

# news release



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## CPB AND THE ANNENBERG SCHOOL ANNOUNCE \$150 MILLION EDUCATION PROJECT FOR PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Washington, D.C., February 26 -- The Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and The Annenberg School of Communications today jointly announced that the School was awarding CPB \$150 million over a 15-year period to support production of high quality, college-level courses for distribution through existing and developing telecommunications systems. The courses would be offered by existing colleges and universities for credit at their institutions.

The announcement was made by Annenberg School President, former Ambassador Walter H. Annenberg and CPB President Robben W. Fleming.

"The Annenberg School's decision to make available one of the largest gifts in the history of higher education and Ambassador Annenberg's confidence in the Corporation for Public Broadcasting is a signal that public broadcasting has become established as a major American institution and a cultural and educational force in our society," Fleming said.

I am confident that the opportunity we have been given for distinctive and significant new contributions will forge an even

stronger link between public broadcasting and higher education in this country."

Fleming said the project, which will be administered by CPB, is designed to provide institutions of higher learning with a significant new resource of educational programming and to explore and discover innovative ways to advance higher education through telecommunications.

Said Ambassador Annenberg: "I have for many years been concerned about the inability of many young people and others, who have an interest in a college-level education, to pursue an education because they lack the time, or the financial or instructional resources. This project, by utilizing the latest advances in radio and television communications, should help make it possible for them to achieve their educational goals."

The project is intended to create one or more significant collections of innovative, high quality, college-level materials and to demonstrate the use of communications systems for addressing unique higher education needs.

Fleming noted that the project is established with full recognition of the long history of similar efforts and accomplishments and is not intended to duplicate, compete with or replace such independent efforts and activities. On the contrary, he said, the project will fund the development of programs and projects in collaboration with other organizations and with higher education institutions that would result in courses to be offered generally, but not exclusively, for baccalaureate degree credit.

Fleming praised the efforts of Dr. William J. McGill, chairman, and the members of the joint CPB/Annenberg Task Force, who have worked since last July to define the nature and scope of the project and to prepare it for consideration by governing boards of both The Annenberg School of Communications and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

On July 21 of last year, The Annenberg School and CPB established a joint Task Force to begin preliminary work toward structuring the project. The Task Force Report resulted in a funding agreement which was executed today.

Members of the Task Force -- William J. McGill, former president of Columbia University; Robben W. Fleming, CPB president and former president of the University of Michigan; Maurice B. Mitchell, chairman of the Board of Directors of National Public Radio and former chancellor of the University of Denver; Newton Minow, former chairman of the Board of Directors of the Public Broadcasting Service and former chairman of the Federal Communications Commission; Lillie E. Herndon, chairman of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and former President of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers; Dean George Gerbner of The Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania; and Harry C. Coles and Merrill Panitt, trustees of The Annenberg School of Communications -- consulted with members of the higher education and public broadcasting communities throughout the summer and fall. The Task Force used several means to gather information about current uses of radio

and television in higher education, new telecommunications technologies and trends in higher education curriculum and enrollment.

The project will solicit and examine proposals that are relevant to its goals and, within the limits of available funding, will support those proposals that appear most promising. Academic advisory structure and mechanisms for proposal solicitation, review and funding will be announced once the full administrative structure of the project has been completed.

Chairman of the CPB Board of Directors, Lillie E. Herndon, commented: "There are 58 million Americans, 25 and older, who have graduated from high school, but they have not graduated from college nor are they now enrolled in college. We know that 25 percent of all colleges and universities make use of television and radio courses, if high quality courses are available. The Annenberg School gift will make possible the development of programs, which will be widely available for colleges to use in serving the target audience."

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