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ABSTRACT

Perspectives concerning college admissions and the transition to postsecondary education are analyzed, based on June 1982 hearings and discussions held in Chicago, Illinois, for the National Commission on Excellence in Education. Issues addressed in the public hearing include: (1) the relationship between declining enrollments and admissions standards; (2) the impact of economic and financial aid changes on college attendance and student choice; (3) the comparative roles of testing, coursework, and grades in admissions standards; (4) the role of parents in the transition from secondary to postsecondary education; and (5) the process of student adaptation to the academic and institutional demands of college. The principle emphasis of the public hearing was secondary education. Themes include the following: education has a significant and complex relationship to our national purpose; articulation is a diffuse and poorly understood concept; college admissions policies, particularly those relying on formulas, cannot play a significant role in the enhancement of educational excellence; and guidance and advisement are important supports for students; college-level programs offered in high school. Issues for further examination include: federal and state roles in education; the high school curriculum; parental roles and perceptions; and identifying and preserving what is working well in American education. (SW)

College Admissions and the Transition to Postsecondary Education

Staff Analysis of the Visit to Chicago by
the National Commission on Excellence in Education
June 23-24, 1982

I. Description of Activity

The Commission's visit to Chicago on June 23-24, 1982 consisted of five (5) events:

1) A public hearing on the subject of "College Admissions and the Transition to Postsecondary Education," held at Roosevelt University, and at which some 23 individuals testified;

2) A dinner-discussion with some 20 corporate and community leaders in the Chicago area, sponsored by the MacArthur Foundation;

3) A breakfast discussion with twelve high school seniors and college freshmen from a variety of types of schools and colleges, hosted by DePaul University;

4) A visit to corporate education programs at Standard Oil (Indiana) and Continental Illinois Bank;

5) A luncheon discussion with 27 college presidents and provosts from the Chicago area, sponsored by the MacArthur Foundation.

Following these events, the six Commissioners in attendance and staff held a debriefing session at the MacArthur Foundation. At this session it was tacitly agreed that the visit was extraordinarily valuable, but for totally unanticipated reasons.

II. General Analysis

The centerpiece of the visit to Chicago was the public hearing on "College Admissions and the Transition to Postsecondary Education." A background briefing paper for the Hearing outlined sets of questions under eight (8) issues deemed important for the Commission's understanding of the topic:

1) The relationship between admissions standards, requirements, and practices, on the one hand, and declining enrollments, on the other;

2) The impact of changes in the economy and in financial aid on college-going and student choice;

3) The comparative roles of testing, coursework, and grades in admissions standards;

4) The roles of parents in the transition from secondary to postsecondary education;

5) The process of student adaptation to the academic and institutional demands of college;

6) Student perceptions of the relationship between curriculum and careers as those perceptions affect the process of adapting to postsecondary education;

7) The role of guidance and advisement in the transitional process;

8) The virtues and limitations of mechanisms such as advanced placement and time-shortened degrees, exchanges of students and faculty between colleges and high schools, etc.

In the course of the Hearing, issues #3, 7, and 8 were covered in some detail and issues #1 and 5 touched upon.

Both Commissioners and staff had hoped that both the testimony and discussion at the Hearing would probe a very complex set of factors and trends cutting across these issues, including the role of admissions in the strategic planning of colleges, the demands placed on postsecondary education by local economies and population groups, student development in the transition process, and competition among different kinds of postsecondary institutions (including employers who offer educational programs) for the increasing numbers of students who delay their entry into higher education or who take that education over a protracted number of years.

But the Hearing itself told the Commissioners very little about college admissions that they did not know already or learned from reading commissioned papers and other background materials.* The demographic and economic conditions of college-going in America were studiously ignored by nearly all commentators at the Hearing, and, with a few (but significant) exceptions, questions concerning transition were unexplored. It may be said, in fact, that the principal emphasis of the content of the Hearing was on secondary schools and not colleges. The testimony implied that American colleges and universities are doing a fine job and are not facing any problems relevant to the concerns of the Commission other than poorly prepared high school students.

Fortunately, the breakfast discussion with students themselves covered many of the gaps in the Hearing, particularly those related to the critical transition issues. Students testified to a complex process of adaptation to the demands of college, discussed the importance of parental roles in the transition, and compared experiences with coursework, testing, and advisement, and considered relationships between academic programs and careers.

* See appended list.

In the course of the site visits to corporate education programs, a number of themes that emerged in previous discussions with corporate educators (e.g. at the Philadelphia panel on "Performance Expectations in American Education") were reinforced, e.g. that the best preparation for business is a liberal arts education, that creative thinking and imagination are valued in the workplace (though not enough), that the ability to set existing knowledge and analysis in new contexts is something that can be developed by schools and colleges, and that the most unnecessary repetitions in American education involve communication skills.

But the discussions with both corporate leaders and senior college administrators produced the major unanticipated value of the Chicago visit, for these discussions brought forward, both directly and by inference:

1) The question of where education fits into what might be called our "national purpose" and sense of community;

2) The question of how excellence in education is defined with respect to excellence in other endeavors in American society;

3) The roles that schools and colleges may serve in the society and the displacement of those roles by other institutions (and vice-versa);

4) The problem of atomistic perspective, i.e. that each class of actors in our society sees and judges education only from the perspective of its role--whether parent, teacher, student, employer, test developer, counselor or administrator. It appears that each class of actors judged success in education in very narrow terms, and that each possesses its own cynicism about the function of the Commission.

All of these issues, it was agreed, should be addressed in a preamble or introductory section of the Commission's Final Report, but that the precise shape and substance should await the discussion of Charter Responsibility #5 at the Commission's November meeting.

III. Findings/Themes of the Visit

What were the most significant themes that emerged over and over again during the visit? In reading through the transcript of the hearing, the prepared statements of witnesses, and notes on various other discussions, the following stood out:

1. EDUCATION HAS A SIGNIFICANT AND COMPLEX RELATIONSHIP TO OUR NATIONAL PURPOSE.

It is difficult to separate the status and image of education in the United States from larger social attitudes, economic expectations, and institutional behavior. If, as some contend, our aspirations as a nation have dropped, if the quality of goods and services we produce is less competitive in the international marketplace that it once was, if the connection between educational credentials and economic and social mobility has been weakened, and if institutions such as corporations and

government reward mediocre performance, and if both our mobility and the specialization of our worklives has resulted in the loss of a sense of community, then this Commission faces a significant task.

It is a task of restoring education as a national responsibility in the face of what many contend to be an obsessive devotion to a philosophy of local control. It is the task of determining that we have national objectives in education and of defining those objectives in such a way as to encourage local authorities, parents and students to realize them without impinging on their power to do so.

It is a task of infusing a concept of excellence based on merit and productivity into the national purpose at a time in which there appears to be no national mandate for excellence--individual or collective--in anything, let alone education. "Education for a competent democracy," was the way one witness at the Hearing put it.

It is the task, perhaps, of defining a sense of purpose for us as a nation--as opposed to 230 million self-centered individuals-- in terms of a future founded on the education of our children. Education, it was pointed out, is not only one of the few purposeful activities in which everyone participates, but the activity that ultimately determines the quality of our economic and cultural well-being. The way in which the Commission defines and illustrates excellence in education, this line of argument goes, may lead the way for the definition and realization of excellence in other sectors of our society and economy.

"Excellence in education," then, can be far more than a convenient but empty slogan; it can be a leading tone for the nation and a way to regain a sense of community--local, state, and national.

2. ARTICULATION, WHILE SEEMINGLY NECESSARY TO SUBSTANTIVE COOPERATION AMONG THE SECTORS AND LEVELS OF AMERICAN EDUCATION, IS A VERY DIFFUSE AND POORLY UNDERSTOOD CONCEPT.

To the quality of education in America is a task that clearly requires better articulation between levels (e.g. secondary / postsecondary) and sectors (e.g. colleges / employers) of American education. This topic was first elaborated at the Philadelphia panel in April, but received considerable expansion in the course of the various events in Chicago.

"Articulation," however, seems to be a term too easily used and too imperfectly understood. To some, it applies only to discrete curricular matters, e.g. insuring that students do not repeat the same Chemistry experiments in high school and college or use the same level of textbook in American History. To others it seems to refer to a process of generalized communication in which the "higher level" expresses its expectations to the next level down the line--whether through admissions requirements (where applicable), the content of qualifying examinations, or direct statements describing discrete competences and proficiencies expected of students. To others, it means the direct involvement of

instructors from one sector or level with students in another. And to still others, better articulation is a wholly indirect function of pre-service and in-service teacher education.

No matter how defined, it was agreed that the most critical group in the process of articulation, college faculty, are comparatively inactive because the system does not provide any incentives for cooperative and outreach activities.

3. THERE IS A PRODUCTIVE TENSION BETWEEN REQUIREMENTS AND STANDARDS IN AMERICAN EDUCATION.

Again, this topic has arisen previously in the Commission's work, but the various discussions during the Chicago visit brought it into bold relief. Ultimately it is a question of the grounds for educational credentials.

As pointed out in the summary of the Philadelphia panel:

requirements = time x content, i.e. so many units or credits of a subject

standards = the expected and/or measured level of student achievement in a subject.

Because we continue to "sell" education to students at all levels in terms of requirements based on time, of accumulating as many courses or credits as fast as possible, we are continually frustrated by our inability to describe exactly what it is that students learn. Students, too, are frustrated when they discover the gap between what they think a diploma or degree means (requirements) and what the world of work demands (performance).

This is not to say that college admission requirements are not valuable. In fact, if requirements for college admissions are not maintained--and increased--secondary schools tend to seek the lowest common denominators. Statements of requirements are thus potent signals for reversing the trend towards dilution of the academic curriculum.

Definitions of expected proficiencies may serve as an effective balance to our current reliance on requirements, it was suggested, because such definitions serve to develop a common language of standards. But even if these definitions were sufficiently detailed and clear, they might do little toward reducing the current smorgasbord of courses that appears on student transcripts.

One alternative to the use of such definitions is to rely more on achievement tests as statements of expectations. But, as has often been noted to the Commission (and, in Chicago, especially by students), our current achievement tests require recall and recognition more than the active exercise of the mind, and hence may be inadequate measures of proficiency. Obviously, it was agreed, there is room for improvement in such tests if we are to use them as standard-setters.

4. COLLEGE ADMISSIONS POLICIES AND PRACTICES, PARTICULARLY THOSE RELYING ON FORMULAS, CAN NOT PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE ENHANCEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE.

While the role of admissions policies and practices cannot easily be dismissed on the grounds of institutional diversity, admissions by formula (e.g. cut-off SAT scores, class rank, or even open enrollment) encourages mediocrity because formulas tend to gravitate to the lowest common denominator necessary to produce a requisite number of matriculants. And as evidenced by stepped-up recruiting for enrollment mixes (i.e. to insure that enough students enter with intentions of majoring in different subjects) this tendency toward "inflexible" admissions practices increases in times of declining enrollments.

Formula admissions, it was pointed out, is an inflexible actuarial process that sorts students without concern for their future intellectual development. So even to change the formulas or to raise the cut-off points will not motivate most students, nor will it solve the problem of underpreparedness.

On the other hand, it was emphasized that one cannot maintain--or even strive for--excellence at the primary and secondary levels of education without the prospect of broad access to higher education. If students, including high-risk and handicapped students, for example, don't think they can go to college at all, there is little incentive for them to work. In other words, there is no effect without at least the perception of social rewards.

5. HONORS, ADVANCED PLACEMENT, AND OTHER "COLLEGE LEVEL" PROGRAMS OFFERED IN HIGH SCHOOL HAVE MORE VALUE IN TERMS OF BOTH ENRICHING THE EDUCATION OF INDIVIDUALS AND SETTING HIGH STANDARDS FOR SCHOOLS THAN THEY DO IN THE CHASE FOR CREDENTIALS.

Honors type programs in the secondary schools (Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Project Advance, etc.) have filtering effects on the schools themselves, that is, lift the aspirations of both students and teachers, whether or not they are participating in the programs. Schools that house such programs generally testify to a more challenging curriculum with a faster pace and more rigorous standards. The result is a better education for all in the school.

For the individual student, the true function of such programs, then, is not to skip a "grade" or shorten one's baccalaureate degree program, rather to increase the quality of one's education. The issue of college credit for high school courses (a variation on this theme that is perhaps best exemplified in Project Advance and its imitators) must be judged the same way.

Students also use a variety of tests--Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and CLEP (College Level Examination Program)--to "place out of" introductory college courses in several disciplines. As the cost of higher education rises, there is an understandable temptation to use this procedure. Of these tests, only the AP and IB can have an impact on secondary school curriculum because they are total

programs involving both students and teachers. CLEP, which was designed for use by adults who had "stopped out" in the course of their educational careers, does not have such an impact. But only the policies of individual colleges can serve to discourage the lock-step students from using (and, some say, abusing) CLEP to dispose of their General Education requirements and moving on to pursue very narrow degree programs.

6. THE ROLE OF GUIDANCE AND ADVISEMENT IS CRITICAL TO BOTH CHALLENGING STUDENTS AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO MAXIMIZE THEIR OPTIONS AT ALL LEVELS OF EDUCATION.

At the present moment in American education, we have isolated a relatively small group of individuals with the title of "guidance counselor" (or, in colleges, "academic advisor") whose functions have become increasingly actuarial, i.e. they schedule students rather than advise them, and their available time to help parents is almost non-existent.

The current trend toward phasing out counselors has left a considerable void, particularly in rural and large urban high schools. In order to allow each student the chance to maximize his/her postsecondary options, it was suggested that the process of advisement should begin as early as the 9th grade, that advisors should function as academic advocates and not mere schedulers, and that academic counseling can be done by more than those who carry the title, e.g. by teachers and administrators. The same recommendations were made for the college level. Students pointed out that as they break away from the home environment, advisement is critical. Again, given the tight personnel situation in postsecondary institutions, faculty and administrators can take a more active role in advisement.

And at both the secondary and postsecondary level, parents seem to need considerable assistance in understanding the options that are open to them and their children, the relationship between courses of study and the changing labor market, and the bureaucratic processes of admissions, financial aid, and colleges in general. In the words of one witness, if students "don't know what they don't know," parents are even more deprived.

7. EDUCATORS REMAIN DIVIDED OVER THE COMPARATIVE VIRTUES OF APTITUDE AND ACHIEVEMENT TESTS, BUT GENERALLY AGREE THAT THE KIND OF TESTS WE USE SENDS IMPORTANT SIGNALS TO BOTH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS.

When this issue was raised at the Philadelphia panel in the context of an international comparison of college entrance examinations, it was pointed out that American tests place a premium on speed and recognition not thoroughness of thought. Perhaps because the magnitude of our de facto national testing system, it is most convenient to rely wholly on multiple choice examinations. But nearly all parties outside the testing industry believe that if our major examinations do not require students to write, then neither students nor teachers will value writing and communication skills will continue to suffer.

Those who favor aptitude tests point to their predictive validity, particularly in combination with high school grades. But there is a contrary sentiment that pertains more to our use of aptitude tests "to play God" with students. On the other hand, it is obvious that an exclusive reliance on achievement tests would discriminate against school systems (particularly in rural districts) that simply cannot provide adequate preparation in some disciplines due to limited resources.

The resolution to these disagreements, it was suggested, must come in a rethinking of our practices of assessment, a topic that is to be taken up, in part, at the Kingston panel on college curriculum.

8. THE TRANSITION FROM SECONDARY TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION IS AN EXTRAORDINARILY COMPLEX PROCESS THROUGH WHICH STUDENTS SEARCH FOR BOTH ACADEMIC AND PERSONAL IDENTITY BUT ARE WOEFULLY IGNORANT OF THE GROUNDS OF THEIR CHOICES.

We often forget that the transition--whether from high school to college or from high school to work--is a passage to another stage of life, that it is a complex and confusing time for late adolescents, and that they make critical choices--career, college, major, etc.--without sufficient knowledge. The financial aspects of their decisions have also become more important, but neither they nor we understand fully the "return on investment" in education.

Entering college freshmen experience a series of shocks that may have beneficial consequences or that may wholly discourage them. Many have little appreciation for either academic achievement and/or social norms, and find themselves in a baffling environment that values both. Most of them exhibit a low tolerance for ambiguity and complexity (which, in part, explains the early rush to resolve their academic identities by commiting themselves to a major), are afraid to take cognitive risks, to wonder, to experiment, and to understand that learning how to learn is the real objective of higher education.

The most significant shocks involve taking on the responsibility for managing one's own academic time and for setting one's own priorities. For those students who work and for commuter students, this adaptation is particularly difficult.

For resident students, adaptation to the social and value environments of college present a great challenge. These adaptations are especially painful for minority students from predominantly minority high schools who often have to come to terms, for the first time in their lives, with what being a minority really means.

Nearly all entering freshmen, even the academically elite, exhibit difficulty with abstract thought, synthetic thinking tasks, and with the use of models--all of which are required for college-level work. There is currently no preparation for any of this, and colleges themselves seem to be making only haphazard efforts to address these student learning needs.

Should we strive to prepare students better for this difficult and complex transition, or should we continue to allow shock and trauma on the grounds that they are more valuable learning experiences? While the question was unresolved, the preponderance of testimony in all the Commission's discussions in Chicago was on the side of better preparation and more sensitive and constructive attention to the transitional experience on the part of colleges.

IV. Issues for the Final Report/Further Examination

1. FEDERAL AND STATE ROLES IN EDUCATION.

If there is a significant aspect of the Commission's investigations that identifies quality education as a national goal and if it is determined that cooperation among the various sectors of education is critical to realizing that goal, then the Commission clearly has to delineate the roles of Federal and State governments in both encouraging quality in education and bringing about that desired cooperation. This is not a question about regulations, intrusion, or the bottom line of funding. Rather it is a question of leadership, incentives, and imagination.

Before tackling this issue in the Final Report, though, the Commission will need to define it more precisely, identify exemplary governmental efforts, and solicit specific and thoughtful testimony.

2. THE USES OF EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

While this issue will be discussed on three (3) occasions in the near future, i.e.

- o the Kingston panel on college curriculum in August (and, accompanying that, Dean Whitla's commissioned paper on "Value-Added");
- o the discussion of standards and achievement at the full Commission meeting in September;
- o the discussion of the past quarter century in American education at the full Commission meeting in November,

it may be helpful to flag the importance and complexity of the topic in advance and to suggest that Commissioners begin to build some ideas about it now. To do so, it might be helpful to refer back to the Commission's discussions at its February and May full meetings, to the summary paper on the Philadelphia panel, and to commissioned papers such as those of Husen, Farnham et. al., and Pace.

Given the intensity of the national debate on testing and the creative ways in which schools and colleges have begun to use assessment, and given the fact that there are short-term improvements that can be made in these areas, the Commission may wish to make a few recommendations.

At this point in time, however, we do not need to assign any further work in this area other than reflection on what we read and hear.

3. SHORT-TERM V. LONG-TERM PROBLEMS AND OBJECTIVES IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

It seems most appropriate that the final report keep a clear distinction between short and long term problems and objectives, but also make sure that both are accounted for. To be perceived as practical, recommendations should be addressed to what is doable within a time frame to which the public can relate. To be perceived as credible, recommendations should be guided by a sense of longer term objectives.

For example, everyone--from teachers to employers to students themselves--desires that students learn how to think creatively. But few have defined what creative thinking means, how it is measured, and what curricula and teaching strategies--on both the secondary and postsecondary levels--can develop creative thinking abilities. The development of those abilities is an example of a long-term objective of American education, one that--like the construction of alternative methods of assessing student learning--requires further research and serious dialogue among all interested and affected parties.

But the research and serious dialogue is part of a shorter term necessity for communication and cooperation among the sectors and interests of American education, a necessity which can be addressed by practical recommendations that are both illustrated and guided by long term objectives.

4. PARENTAL ROLES AND PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATION

One of the chief values of the Chicago visit was its demonstration of the atomization of perceptions and roles with respect to education in the United States. No role seems to be more common or critical to breaking down that atomization than that of parent, and yet the Commission has done little thinking about that role to date.

Unfortunately, there is a tendency of some self-proclaimed "representatives" of parents to address anyone connected with education in a formal capacity as if he or she could not possibly be a parent, too, as if he or she could not possibly care about or be involved with children, schools, and colleges in any capacity other than a professional one.

Those parents who happen to be educators are sometimes no less guilty in the way they address others whose professional lives happen to be in business, the media, the trades, or government.

While the Final Report needs to break down such destructive and divisive perceptions, it ought also to give more attention to the parental role (actual and ideal) at various stages and in various settings of education. That this is a complex issue might be indicated by the observations of Commissioners concerning the number of adults, many of them parents, who are themselves students and concerning the number of recent immigrants to this country who will, in effect, have to go to school with their children.

It is clear that the Commission requires a better knowledge base in this area, but time is short, and there is a question of what is the most

efficient way to build that knowledge.

The original plan of work for the Commission had included a symposium or panel on the parental role. It is still possible to design and hold one--say, in early December--and to commission a review of the existing knowledge and literature on various aspects of the issue.

5. IDENTIFYING AND PRESERVING WHAT IS WORKING WELL IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

This is the thrust of Charter Provision #4 and calls for specific, detailed, and verifiable information on specific programs. Many who testified in Chicago--whether at the Hearing or in other contexts--suggested that one of the most valuable functions the Commission could perform would be to collect compendia of such information and make them available to the public. There are schools and colleges, teachers and professors, who have developed programs that have track-records of success, that evidence a belief in students through a combination of compassion, structure, and motivation.

The staff has had two experiences to date with systematic attempts to collect such information, and has concluded that it is easier to do so on the postsecondary level than in primary and secondary education.

The first experience involved a search for notable programs in mathematics and science education. We received profiles of some 35 programs (23 college and 12 pre-collegiate), sent them to the Commissioners who attended the Palo Alto hearing on science and mathematics education, but received no indication as to whether the Commissioners found this material to be valuable.

The second experience is reflected in the addendum to this analysis, and was designed in conjunction with the Chicago hearing. Instead of sending the materials we received, however, this time we wrote a set of critical abstracts of the programs.

There is a question, though, of whether there is enough interest to proceed in this direction any further. At the present moment, we are organized to do so only with respect to postsecondary programs, and have asked the American Council on Education to solicit profiles for us on programs addressing a number of specific areas of concern that have emerged from the Commission's work to date. That information should be ready by November.

In order to have a comparable body of material for primary and secondary education, we should proceed in the same way. But time is now very short and the interest of the Commissioners in this task is unclear.

It is thus suggested that we allow the draft recommendations of the Final Report to guide us in searching for programs that can show what is possible in the areas addressed by those recommendations, and that once a draft of recommedations is drawn up (presumably by early January) we conduct a search parallel to that which we are doing through ACE, and such that the particulars will be ready by early March.

6. THE CONTENT OF HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM: HOW SPECIFIC SHOULD RECOMMENDATIONS BE?

As we were reminded in Chicago, there is no shortage of recommendations on revising the content of the secondary school curriculum in the United States in terms of requirements. And between now and the time the Commission issues its Final Report, a number of major studies of the American high school will be released, each of which will make rather specific recommendations concerning the high school curriculum.

The Secretary's charge to the Commission, however, has a different thrust, and hence the Final Report cannot appear to be the result of merely another study of the American high school. Besides, that hasn't been the case. The Commission has, in fact, looked at far more generic issues of schooling, and by the time its work is done, will have focused on all levels of education from elementary through undergraduate.

At both the secondary and postsecondary levels of education, there is a distinction between what is offered and required, on the one hand, and what students actually take for courses on the other. A knowledge of student behavior, then, may be more important to recommendations on high school curriculum than anything else. This behavior ought to illustrate concepts concerning secondary school curriculum that are less likely to be the primary focus of other projects but more critical to reform efforts, e.g.

- o the ways in which schools value various courses through credit-weighting;
- o the influence of state-mandated, credit-bearing requirements in non-academic areas, e.g. driver education, consumer education, etc., hence the deeper question of the use of school curriculum for other public purposes;
- o the influence of tracking on student development, let alone on school organization;
- o the ways in which high schools and high school teachers try to imitate colleges and hence the question of the boundaries between secondary and postsecondary education and the deeper question of who is the appropriate provider of what.

Drawing on two unique and very fine-grained data bases, the staff is preparing an analysis of high school student course-taking patterns, 1964-1980, and will present that analysis to the Commission in time for discussion at the November meeting. A preliminary version of that analysis will also be presented at the Kingston panel on college curriculum.

Following the final presentation of this material in November, it is recommended that a sub-group of the Commission and staff review all the materials the Commission has received and gathered on the content of secondary school curriculum and decide on a strategy for treating that subject in the Final Report, a strategy that will sound like something other than warmed-over pablum or the reinvention of the wheel. No other work or commissioned papers appear either necessary or feasible at this point.