

Editorial Opinion

Junior College Proposal Has Great Potential

Last month University President Eric A. Walker went before the Task Force on Higher Education of the Governor's Committee on Higher Education and advocated that the state establish a system of junior colleges to help answer the need for expansion of educational opportunity in the Commonwealth.

Considering the apparent lax attitude on the part of state legislators toward their responsibility to educate the youth of the state, as illustrated by their failure to support their only major state university, this commendable plan will probably never get any farther than that committee.

But the junior college idea is certainly one of the best ways to bring college education to as many of the state's students as possible.

A system with colleges spread out across the state so that there would be a campus within commuting distance of every student would be the ideal situation. If a student can commute to school his expenses are cut considerably.

And Pennsylvania already has a great potential starting point for such a system with the Penn State Centers and the vast network of state teachers colleges, which dropped the word "teachers" from their titles. If they can likewise drop the connotation from their curriculum and expand their course offerings, they could form a solid base for such a system as Walker proposed.

And much as we may hate to see it, sentimental tradition and all that, our University, may fit into such a system as the two-year finishing stop.

Certainly our University Park campus cannot expand much more and still maintain any individuality and unity as an integrated four-year school. It could be conceivable that freshman and sophomore courses would be eliminated here and all students would take their first two years at one of the "junior colleges" and their final two here.

While we shall hope it would not have to go as far as the latter, we say the junior college system is one of the best ways that the state can fulfill the educational responsibility that it is failing to meet now.

California, for example, which has a much higher educational rating than Pennsylvania (and what state hasn't?) for years has supported a vast junior college network that is part of the free public school system.

Pennsylvanians, legislators and voters alike, must wake up to and stand up to their responsibility to expand their educational facilities to keep pace with the needs.

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