. The new technology appears to be far more flexible and perhaps less expensive, but appropriate delivery systems must be developed and tested. (p. 262)

"We have emphasized the need for strong local action to improve the quality and quantity of instructional and educational programs available...At the same time, we believe it is essential for the Program Services Endowment to play a catalytic role in developing new educational programming. We anticipate that approximately \$15 million will be allocated by

the Endowment for research and programs that demonstrate the potential of television and radio for learning. Portions of these moneys might be used outright to fund directly several educational programs or series each year, or they could be used as risk capital to speed development of promising initiatives." (p.270)

Both Kalba Bowen and Carnegie II point in the direction of carefully targeted audiences and innovative projects responsive to local as well as national institutional and educational needs. The promise of new technologies and the need for pilot and demonstration programs and new initiative are especially stressed. Scattered throughout Carnegie II are recommendations for "programs to test and demonstrate new potentials;" "innovative and conceptually sophisticated instructional programming;" "new technologies offering the potential to greatly aid or simplify the learning process;" "a catalytic role in developing new educational programming;" "research and programs that demonstrate the potential of television and radio for learning;" "risk capital to speed development of promising initiatives." The Kalba Bowen study offers to further testimonials as well as some promising leads and experiences in these directions. Needed, therefore, is a charter that will clearly pinpoint the people and goals to be reached, set down criteria to be used in the selection of programs, and establish a flexible mechanism under the Corporation of Public Broadcasting which will be relatively insulated from outside pressure and capable of guiding and keeping the project on its intended course.

It is in light of these considerations that we propose the following partial wording (not including legal and financial provisions, to be added later) for a charter and draft agreement between the Annenberg School of Communications and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

## DRAFT

PARTIAL TEXT OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ANNENBERG SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS  
AND THE CORPORATION OF PUBLIC BROADCASTING.

The Annenberg School of Communications will make funds available to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to support the creation of high quality college level materials for distribution through existing and developing communications systems. The name of the project will be the Annenberg Higher Education Project (AHEP).

This project is established with full recognition of the long history of similar efforts and accomplishments and does not intend to duplicate, compete with, or replace them. On the contrary, materials and programs will be developed in collaboration with other organizations in the field and with degree-granting higher education institutions which will grant credit for any courses AHEP might help develop. AHEP's distinctive contribution to other efforts will be its careful delineation of goals and target audiences to be served.

The goals should stress non-traditional, innovative, pilot development, demonstration, and testing of new initiatives in college-level education by existing and new telecommunications means. The target audiences should be those who have demonstrated an interest in college education but for a variety of reasons are unable to complete it. This realistic and significant objective should govern the definition of needs and the application of criteria to the selection of projects and programs to be supported:

Criteria for the selection and support of programs and projects

The principal criterion is that projects and programs shall innovate



or complement but not duplicate or replace already existing programs. More specifically, they shall

- (a) emphasize educational needs of the target audience not met by other means and institutions or projects;
- (b) seek and seize opportunities, plans, ideas that promise to make significant contributions to its mission but cannot obtain other support;
- (c) explore the application of technologies and systems uniquely suited for specific educational tasks;
- (d) support new rather than already approved and funded projects;
- (e) emphasize experimental, pilot, demonstration projects rather than fund more of what is already being done;
- (f) include a strong evaluation component in every program and project that is funded.

AHEP is not established to be the principal agency of college level telecommunications education. That is a vast enterprise carried on by diverse institutions in many localities, as fitting the American system of higher education. The specific goal and target of AHEP will be to explore and discover new ways to advance higher education in those areas where the need is demonstrable and where "venture capital" is required. When a new practice or system of telecommunications education has proved its value, the activity should be carried on by local and other institutions, with AHEP always on the leading edge of educational and telecommunications advance.

A significant task of the AHEP is to solicit and examine proposals for projects relevant to its tasks, and to support those that meet the

above criteria and seem the most promising. Examples of such directions include the use of computer-aided learning systems; interactive systems applied to learning; satellite-aided cross-cultural and foreign language studies; teleconference and large national group-network systems applied to learning; innovative urban applications of new systems and technologies; language-skills improvement programs on the college level; and the course materials and other support features necessary for the full development and demonstration of each project.

#### Administrative structure

In order to implement the AHEP's mission, the following administrative arrangements will be made.

1. CPB will create within its organization a special unit to administer AHEP and will appoint its Director. The Director will be the chief educational and operational officer of AHEP.
2. Educational responsibility will be shared with an Educational Board which will be composed of two members each chosen by CPB, ASC, PBS and NPR and chaired by the Director of AHEP. Up to two additional public members of the Board will be chosen by members of that Board at their option. The Educational Board shall review proposals for projects to be supported and for the Academic Advisory Committees for these projects. The Board and the Director are jointly responsible for projects and programs meeting the stated goals, targets, and criteria.
3. An academic advisory structure will be set up for each major proposal and project. This should include an Academic Advisory Committee of distinguished individuals knowledgeable in the area of the project. The Educational Board shall receive and consider the advice of the appropriate Academic

Advisory Committee before acting on a proposal.

4. The responsibility for selecting and administering projects will be delegated by the CPB Board to the Director and Educational Board of AHEP. A majority vote of the Board plus the affirmative vote of the Director is necessary for the approval of a program or project.

5. The Director of AHEP will issue an annual report of activities.