

CPB/ASC Joint Task Force

Higher Education Project
Corporation for Public Broadcasting
The Annenberg School of Communications

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TOWARD CPB/ASC Project Report and Recommendations of the CPB/ASC Joint Task Force

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The Task Force has concluded a series of meetings and consultations and has received the report of an intensive study of the factual background of its charge. Our deliberations and the evidence before us have led us to examine, refine and broaden some early conceptions. We are now prepared to recommend a course of action that we believe to be responsive to the original impetus behind our charge and to offer an opportunity for distinctive and significant new contributions.

The Kalba Bowen study commissioned by the Task Force has documented the present status of college course offerings by television and other telecommunications means. Seventy-one percent of higher education institutions made some use of television in 1978-79, 25 percent offering courses over television. Many colleges also use radio programs and audio cassettes for instruction. Although a few colleges offer a wide variety of courses by television and radio, relatively few schools have been involved in producing and distributing such courses on a national or international basis.

Our recommendations benefit not only from the facts assembled by the consultants, and of course the experience of members of the Task Force, but also from other recent studies in American public

broadcasting and education. In order to appreciate fully the contribution of these sources of information, a brief overview of educational broadcasting is necessary.

Spectacular growth of educational television and radio occurred at the same time as the post-World War II educational expansion, responding to the pent-up needs and population shifts of the Depression and war years. In 1945 the FCC first set aside radio frequencies for educational broadcasting. In 1949 the National Association of Educational Broadcasters set up headquarters in Washington, D.C. and began servicing member stations with program material, research, and publications. Shortly thereafter the Ford Foundation began to support educational television, leading eventually to the establishment of a production center and National Educational Television. In 1952 the FCC reserved 242 television channels for educational purposes. In 1960 the Eastern Educational Network was born. In 1962 Congress passed the Educational Broadcasting Facilities Act providing major financial support for growth.

By the mid-1960's the educational thrust was well established. The 1967 Carnegie Commission called for a change in direction and mission, and the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 was a response to this Commission and to other pressures. Its principal feature was the establishment of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to finance program production for national distribution, and the shift from a primarily educational emphasis to a broad public and cultural mission, including education.

By 1977 public broadcasting had become established as a major American institution and a cultural and educational force. Another Carnegie Commission conducted an 18-month inquiry into the needs and requirements of further development. "Telecommunications and Learning," the education section of its report released in 1979 (A Public Trust), contributes certain considerations the Kalba Bowen study was not asked to address.

From our study, we know that the link between public broadcasting and education is strong. Both are based on the principle of local control but both also benefit from the economies of scale achieved when some services are developed centrally and offered nation-wide.

Currently, about one-third of elementary and secondary school teachers nation-wide use television regularly in their classrooms. The extent of radio's use, known to be high in some large city school systems, is the subject of a current CPB study. Twenty-five percent of all colleges and universities offer courses over television. The typical public television station devotes about 40 percent of its broadcast schedule to instructional and educational programs, and countless additional hours to programs of broader education appeal. Forty-four percent of all public television stations and seventy-five percent of public radio stations are licensed to colleges and school districts.

Our studies have enabled us to pinpoint specific needs and opportunities for further development:

Significantly greater resources than currently available-- both financial and creative--must be devoted to innovative and conceptually sophisticated higher education programs and projects. The capabilities of the broadcast media must be fully exploited and the potentials of new telecommunications technologies must be explored.

All of the studies reviewed point in the direction of carefully targeted audiences and projects responsive to local as well as national institutional and educational needs. The need for new programming, the promise of new technologies, and the need for pilot and demonstration programs and new initiatives are especially stressed.

There is, therefore, a need for a charter that will clearly pinpoint the people and goals to be reached, set down criteria to be used in the selection of programs, and establish a flexible and self-directing mechanism under the aegis of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting which will be insulated from pressure, preserve academic integrity, and keep the project on its intended course.

In light of these considerations, we believe that the project should aim to develop one or more collections of high quality college-level radio and television programs which will be widely available, in whole or in part, to colleges and universities, public broadcasting stations and other telecommunications entities, and the American public. Those programs should be developed using telecommunications technology in their design and to promote widespread distribution, as appropriate.

Other projects might utilize computer assisted instruction, teletext, interactive cable, satellites and other technologies yet to be developed. This broad interpretation of programming is compatible with the mandate of the 1978 Public Telecommunications Financing Act which authorizes the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to "facilitate the full development of public telecommunications in which programs of high quality, diversity, creativity, excellence and innovation...will be made available..." In that Act, telecommunications is understood to include transmission via broadcast television and radio and other-than-broadcast distribution "including, but not limited to, coaxial cable, optical fiber, broadcast translators, cassettes, discs, microwave, or laser transmission through the atmosphere."

With this as a background, we propose the following partial wording (not including legal and financial provision, to be added later) for a charter and draft agreement between The Annenberg School of Communications and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

PROPOSED TEXT OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN CPB AND ASC

The Annenberg School of Communications will make funds available to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to support the creation of high quality college level radio, television and other materials for distribution through existing and developing communications systems.

The name of the project will be the CPB/ASC Project, hereinafter referred to as the Project.

The Project is established with full recognition of the long history of similar efforts and accomplishments and does not intend to duplicate, compete with or replace them. On the contrary, the Project will fund the development of programs and projects in collaboration with other organizations and with higher education institutions which would result in courses to be offered generally but not exclusively for baccalaureate degree credit.

The goals of the Project are: 1) to create one or more significant collections of new, innovative, high quality college level materials and 2) to demonstrate the use of communications systems for addressing unique higher education problems.

The primary target audiences are those persons who demonstrate an interest in college level education but because of lack of time, financial or instructional resources or other reasons are unable to pursue it.

The Project is not seen as the principal agency of college level telecommunications education. That is a vast enterprise carried on by diverse institutions in many localities, as befits the American system of higher education. The specific mission of the Project will be to provide institutions of higher education with a significant new resource of educational programming and to explore and discover new ways to advance higher education through telecommunications, in those areas where the need is demonstrable and where "venture capital" is required. Once the new programs, practices or systems of telecommunications education have proved their value, the activity should be carried on by local and other educational institutions and telecommunications organizations, with the Project always on the leading edge of educational and telecommunications advance.

The Project will solicit and examine proposals relevant to its goals and, within the limits of available funding, will support those that meet the criteria below and seem the most promising.

Criteria for Selecting and Supporting Programs and Projects

The principal criterion is that programs and projects shall innovate or complement but shall not duplicate or replace what already exists. More specific criteria are as follows:

A. For Program Funding

(These are projects designed to contribute to the collection(s) of college level materials and to encourage student participation in higher education

programs and institutions.)

1. Emphasize educational needs of the target audience to fill gaps not adequately met by existing programs;
2. Seek and seize opportunities, plans and ideas that promise to make significant contributions to the Project's mission but are unlikely to obtain other support;
3. Provide national availability of programs developed;
4. Include a strong evaluation component in every program that is funded.

B. For Project Funding

(These are projects designed to demonstrate the use of telecommunications for addressing higher education problems.)

1. Emphasize experimental, pilot, demonstration projects rather than fund more of what is already being done;
2. Explore the application of instructional methods, course designs and new technologies;
3. Encourage projects which promise to be replicable in other settings;
4. Include a strong evaluation component in every project that is funded.

Administrative Structure

In order to implement the project's mission, the following administrative arrangements will be made:

CPB will create within its organization a special unit to administer the Project and will appoint its Director. The Director will be the chief educational and operational officer of the Project.

A Council which will be composed of two members each chosen by CPB, ASC, PBS, and NPR will be chaired by the Director. Up to two additional public members of the Council may be chosen by members of that Council at their option.

It will be the duty of the Director and the Council to see that projects and programs meeting the stated goals, targets and criteria of the Project are selected and carried out, within the limits of available funding.

An advisory structure will be set up to review proposals submitted. This should include an Academic Advisory Committee of distinguished individuals knowledgeable in the areas of the proposals. Once proposals are funded, an Advisory Committee will be established for each of them to maintain academic integrity.

The responsibility for administering projects will be delegated by the CPB Board to the Director of the Project with the assistance of the Council.

The Director will recommend to the Council those programs and projects which he/she deems worthy of funding and for which funding is expected to be available. The Council will record its actions on each of the proposals. A majority vote of the Council and the affirmative vote of the Director are required for the approval and implementation of a proposal.

The Director of the Project will issue an annual report of activities.