



**DEMOCRATIC CAUCUS**  
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To: Press, Radio and TV  
From: Representative Frank B. Brouillet  
Subject: Caucus Report

One of the quietest revolutions in Washington state history is being carried out in this session of the legislature. Not a shot has been fired in Olympia -- the real battle took place during the last session -- but the change brought about by the passage of new community college legislation will have as profound an impact on the educational future of this state as did the Morrill Land Grant Act a century ago.

Formally the bill before us establishes a separate State Board of Community College Education and defines its responsibilities in relation to a series of 22 district boards which will have direct jurisdiction over local community colleges. But facts make up only a small part of the story.

This legislation will add a new dimension to higher education in Washington state. Not that community colleges, themselves, are entirely new. Far from it. But not until now have they been admitted to full membership in the fraternity of formally recognized forms of post-high school education.

Community colleges are taking a giant step upward in the pecking order of educational systems in this state and they are assuming an identity and a responsibility -- really a series of responsibilities -- which are unique.

It may turn out that their role is the most far-reaching of all; for while the colleges and universities are rapidly developing their own sets of self-limitations, the community colleges have a broad and nearly unlimited range of service potential for the state's population whether in terms of age, educational goals, geographic setting, or background.

The presidents of the state's five existing institutions of higher education have called for a differentiated role to be assumed by each kind of school. Under such a program the colleges will offer four-year programs leading to the bachelor's degree and courses leading to a master's degree in a limited number of fields, primarily education. The universities will carry the same responsibilities, but will go further, offering advanced and professional degrees at all levels and conducting research.

Into this rapidly developing hierarchy, the community colleges will have a cooperative link, but will also grow in other directions.

As a basic requirement, they will offer the first two years of an academic program, allowing students to transfer to four-year schools. Equally as important will be programs of occupational education. And as a final responsibility, they will offer special programs in continuing education for the enrichment of the local adult population.



There is no turning back from the computer age in which such rapid changes are taking place in every occupational field that all of us will be required to keep on learning. Education no longer ends when a student is graduated; today, and increasingly in the future, education must be a life-long process.

It has been estimated that the knowledge an engineering graduate prizes so highly the day he receives his diploma will be obsolete within five years. To continue to be useful to his employer, the engineer must constantly bring his knowledge up to date. The same is true in medicine, in teaching, in the management of small businesses, in technical fields of all kinds.

And through intensified and imaginative programs offered by the community colleges, this kind of retraining, as well as much original training, will be available in local communities.

As a result, the young may turn out to be the smallest portion of the population benefiting from developments in community college education. By 1970 we expect that half of all undergraduates enrolled in some form of higher education in Washington will be attending community colleges. Still they will be outnumbered by mothers whose children are in school and who are seeking new job skills, by businessmen seeking methods of improving the management of home-owned bakeries and gas stations and automobile agencies, and by grandmothers taking courses in adolescent psychology or Greek mythology.

Individuals with a broad range of interests and widely divergent goals will find the kinds of specialized programs they seek in nearby community colleges. It is an exciting prospect and one which I think we are just beginning to realize.

The plan which we have developed is the result of long study and careful consideration. It has come out of consultation with local school people, with individuals in higher education, and with business and community leaders. And it has received broad support within the legislature.

This is perhaps the most satisfying kind of legislation one can become involved with in Olympia, for it represents a positive attempt to anticipate and solve problems before they become acute. And because the opportunities -- some of them as yet undiscovered -- promise service to nearly every individual within the state.