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Address to the East Texas Council of Governments

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DRAFT

EAST TEXAS COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
November 17, 1978

I am delighted to join you today to discuss briefly the relationship between the East Texas Council of Governments and Texas Eastern University. Stated another way: ^{how can} What is Texas Eastern University doing, or what should we be doing, for the East Texas Council of Governments? And posing the proposition yet another way--~~we~~ ^{how can} we work together to achieve desirable goals ~~throughout the East Texas area~~ in which we all have a common interest. [?] **I** Indeed, a serious common obligation and responsibility.

^{I have} I've thought of at least two ways that I might approach this task. One ~~was~~ ^{it was} to discuss ~~something about~~ the general philosophy of education along with ~~specific reference to the philosophy and program of education at Texas Eastern University.~~ Another ~~was~~ ^{is} to discuss in a more narrow and direct way some of the programs in which the East Texas Council of Governments and Texas Eastern University are already involved or in which it is envisioned we ought to be involved.

Neither of these approaches seem^d to be totally acceptable as I attempted to prepare for our time together today. Instead, my decision was to use both of these approaches and perhaps even spill over into some others. And if this doesn't work as well as might be desired then perhaps there will be time for discussion and interchange toward the end.

Someone has said, "Higher education is not a commodity. The chief beneficiary of higher education is not the person who gains its credits and degrees, but the beneficiary is society itself." This is, of course, a pragmatic view of what higher education is

all about and a view which I feel we can work with very well relative to our purposes today.

The history of education in our country, as you know, indicates that our nation has sought to provide, almost intuitively, in our educational program, a kind of minimum plateau, reflecting what was considered to be necessary for the well-being of the next generation. Education in this land--even prior to the birth of our country--has always been too important to be left to chance. All the way from the actions of ~~the~~ Massachusetts colonists to the present day, fortunately, education has received a great deal of attention. Today, in my opinion, we are in a period which is very critical for our public education programs because of the serious questions being focused on relative to educational quality.

← Does local government have a responsibility ^{in this regard?} here? Well, we all know that local responsibility for education is a basic element of our constitution, and (this was, as mentioned,) given birth in the minds of the colonists even before the official birth of our nation. And as we recognize local governmental responsibility we also recognize a vital role that TEU has in this regard.

There is a contemporary song, ^{in which} a portion of the lyrics which go like this: "Yesterday has come and gone, tomorrow is out of sight, it's so sad to be alone, help me make it through the night." For many, tomorrow is truly out of sight and they long for a return to yesterday while they seek rather desperately to make it through the night. Change is ever present at an alarmingly increasing rate in our society today. And unless we continually work hard to keep up with change, we (will surely) be submerged by it. We must think in

a more serious manner than that of desperately trying to make it through the night. We must plan ahead. This is certainly true for ~~educators~~ ^{leaders} such as you, and it is also true for those of us in higher education.

Indeed, if we are to continue to serve society in contemporary times we must be sensitive to the needs of society and concentrate on meeting those needs. As we look quickly at this problem, I would suggest that the level of higher education will continue to expand in this decade in which we are now living. We have not reached the ultimate plateau by any stretch of the imagination. But I would draw a sharp distinction at this point between "getting a degree" or "acquiring a certificate" or development of salable skills and what can be called an "aspiration for learning".

Higher education must look in both directions and continue to provide both avenues for learning if we are to do our job effectively. And as I see this, we all have a significant role to play in this venture. We must listen to each other, we must work with each other, and be sure that we are communicating.

It is fairly well documented that there is a phenomenon taking place around us ^{of} which we have probably not yet become fully aware, but which will have profound consequences for all of higher education--for all of society. It is what might be called the recurring cycle of learning ¹ ~~We do not just learn and let that be it anymore.~~ ^{Once occupational preparation is not contained within a four year system} New knowledge--new ideas--cause us to be out of date if we do not find acceptable ways to keep up with the changes occurring in practically all areas of work. Learning, we have come to understand ^{as a more complex system of} more clearly than ever before, is a lifelong process. To put it ^{time}

^{any}
^{larger}
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another way, I think we are going to have to discard the notion that the four-year program of postsecondary education, for those vocations requiring it, is a "stopping point" beyond which we do not have to go. Rather, we must look upon it, along with the educational experiences that precede it, as a base, a means by which one acquires some essential educational tools, and ^{thereafter} ~~an arrange-~~ ~~ment by which one~~ ^{education} continues . . . and continues . . . and continues . . .

It has been suggested that instead of handing out diplomas at the end of four years of study, we give a "certificate of continual learning" together with a contract, the terms of which would be spelled out for the next several years. This would add real validity to the traditional commencement concept that it really is not the end but the beginning.

Indeed, continuing education is having an enormous impact on education in terms of how we arrange our schedules, our instructional processes and all the rest of our educational paraphernalia. For example, the four-day work week utilized in our society now provides time for individuals to pursue further education which might not have been possible earlier. In fact, it permits government, business and industry ^{with the opportunity of arranging employee} ~~to negotiate~~ ^{work agreements} ~~employee contracts,~~ if desired, ^{whereby the employer is permitted to} ~~providing for~~ ^{devote one day per week} ~~working~~ four days per week and ~~committing one day to~~ learning. Of course, there are other ways in which this can be accomplished, ^{and I think,} as a result of this sort of activity, we are seeing a fusion between the enterprise of learning and the industry of production. What I am suggesting is that our institutions will become--and have already become to a large extent--less like "fortresses" and more like public libraries open to people who are

is that our institutions will become--and have already become to a large extent--less like "fortresses" and more like public libraries open to people who are able to come at their convenience and at their age level without hesitancy or sense of embarrassment. Indeed, they are coming in many cases out of necessity: the necessity to cope with change. This is not new to those of us in education; for this has been, and is, the commitment of our profession. We already have a large number of people in the United States involved in continuing education, and the number will get larger. I have probably more than made my point in this regard, and I now turn to a discussion of the Texas Eastern University organization from the perspective of its nature, structure and academic programs.

Created by the Texas Legislature in 1971, Texas Eastern University is an upper level institution which means our academic programming includes the third and fourth years of baccalaureate degree instruction and graduate instruction at the master's level. At the present time Texas has ten upper level institutions--some operating independently as does Texas Eastern--some operating as extension centers of their parent university. Regardless of the organization of these various institutions, the rationale utilized by our State Legislature for the establishment of upper level institutions beginning about ten years ago includes the following concepts.

First, that they provide an educational experience tailored to

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First, that they provide an educational experience tailored to the need of the junior college transfer student and the student who changes institutions after the junior year.

Second, that they encourage experimentation in educational methods and materials.

Third, that they offer programs ^{relating} that relate specifically to the needs of the ^{geographical} ~~local~~ ^{where they are located} area. That is, upper level

institutions can offer programs designed to prepare students for direct entry into occupations rather than *just* for research-oriented professions. However, I might mention that research-oriented work ~~would~~ ^{is} not ~~be~~ necessarily excluded if ~~needs exist for this in the future.~~ *there is justification.*

Fourth, that they provide the depth of educational experience necessary for specialization in the junior and senior years of the baccalaureate program *and appropriate graduate programs.* Fifth, that they provide an economically and educationally feasible alternative to the creation of four-year institutions in areas lacking in baccalaureate degree opportunities.

In a word, this means that duplication is prevented.

Avoiding duplication of costs for faculty, library, teaching supplies and equipment associated with offering freshman and sophomore level work, reduced maintenance and operating costs, and savings to the State of Texas in investment, in physical plants.

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Located in a geographical area with a heavy concentration of community/junior colleges, Texas Eastern University has met all of the educational criteria for its establishment. Opening for classes in rented facilities in the Spring of 1973 with an enrollment of 176 students, the university has grown to a present enrollment of 1938 students who attend classes on the permanent campus, a 200-acre wooded area located on the southeast outskirts of Tyler. Two additional classroom buildings are scheduled for completion during the summer of 1979, and bids have just been received on the construction of a library.

Since Texas Eastern University's first graduating class in 1974, a total of 1247 students have completed degree requirements--908 for bachelor's degrees and 339 for master's degrees. Of the present 76 full-time faculty members, 89 percent hold the earned doctorate. Completing the faculty are 35 part-time instructors. Currently there are ^{*Cresch} 48 ~~(46)~~ bachelor's degrees and ~~(12)~~ master's degrees offered at Texas Eastern.

14 And suffice it for me to state that each of these degree programs offers direct support to the concerns which are shared by you who represent various aspects of local government through this East Tex. Conf. of Govts. org. Perhaps I should not let this suffice! Let me mention just a few: baccalaureate degrees in accountancy, biology, chemistry, comp. science, criminal justice, nursing, political science, education. ~~for the graduate area~~; business administration, education, interdisciplinary studies.

It may be that individuals are not interested in ~~attending~~ a degree program but ~~interested~~ study in a particular area on a one ~~or~~ course ~~or~~ basis. If so, ^{even could in} then the ~~complete~~ inventory of courses becomes a possibility.

As mentioned I also wish to discuss some other specific programs through which we are working directly with the ETCOB and/or local units.

NOTES for preparation of speech for East Texas Council of Governments Board of Directors meeting on November 10, 1978

Traffic Safety Program

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we were pleased to add to the

At the request of Governor Dolph Briscoe, Texas Eastern University assumed one of the ~~arch~~ ^{the multi-} leadership roles for the Multi-jurisdictional Traffic Safety Program which began at the university on November 15, 1975. Under this program, TEU established an Office of Traffic Safety with a full-time Traffic Safety Coordinator to provide services and programs to local jurisdictions in a twelve-county area including Cass, Ellis, Gregg, Harrison, Henderson, Kaufman, Marion, Navarro, Smith, Upshur, Van Zandt and Wood counties.

of course, some of you work with similar programs ~~operated~~ based at other institutions.

Advisory Committees

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Texas Eastern University is continually seeking channels through which closer communication can be maintained with the various constituencies and professions served by the university. A particularly effective procedure for this purpose has been the establishment of advisory committees to assist with the development of various programs and services. Current advisory committees include the Citizen's Advisory Committee on Local Government Affairs, Special Education Advisory Committee, Industrial Education and Technology Advisory Committee and Nursing Program Advisory Committee.

And I mention with a great deal of pride that your own ~~off. director~~ ^{off. director}, Don Edmonds serves very effectively as Smith County Overall Economic Development Committee a member of

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~~I have had the privilege of working with the Smith County Overall Economic Development Committee as the university's official representative appointed by the Board of Regents. As many of you know, this committee was organized for the purpose of preparing a written overall economic development program for Smith County for submission to and subsequent approval of the Economic Development Division of the U. S. Department of Commerce. This work is a result of the Smith County Commissioners Court's acceptance of the designation of Smith County as a redevelopment area of the United States Department of Commerce.~~

all examples of joint efforts between the ETCOB + TEU.

In conclusion, I say to you that basic to our work at Texas Eastern University is maintenance of a learning environment in which an individual has the opportunity of obtaining an education thereby permitting an ^{him} individual to function at his full potential as a human being in the kind of world in which he is, and will be, living and working.

And, it occurs to me, that it is the obligation of all of us in government and education, along with other elements of our society, ~~to work together toward~~ ^{to work together toward} a program that will accomplish this sort of goal.

In speaking of institutions of higher learning, John Gardner observed a few years ago, "We like to think that institutions are shaped according to the best vision of the best men in them and sometimes they are--but that is not the only way institutions get shaped. Sometimes institutions are simply the sum of the historical accidents that have happened to them. Like the sand dunes in the desert, they are shaped by influences but not by purposes." He went on to say that "men can shape their institutions to suit their purposes--provided they are clear as to what those purposes are and provided that they are not too gravely afflicted with the diseases of which institutions die--among them complacency, myopia, and an unwillingness to choose." And some institutions are dying today for these reasons. But others, like Texas Eastern University, are evaluating and making sound decisions through which success is being achieved.

And I can assure you, we certainly have no room for complacency at Texas Eastern University, ^{we} we trust that our vision is not short-sighted, and we do feel that we possess the willingness to choose between and among alternatives, ^{we will} and in so doing, be selective in

working toward purposes that will contribute in a maximum manner to the society of which we are a part. For as I stated in the beginning, "higher education is not a commodity. The chief beneficiary of higher education is not the person who gains its credits and degrees, but the beneficiary is society itself."