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State Grant for Rural Studies Goes to 8 Area Colleges

A \$22,000 grant to assist in program will be off-campus, students, faculty members the formation of a on-site studies by students, and rural residents together cooperative Rural Studies Program has been awarded by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Education to eight colleges and universities in central Pennsylvania.

The schools, which will be working together on a joint project for the first time, are Bloomsburg State College, Bucknell University, Lock Haven State College, Lycoming College, Man-sfield State College, Pennsylvania State University, Susquehanna University, and Williamsport Area Community College.

The program is believed to be the first in the nation in which rural society will be studied by undergraduates from a liberal arts point of view through cooperation

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who will meet and work with local leaders of all segments of rural society in the area.

Receipt of the grant was announced by Dr. Gustave W. Weber, president of Susquehanna University and Chairman of the Council of College Presidents for the Central Susquehanna Region. He also stated that George W. Fasic, director of planning and community development for the Institute for Regional Affairs at Bucknell, would serve as coordinator of the program.

The program, which will get underway this fall with the ultimate goal of studying all aspects of rural life, is a pilot venture which will be used to help determine the ability of the eight institutions to work together on among several institutions. similar projects. The A significant aspect of the program is designed to bring

to identify and solve problems peculiar to rural areas.

Describing the need for the program, its sponsors have noted that "more and more, rural society has become the passive, acted-upon segment of American society. Large scale public works are planned and built in or through rural areas whose needs and desires have been taken into account only in the most perfunctory manner.

"Simultaneously, existing rural, political, social and economic institutions increasingly are affected by and respond to decisions and policies arrived at centrally, with little appreciation or regard for local or regional desires or needs."

Sponsors of the program feel, however, that there are outstanding opportunities in this particular geographic area to redirect attention to the development of rural society. Pointing to the region's "unique indigenous." academic resources" they are convinced much can be done to assist the region in the development of "its full economic, cultural, and political capabilities according to the desires of the resident population."

The first year of the program will consist primarily of an inventory and assessment of the resources available at the

cooperating schools, detailed planning and development of the program, and the preparation of courses. These courses would be offered beginning in the summer of 1975 and 1976 and in the 1976-77 academic year.

In addition to the long-range goal of improving many aspects of rural life, it is hoped that the research and study undertaken by students and faculty involved in the program will result in increased community service and the enhancement of existing resources.

Administration of the program will be under the direction of a board of directors comprised of two representatives for each school. A Rural Studies Advisory Group, composed of faculty, students and representatives from cooperating communities and agencies, will be selected by the Board.

Members of the Board of Directors for the program are James H. Huber, associate professor of sociology, and William L. Jones, assistant dean of the faculty, at Bloomsburg State College; Wendell I. Smith, provost, and Melvyn L. Woodward, director of the Institute of Regional Affairs, at Bucknell University; Arden W. Holland, Professor of education, and Robert D. Lynch, director of development and Upward Bound, at Lock-Haven State College; and Robert L. Glunk, registrar and assistant to the dean, and J.S. McCrary, chairman of the department of sociology and anthropology, Lycoming College.

Also David Darby, assistant professor of geography and regional planning, and James Y. Glimm, associate professor of English, at Mansfield State College, Donald Crider, assistant professor of rural sociology, and T. Sherman Stanford, assistant to the senior vice president for development and relations, at the Pennsylvania State University; Frank W. Fletcher, director of the Institute For Environmental Studies, and John T. Moore, registrar, at Susquehanna University; and William Homisak, director of community services, and Otto L. Sonder, Jr., professor of sociology, at Williamsport Area Community College.



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