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ABSTRACT

THE 2-YEAR JUNIOR UNIVERSITY COLLEGES IN CEYLON ARE UNDERTAKING PROGRAMS AIMED TOWARD SOLVING THE CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF TRAINED PERSONNEL NEEDED TO FULFILL THE COUNTRY'S COMMITMENT TO PLANNED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THE COLLEGES ARE DEVELOPING AN ORGANIZATION CAPABLE OF RESPONDING TO THE SPECIAL PROBLEMS OF BOTH URBAN CENTERS AND RURAL COMMUNITIES. THIS DOCUMENT REVIEWS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRST SIX JUNIOR UNIVERSITY COLLEGES AND PROJECTED DIRECTIONS THAT THE FUTURE GROWTH OF THESE INSTITUTIONS WILL TAKE.
(MC)

ACCENT ON ACTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION—CEYLON'S NEW JUNIOR UNIVERSITY COLLEGES

By FREDERICK C. KINTZER

Higher education is experiencing an unprecedented development of explosive proportions among nations of the world. Strongest attention is focussed upon the two-year college which has achieved greatest recognition in the United States. "Accent on Action in Higher Education" introduces the story of this development as background for a description of "Ceylon's New Junior University Colleges."

The two-year community junior college, recognized as the most dynamic and flexible institution in American higher education, is accepting an ever-increasing share of post-high school students. Now represented in all fifty states, this institution, referred to as a "junior college," "community college" or just "college," offers to many an opportunity—perhaps the only opportunity—to prepare for immediate employment in the working world or for upper-division senior college or university studies.

This vast network totals, at present, over 650 publicly-operated and approximately 260 privately-sponsored institutions—including some 160 church-affiliated colleges. According to the *1968 Junior College Directory*, published by the American Association of Junior Colleges, a record-breaking total of 72 new colleges opened in the fall of 1967. The *Directory* also lists 41 institutions that have announced plans to open by 1969. Enrollments of full and part-time students (October, 1967) totalled 1,671,440, an increase of more than 14 per cent over 1966.¹

The explosive growth of the two-year college is expected to continue unabated into the 1970's. It is predicted that by 1975 at least 1,000 publicly supported two-year colleges alone will enroll as many as 6.5 million students. Several states—including California, Florida, and New York—are currently approaching a goal for the twenty-first century: that every young person will

be able to attend a two-year college in his own community. From a meager beginning at the turn of this century as an attachment to the local high school or as a single-purpose private college, the junior college is now characterized as a comprehensive institution, offering a wide variety of programs accenting semi-professional courses, and is recognized as a full-fledged member of the American higher education family.

Quality Education

While convenience of location, low cost, and the diversification of opportunities are important factors in this rapid and widespread growth, leaders of the junior college movement like to point to quality education as the consistent attraction of the community-junior college. Personalized instruction that recognizes individual students is singled out as a distinctive characteristic. How to maintain quality with diversity, individualization in spite of numbers, and close community identity within an expanding administrative structure are questions of great concern whenever junior college administrators meet. Diversity among institutions and programs within institutions, many feel, is the only answer to individual differences in ability and aspirations—the only means of achieving quality within a framework of quantity.

Gardner illustrates what he means by institutional excellence with his famous "Princeton fable".

The traditionalist might say, "of course! Let Princeton create a junior college and one would have an institution of unquestionable excellence!" That may be correct, but it leads us down precisely the wrong path. If Princeton Junior College were excellent in the sense that Princeton University is excellent, it might not be excellent in the most important

1. *Directory, American Association of Junior College, 1968. Washington, D.C. P. 68.*

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way that a community college can be excellent. It would simply be a truncated version of Princeton University. A comparably meaningless result would be achieved if General Motors tried to add to its line of low priced cars by marketing the front half of a Cadillac.²

As a product of the twentieth century, the junior college is not bound by tradition. Given reasonable time for planning and organization, it can provide educational experiences recommended by lay advisory committees which are appointed to advise and coordinate the development of semi-professional curricula. The citizen's advisory committee acts not only as a community sounding board but also provides vital technical assistance. In many instances, committee members donate equipment that the college could not even hope to purchase. Instructors are frequently recruited perhaps on a part-time basis from companies represented on citizen's advisory committees.

Wherever it is found, the community junior college is put to a severe test to serve community needs, however humble the activity, but at the same time to maintain quality in all that it undertakes. Again, in Gardner's words :

We must learn to honor excellence (indeed to demand it) in every socially accepted human activity, however humble the activity, and to scorn shoddiness however exalted the activity. There may be excellent plumbers and incompetent plumbers, excellent philosophers and incompetent philosophers. An excellent plumber is infinitely more admirable than an incompetent philosopher. The society which scorns excellence in plumbing because plumbing is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in philosophy because it is an exalted activity will have neither good plumbing nor good philosophy. Neither its pipes nor its theories will hold water.³

Aims and Ideals

The aims of the American two-year college—*diversified programs with an emphasis on semi-professional (occupational) courses coupled*

with general studies to prepare students for more effective citizenship ; attention to the individual student through counseling and guidance centers ; a variety of teaching methods to match differing abilities and aspirations ; and flexible non-academic programs to cope with particular requests of the adult community—are not limited to the United States or to the North American Continent. These aims embody the hopes and ambitions of nations everywhere. They represent the cherished longings of people the world over.

The development of Ceylon's newly-created Junior University College system resulted from the cumulative thinking and planning of many educators and political leaders. Of strategic importance was the Honorable Minister's visit to the United States late in 1965. I. M. R. A. Iriyagolle, Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs, saw collegiate institutions, including junior colleges in Southern California, and was favorably impressed particularly with the work of students in the building trades at Los Angeles Trade-Technical College. Projects that the Minister inspected on that campus alone were indelibly fixed in his mind. The Honorable Minister returned to Ceylon with renewed enthusiasm and determination to provide semi-professional education for his Nation.

Intensive preparation for Ceylon's Junior University Colleges began following the passage of the 1966 Higher Education Act, No. 20, by The Parliament. After thorough consideration of regional population distribution ; availability of sites, building facilities, and staff ; and money allocations, the Ministry—acting on recommendations received from the Permanent Secretary, Chairman of the Planning Committee appointed by the Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs—decided to establish the first five institutions at Dehiwala (Colombo), Galle, Kegalle, Kuliyaipitiya, and Palaly (Jaffna). Subcommittees were subsequently appointed to recommend curricula, to rough out course syllabi for detailed development by the faculty, and to develop regulations regarding entrance and graduate requirements.

2. John Gardner. "Quality in Higher Education," *Current Trends in Higher Education, 1958. National Education Association, Washington, D.C., 1958, P. 11.*

3. *Ibid.* P. 11.

According to sub-committee recommendations, a prospectus was released late in 1966 giving general information as well as basic curricular commitments.

Named after Patriots

The five Junior University Colleges were subsequently named after Ceylonese patriots: D. S. Senanayake Junior University (Kuliya-pitiya) honors the first Prime Minister of Ceylon—generally referred to as the “Father of the Nation”; Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan Junior University (Palaly) honors one of the greatest statesmen of the Nation; W. A. de Silva Junior University (Dehiwela) honors a former Minister and leading educationist responsible for the creation of a number of Buddhist schools; C. W. W. Kannangara Junior University (Galle) honors a former Minister of Education who introduced free education in Ceylon; and C. A. Hewavitarne Junior University (Kegalle) honors a great philanthropist and educator who founded a number of technical institutes. Two of these institutions (at Dehiwela and Palaly) are co-educational. The other three are for men only. A sixth Junior University, Ehelepola Kumarihamy Junior University for Women (honoring the wife of one of the Prime Ministers of the last Kandyan King) has been established at the Uyanwatta Teachers' Training College at Polgolla (near Kandy). According to the National Council for Higher Education, this is a forerunner to more Junior Universities for women. Others have been proposed—notably in the Uva and Southern provinces.

Consistent with the statement of objectives contained in the law, two-year diploma programs were determined in areas of critical manpower shortages—Agriculture, Applied Arts (English, Journalism, Librarianship, and Translation), Commerce and Management Studies (Audit Practice, Book-keeping, Costing Methods, Personnel Management, Purchasing and Supply Management, Sales and Retail Management, and Transport), Science (Science and Home Economics), and Technology (Architectural Draftsmanship, Surveying and Levelling, and Textile Production).

Difficulties of staffing, procurement of equipment, adequate facilities, and other considerations prevented initial activation of the latter two curricular areas—Science and Technology.

Planning and Organization

Preparation of syllabi and detailed course outlines commenced immediately upon the appointment of the first group of faculty in the Spring of 1968. A series of workshops planned and directed by Charles C. Collins, Fulbright Professor, 1967-1968, gave necessary impetus to these arduous tasks, and to plans for a comprehensive Student Personnel Services Program which for the first time in the Nation's educational system, was destined to be manned by full-time Guidance and Placement Counselors.

Orientation seminars and workshops for more recently-named lecturers, counselors, and librarians were held at the various college sites throughout the Fall of 1968 by Frederick C. Kintzer, Fulbright Professor, 1968-1969, who also conducted training sessions for secretaries, vice-principals, and finally, the college principals. A final seminar for all Junior University Colleges sponsored by the Ministry on January 8, and an auspicious Dedication Ceremony held on January 30, climaxed the months of preparation and heralded the opening of the institutions on February 2, 1969, with a total enrollment of approximately 1,000 young men and women.

Frequent evaluative sessions—including work with lecturers on more accurate measurement of student accomplishment and in-basket techniques with administrators—will be held by Professor Kintzer throughout the Spring and early Summer at the colleges.

Standards for admission to all courses of study include passes in three prescribed subjects in the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) Examination. For some courses, an oral examination is contemplated. Academic admission requirements (three passes) are a notch below University minimums (four passes) to accommodate well-qualified applicants who are interested in attempting mid-management level programs. Many of the

initial J.U.C. group are University eligibles rejected because of lack of space on University campuses.

Most graduates completing a two-year major will move directly into jobs appropriate to their specialties. Those who are awarded First Division passes on the Diploma Examination, however, will be admitted to any University in Ceylon with advanced credit for work taken at a Junior University College.

The Junior University Colleges, as envisioned by the Honorable Minister, will adapt other features of the American Two-Year College: (1) The Library of each institution will become the focal point of learning. Accordingly, ten hours (per week) of supervised library study will be required of all students regardless of major. (2) Student evaluation will be based upon multiple criteria frequently and continuously applied throughout the two-year programs. Methodology supporting course objectives will be varied and flexible. Strenuous efforts will be made to break the stranglehold of the final written examination, as well as the lecture method. (3) Individualized instruction will be implemented by means of audio-visual equipment which is in comparatively generous supply on all campuses. (4) General studies—including English, Social Education, and Physical Education will be required, thus broadening the base of higher education in Ceylon to emphasize preparation for a richer life.

Problems

Problems faced by the Junior University Colleges are varied and many. The late appointment of the chief-administrators—resulting from a series of unavoidable circumstances—added, for a time, a tone of apprehension and unrest. Obtaining sufficient equipment and facilities and competent teaching staff—ever-present in the fast-moving world of semi-professional education—will continue to plague the system. Most disconcerting of all is the anticipated wide variation in the English competency of students. While excellently prepared in Sinhala and/or Tamil to benefit from lectures and to participate in discussions, many—possibly the vast majority of the initial group

of about 1,000 enrollees—will not be sufficiently prepared to make effective use of the library collection which is almost entirely composed of English texts and materials. Original preparation and translation of books into Sinhala and Tamil, apparently a complex and time consuming process, has not kept pace with the Nation's understandable interest in emphasizing the mother tongue. Anticipating this situation, the Junior University Colleges (actually at Kegalle and Kuliya-pitiya) are offering a major in Translation which, in time, should help to ease the problem.

Contribution

What of the future? Ceylon's new Junior University College system may make its greatest contribution in providing the means for personalized educational opportunities. The system director and, in turn, the six college principals are determined to operationalize this ideal established by American community-junior colleges. Responsibilities for balanced semi-professional and general studies programs will necessitate tough-minded, exacting standards; but devotion to individual student development and community betterment will require a much greater range of teaching methods and evaluation techniques than heretofore practised.

Junior University College leaders are also studying ways to provide opportunities for two other types of students: University graduates who remain unemployed and University and other level failures who nevertheless exhibited unleashed potentialities. Cruciality of the need to educate and re-educate at least the most promising of both groups is certainly self-evident if the Nation is to maintain its rather impressive economic improvement. While statistical evidence is not available relative to the size of the second group, the *High ability-low achievers*, the number of *educated but unemployed* is more easily identifiable. According to *The Economic Journal*, the proportion of unemployed University graduates has risen on a cumulative basis from less than eleven per cent of the total in 1963 (1,800 out of 16,800) to nearly twenty-two per cent (6,300 out of 29,000) in June, 1968. Of the approximate

4,000 June, 1968 graduates, eighty per cent remain without jobs. While high job expectations, attitudes toward work, and absence of career counseling are contributory, the enormous increase in the unemployed number of Arts graduates is the key factor in the rising tide of unemployment.⁴ Obviously, the Nation can ill afford to waste even a small number of its brightest and most talented youth. Junior University College leaders are determined to achieve one hundred per cent job placement of the initial classes of graduates, and as already described, have hired counselors to facilitate that high ambition.

Research and study have been prominent in the formation stage of the Junior University Colleges. Such attention to evaluation should not cease, but continue unabated.

Institutional research—the type that is designed to help an institution do a better job—is essential for a two-year college. Constant clarification of institutional goals in the light of new evidence is imperative. Continuous and consistent research on the entire college effort, particularly the instructional program, must also be provided if the system is to respond with speed and accuracy to changing demands. Follow-up studies are particularly valuable in assessing the effectiveness of semi-professional curricula. These should be designed early in the action stage. Accent on evaluation is getting emphatic attention in American Higher Education, notably through the United States Office of Education program.

Plans are now being formulated to extend and increase assistance from the United States. In addition to the continuation of the Fulbright Professorship Program, efforts are being made to involve professional and philanthropic organizations in the immediate years ahead.

The spotlight of leadership is now on Ceylon's Junior University Colleges. Led by the Honorable Minister of Education, leaders

of this new movement are undertaking an ambitious program to show the way toward solutions of critical national problems. Ceylon is committed to planned economic development which calls for immediate increases in the number and variety of trained personnel. Every young person, according to this commitment, must be given the chance to benefit from education to the full extent of his abilities. The Junior University Colleges are therefore dedicated to this ideal.

At the same time, The Honorable Minister is determined to develop an organization capable of responding both to special problems of urban centers as well as rural communities. Each of the six colleges will be afforded a high degree of freedom to meet the differing needs of its own community. Policies presented in The Higher Education Act, No. 20, 1966, are broad and flexible to allow each school to develop procedures to fit the local scene.

The colleges, in addition, will make every effort to contribute to the cultural and social as well as the intellectual life of their service areas, and take leadership in promoting skills for the profitable use of leisure time. Educational services which utilize special talents of the professional educators soon to be taking up residence in the six communities will, within limits of their extra time and remaining energies, offer to assist community leaders in their quest to find solutions to local problems and to build long-range programs for community betterment.

The Junior University Colleges, newest members of Ceylon's higher education team, are destined in the decades ahead to bring lasting benefits of great value to their students, to each of the cities and towns represented, and hence to the Nation.

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4. *The Economic Journal*, Colombo, Ceylon, Vol. 1, No. 40, October 1, 1968, P. 1.