

# reporter

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## MINNESOTA COLLEGES SERVING AS COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Colleges and Universities in Minnesota are becoming more directly involved in community programs for two general reasons:

1. in response to the challenge to bring their resources to bear on community problems, and
2. to help open the community as a contemporary, practical learning laboratory for college students and faculty.

As institutions of higher education have become more involved in the community, they have found that the benefits to them have often been as great or greater than those to the community. Community involvement has become more the rule than the exception, as higher education is a real benefactor in first hand involvements. The Minnesota State College Board under the leadership of Chancellor G. Theodore Mitau is providing strong leadership in bringing the College to the people.

To help guide the role of colleges in continuing education and community service, Dr. Robert D. Johnson, Vice President for Public Services and Development at Southwest Minnesota State College, has set forth the following principles:

1. The primary purpose of any education system should be to provide a variety of options for all citizens. This includes not only such options as flexible entry and exit into training, retraining and education required for employment, but also opportunities for the individual to learn to make wise use of leisure time.
2. Education must be available to people throughout their lifetime or it fails to meet their needs either today or tomorrow.
3. Shifts in societal values, wider accessibility to higher education,

increasing emphasis on life-long learning and retraining, and higher levels of discretionary time will all reinforce to make the colleges in the future more open to the community and more concerned with the educational welfare of the whole population.

4. The college belongs to the people and they will increasingly demand to be served by it, individually and directly. Any remaining vestiges of elitist and cloistered thinking within the institution will not long survive.
5. The physical difficulties of serving such a broad public from the central enclave, which a college campus represents, will become increasingly apparent. Learning can occur in a variety of places and through many methods. The college will have to go to the people, rather than vice versa, when its student body increasingly encompasses all age groups, social strata, and geographical locations.
6. Traditional concepts of higher education such as collegiate credit and residency requirements may not be appropriate to serve people interested in learning but not necessarily in pursuing a degree. Elasticity must consequently be inserted in such traditional concepts to better serve this clientele; learning is possible at age 50 as well as age 20.

Colleges and Universities have stimulated interest in and encouraged inter-governmental cooperation in Minnesota. In each of the established or about-to-be established regional commissions in Minnesota, there has been a college

actively involved in community issues. Noticeably these include the University of Minnesota-Duluth in Region 3, Bemidji State College in Region 2, Mankato State College and Gustavus Adolphus College in Region 9 and Moorhead State College and the University of Minnesota-Morris in Region 4.

### OUT STATE COALITION

Several out-state colleges — Mankato State, Moorhead State, Southwest State, St. John's, St. Cloud State, University of Minnesota Duluth, University of Minnesota Morris, St. Olaf, Minnesota Technical College at Crookston, Gustavus, and Concordia — have established or are in the process of establishing community service centers or clearinghouses, as well as encouraging informal efforts on the part of individual faculty members to speak to community issues. These regionally-oriented and strategically-situated colleges promise to be important community resources within the several outstate regions of Minnesota.

During the past six months, representatives from these institutions, with an interest in community service, have been meeting to share common concerns and to begin developing mechanisms that could lead to a coordinated effort to provide public service to outstate areas of Minnesota. Although it has more characteristics of an interest group rather than a formal coalition, the new group is called the Outstate Coalition of Colleges for Community Service. Robert Barrett, Director of Urban Studies Institute, Mankato State College, and Edward L. Henry, Director of the Center for Study of Local Government, St. John's University, initiated the group in December, 1971, with a

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"brain storming" session during which issues of community service were examined and program ideas were shared. Out of this early meeting of four or five people has grown a considerable group drawn together by an intense belief that outstate cities and counties are in need of community service resources that local colleges can provide.

More than simply individual efforts, the Coalition has also developed the notion that outstate areas can profit from a collective effort of outstate colleges. A collective effort provides for cross fertilization between colleges and avoids the phenomenon of "re-inventing the wheel" each time a community service effort is faced with a new community issue to tackle.

The Coalition does not conceive of itself as a group that is in opposition to Twin City colleges and universities, but it does recognize the distinction between metropolitan needs and those of outstate areas. It recognizes that the Twin City area, because of economics of scale, has an abundance of action and research infra-structures, available to it with its Universities, Metropolitan Council, the Citizen's League, etc. The Coalition is attempting to develop a similar potential for outstate areas. The many outstate colleges provide one such alternative to meet the alarming information gap and problem solving needs of outstate cities and countryside areas. Realistically, the Coalition also recognizes that information in the form of expertise and knowledge is also power to deal effectively with community problems and issues of public policy.

Thus far the Coalition has been working on several fronts. As indicated earlier, the Coalition is loosely organized with the only formal aspect being a steering committee whose membership consists of Clifford Sibley, Southwest Minnesota State College; Byron L. Schmid, Ph.D., Moorhead State College; Roger A. Davis, Mankato State College; James Cecil, Bemidji State College; Dale Olsen, Ph.D., University of Minnesota, Duluth; and L. Dennis Kleinsasser, Ph.D., St. John's University. This committee has been meeting with state agency and state professional associations in an attempt to explore ways in which state programs can utilize outstate colleges as regional launching pads for needed research and training. A few payoffs for outstate areas have already begun to occur. Outstate colleges jointly sponsored community information sessions with the Upper Midwest Council in which new updated population

data was shared with local decision makers and planners. Plans are also underway to jointly sponsor, with Minnesota Analysis Planning Systems, Census User Conferences with the goal of giving more outstate planners, agency heads, and decision makers the skills to make use of census data.

With the current thrust toward regionalism and the attendant philosophy of greater use of regional resources, state agencies and funding resources can either facilitate or negatively reinforce the development of outstate colleges as local resources. The coalition believes that investment in outstate college public service efforts will not only help to meet immediate needs, whether they be of a research or training nature but such an investment will also have the long range effect of more fully developing this potential for application to future outstate needs.

Many of the Coalition's activities have also been focused on the gains that can be realized by a collective effort. Statewide research efforts that involve a state-wide network of colleges are now possible with the sort of horizontal linkages provided by the Coalition. The Coalition also provides a horizontal conduit through which technical transfer can take place, whether it be the sharing of a methodology for making a community housing survey or the sharing of specific training methods that one college has found to be effective with members of the public sector. The Coalition realizes that many college faculty members lack skills and that many institutions of higher education do not reinforce community involvement. Collectively, the Coalition hopes to interest more faculty and then to provide avenues for training, if necessary, to allow their specialty skills to be applied to community needs.

Hopefully, the sort of community involvement currently being promoted by the Coalition is not simply offered to outstate areas as a gesture in some vague effort to relieve social-conscience pangs. The net effects of community involvement are not one way. Outstate colleges do not have all to give and nothing to gain. Public service of outstate colleges will benefit the institutions involved by benefitting the teaching process through the addition of relevancy, benefitting the campuses by adding a certain dimension of social involvement that students are demanding, and by offering opportunities to ply theoretical and experimental findings to current issues that lie within

the fabric of outstate communities. Generally, the Coalition assumes that the universities and colleges will gain as much information and knowledge as it imparts to practitioners in the public sector.

## CENTRAL MINNESOTA CONSORTIUM

One of the more significant happenings in Central Minnesota is the advent of the Central-Minnesota Public Service Consortium. The concept has been blessed by the presidents of the three area colleges, St. Cloud State, St. Benedict's, and St. John's. With an assist from Title I funds, the planning process is currently underway, directed by Dr. Robert H. Wick and Dr. George Bellis, and involves a planning committee with college, school district, and St. Cloud diocesan representation.

Developing a mechanism that will unlock the learning resources within area institutions of higher education and make them available to the community is the over-riding goal of the Consortium. The planning committee is currently meeting with a wide range of community members to assess educational needs. A structure and process will evolve that can coordinate and facilitate the process of juxtaposing higher educational resources with community needs.

## ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

The Center for Study of Local Government, St. John's University, is not a newcomer to Central Minnesota as is the Central Minnesota Public Service Consortium. The Center is a kind of experiment in itself; an experiment to determine the value of an outstate resource center in servicing a wide range of non-metropolitan people that occupy the public sector. Founded in 1968 by Dr. Edward Henry with a Ford Foundation grant, the Center initiated a series of studies with a focus on "Micro Cities", Minnesota Communities ranging in size from 25-50 thousand. Since the Center's initiation, it has now grown into a group of projects that all relate to the broad purpose of providing research and education to promote and strengthen non-metropolitan institutions and processes of local self-government and public service. For example, the Micro City thrust is now focusing on designing training programs for municipal and county planning commissions and is under the direction of Mr. David Slipy. At a time when crime is defined as an "urban" phenomena, the Rural Crime and Justice Institute, also a part of the Center, is unique in the nation with its rural focus on

criminal justice. Under the direction of Mr. James Olila, the staff of the institute are addressing research and continuing education efforts to nonmetropolitan criminal justice needs. A study of rural juvenile probation and a one-week seminar for sheriffs, jointly sponsored by the Minnesota Sheriffs' Association, are two recent examples of Institute activities.

Other services and projects of the Center include studies of the impact of electrical power plant siting on the countryside, assistance in preparing and submitting proposals for state and federal grants, staff and planning resources for regional criminal justice planning, and a developmental effort aimed at facilitating the establishment of detoxification centers in rural regions. Still another facet of the Center's function is in the form of a regionally oriented Drug Awareness Clearing House coordinated by Mr. Kenzie Phelps; a regional expression of Minnesota Drug Abuse and Prevention.

Dr. Edward Henry, the founder and director of the Center is currently on a leave of absence for three years to serve as President of St. Mary's College, Indiana. During his absence Dr. Dennis Kleinsasser, Associate Director, will be serving in an "Acting Director" capacity.

## **MANKATO STATE COLLEGE**

The Minnesota State College Board authorized the B.S. degree program in Urban Studies for Mankato State College in 1966 and the M.A. degree program the following year. These interdisciplinary programs, which include instructional, service and research activities, were the first of their kind in Minnesota. They draw upon sixteen departments located in the five schools of the college, with the major faculty and curriculum support provided by the Departments of Geography, Political Science and Sociology. The programs were designed for "generalists" rather than "specialists" and maximum flexibility is provided: in addition to formal coursework, students may enroll in seminars, undertake independent study, work in internships, and participate in field studies in such places as Mobile, Chicago, Portland, the Twin Cities, St. Louis or Europe.

In 1970, the Urban Studies program formally became an "institute" and Dr. Robert A. Barrett was appointed its director. The specific responsibilities of the institute and its director include, but are not limited to the following: making recommendations to the chairmen of principal participating departments regarding

such matters as curriculum development, course offerings, faculty appointments, and other activities involving the departments; coordinating the instructional program including assignment of advisors and graduate assistants on the undergraduate and graduate level; making recommendations to the Academic Affairs Office on such matters as faculty, curriculum, budget, space, and other matters; initiating and maintaining contacts regarding research and service activities with urban organizations and government agencies; facilitating and encouraging exchange of ideas and information on urban studies; and serve a liaison function for faculty and students to encourage interdisciplinary opportunities in the instructional, research, and service programs. Roger A. Davis was named Coordinator of Community Services for the Institute in July of 1971.

A substantial increase in urban research and service activities has accompanied the growth of the program, which included approximately 150 B.S. majors and 45 M.A. majors in the spring of 1972. Similarly, service activities, primarily in the planning and management areas, have been developed at the initiative of regional organizations as well as the Institute's initiative. During the nine-month period from September, 1971, to June, 1972, Urban Studies Institute personnel visited and provided technical assistance in seventy-one communities as well as performing major staff or policy work for five major regional organizations being formed in southern Minnesota. Services provided were in the following functional areas: citizen participation, governmental reorganization, cost/benefit analysis of public services, environmental analysis and action, drug abuse, regionalism, increasing efficiency, impact studies, detoxification coordination, youth center development, urban renewal, housing improvement, zoning, land use, pollution control, manpower, economic base, community and regional information needs, area health, law enforcement, community-based corrections, grants administration, transportation planning, human services inventory, emergency communications, records systems, information retrieval programming, public policy development, intergovernmental cooperation, recreation systems, mass transit survey, community theater, finance systems, and power plant site studies.

The students of the Urban Studies Program are encouraged to do research which is relevant to the needs of communities. The basic philosophy of the Urban Stud-

ies Institute and the faculty involved in the program is that research should not simply be for research's sake, but should rather be a benefit to a community. As such, faculty of the Urban Studies Institute quite often require of their students research projects which are projects rather than papers. According to Dr. Barrett, ". . . we as an Institute turn to our best resource — a student and his ability through the guidance of faculty to do good research. "Learning, research and community service can and must be linked if relevancy is to be added to the education of our students. Additionally, they must be linked if the college is to become more than simply a learning center of the very few."

Besides the opportunities for experience through research and service, the Institute offers other valuable and unique programs. Two examples of these are "Project Plunge" and the "Environmetrics" urban simulation game. Project Plunge is designed to give advanced students an insight into the problems of the inner city. A student seeking this experience spends a week in the inner city of a metropolitan area with only two dollars and his social security card and must learn to "survive" by finding temporary labor and lodging. The Environmetrics urban simulation game, financed by a grant from the National Science Foundation, provided students with the experience of role playing and decision making within a series of community situations. The Institute is the only educational institution in the area with the Environmetrics Game in its urban program, and the only school in the country with the game mounted on a computer on its campus.

Probable future directions for the Institute include an increased emphasis on regionalism, problem solving instruction and attempts to foster rural-urban balance. Dr. Barrett anticipates expansion of community services to accomplish the following: encourage regional communication networks; upgrade information services of the college to communities and regional organizations; improve technical assistance services; increase cooperation with other educational institutions.

## **BEMIDJI STATE COLLEGE**

The service area of Bemidji State College consists of a large portion of rural Northern Minnesota, most of which is experiencing a gradually declining population. Four economic life styles are prevalent: farming, tourism, mining, and logging, additionally there are four Indian reserva-

tions close to Bemidji. While many tourists know the Bemidji area as a delightful place to spend leisure time, the area suffers from the many problems of rural America such as population decline, poverty, lack of employment opportunities, out migration of its youth, inadequate transportation, low educational attainment, and a large proportion of substandard housing. Bemidji State College, as it has grown from a teacher's college to a multi-purpose institution, has become more sensitive to and involved in the resolution of these problems.

One of the more significant events in the recent past was the organization of the Northern Minnesota Coordinating Council for Continuing Education and Community Services (NMCCCECS) under a 1971-72 Title I grant and its continuation under a 1972-73 Title I grant. This group includes representatives from community service agencies as well as four Junior Colleges in the area: Northland State Junior College in Thief River Falls, Rainy River State Junior College in International Falls, Itasca State Junior College in Grand Rapids, and Brainerd State Junior College. Sub-group coordinating councils are being organized in each of the four Junior College areas and the Bemidji State College area. These councils will investigate educational and community service needs and recommend priorities for program development to NMCCCECS.

The first effort of NMCCCECS was a three-day training program held in May 1972 for council members and representatives of their agencies and/or institutions. The conference whose theme was "Continuing Education and Community Services, Process, Program and Commitment", included leaders in the field of community service and continuing education. Participants discussed and analyzed the basic relationship between college and community; what it has been, is now, and should or could be, dealing with such questions as: Should colleges be involved in institutional advocacy? Do colleges have only knowledge to deliver? Are faculties willing and able to serve communities in new styles? What role does controversy have in college programming? Can the public be involved in designing college programs? Does continuing education and community services have a positive future?

The consultants presented helpful formats for problem analysis and program design, facts and figures about the area involved, sociological perspectives of the

community power structure and rural social structures.

The goal of the conference was aimed at giving the council members knowledgeable tools with which to work in the area of continuing education and community services, and to better enable them to chart program developmental directions in the area to be serviced.

Mr. Ed Knudson has been hired as Program Director to coordinate the efforts of the community councils being developed and to act as a liaison between the coordinating council (NMCCCECS) and the sub-councils in establishing program development priorities.

Mr. Ed Gersich, Director of Area Services, Bemidji State College, is Chairman of the 15 member NMCCCECS Council.

#### U OF M - DULUTH

Planning efforts of the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC) in Northeastern Minnesota are not overlooking the valuable resources of a University. Since its inception the Arrowhead Commission has had a working relationship with the University of Minn., Duluth.

Communication has been the key word of that relationship, which began with the "University-Community Program for Planning and Development in the Arrowhead Region." The objective of the program was to use University faculty, in cooperation with ARDC personnel to explain new state and federal planning and review requirements to local government officials in the seven-county region.

The U-Community Program was funded by a grant from Title I of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and is unique in the nation. It represents the first time a regional planning commission and a University Title I program have joined to provide broadly based community services at a regional level.

An initial federal grant of \$16,000 was received in the spring of 1970 and matched by \$8,000 in local funding. A \$20,000 grant, matched by \$10,000 in local funds, continued the program a second year. Through the efforts of ARDC Executive Director, Rudy Esala, UMD Professor Dr. Wayne Jesswein and others over the past two years, the program has been a success.

Getting underway in July, 1970, the program sought participation from faculty members at UMD, the College of St. Scholastica and junior colleges in International Falls, Hibbing, Virginia, Ely and

Grand Rapids. Programs during the first year included meetings at all the area junior colleges concerning ARDC's review process, a meeting on regional housing problems, a meeting on regionalism held at Aitkin and a pilot program on personnel management.

Much of the first year was spent in organizing and training the faculty members to become familiar with federal and state planning and review requirements. The continuing 12-month grant received in 1971 expanded activities of the program. A series of five one-day sessions in personnel management for county, municipal and township officials were held. One day workshops designed to help local government administrators involved in planning were given at three locations in the region. A Government Information Management Seminar was held where participants from city and county government and a Board of Education learned about the cooperative development of computerized information systems. An informative monthly newsletter was published for government officials and the public with a circulation of over 1,000 copies per month.

Though a third year grant of the U-Community Program was not received, ARDC and the University of Minnesota, Duluth are cooperating on several proposals for advancing the comprehensive planning process.

An internship program for upper division students at UMD has been in operation for over a year. Students learn valuable skills and the day-to-day functions of a planning agency while earning academic credits.

A proposal is now under consideration to share the knowledge and skills of a person in developing a regional information system for ARDC. This person would also undertake teaching duties at the University while involved in developing the information system which would be available to all local government agencies.

This cooperative proposal would not only advance the development of a comprehensive regional plan but help to achieve other goals of the Arrowhead Commission and the University. These include joint utilization of information systems, direct ties between ARDC and University programs such as the Minnesota Land Management Information System, advancement of plans for an M.A. degree in Community and Regional Studies at UMD and advancement of the mutual goal of expanding the community service functions of the Arrowhead Commission and the University of Minnesota, Duluth.

## MOORHEAD STATE COLLEGE

During the past academic year Moorhead State College has been engaged in the development of communication and educational resources for community and regional problem-solving activities in West Minnesota. The project, funded under Title I of the Federal Higher Education Act of 1965, has been developed in cooperation with other Region 4 educational institutions and planning agencies. It has been attempting to lay the foundation for long-term cooperative activity between the educational institutions and units of government and community organizations. Dr. Byron L. Schmid, Moorhead State College, and Mrs. Lois Mann, CURA community resource development coordinator, Fergus Falls, have guided the program.

Features of the Title I project have included:

- *establishment of communication with regional leaders:* Liaison has been established with public officials, regional agency staff and higher educational leaders in West Minnesota. The Title I project has been developed in consultation with directors of regional agencies and with regional educational leaders. An 18-member regional advisory council composed of public officials, regional agency directors, educators and other selected citizens chosen from throughout the region has provided overall direction.

- *publication of a monthly regional newsletter:* The *Communicator* is mailed to approximately 2,700 community leaders in the nine-county area. It serves as a medium for communication on information about multi-county activities and other items of regional interest in West Minnesota. The newsletter is the only existing medium for general regional communication among community leaders in the area.

- *preparation of a regional leadership index:* Information on approximately 3,000 community leaders in the region is being computerized according to the MAPS (Minnesota Analysis and Planning System) mailing list form. The various public leadership positions held by persons on the list also are being coded into the index.

- *determination of priority needs of the region:* A major regional conference was held last October for dramatization of the reality of a regional community in West Minnesota and for identification of priority needs for action. Conference participants included board members and

staffs of regional agencies, members of municipal and county planning commissions, selected county and municipal officials and other interested citizens involved in community development efforts and multi-county planning activities. The conference was jointly sponsored by the Title I project, CURA and the Agricultural Extension Service in cooperation with 16 regional agencies and institutions.

- *collection of regional socio-economic information:* The Title I project prepared a document, *West Minnesota Profile*, for distribution in the region. The 56-page *Profile* contains socio-economic data on the nine counties, descriptions of the multi-county planning and service agencies, addresses of state and federal offices in the region and information on 43 state and federal grant-in-aid programs. Nearly 700 copies of the *Profile* have been distributed in the region.

- *provision of information concerning a regional development commission:* The project has attempted to provide information concerning the 1969 Regional Development Act to county boards and municipal councils. A regional commission will be created when local units of government which represent another 16,000 people, less than 8% of the region's population, adopt resolutions in support of the regional planning body.

- *inventory of faculty community service capabilities:* The project has undertaken a survey of the community service interests, capabilities and involvement of Tri-College University faculty members in order to determine the availability of faculty resources for community service in the region. The survey form also is being used by Fergus Falls State Junior College and by the University of Minnesota at Morris.

- *planning for institutionalization of community service programming in the Tri-College University:* Finally, the Title I project has attempted to develop the institutional capacity of the Tri-College to coordinate the community service activities of Moorhead State College, Concordia College and North Dakota State University. (More information on this feature of the project will be contained in the next issue of the *Communicator*.)

Moorhead State College President Roland Dille recently announced the establishment of a Community Service Clearinghouse at Moorhead State College. The Clearinghouse will facilitate development of the community service potential of the state college and make its resources more accessible for community problem-solving efforts in western Minnesota. Dr. Byron

L. Schmid, assistant professor of political science, will serve as director of the Clearinghouse.

Activities will include public affairs workshops and conferences, community survey and research activities, technical consultation on community problems and development, and information services.

Requests for educational resources from community organizations and public agencies have been increasing in number. "The resources of the state college belong to the region," Dille said, "and the Community Service Clearinghouse will enable Moorhead State to become a more effective partner along with other public and private groups in efforts designed to improve the quality of life in the region."

Establishment of the Community Service Clearinghouse culminates a year of college-community service planning efforts by Moorhead State College.

## U OF M – MORRIS

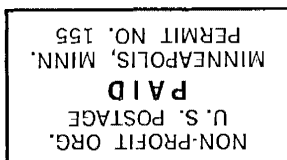
A comprehensive plan for coordination of all University of Minnesota community services in west central Minnesota is currently nearing completion. Appointment of a Community Services Director is expected shortly, according to Dr. Gordon Bopp, University of Minnesota, Morris Academic Dean. The newly-created position, "is broadly representative of the University of Minnesota Continuing Education Division and the University of Minnesota, Morris in matters concerning community services at local, regional and state levels," Bopp said. Much of the groundwork for this new program was laid by the Regional Research Center for Community Development, which was established at the University of Minnesota, Morris in 1969 under the leadership of Assistant Professor of Economics, Sun M. Kahng.

The Director will have an office on the UMM campus. He or she will be responsible for administration and development of University of Minnesota continuing education and extension programs in west central Minnesota. The Director also will:

- identify regional needs for research and continuing education and seek ways and means of applying University resources towards the fulfillment of these needs
- cooperate with and serve as liaison person for the various U of M community service programs including those of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs and the Agricultural Extension Service

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- serve as UM/UMM representative to regional advisory councils and other organizational units dealing with regional program development
- help with development and implementation of interinstitutional cooperative service activities
- provide information to appropriate faculty members and others regarding sources of funds for education and research involving community service needs.

According to Dean Bopp, "the new community service programs will provide a means of drawing together a great variety of essential resources, funds and personnel in a concerted and coordinated effort to bring to bear the greatest help for the most essential challenges facing the entire region. It will mean a calculated assessment of needs to be matched by resources from local units of government, educational institutions, and other sources of expertise from throughout the State."

The Community Services program will be sponsored initially by the University of Minnesota Continuing Education and Extension Division; the University of Minnesota, Morris; and the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs. The Community Services Director will be expected to provide leadership in the identification of community service needs and will propose ways in which University resources can be applied to the fulfillment of these needs. The Director will not only work within the context of the University of Minnesota but will also work in cooperation with a variety of community and governmental agencies as well as other college and university community service personnel and University extension agents in the west central area of Minnesota.

### SOUTHWEST STATE COLLEGE

Southwest Minnesota State College opened in Marshall in 1967 with a strong basic internal commitment to Continuing Education and Community Service. As expressed in its "Mission", the purpose of Southwest Minnesota State College is:

"To provide the region with a research, educational, and cultural resource serving not only on-campus students but the people of the College region."

Among the challenges in the countryside community served by Southwest Minnesota State College is that of developing public policy. For example, where can decision makers get objective data about specific problems in the countryside to help them in formulating public policy? What communication links (printed, electronic, or verbal) can be established in the countryside that will allow us to discuss common problems? Many times a telephone call 8 miles away is a long distance call. What "critical mass" of people is necessary to establish the quality of life that is necessary for a prospering countryside area?

The needs of people are continually being assessed and programs being developed to meet those identified needs at a time, place and price that is acceptable to the person being served. There are many people that are educationally disenfranchised because it is not feasible for them to be full-time students. As a result, non-credit offerings are a large part of the program in Southwestern Minnesota.

In serving the community, a college such as Southwest can be most effective

by joining hands, when appropriate, with the related agencies and institutions including the area vocational schools, public and private school districts, state and federal agencies, junior colleges, sister state colleges, private colleges or the University of Minnesota. This coordination of effort is particularly appropriate on a multi-county or regional basis. At the present time the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Commission is providing leadership as a catalyst and funding Continuing Education and Community Service projects in Title I of the Higher Education Act.

Community Service and Continuing Education requests that come to Southwest State College, and subsequent program development to meet those needs, are coordinated through a central administrative unit. As Robert D. Johnson, Vice President of Public Service and Development, sees it, there are two distinct elements of this responsibility:

Processing requests for service from external sources to appropriate college faculty for review and decision making.

Helping to implement proposed action by the college and coordinating relationships with other appropriate colleges or agencies.

New and imaginative methods of evaluating Community Service and Continuing Education programs are also being developed and implemented at Southwest because "External Services must prove themselves to the public and higher education traditionalists."