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A legislative history of the comprehensive community college system in Nebraska 1926-1986: from junior college to technical community college

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system in Nebraska, 1926–1986: From junior college to technical
community college**

Knedler, Michael Lee, Ph.D.

Iowa State University, 1989

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A Legislative History of the Comprehensive Community
College System in Nebraska 1926-1986: From Junior
College to Technical Community College

by

Michael Lee Knedler

A Dissertation Submitted to the
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Iowa State University
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1989

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PREFACE

The legislative evolution of the Nebraska technical community college system began in 1925 when the McCook School Board considered the establishment of a junior college as an extension of the secondary schools. It culminated in 1971 when the junior colleges, State trade schools, and the area vocational technical schools were merged into a statewide system. This study traces the development of that system by examining the passage of the laws which concluded with the legislation in 1971.

The development of the community college system was studied during two distinct time periods, prior to World War II and after World War II. Before World War II, two elements of the technical community college system were established legally. In 1931, after failures in 1927 and 1929, the Nebraska Unicameral approved Senate File 1 (SF 1). It was permissive legislation which allowed school districts with 200 students and property valuation of \$5 million to hold an election to gain approval for establishing a junior college. It required a sixty percent majority. Voters in two communities, McCook and Scottsbluff, gave approval for such schools in 1931 and Fairbury and Norfolk approved them in 1941. These schools offered primarily a two-year transfer curricula with a few preprofessional courses.

Also, in 1941, the legislature established the state's first trade school in Milford (Legislative Bill 148). Subsequent attempts to establish a state trade school in Broken Bow in 1937 and 1939 had failed. The school in Milford offered a variety of trades. It was located near Lincoln and provided trained individuals for industrial plants in Lincoln and Omaha. The Milford trade school provided skilled workers for the Martin Bomber Plant in Omaha, as the nation prepared for war in 1941.

There was no additional legislative action changing the legal foundation for two-year postsecondary education until the end of the 1950s and early in the 1960s. Five communities; Sidney, Grand Island, North Platte, Ogallala, and O'Neill sought legislative approval for a second trade school in 1963. The legislature rejected all of them but called for a legislative study of postsecondary education. Then in 1965, the Unicameral established a second trade school in Sidney, and passed permissive legislation to allow communities and surrounding areas to establish area vocational technical schools. Within three years, five such schools had been created.

In 1967 the legislature began to discuss the need for coordinating postsecondary education in Nebraska. Then in 1969, the Unicameral combined the junior colleges and

vocational technical schools into a single system. It was vetoed by the governor and his veto was upheld. In 1971 the legislature passed similar legislation that included the state trade schools at Milford and Sidney. In addition it provided that all counties should be in a technical community college area by 1973.

This study examined the evolution of the community college system in Nebraska over a sixty year period, using Roald Campbell's conceptual framework. Campbell divided the legislative process into four components: basic forces, antecedents, legislative action, and formal enactment. Each one is examined. The social, economic, and political changes over the 60 year period during which it was developed is examined, influential people and events identified, and conclusions reached. As social forces change, educators and policy-makers will need to understand and make effective adaptations to the educational system. Historical analysis of legislation provides a basis for such understanding.

CHAPTER I.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Public two-year postsecondary educational institutions have experienced tremendous growth and change over the past 87 years since the establishment of the first public junior college in Joliet, Illinois in 1901. By 1920 there were an estimated 52 junior colleges nationwide.¹ That number has increased in each decade since to approximately 1,250 in 1982, ranging in size from fewer than 100 to more than 30,000 students.² "Too often these institutions have been subject to misunderstanding about how they developed and about their mission, structure, clientele and programs."³ But these institutions

did not grow in a vacuum and one can point to certain benchmarks in its development. Before 1930 the 'junior college' function was mainly academic. . . . By the 1930's occupational technical education had also become a permanent and major component of the community college

¹John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, Higher Education in Transition, 3rd ed. (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1976), p. 256.

²Arthur M. Cohen and Florence B. Braver, The American Community College (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1982), p. XV.

³William L. Deegan, Dale Tillery, and Associates, Renewing the American Community College (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1985), p. 1.

curriculum. . . .⁴

Economic, social and political changes influenced the evolution of the junior colleges into comprehensive institutions offering both academic and vocational technical education. More recently, the concept of lifelong learning has guided the development of programs and services in community colleges. There is considerable speculation and prognostication in community college literature regarding the impact of broad social, economic and technological trends on the institutions, but such discussion is often in want of a historical context or comparative base. Change is observable over time. Thus, the study of change is most amenable to historical analysis.

Deegan and Tillery described the public two-year institution as distinctly American. They suggested that the transformation of the junior college was the result of three influences: rapid industrialization and the mechanization of agriculture, democratization of public education, and the growth of the American research universities.⁵ While Cohen and Braver acknowledge such social forces as expanding industries, the lengthened period of adolescence, and the

⁴George B. Vaughan, The Community College in America: A Short History Revised (ERIC Document Reproduction Service ED 255 267, 1985), p. 1.

⁵Deegan and Tillery, p. 5.

drive for social equality as being influential on community college development, they argue that the single most important reason for their growth was the increased public demands placed on schools at all levels.⁶

Korim suggested that if community colleges respond to these demands a "limitless market for their services will exist."⁷ He argued that the community colleges need to be aggressive and creative in dealing with open admissions, that they must integrate non-collegiate and collegiate learning, that the organizational structure will change dramatically, that "the line between the community college and the external community will largely disappear," and that the support services must be changed.⁸

Other authors have also described what they believe will be the trends of the 1980s and beyond. Deegan and Tillery identified six.⁹ First, adults will have increased educational needs. Second, there will be a need for programs that are in tune with local and regional demographics. Third, there will be changes in why, how, and where people

⁶Cohen and Brawer, pp. 1-2.

⁷Andrew S. Korim, "Challenges Facing Community Colleges in the 1980s," New Directions for Community Colleges 33 (1981):13.

⁸Korim, p. 14.

⁹Deegan and Tillery, p. 29.

learn. Fourth, educational institutions will face stiffer competition for society's resources, and thus there will be greater demand for accountability. Fifth, there will be demand to replace old and deteriorating facilities and technologies. And sixth, the aging of college personnel will require new approaches to staff development and employment practices.

In "Demographics and Related Issues for Higher Education in the 80's," Glenny identifies six probable trends relating basically to enrollment changes.¹⁰ First, the enrollment in the number of college-age youth will decline, but minorities and women will enroll in community colleges, thus helping them to maintain enrollments.

Second, the public community colleges

will tend to maintain their current proportion of total higher education enrollment primarily because of their attunement to local citizen desires and needs and for the short term occupation courses leading to job entry for the young and retraining for adults.¹¹

Third, Glenny suggested that the gap between supply and demand for specialized areas will be filled by those just out of college, not those retrained because those students will

¹⁰Lyman A. Glenny, cited by Robert Birnbaum, ed., ASHE Reader in Organization and Governance in Higher Education (Lexington, Massachusetts: Ginn Custom Publishing, 1984), pp. 370-373.

¹¹Glenny, p. 371.

be familiar with the latest technologies that businesses desire. Students will seek those institutions that provide quality of education.

Fourth, the number of adults entering college will not make up for the decline in the traditional college age group. But, the community colleges can provide for these lifelong learners better than can the traditional four-year colleges.

Fifth, social, religious, civic, and non-profit organizations as well as business, industry, and government will provide more educational opportunities. Consequently, colleges may find it advantageous to offer educational services to these groups and organizations.

And sixth, Glenny suggested that other changes unrelated to enrollment will occur, such as: licensure and examinations will partially replace a college degree as an indication of competencies and capabilities; collective bargaining will make it more difficult to change programs, work patterns, course length, and teaching load; and competition will turn educational institutions into used car hucksters. Therefore,

Those institutions of higher education that do serve until 1995 will have stronger programs, more distinguished faculty, and better senses of mission and goals.¹²

¹²Glenny, p. 372.

Glenny and the other aforementioned community college researchers suggest that social, economic, political, and technological changes have had a profound influence on the evolution of the public junior college into the comprehensive community college. These changes may have implications for its future development. The future depends on the past, and on our ability to plan effectively. Knowledge of the past helps us to understand the present and to synthesize that information as a means of organizing for the future. The demands for change will continue into the twenty-first century. Therefore planning, based on sound research of the past, is critical.

Nebraska

Various social, economic, political, and technological trends as well as the greater complexity of their interrelatedness suggest a need to study the evolution of the community college. Nebraska, like other states, has created, changed, and changed again its public postsecondary two-year institutions. Currently, Nebraska has a statewide system of technical community colleges which includes former junior colleges, technical schools, and area vocational technical schools. This system was established in 1971.

The evolution of a statewide system of public postsecondary two-year institutions in Nebraska began in 1926

with the establishment of McCook Junior College in McCook, Nebraska. Although not established by state legislation, McCook Junior College marks the beginning of the comprehensive community college. It was the first public junior college in the state. Its founding purpose was

to extend to the graduates in the territory adjacent to McCook the opportunity to complete the first two years of a college education under home influences and parental direction at half the cost or less of going elsewhere. It will also make it possible for a much larger number of young people to complete the first two years of a college education and should serve as an incentive to many young men and women to continue college work and complete extended professional courses. . . .¹³

Prior to World War II, junior colleges were also created in Norfolk, Fairbury, and Scottsbluff. In the 1960s additional junior colleges were established in North Platte and Columbus.

Although state legislation to establish junior colleges failed to pass in the Nebraska legislature in 1927 and 1929, such legislation was successful in 1931. Senate File 1 created junior colleges as part of the secondary school system, governed by the public school board and superintendent. This local governance and administrative structure was virtually unchanged for the next 30 years. According to Easton, "The Junior College was considered as

¹³McCook Junior College Bulletin, cited by Theodore Easton, "The Development of Community Colleges in Nebraska" (Ed.D. thesis, University of Colorado, 1973), p. 21.

high school extension and its curriculum was intended to serve the transfer function."¹⁴ Senate File 1 established a legal foundation for junior colleges in Nebraska and created institutions which served primarily the transfer function.

Through Legislative Bill 148 (LB 148) a technical college, the Nebraska State Trade School at Milford, was created in 1941. Its purpose was to provide a means of acquiring technical skills and knowledge for people who had completed high school or reached the age of 16.¹⁵ The legislature made few changes to this legislation over the next twenty to twenty-five years.

In 1965 the Nebraska Unicameral established the Western Nebraska Vocational-Technical School at Sidney through legislation patterned after LB 148.¹⁶ In that same year, the Unicameral created the area vocational technical schools through Legislative Bill 581 (LB 581). The purpose of LB 581 was to "create a system of vocational education so badly

¹⁴Theodore A. Easton, "The Development of Community Colleges in Nebraska" (Ed.D. thesis, University of Colorado, 1973), p. 85.

¹⁵Easton, p. 89.

¹⁶The Unicameral is unique to the State of Nebraska. It refers to a one house legislature, rather than the bicameral, or two house legislature, which the other 49 states have.

needed in Nebraska.¹⁷ LB 581 permitted two or more local subdivisions, such as counties or school districts, to subdivisions, such as counties or school districts, to establish vocational technical schools without state funds. While LB 581 created a new set of postsecondary schools, it took six years for the junior colleges, area vocational technical schools, and the state technical schools to become part of a comprehensive community college system.

In 1971 the Unicameral established a statewide system of comprehensive community colleges through Legislative Bill 759 (LB 759). The colleges were called technical community colleges because

a truly comprehensive community college has occupational education as one of the major areas of emphasis in curriculum. However, to further emphasize this area, the individuals working on the original legislation felt the word technical should be included. The state as a whole now understands how a comprehensive community college functions and the word 'technical' may be superfluous in the future.¹⁸

According to the legislation, the purpose of these colleges was to meet the needs of students and communities for "practical courses in vocational-technical education, high

¹⁷Nebraska Legislature. "Minutes of the Committee on Education, Introducer's Statement of Purpose," 22 March 1965.

¹⁸Robert C. Schleiger, The Evolution of the Nebraska Comprehensive Technical Community College System (ERIC Document Reproduction Service ED 087 501, 1973), p. 22.

standards of excellence in academic transfer courses, and comprehensive community service programs."¹⁹ Thus a statewide system was finally in place by 1971. Nebraska was one of the last states to create a public two-year college system.

In 1978, to resolve problems about the role and mission of the various elements of higher education in Nebraska, the Unicameral enacted Legislative Bill 756 (LB 756). It designated the technical community colleges as those institutions responsible for the awarding of Associate Degree diplomas and certificates of less than baccalaureate degree programs.²⁰ MetroTech Community College in Omaha was ordered to cease offering general academic transfer programs and awarding degrees based on these programs after September 1, 1980. MetroTech and Southeastern in Lincoln were encouraged to "work in cooperation with the University of Nebraska for the provision of such academic transfer programs in the Lincoln and Omaha areas."²¹ Through passage of LB 756 the Unicameral determined the role and mission of the technical

¹⁹Easton, p. 117.

²⁰Eugene P. Trani, Higher Education in Nebraska: A Report Prepared for the Sloan Commission on Government and Higher Education (ERIC Document Reproduction Service ED 184 449, 1978), p. 26.

²¹Trani, p. 29.

community colleges.

Numerous pieces of legislation relating to the public two-year postsecondary colleges of Nebraska have been approved by the legislature, but four in particular lead to the evolution of a comprehensive community college system in the State. Senate File 1 (1931) legalized the junior college, Legislative Bill 148 (1941) established the first State trade school, Legislative Bill 581 (1965) permitted area vocational technical schools, and Legislative Bill 759 (1971) created the Technical Community College system.

Largely since World War II, state government has assumed a larger and more complex role in providing higher education. Higher education differs, however, from many other state services because "it promises vast future payoffs for individuals and communities. By assuming the responsibility for education, the states are doing more than just training students."²² Consequently, states have a large role in higher education.

The increased responsibility of states in higher education is reflected in the number of students enrolled in public colleges and universities, the number of faculty who work there, and the funding provided. Enrollments in public

²²Ira Sharkansky, The Malignant States: Policy Accomplishments, Problems, and Opportunities (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1972), p. 82.

institutions rose from forty-nine percent of the total in 1947 to seventy-one percent in 1968.²³ By 1985 it was seventy-seven percent.²⁴ In addition, the percent of faculty in public institutions grew from forty-six percent in 1939 to sixty-two percent in 1967.²⁵ In 1986, seventy-four percent of the tenured faculty taught in public institutions.²⁶ Furthermore, between 1950 and 1968 public spending increased 120 percent of the growth of expenditures in private institutions. Between 1970 and 1985, expenditures for public colleges and universities increased from 15.8 to 63.7 billion dollars while expenditures in private colleges and universities increased from 8.9 to 34.6 billion dollars.²⁷ Thus politics and education are not two separate fields, but rather are complementary and interrelated.²⁸

²³Sharkansky, Maligned States, pp. 86-87.

²⁴Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States 1988, 108th Edition. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1988), p. 118.

²⁵Sharkansky, Maligned States, pp. 86-87.

²⁶Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States 1988, 108th Edition, p. 149.

²⁷Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States 1988, 108th Edition, p. 119.

²⁸Marc J. Sosne, "State Politics and Educational Legislation" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1979), pp. 1-2.

There is a myth in America that education and politics exist separate from each other. If the world of politics means something more than the choice between political parties and public education includes policy-making . . . then the myth hardly describes reality. . . .²⁹

Thus an examination of the legislative history of the comprehensive community colleges in Nebraska provides insights for educators and educational policy-makers to understand the role of the public two-year institutions.

The great need in educational leadership is to make professional opinions heard at the palace level of politics - that is in the circles of interaction where the big policy decisions are given consideration.³⁰

If educators expect to advance their interests, they must become politically active.

Statement of the Problem

Social, economic, political, and technological changes require shifts in public policy relating to education. The comprehensive community college evolved through legislation in response to these changes. Several authors have identified societal changes and reflected on their importance to the future of these colleges. Thus an historical inquiry

²⁹Laurence Inannaccone and Frank W. Lutz, cited by Marc J. Sosne, "State Politics and Educational Legislation" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1979), p. 3.

³⁰Ralph B. Kimbrough, cited by Marc J. Sosne, "State Politics and Educational Legislation" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1979), p. 8.

into the legislative enactments which influenced the development of the comprehensive community colleges in Nebraska will allow educators to develop approaches and strategies for the coming years. Such a study may also suggest public policy pertinent to other states whose community colleges also must change in response to social, economic, political, and technological change.

This study examined critically the role of the Nebraska legislature in influencing and determining the development of public two-year postsecondary institutions between 1926 and 1986. The study:

1. identified the evolutionary pattern in the legislation which created the Technical Community College system;
 2. determined those conditions which appear most influential in determining public policy relative to the postsecondary public two-year colleges;
 3. examined the sources of this legislation in the historical context, particularly as it was influenced by social, economic, political, and technological change;
 4. described those factors that positively or negatively influenced the legislation concerning these colleges;
- and

5. identified trends that might guide educators and policy-makers seeking to plan for the future.

This study described the legislation passed by the Nebraska Legislature over the past sixty years which established a comprehensive community college system. The study was guided by two questions. First, what social, economic, political, and technological factors affected such legislation? Second, what groups, organizations, or individuals were influential in this legislation?

Research Questions

1. What major social, economic, political, and technological factors occurred in Nebraska and the nation during the period studied?
2. How did these factors advance or inhibit legislation on the community college in Nebraska?
3. What were the debate issues relative to the various bills approved by the Nebraska Legislature from 1926 to 1986?
4. How were community colleges created or changed in Nebraska by this legislation?
5. What groups were influential in supporting or opposing such legislation?

Conceptual Framework

Students of American state politics are interested in

describing and explaining different policy outcomes. "These outcomes express the value allocations of society, and these allocations are the chief outputs of the societies political system."³¹ The explanation of these outcomes involves an examination of the relationship between policy outcomes and those social, economic, political, and technological conditions which operate to shape them. Several authors have offered conceptual frameworks or models for examining public policy.

Sharkansky suggests a framework that includes inputs from the environment (those host of social, economic, and political conditions that present problems to policy makers), outputs, and a conversion process that transforms inputs into outputs.³² Although Sharkansky specifically uses this framework to study the policy process, it offers insights into the development of public policy, in general, and for education specifically.

In Policy and Politics in American Governments, Sharkansky and Van Meter offer a similar approach in a

³¹Thomas R. Dye, Politics, Economics, and the Public (Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1966), p. 1.

³²Ira Sharkansky, Public Administration (Chicago: Rand McNally & College Publishing Company, 1976), pp. 7-9.

discussion of policy delivery systems.³³ In their model the environment (social, economic, and political traits) influences the demands of the public, the conversion process of translating inputs into policy, the policy itself, and the performance.

In discussing, "A Model for the Analysis of Policy Outcomes," Dye suggests that the "central purpose is the explanation of these policy outcomes, and this involves examination of the relationships between policy outcomes and those social, economic, and political conditions which operate to shape them."³⁴ Dye's conceptual model is based on David Easton's "An Approach to the Analysis of Political Systems" and "A Framework for Political Analysis."³⁵ It uses socioeconomic development variables as inputs (independent variables) in the political system, leading to policy outcomes (dependent variables), such as welfare, highway programs, and educational policies.

These models emphasize the importance of the environment in shaping the issues, leading to discussion and debate between various groups, and culminating in the passage or

³³Ira Sharkansky and Donald Van Meter, Policy and Politics in American Governments (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1975), pp. 6-10.

³⁴Dye, p. 1.

³⁵Dye, p. 4.

defeat of legislation. Basically, then, these involve inputs working through the political process until the desired outputs (legislation) occur.

Campbell's view of educational policy-making has been selected as the conceptual framework for this study.³⁶ He suggests that policy grows out of basic socioeconomic forces in our society. These forces generate movements antecedent to policy. These movements in turn encourage political action. Finally, these activities lead to the formalization of policy by government agencies.

In his model, Campbell presents a flow chart which includes four phases: the basic forces, antecedent movements, political action, and formal enactment. The basic forces include the social, economic, political, and technological forces. This study was limited to the state of Nebraska. Social, economic, political, and technological forces experienced in Nebraska during the period under study were treated as the primary basic forces which influenced educational legislation pertaining to community colleges in the state. Secondarily and more generally, national changes which affected education were examined as contributors to the

³⁶Roald F. Campbell, Luvern L. Cunningham, Roderick F. McPhee, and Raphael O. Nystrand, The Organization and Control of American Schools (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1970), pp. 38-41.

basic forces of Campbell's model.

Antecedent movements, Campbell's second phase, are the outgrowth of these changing social forces and are movements designed to change educational policy. They may be official or unofficial and be local or nationwide in scope. These movements and their subsequent proposals lead to political activity.

The third phase, political action, involves debate "among educators and among lay citizens and between these two groups."⁹⁷ Through political action citizens become interested in educational issues and become involved in debates about educational policy.

Formal enactment, the fourth phase, is the process in which suggestions, ideas, and proposals become public policy through the enactment of the appropriate body. At the state level, it is the legislature.

This conceptual model of the four phases of policy formation in education provides an effective means of studying, not just single pieces of legislation, but of examining the historical developments over time of the evolution of a statewide system of technical community

⁹⁷Barrie S. Ciliberti, "The Legislative Process and the Making of Educational Policy: The General School Aid Bill in the 81st Congress" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 1976), p. 9.

colleges in Nebraska.

Methodology

The research methodology used in this study is historical inquiry. The historical method is "the process of critically examining and analyzing the records and survival of the past."³⁸ It is one of the oldest research methods and is regarded as particularly significant for educational researchers because it furnishes "scholars a base from which to understand contemporary movements, it lends perspective to other types of research, and offers scholars a more balanced array of techniques."³⁹ It is "the systematic search for documents and other sources that contain facts relating to . . . the past."⁴⁰ It involves collecting data, placing it in historical perspective, and synthesizing the historical developments. It is characterized by "a concern for change over a significant period of time, for the direction of trends that may appear . . . and for those unique qualities, persons,

³⁸Louis Gottshalk, Understanding History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950), p. 48.

³⁹Michael Edward Pernal, "A Study of State Legislation in the Development of Public Higher Education in Connecticut from 1849 to 1970" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1975), p. 41.

⁴⁰Walter R. Borg and Meredith D. Gall, Educational Research, 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 1983), p. 801.

or events" that are discovered.⁴¹

Historical analysis includes:

1. the selection of a subject for investigation.
2. a collection of probable sources of information on the subject.
3. an examination of these sources for genuineness, and
4. the extraction of the points proven to be genuine.⁴²

The synthesis of this data is historiography, or "the imaginative reconstruction of the past from the data derived by the process."⁴³ In this sense,

historical research in education differs from other types of educational research in that the historian discovers data through a search of historical sources. . . . In other types of educational research the researcher creates data by making observations and administering tests in order to describe present events and present performance.⁴⁴

Approaches to educational research vary, but the use of historical analysis adds to the knowledge obtained through other means.

⁴¹Sister M. James Francis Gilbride, O.S.U., "The Coming of the Community College to Ohio: The Enabling Legislation and the Founding of Cuyahoga Community College, 1946-1963" (Ph.D. dissertation, Kent State University, 1979), p. 26.

⁴²Gottshalk, p. 52.

⁴³Gottshalk, p. 48.

⁴⁴Borg and Gall, p. 801.

Delimitations

In many instances public postsecondary two-year institutions began as junior colleges and became comprehensive community colleges through legislation passed by state legislatures in response to a changing environment. This study is limited to the legislation enacted by the Nebraska legislature between 1926 and 1986. This is the period during which Nebraska's public two-year colleges evolved into comprehensive community colleges. As such, the basic forces, antecedent movements, political action, and formal enactment identified in Campbell's conceptual model pertain to those developments within the state of Nebraska. However, in order to place these forces into historical context, national trends affecting higher education are also considered.

Legislation affecting other segments of higher education may have influenced the development of the comprehensive community colleges, but this type of legislation was examined only peripherally. The subject of investigation was legislation which led to the development of the comprehensive community college system in Nebraska directly.

The data was limited to the actual bills enacted by the Nebraska legislature. It included amendments, debates, committee proceedings, reports, studies, and relevant verbatim testimony of groups and individuals supporting or opposing the

legislation. Newspaper accounts during the period under study were used to complete the entire picture.

Although every effort was made to analyze all relevant documents, some information important to the study was not available. Detailed records of legislative proceedings prior to 1937 were very limited, and in fact, verbatim committee hearings were not available until the mid-1960s.

Definitions

For the purposes of this study the following definition of terms were used. Junior college was defined as a postsecondary educational institution offering two years of collegiate level work which may include some non-credit adult courses.

Comprehensive community college referred to a two-year educational institution which offers postsecondary education programs to meet the needs of all in the community. Such programs include transfer courses, vocational technical courses, and adult education courses. This type of college is accredited to award Associate of Arts and Science degrees as the highest degree. Comprehensive community college, for the purposes of this study, was synonymous with community college.

Technical community college was a term used in Nebraska at the time of this study and was synonymous with comprehensive community college. It identifies a two-year

postsecondary college which offers transfer, vocational technical, and adult education course, and awards associate degrees, diplomas, and certificates less than the baccalaureate degree.

The terms legislation and state legislation, as used in this study, were synonymous and referred to those laws enacted by the Nebraska legislature.

Data Collection

Data was obtained from a variety of sources, both primary and secondary. Primary sources are "the testimony of an eyewitness or of a witness by any other senses, or of a mechanical device like a dictaphone."⁴⁵ They include those documents which relate directly to the event being studied. For the purposes of this study primary sources included: newspaper articles, legislative records, legislative enactments, proceedings of committee hearings, minutes of organizations, documents from the State Department of Education, federal documents, documents from the Nebraska Technical Community College Association, and documents of ad hoc committees and commissions.

A secondary source is "the testimony of anyone who is not an eyewitness."⁴⁶ As such, secondary sources for this study

⁴⁵Gottshalk, p. 53.

⁴⁶Gottshalk, p. 53.

include: ERIC articles, dissertations, newspapers, journals, books, and periodicals.

Analysis of Data

The data for this study is organized chronologically and arranged according to time periods or trends that emerged from the study. Each chapter has the following format. First, a introduction describing the environment in terms of social, economic, political, and technological change is presented. This includes those national and state trends impacting on public higher education. Then the legislation itself is examined, and synthesized.

Chapter Summary

In a review of selected literature, no studies were identified which specifically examined the history of legislation affecting the growth and change of Nebraska public two-year postsecondary education. However, several studies, particularly dissertations, described parts of the technical community college system or provided a history of the technical community college from a perspective other than a legislative history, such as, a history of the establishment of a statewide coordinating system or a history of the curriculum, governance, or other aspects of these colleges. This study is significant because:

1. There are currently no legislative histories of the

technical community college system in Nebraska.

2. Nebraska was one of the last states to move toward a statewide coordinated system.
3. There is a need to research the origins of the community colleges in various states to better understand their current programs and to prepare for change in the future, and
4. It is necessary to identify those conditions, people, or groups who advance or impede legislation related to the community college.

The public junior colleges were transformed over the past several decades from institutions primarily devoted to the transfer function to comprehensive community colleges. This transformation was the result of social, economic, political, and technological changes and an increased role of state government in higher education.

In the 1990s as in the past, these comprehensive community colleges must plan for the future. There may be changes in student population, characteristics, and needs; in emphasis on economic development and demand for specialized vocational training; competition among both private and public institutions of higher education and non-profit and civic organizations for resources with which to operate; resulting changes in the delivery of the educational programs and

services; and greater demand for public accountability. Therefore, the ability of educators to effectively plan for the future involves a need to know the past and what has determined the present.

Nebraska was used as a case study to examine the evolution of a junior college system into a comprehensive statewide community college system. The first junior college was established in 1926 in McCook. The number eventually grew to six, although several junior colleges had been established but have ceased operations. In the early 1940s a state trade school was established, supplemented by a second one in 1965. During the 1960s the Nebraska legislature created area vocational technical schools, and in 1971 created a statewide system of comprehensive community colleges called Technical Community Colleges. The mission and function of these colleges were further clarified by the legislature in 1978.

This study examined the evolution of the Technical Community Colleges by studying the legislative history of their development. An attempt was made to identify significant actors who influenced public postsecondary education in Nebraska. The basic question this study examines was: how have social, economic, political, and technological factors impacted legislation establishing a comprehensive

community college system and what groups, organizations, or individuals have influenced that legislation?

The study used the conceptual framework of Roald Campbell. According to this framework, the four phases were: the basic forces (social, economic, political, and technological), antecedent movements (which generate proposals), political action (a process of debate, discussion and involvement), and formal enactment.

This study employed historical inquiry as its methodology. Historical inquiry is a process of discovering data, analyzing it, and then synthesizing it in an attempt to ascertain trends and to identify the significant participants in the events.

The data was collected from a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, including documents and records, newspapers, dissertations, books and periodicals. The data was organized chronologically and divided into two chapters, one covering the period between World War I and World War II, the other the period after World War II up until 1986.

CHAPTER II.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A review of related literature was undertaken in order to study a legislative history of the comprehensive community college in Nebraska. The purpose of the review was to identify variables and factors that influenced the legislative process as it related to junior/community colleges and to identify methodologies and source materials used in legislative histories. Through this review, a variety of articles, theses, and dissertations were found which described legislative histories and the chronological development of legislation creating public postsecondary two-year institutions in Nebraska and the nation. The process by which legislation is enacted involves relationships between basic socioeconomic forces, groups which support political action, and political activity. The examination of related literature identified some of the conditions which influenced the development of a technical community college system in Nebraska and helped to put that development in historical context.

The authors of these articles, theses, and dissertations conceptualized their topics in several different ways. Some wrote histories of specific pieces of legislation, while others described the development of entire state systems.

Some presented compilations of the legal provisions establishing the postsecondary two-year college and others studied the historical evolution of their functions. And still others outlined the process through which these legal provisions became law or searched for the factors which influenced the legislation and the legislative process. Because of these varied approaches this chapter examines the literature from three perspectives: legislative histories, histories of legislation concerning junior/community colleges; and histories that dealt specifically with the evolution of the Nebraska system of technical community colleges.

Legislative Histories

Four legislative histories were selected for review in this section. Through the historical analyses of a variety of sources, including government documents, legislation, committee hearings, and court decisions, these authors examined some aspect of the legislative process involved in the passage of laws relevant to education. Thomas examined the creation of state legislation to finance special education in Pennsylvania from 1821 to 1984. Sosne studied the passage of a bill in North Carolina which established a statewide achievement testing program. Ciliberti examined the General School Aid Bill in the 81st Congress, and Pernal chronicled

the legislative development of a statewide system of public higher education in Connecticut over a period of 120 years. Two of the authors combined historical analysis with a conceptual framework to study and analyze the inputs, outputs, and environment involved in the political process and the passage of legislation.

Thomas examined Pennsylvania's legislation relating to the financing of special education in order to determine whether a pattern could be discerned and what state, federal, and court actions influenced the legislation.¹ She used historical methodology to find, interpret, and organize data from dissertations, journal articles, the state legislature, the state Department of Education Regulation, and legislative histories. Based on the data, she identified four periods of funding and put the legislation enacted in each period in historical context by examining events in Pennsylvania and in the United States which had an impact on special education legislation.

Thomas found that during the nineteenth century the legislation segregated handicapped children and allocated funds for their education and training to institutions for the

¹Katherine R. Thomas, "Historical Study of Pennsylvania Legislation for Special Education with Emphasis on State Financial Provisions: 1821-1981" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1984).

blind and deaf. Through legislative enactments since that time she discovered that the government had expanded its responsibility to the handicapped to include services for the speech and hearing impaired, the partially sighted, the cerebral palsied, the blind, the deaf, and the mentally retarded, the gifted, the brain impaired, the muscular dystrophed, and the learning disabled. Public school systems became more accessible to the handicapped as the result of litigation and federal legislation requiring publicly supported programs for the handicapped between the ages of three and twenty-one. The state of Pennsylvania increased its financial support and expanded the coverage provided by its special education programs.

While Thomas examined a series of acts related to education for a specific target population, two studies were reviewed which examined specific pieces of legislation. Both of these studies used a conceptual framework that investigated inputs, outputs, and the environment. In one study, Sosne investigated the relationship between education and politics when non-money issues were involved.² Through a case study approach he described the process which led to the North Carolina Legislature's passage of the "Every Pupil Testing

²Marc J. Sosne, "State Politics and Education Legislation" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1979).

Bill" (House Bill 205) in 1977. Sosne choose David Easton's systems model as the general theoretical framework to analyze the impact of educators on the passage of this piece of legislation and to indicate how and where educators could influence the political process. According to Sosne

the task in utilizing systems theory to describe a policy process is to identify the people playing key roles, to describe the underlying societal values leading to the initiation process, and to relate the roles of the key people to environmental factors in a meaningful way so that the subsequent actions and decisions coming from the process can be understood.³

In Easton's model, demands and support emerged from the environment as inputs. The inputs acted as catalysts to get the policy process, or throughputs, started, which in turn converted the inputs into action and decision, or outputs. The throughputs were then examined more closely.

Sosne concluded that educators could and should be more involved with legislation which governed public education. To do so, educators needed to recognize that education was not free from politics and that they must carefully select where to enter the process in order to have the greatest impact. In the case of North Carolina's pupil testing bill, he discovered that the key actor was the governor because of his role in developing the plan and in moving it through the legislature.

³Sosne, p. 22.

Sosne concluded that educators needed access to the governor. However in this case, the education lobby was only symbolically involved in the legislative process and was too late for any substantive impact. Sosne suggested that educators should be actively involved in the nomination and election of governors, and that they should be organized so that legislators listen to them.

The second author who studied a single piece of legislation and used a conceptual framework to examine inputs, outputs, and the environment was Ciliberti.⁴ He used content analysis of public documents to examine the process by which the General School Aid Bill was considered in the 81st Congress. The purpose of the study was to determine "if there was any correlation between opposition to the Senate bill which passed and the defeat of the House proposed bill."⁵ He used Roald Campbell's conceptual model which consisted of four phases: social forces, antecedent movements, political action, and formal enactment, to study the school aid bill.

In reflecting on Campbell's conceptual model, Ciliberti suggested the following. First, if the legislation produced

⁴Barrie S. Ciliberti, "The Legislative Process and the Making of Educational Policy: The General School Aid Bill in the 81st Congress" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 1976).

⁵Ciliberti, p. 13.

through the first three phases did not meet the needs of society, formal enactment was unlikely. Second, rapid formal enactment was probable if the issue concerned an area of strong public interest, such as legislation for veterans or national defense. Third, Ciliberti recommended that a fifth phase be added to Campbell's model, an assessment stage, used to identify qualitatively whether the political action was positive or negative. And fourth, the author suggested that Campbell's model failed to account for the Unresponsive Entrenched Cabal (UEC) factor. Ciliberti identified UEC as a small group of people who were not sensitive to the needs of the majority.

By applying Campbell's model to the General School Aid Bill, Ciliberti concluded that basic social forces influenced the legislative process. However he studied only the legislative process in Congress during consideration of the school aid bill and did not examine the social forces which affected the bill. Those studies and proposals which made up the antecedent movements "though not absent from the total process, were not visible during the 81st Congress."⁶ The formal enactment stage did not occur because the legislation failed to pass. Thus phases one, two, and four of Campbell's model were either absent or not observed during the period of

⁶Ciliberti, p. 153.

the study. Ciliberti emphasized the third phase of the model, the political action phase, which included the discussions in and out of government and the debates in committee and on the floor.

Pernal also examined political action through a legislative study Pernal.⁷ Using a longitudinal approach, he traced the development of public higher education in Connecticut from 1849 to 1970. The purpose of his study was "to provide a comprehensive examination of this legislation and to interpret the effects of this legislation on higher education development in the state."⁸ He used historical inquiry to analyze and synthesize chronologically the data which covered the period studied. Pernal surveyed state legislative involvement in public higher education in Connecticut to discover if there were

evolutionary patterns of state legislation affecting public education in Connecticut . . . [and] what conditions or developments have affected the initiation of higher education legislation?⁹

He found that the evolution of legislation for higher education in Connecticut was influenced by the concerns of

⁷Michael E. Pernal, "A Study of State Legislation in the Development of Public Higher Education in Connecticut from 1849 to 1970" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1975).

⁸Pernal, p. 13.

⁹Pernal, p. 9.

educational leaders and individuals outside of the legislature. He concluded that the developments in higher education in Connecticut were not the result of initiatives by the legislature, but were affected by political, social, and economic conditions. The legislature influenced the development of public higher education by controlling finances and institutional policy through increased centralization and legislative coordination. In addition, legislative developments in higher education were influenced by various changes, including the change from an agrarian to an urban state, the two world wars, the depression in the 1930s, population changes, and the diversification of the economy.

Through historical inquiry these dissertations examined the legislative process and provided different perspectives on the evolution of educationally related legislation. The authors of these dissertations used historical methodology and comparable source materials, such as newspaper articles, public documents, committee hearings, and legislative debate to trace the legislative process, whether that of a single bill such as the General School Aid Bill, or a series of legislative acts creating a system of higher education in Connecticut. Two authors applied differing conceptual frameworks to study the interaction and relationships of outputs, inputs, and the environment. These dissertations

served to clarify a methodology and to develop a conceptual basis for this dissertation.

Legislative Histories of Junior/Community Colleges

The legislative evolution of two-year public colleges from junior college to community college has been discussed by various authors. A review of the literature identified studies which examined the legal provisions for junior/community colleges in various states. Studies in the 1930s used descriptive surveys of that legislation. Studies after World War II emphasized the legislative development of the community college and examined its growth and development through historical methodology.

Clement and Smith summarized the legal and semi-legal provisions for junior colleges in the United States in 1932.¹⁰ Their article was characterized by one author as "the first study of note concerning public junior college legislation in the United States."¹¹ The purpose of their study was

to gather together and to present in an organized form the essential information in regard to various

¹⁰J. A. Clement and Vivian T. Smith, "Public Junior College Legislation in the United States," Bureau of Educational Research Bulletin, No. 61 (1932).

¹¹Raymond Young, "An Analysis and Evaluation of General Legislation Pertaining to Public Junior Colleges" (Ed.D. thesis, University of Colorado, 1951), p. 4.

legislative enactments and the semi-legal requirements pertaining to public junior colleges. . . .¹²

To accomplish this, the authors used as original sources the legal provisions found in the various states' school laws, statutes, or codes. In addition to these sources of information, they sent a questionnaire to the departments of education in each state in the United States and received forty-three responses. They asked for information about each state's junior college regulations and specifically sought information about the general legal status of junior colleges, how they were established and maintained, and what administrative and academic standards they had.

From the information obtained, Clement and Smith reached the following conclusions. First, in twenty of the thirty-five states which had junior colleges some type of junior college legislation existed. Second, recent legislation (to 1933) had tended to be restrictive in order "to standardize the junior college rather than encourage it."¹³ Third, there was little uniformity among the states in their requirements to establish junior colleges, although those requirements usually included minimums for size, wealth, population, and secondary school enrollment. Fourth, state aid was not

¹²Clement and Smith, preface.

¹³Clement and Smith, p. 60.

usually given to locally-controlled junior colleges. The local tax rate approved to support these colleges was set at two mills or less. And fifth, Clement and Smith discovered that most states had similar academic standards, such as requiring teachers to have at least one year of collegiate education, requiring students to earn sixty semester hours in order to graduate, and offering courses in English, mathematics, social science and language.

Chambers also examined the legal provisions for junior colleges in an article published a year after Clement and Smith's study.¹⁴ Chambers investigated the status of junior college legislation in the mid-western states through a chronological discussion of the initial enactment and subsequent changes in the laws which "expressly authorized the establishment of public junior colleges by local school districts."¹⁵ He used as his primary source of information the laws and statutes of the mid-western states studied. Chambers identified fourteen states that authorized the establishment of junior colleges, nine of which were in the upper Mississippi Valley. The nine states were: Montana, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Nebraska, Iowa,

¹⁴M. M. Chambers, "Junior College Statutes in the Middle West," Junior College Journal 3 (January 1933):185-191.

¹⁵Chambers, p. 185.

Kansas, and Missouri. Of these nine, Wisconsin was the first to authorize public junior colleges, while Nebraska was one of the last.

Chambers characterized the legislation establishing public junior colleges in Nebraska in 1931 as

the most comprehensive and detailed statute on this subject in any of the mid-western states. Its sixteen lengthy sections make detailed prescriptions regarding the authorization, establishment, control, organization, curriculum, accreditation, and suspension of local public junior colleges. . . .¹⁶

Some of the specific provisions in the Nebraska legislation were: an average attendance of two hundred or more high school students, an assessed valuation of \$5,000,000 or more, approval of sixty percent of those voting to authorize the junior college, and control vested in the local board of education with the local superintendent being the college's president. Although neither Nebraska nor any other mid-western state provided substantial state aid, the usefulness and necessity of the junior college, according to Chambers, was well established. He praised these states because the legislation enacted contained requirements he considered simple and sane.

Nix, writing in the October, 1937 issue of The Junior College Journal, described the general legislative provisions

¹⁶Chambers, p. 189.

for the junior college in the United States, including most of the mid-western states studied by Chambers.¹⁷ Through a state by state examination of the school laws, he identified thirteen states which at that time provided for junior colleges through statutory provisions. Those states were: Arizona, California, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Carolina, and Texas. He noted that although Montana and Wisconsin had earlier passed legislation, they had "failed to continue their statutory acknowledgment of the junior college."¹⁸ The provisions in the thirteen states varied, and therefore, Nix approached the examination by organizing the study into seven categories, providing examples in each one.

In the first category Nix examined the legal requirements for organization. He found that all thirteen states had some general requirement for organization, such as, average daily attendance, assessed valuation, or minimum population restrictions, but the variations were substantial. Texas had the most rigid requirements of an average daily attendance of four hundred high school students and an assessed valuation of \$12,000,000, while Missouri only required the maintenance of

¹⁷E. H. Nix, "Present Legal Status of the Junior College," Junior College Journal 8 (October 1937):10-21.

¹⁸Nix, p. 10.

an accredited high school. The two most common provisions for the formation of districts (Nix's second category), were (1) by a vote of the school board or (2) by approval of the voters. Nix's third category of legislative provisions was that for the discontinuance of districts. Only three states had such provisions: Arizona, Nebraska, and South Carolina. Fourth, the boards governing the junior colleges were usually the same as the local school board if the junior college district and the public school system covered the same area. When the junior college was county-wide, at large elections were common. In his fifth category Nix examined state financial provisions for the junior colleges. Of the thirteen states which gave them legal recognition, two (California and Missouri) provided state support, three (Nebraska, South Carolina, and Texas) expressly prohibited state aid, and the remainder did not mention state funding. Sixth, local financial support came in the form of bonds, taxes, and tuition. Nix found that four states (Arizona, California, Nebraska, and Texas) permitted bond issues to support junior colleges. Eight other states allowed support through taxation (Arizona, California, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, and Texas). Conversely, in four states (Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, and North Dakota) tuition was the only financial support for the junior colleges. And last, the

control of the junior college's curriculum, board procedures, admission, and graduation requirements tended to be the responsibility of the governing board. However in some instances, particularly as it related to course of study and board procedures, this responsibility rested with the state departments of education.

Based on this data, Nix concluded that there were great differences in the

general legal status in the thirteen states which give recognition to this young education institution. Practices vary in all its phases of organization, support, and control. . . . There is no question that the junior college has become an acceptable addition to the educational family.¹⁹

Thus, Nix's study revealed that during the first thirty years of junior college history, the institution had become firmly established under the law. Although the specific provisions for its organization, support, and control varied, these states provided a significant legal foundation for their existence and operation.

Following World War II, Simms examined the constitutional provisions and judicial interpretations of junior college legislation.²⁰ The study was described as "probably the most

¹⁹Nix, p. 20.

²⁰Charles Wesley Simms, The Present Legal Status of the Public Junior College (Nashville, Tennessee: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1948).

extensive study of legal and semi-legal requirements . . . of public junior colleges."²¹ The purposes of the study included (1) a systematic organization of the legal provisions for public junior colleges in the United States, (2) the development of criteria for the establishment of public junior colleges, and (3) an evaluation of the general junior college legislation based on the criteria developed.

Simms collected information from three sources: statutory and constitutional provisions for public junior colleges, relevant supreme court decisions, and questionnaires sent to the chief state school officials in each state. He then evaluated the data and concluded in general that:

the present general legal provisions for public education appear to be adequate to place the public junior college on a sound constitutional basis. The state constitutions provide the legal basis for statutory enactments.²²

He noted that while there were strong legal foundations for public junior colleges there was a decided lack of uniformity among the states and significant variation in the scope of existing legislation. While he did not believe that the legal provision's for the establishment of junior colleges should be the same in every state, he suggested nine principles as a basis for enacting them.

²¹Young, p. 4.

²²Simms, p. 94.

Simms's nine principles were: (1) survey the state to determine the need for a public junior college; (2) offer lower division, terminal and adult education courses; (3) require a minimum of one thousand students in the secondary schools within a junior college district; (4) require beginning enrollment in a junior college of not less than one hundred students and the maintenance of at least two hundred after the third year; (5) insure that the proposed junior college districts have sufficient taxable wealth; (6) place the decision to establish a junior college district with the voters, not a local board; (7) permit union and joint districts; (8) make the tenure and retirement programs for the junior college instructors the same as other teachers; and (9) empower the state department or board to establish administrative and academic standards. Based on his analysis, Simms concluded that if a state included these principles in legalizing the public junior college they would thrive.

Another author who investigated the desirable characteristics of public junior college legislation was Young.²³ In 1950 he analyzed and evaluated the statutes in each state. He classified the provisions into thirteen major categories, including, requirements for establishment,

²³Young.

building and equipment, faculty, finance, and curriculum. Based on the information contained in these categories, he developed a questionnaire which he submitted to public college administrators and a jury of prominent educational authorities. The purpose of this survey was to obtain their opinions about the existing legislation and to determine what categories were considered desirable for inclusion in public junior college legislation.

In the process of collecting the data Young discovered that public junior college legislation existed in twenty-six states. However, he found that

legislative enactments of the several states appears to have followed no systematic pattern of development and some states have no general legislation pertaining to public junior colleges.²⁴

Despite the lack of uniformity and legal basis, Young believed that the public junior colleges would continue to grow, but that certain provisions in the general junior college legislation seemed desirable.

Young concluded that public junior college legislation should provide for as much flexibility as possible and should avoid over-standardization. In addition, the legislation should specify concisely the procedures for establishing a junior college, provide for surveys to determine educational

²⁴Young, p. vi.

need, permit a vote of the people within the proposed junior college district, and have provisions for the discontinuance of these colleges. Young believed that the inclusion of these provisions, and others, in public junior college legislation enhanced their development.

In 1963, Struther examined the development of junior college legislation in each state to determine if a common pattern existed.²⁵ Was the junior college to have been an extension of the high school or was it supposed to have been a comprehensive college? In order to answer that question, Struther tested two hypotheses. The first hypothesis was

that a concept of the junior college as a high school extension, offering university parallel work, was associated with local responsibilities in establishment, control and finance, while a concept of the junior college as a comprehensive institution was associated with state responsibilities in areas of establishment, control, and finance.²⁶

The second hypothesis was that "state financial support was accompanied by state controls and state participation in establishment."²⁷ Struther tested his hypotheses through a chronological study of legislative provisions in four areas: (1) the concept, that is, whether the legislation was intended

²⁵Frederick R. Struther, "The Development of Community Junior College Legislation in the United States to 1961" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1963).

²⁶Struther, p. 5.

²⁷Struther, p. 5.

to create an extension of the high school, offer academic courses, offer vocational or technical courses, or offer special functions such as adult education or civic and liberal education; (2) establishment, that is, what were the units of organization, the criteria for organization, and the action needed to organize a public junior college; (3) control, who set standards or approved curriculum; and (4) finances, how were the junior colleges financed and what was the state's role. He divided the United States into six regions and examined the legislation in the states in each region relative to the four areas. Struther summarized the findings for each individual state, identified trends in the four areas, and found that both hypotheses were supported by the study.

One of the states which Struther studied was Nebraska. He discovered that since the passage of enabling legislation in 1931 changes in the Nebraska laws relative to public junior colleges included: the authorization to issue revenue bonds for the construction of dormitory and student facilities (1945), the removal of the prohibition against the use of state aid for public junior colleges (1947), and the authorization for junior college districts apart from the secondary school system (1955). He concluded that

while a comprehensive concept appeared from the first law, there appeared to be little or no state responsibility in development, control, and finance. The only change of significance was authorization

for larger districts.²⁰

Prior to 1963 then, Nebraska law did not require state review or approval in the establishment, control, or finances of public junior colleges beyond the original intent of the 1931 legislation.

In addition to the observations which Struther made about Nebraska, he identified national trends in the four areas of concept, establishment, control, and finance. First, junior colleges had begun by offering primarily academic courses, then added vocational and technical courses, and finally were authorized to offer other services such as adult education and civic programs. Second, the laws pertaining to the establishment of the public junior colleges at first tended to require local action, but after World War II they began to require state approval which led to provisions requiring state surveys and master planning. Third, Struther identified a trend toward greater state control, and fourth, a trend toward greater state financial support. These four national trends were observed in several states, including Ohio.

Gilbride studied the passage of the legislation which created the first community college in Ohio in 1961.²¹ The

²⁰Struther, p. 255.

²¹Sister M. James Francis Gilbride, O.S.U., "The Coming of the Community College to Ohio: The Enabling Legislation and the Founding of Cuyahoga Community College, 1946-1963"

purpose of Gilbride's study was to trace the evolution of the community college in Ohio by investigating the events and people involved and to identify the positive and negative factors which influenced the legislative effort. She limited her study to Ohio and used documentary and oral history research techniques. She examined published reports, minutes of meetings, proceedings of public groups, statements of public officials, and interviewed over fifty individuals who participated as eyewitnesses to the process.

Gilbride found that local, national, and international trends affected the community college movement in Ohio. Growth of community colleges was stimulated by returning veterans and the later impact of their children. Numerous reports, particularly President Truman's Commission on Higher Education and several studies at Ohio State University, spurred the evolution of the community college as well. These reports emphasized the value of the community college as part of the state system of higher education. Existing Ohio colleges and universities opposed the legislation establishing community colleges because they were concerned about competition for state funds, curriculum, control, and transferability of credit. Opposition to the community college was intensified due to a split in the political

(Ph.D. dissertation, Kent State University, 1979).

interests of those living in rural and urban areas of the state. The Ohio legislature was dominated by representatives from rural areas, representatives who were fiscally conservative, lacked knowledge of educational and technical endeavors, and did not understand the problems of urban communities. Supporters of the community college legislation included key legislators, the governor's finance director, labor unions, and industrial and educational leaders.

While some authors emphasized the statutory provisions for junior/community colleges, McLeod examined the constitutional status of the colleges.³⁰ He examined the provisions for junior/community colleges in all fifty state constitutions. He found that most states had sections in their constitutions which provided for the establishment of the common schools, public institutions of higher education, or private higher education, but few had constitutional provisions which pertained to junior/community colleges.

McLeod discovered that Arkansas and Michigan were the only states with specific constitutional provisions for community colleges. In 1964 an amendment to the Arkansas constitution enabled the legislature to establish community college districts. It required that a local referendum be

³⁰Marshall W. McLeod, "Constitutional Provisions for Community Junior Colleges," Community Junior College 7 (January 1983):175-181.

held before any taxes were levied, and it specifically prohibited a community college from becoming a four-year college. The 1963 Michigan constitution mandated that the state legislature provide for the establishment and financing of community colleges, that these colleges were to be locally controlled, and that a state board for public community and junior colleges was to be created to advise the state board of education.

In addition to the constitutional provisions for community colleges in Arkansas and Michigan, McLeod found that five states had vague references to community colleges in their constitutions. In Arizona, the only constitutional reference to community colleges was a provision that the state Board of Education have as one of its members a representative from the state's Junior College Board. California's constitution gave the legislature the authority to incorporate community college districts and to exempt some community college property from taxation. The Florida constitution did not mention community colleges by name, but the index to the constitution identified those sections which applied to junior colleges. In Oregon, the constitution gave the state the power to "lend credit for financing higher education institutions and activities, and community colleges."³¹ And

³¹McLeod, p. 179.

in Texas, the constitution allowed junior college districts to change boundaries. This change in boundaries, however, did not affect the district's taxing and bonding authority. Based on the information obtained in his survey, McLeod observed

that many of the state constitutions antedated the idea and the establishment of the type of institution. And when state systems of community colleges were established by statutory law, such was apparently deemed sufficient; and that the task of providing constitutional law by amendment was unnecessary. For states with new constitutions made subsequent to the statutory community college acts, it is probable that strict constitutional provisions were not thought to be needed.³²

There was a perception by educators and legislators that constitutional provisions for community colleges were unnecessary, and in fact, undesirable. Therefore few states had specific constitutional provisions concerning community colleges.

The articles and dissertations selected for review in this section traced the development of the legal foundation for public two-year college by examining their statutory and constitutional basis. The first mid-western state to enact legislation providing for the establishment of a junior college was Wisconsin in 1911. By the 1960s almost all of the states had legislatively enabled community colleges, but by the 1980s only two states, Arkansas and Michigan, had

³²McLeod, p. 180.

specific reference to the community college in their constitutions.

Through survey, description, and historical analysis, the studies reviewed did identify those states which provided statutory and/or constitutional basis for the public two-year college. The early studies of state legislation used survey and descriptive techniques to examine and identify the legal status of these institutions. Latter studies went beyond description and included the creation of criteria to evaluate the legislation based on the perceptions of community college and other educational leaders. In addition, one study examined the development of the community college system in Ohio through documentary and oral history techniques, using government and public records as well as personal interviews with those involved.

In studies reviewed, major features of that legislation were identified. Although several authors concluded that there was little uniformity between the states, the early legislation usually specified the requirements for organization of junior colleges. These requirements included a minimum total secondary school enrollment within the college district, a minimum assessed valuation of property within the district, and minimum enrollment size for the college. Provisions became more specific and tended to include sections

concerned with purpose, control, finance, as well as establishment. The states increased their control over the public two-year colleges and gave them additional sources of financial support. These studies provide a context for an examination of the development of junior college legislation in Nebraska. They indicated an ongoing and evolving interest in the legal status of the junior/community college. Furthermore, they suggested that the evolution of legislation in Nebraska may be comparable to that of other states.

Nebraska Histories

The third category of the literature selected for review included articles, theses, and dissertations which specifically examined the evolution of Nebraska's public junior colleges into a system of technical community colleges. The junior college legislation in the early 1930s provided the foundation for the technical community college system. In the sixties, area vocational technical schools were created, and then in 1971, the system of technical community colleges established. The authors of these studies used survey and historical methodologies to examine the various pieces of legislation that created the system and studied the development and growth of these two-year colleges over time.

One of the earliest articles about public junior college

legislation in Nebraska was Lindsay's article in The Junior College Journal in October, 1931.³³ Lindsay, who was the Dean of the Norfolk Junior College at the time of the article, reviewed the provisions of the law passed in 1931. He also briefly discussed the establishment of the first junior college in McCook and the decision by the Norfolk Board of Education to provide for a junior college in 1928. Both colleges operated without legal authorization until the passage of the 1931 law.

Lindsay examined the scope and provisions of the 1931 Nebraska law for the organization, control, curriculum, and finances of junior colleges. He found that the 1931 law was detailed and quite specific, but that local authorities had ample latitude in establishing and administering junior colleges. The 1931 law required that school districts: (1) have 200 or more high school students, (2) have an assessed valuation of \$5,000,000 or more, (3) put the question to a vote of the people, and (4) secure the approval of 60 percent of those voting. The law placed the management and control of the junior college in the hands of a junior college board, which was in fact the same as the local Board of Education, with supervision of that board vested in the state

³³Charles Lindsay, "New Junior College Law in Nebraska," The Junior College Journal 2 (October 1931):11-15.

Superintendent of Public Instruction. The junior colleges were authorized to offer a transfer program; agricultural, industrial, commercial, and homemaking vocational courses; and instruction related to civic and liberal education. The law prohibited junior college districts from applying for or receiving state aid. Instead, junior colleges were to receive financial support from tuition, not to exceed 108 dollars per year per pupil, and local property taxes to a maximum of two mills.

Lindsay believed that the provisions for the organization, control, curriculum, and finances of junior colleges were clear and understandable. He also believed that the 1931 law was a significant advance for education in Nebraska. It provided a vision of the future for education in the state. There had been strong identifiable support for the passage of the 1931 law. While there had also been those opposed to the bill, their struggle lacked the bitterness and intensity often identified with the politics of legislation.

While Lindsay examined the provisions of the law which allowed the establishment of junior colleges, Hughes studied the history of the junior colleges in Nebraska from 1925 to 1940.³⁴ She reviewed the growth and evolution of the junior

³⁴Kathryn H. Hughes, "History of the Public Junior Colleges of Nebraska" (M.A. thesis, University of Nebraska, 1942).

college in America, and noted that Nebraska experienced the same problem faced by most other states when junior college legislation was enacted. That problem was determining the junior college's role within the state educational system. However, once the 1931 law was enacted, the legislature did not change its provisions. The junior college curricula in Nebraska stressed transfer courses or terminal and semi-professional training and control remained at the local level.

Hughes suggested that the development of the public junior colleges in Nebraska between 1925 and 1940 occurred in three periods: the Developmental Period, 1925-1931, the Depression Period, 1931-1935, and the Expansion Period, 1935-1940. During the Developmental Period, several communities established or attempted to establish junior colleges, but several handicaps were encountered as well. They had no legal status. Their finances were limited. Their facilities and equipment were shared with high school students. Libraries were of poor quality and often consisted of books donated by city libraries. And the transferability of the junior colleges credits needed to be fully recognized by the University of Nebraska. Consequently, the hiring of instructors, the curriculum, books, and even tests were approved by the University of Nebraska Extension Division. During the Developmental Period, the locally controlled junior

college lacked considerable independence, and in fact, depended upon the University of Nebraska Extension Division for its credibility. During the Developmental Period, legislation to enable junior colleges was twice defeated. The passage of the 1931 junior college law and the collapse of the stock market heralded Hughes' Depression Period in Nebraska junior college development.

Support for the junior colleges waned during the Depression Period. Because of the economic distress and the fear of increased taxes, Grand Island voters twice rejected the establishment of a junior college, once in the fall of 1931 and again in the spring of 1932. In addition to these electoral defeats, the junior colleges in McCook and Scottsbluff experienced enrollment declines and serious financial problems. Salaries were cut, extracurricular activities dropped, and tuition lowered. Economic recovery in the mid-30s marked the end of the Depression Period and the beginning of the Expansion Period.

During the Expansion Period from 1935 to 1940, enrollments doubled at both McCook and Scottsbluff. The expansion resulted from lower tuition, a break in the Depression, and an expanded curricula. After 1940, this expansion spread to other Nebraska communities. In 1941 voters in Fairbury and Norfolk voted to establish junior

colleges by five to one margins or better. Fifteen school districts in 1941 which met the 1931 law's criteria for establishment of junior colleges were: Beatrice, Columbus, Fairbury, Falls City, Fremont, Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney, Lincoln, McCook, Norfolk, North Platte, Omaha, Scottsbluff, and York. Ten of these either had junior colleges or other forms of higher education. Those that did not were; Beatrice, Columbus, Falls City, Grand Island, and North Platte.

Two national reports, The Educational Policies Commission in 1944 and The President's Commission on Higher Education in 1947, prompted Saylor in 1948 to investigate 13th and 14th grade education. This study resulted in a series of articles in Junior College Studies.³⁵ This publication contained three separate studies, one examined the legal status of junior colleges in the United States, another studied the provisions for their financing, and the third provided a history of the public junior colleges in Nebraska.

Saylor's examination of the legal status of junior colleges represented "an analysis of the present statutory basis for the establishment and operation of public junior colleges in the various states that have recognized the public

³⁵Galen Saylor, ed., "Junior College Studies," No. 166, Extension Division, University of Nebraska, November 1948.

junior college in law."³⁶ The author, Bonita S. Hoag, analyzed the legislation which governed the establishment of junior colleges by any qualified local unit or district. She found that twenty-six states, including Nebraska, and the neighboring states of Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, and Wyoming, had general legislation while eleven states had no statutory provisions for junior colleges at all. Those states that did have legislative provisions varied their approach to the establishment of junior colleges.

Some states . . . permit almost any local district maintaining a high school to add the junior college grades; others set up severe restrictions which limit the establishment to only a few districts in the state; while still other states set few restrictions in the law, but require that the state department or state board of education must approve the establishment of the junior college on the basis of a thorough study and investigation of the need for the institution and its probable success.³⁷

Thus a majority of the states had general legislation permitting public two-year colleges but the laws lacked uniformity.

According to the study, states that had established locally controlled junior colleges permitted financial support from three sources: state aid, tuition, and local taxation. Eighteen of thirty-one states provided no state aid, but a

³⁶Saylor, p. 5.

³⁷Saylor, p. 21.

majority did permit district and non-district tuition and allowed for support from the general school levy. In Nebraska, junior colleges did not receive state aid and could not use funds from the general school fund, but they were permitted to charge tuition and levy a separate tax not to exceed three mills.

The historical review of the public junior colleges of Nebraska was an updated version of Hughes' original study of 1941. The article described early legislative efforts, noting the defeat of enabling legislation in 1927 and 1929, followed by the passage of such legislation in 1931. From the establishment of the first junior college in McCook in 1926 junior college enrollment increased from 45 to 862 in 1948 when junior colleges existed in McCook, Norfolk, Scottsbluff, and Fairbury. Only McCook and Scottsbluff, however, had continuous operation from 1931 to 1948. The author briefly reviewed the founding of six junior colleges in Nebraska: McCook (1926), Norfolk (1928), Scottsbluff (1926), Fairbury (1941), Grand Island (1931), and Walthill (1928).

The enabling legislation approved by the Nebraska Legislature in 1971 served as the catalyst for another study of the Nebraska junior/community colleges. Easton used historical and case study methods and traced the evolution of public two-year colleges in Nebraska from their early

beginning to 1973.³³ He relied on board minutes, college catalogs, and a questionnaire sent to each community college president in Nebraska for primary data. According to Easton, the statewide system of community colleges evolved from legislation in three areas: junior colleges, state vocational technical colleges, and area vocational technical colleges.

Junior colleges received legal status with the passage of Senate File 1 by the Nebraska Legislature in 1931, and according to Easton, only minor changes occurred over the next thirty years. The average daily attendance requirement increased from 200 in 1931 to 1200 in 1971, and the assessed valuation increased from \$5,000,000 to \$65,000,000. In addition, the legislature allowed the junior college districts to match county boundaries and in 1967 granted them state aid. But generally, "the junior colleges developed largely without benefit of concern or interest on the part of the legislature."³⁴ Nebraska legislators chose not to make major changes in junior college legislation, but did enact legislation which established two state trade schools.

The Nebraska legislature approved the initial legislation for state vocational technical schools in 1941 when it

³³Theodore A. Easton, "The Development of Community Colleges in Nebraska" (Ed.D. thesis, University of Colorado, 1973).

³⁴Easton, p. 86.

created the Nebraska Trade School at Milford. The legislature created a second trade school in 1965 at Sidney. According to Easton, the 1965 law used the same language as found in the 1941 legislation and few changes pertaining to vocational technical education were made in between the establishment of these two schools. The purpose of the trade school was to provide an opportunity for Nebraskans to acquire technical skills. But in 1965, the legislature enacted a bill which led to the establishment of area vocational technical schools in Hastings, North Platte, Norfolk, Omaha, and Lincoln.

The legal bases for two year colleges, then, were varied. The junior colleges were created . . . as an appendage of the public school systems. . . . The state vocational technical colleges were created by the legislature. . . . The area vocational technical colleges were created by vote.⁴²

The legislative enactments created three different types of two-year public institutions, but the move towards a statewide system was essentially completed when the legislature approved a bill in 1971 that created the technical community colleges.

Based on the information collected, Easton reached five conclusions. First, a philosophy of a comprehensive community college developed slowly in Nebraska because the junior colleges emphasized the transfer function. Second, the local

⁴²Easton, p. 93.

boards and the state legislature ignored changing community needs and retarded the growth of vocational and technical education. Third, Nebraska needed state planning in education. Fourth, the professional staff of the junior colleges did not identify with the junior college. And fifth, in none of the areas examined in his study did the community colleges in Nebraska develop in a markedly different way from the development of community colleges nationwide.

In 1973, Schleiger traced the development of the comprehensive community college in Nebraska through an historical examination of the legislation which created a statewide system of technical community colleges.⁴¹ The purpose of his article was to provide information about the issues, people, and process involved in establishing a statewide system and to chronologically trace the development of the legislation and its implementation. He briefly reviewed the establishment of public junior colleges in Nebraska. He noted that the state legislature did not recognize the need to establish additional vocational technical schools until 1965. Then the legislature enacted laws which moved the state of Nebraska toward a statewide system.

⁴¹Robert C. Schleiger, The Evolution of the Nebraska Comprehensive Technical Community College System (ERIC Document Reproduction Service ED 087 501, 1973).

Between 1965 and 1973 the Nebraska legislature passed several bills that resulted in the eventual creation of the technical community college system. In 1965 legislation created area vocational technical schools. Later legislation placed the junior colleges, vocational technical schools, and the state trade schools into a unified system. Schleiger believed that a dual system with one set of comprehensive community colleges and another set of area vocational or technical schools had too many problems and would not be effective in Nebraska. He believed that the future success of public two-year colleges in Nebraska depended upon the creation of a single system.

In 1969 the legislature established a single statewide system but the governor vetoed the bill because of questions about the areas created and the transfer of state and area institutions into other areas. Despite the veto, the legislature continued to study the need for a statewide system and in 1971 passed Legislative Bill 759 (LB 759). This bill created a statewide system of public postsecondary two-year institutions coordinated by a State Board of Technical Community Colleges with administrative control in the hands of a local board. But some counties elected not to go into the system for political reasons or to avoid providing local financial support. As a result, in 1973, the legislature

placed the uncommitted counties into areas and created seven areas with thirteen individual institutions.

Schleiger described the historical evolution of the Technical Community College system in Nebraska and identified issues involved in the creation of that system. He discussed the conditions supporters of a statewide system perceived as essential. By 1973 the Nebraska Legislature enacted legislation based on these conditions to create a unified system, administered locally, with a state board to provide advice and make policy.

Five years after the creation of a statewide system, Trani prepared a report for the Sloan Commission on Higher Education in Nebraska.⁴² In this descriptive study, Trani examined Nebraska's system of higher education, including the state university, the four state colleges, and the six technical community colleges. He provided a history of postsecondary coordination in Nebraska. He also examined the role and mission legislation enacted in 1978 and the effort to coordinate higher education in the state.

Trani reported that in 1975 the Nebraska legislature created the Nebraska Coordinating Committee for Technical

⁴²Eugene P. Trani, Higher Education in Nebraska: A Report Prepared for the Sloan Commission on Government and Higher Education (ERIC Document Reproduction Service ED 184 449, 1978).

Community Colleges to help coordinate information and ideas, program development, and equitable distribution of federal funds among the technical community colleges. Then in 1976 Nebraska's 1202 commissions, created by the federal government in the Higher Education Act of 1965 to study educational resources and possible coordination of higher education within the states, assumed the duties of the Coordinating Committee for Technical Colleges. The principle objectives of the commission were: the equitable distribution of federal funds, sharing information and ideas, help in developing programs, and the support of coordination efforts. According to Trani, tension existed within higher education in Nebraska at this time because of unresolved questions regarding the proper size, governance, and autonomy of institutions. To alleviate some of these concerns, the legislature passed legislative Bill 756 (LB 756) in 1978 which outlined the role and mission of the various elements of higher education in Nebraska. LB 756 gave the University the responsibility for doctoral, professional, and cooperative agricultural extension programs and "all graduate programs, except master's and specialist work in teacher education."⁴³ The state colleges were to provide baccalaureate degrees in education and were specifically prohibited from offering graduate education in

⁴³Trani, p. 28.

areas other than teacher education. The technical community colleges had the responsibility for less than baccalaureate degree programs and the general academic or transfer programs were eliminated or reduced. According to Trani Nebraska was unique because the legislature played such a dominate role in the coordination of higher education.

Trani concluded that in Nebraska the legislature and other branches of state government exerted the major governmental influence on public higher education. In addition, the federal government emerged as a major partner in higher education in Nebraska because of the requirements associated with data collection, documentation, affirmative action, equal opportunities, and civil rights.

In 1987, an examination of the first public junior college in Nebraska also appeared in "First' Junior Colleges in an Age of Reform."⁴⁴ Through a comparison of local and institutional histories, Ratcliff studied the development of public junior colleges in three communities: (1) Saginaw, Michigan; (2) Springfield, Massachusetts; and (3) McCook, Nebraska. He used newspapers and college publications as primary sources. Secondary sources included: histories of higher education in each state; state and local social,

⁴⁴James L. Ratcliff, "'First' Public Junior Colleges in an Age of Reform," The Journal of Higher Education 58 (March/April 1987):151-180.

political, economic, and educational histories; and related journal articles and dissertations. The purpose of Ratcliff's study was to examine social, political, economic and educational factors which were associated with the establishment of each school, the first in each state. He compared and contrasted the development of these colleges in the context of the social political, economic and educational factors which he identified.

Ratcliff asked three questions in the examination of each junior college. "(1) How did the colleges originate and what were their antecedents? (2) What factors lead to the establishment of the colleges? (3) Which conditions, factors, or persons influenced their development?"⁴⁵ In applying historical inquiry to answer these three questions, Ratcliff discovered the following regarding each school. First, the investigation of the junior college in Saginaw, Michigan revealed that it did not begin in 1895 as had been claimed. Despite references to the creation of Saginaw Junior College in 1915 by Gray in "The Junior College in California" and comments about the success of its graduates at the University of Michigan by Eells, Ratcliff's review of the Saginaw Evening News, school board minutes, and graduation lists did not support the earlier references. According to Ratcliff such

⁴⁵Ratcliff, p. 155.

findings raised serious questions about the scholarship of previous junior/community college studies and their validity and reliability.

Although a public junior college, as an extension of the East Side High School in Saginaw did not exist, Ratcliff examined the social, economic, political, and educational climate to determine if the environment would have been conducive to the establishment of a public junior college. He concluded that economic factors, particularly the monetarist policies of the Cleveland Administration inhibited the growth of public education. But he suggested that the social, political, and educational environment was conducive to the beginning of a junior college in Saginaw. He found that community leaders supported the school system as an aid to continued economic growth. The development of different modes of transportation, the discovery of coal nearby, and Saginaw's support of denominational and proprietary colleges created an environment favorable to the establishment of a junior college.

Second, the establishment of a public junior college in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1917 occurred at a time of business expansion and growth. As the population increased, so did enrollments in high school. Local schools were politically active and involved in educational reform. The

area contained several four-year colleges, such as Mt. Holyoke and Amherst. Ratcliff concluded that the economic and demographic environment supported the establishment of a junior college in Springfield. However, the success of the college was inhibited by the lack of students during World War I, the preference for private higher education in that part of the state, and the lack of promotion.

Third, Ratcliff's examination of the establishment of McCook Junior College in McCook, Nebraska revealed several reasons for the creation of a junior college in that community in 1926. First, McCook was a long distance from the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. Second, some students wanted to stay close to home. Third, fewer than two percent of Nebraska high school graduates attended an institution of higher education. And fourth, a college was seen as a civic and community asset, much like a museum or country club.

Unlike Springfield and Saginaw, McCook had strong leadership in their effort to start a junior college and obtain legislative sanction. The editors of the McCook Daily Gazette, H. C. Strunk and Mark Knight, ran a series of articles extolling the benefits of a junior college and cited examples from other states, such as Michigan and Iowa. The Superintendent of Schools in McCook, J. A. True, worked with business and civic leaders as well as people interested in

establishing a junior college in Norfolk and Scottsbluff. Supporters of the junior college in McCook worked with leaders from the University of Nebraska to develop a curriculum acceptable to the University. The civic, business, and educational leaders of McCook played a significant role in the creation of the junior college.

McCook was a prosperous community. It was a growing trade center with expanding businesses. Highways to the community were paved and transportation improved. The social, political, economic and educational factors were conducive to the establishment of a junior college in McCook. With McCook leading the effort, the Nebraska legislature legalized public junior colleges in 1931.

Ratcliff concluded that although the emphasis on local rule and governmental efficiency in the 1890s was favorable to the establishment of public junior colleges, the economic policies and recessions of that period inhibited their creation. But in Nebraska in the 1920s the political reforms associated with the populists, along with the economic prosperity of McCook, encouraged the development of a junior college.

Ratcliff's study confirmed his thesis "that the first public junior colleges confronted and overcame certain obstacles."⁴⁶ First, "the support of various interest groups

⁴⁶Ratcliff, p. 173.

within the community had to be developed and marshalled."⁴⁷ He concluded that in Springfield the political mechanisms were absent, but in McCook educators, civic leaders, and the newspaper provided support.

A second obstacle was the legalization of public two-year colleges. It was not a concern in Springfield, but was necessary in Nebraska. As Ratcliff stated, the "legalization of the first public junior college was an obstacle only when the founding of such colleges was contested."⁴⁸ In Nebraska, the University of Nebraska, the state normal schools, and private colleges at some time resisted the expansion of junior college education within the state making legalization necessary.

A third barrier to the establishment of the junior college suggested by Ratcliff was the lack of a relationship with a four-year college or university. Such a relationship was established in Springfield because of the history of excellence in Springfield's secondary schools and the placement of its students in prestigious universities and colleges. In McCook, the Extension Director of the University of Nebraska and the Dean of the Teachers College there assisted in the development of a curriculum which was

⁴⁷Ratcliff, p. 173.

⁴⁸Ratcliff, p. 174.

acceptable to the university.

Based on the information obtained in his study, Ratcliff concluded that the economic conditions, civic and business support for public education, and the political environment influenced the development of the junior colleges in Saginaw, Michigan, Springfield, Massachusetts, and McCook, Nebraska. The superintendent of public schools in Springfield and McCook strongly supported the effort to establish a junior college in their respective communities. The research disproved the great man theory, which linked the founding of junior colleges to pioneers such as Tappan and Harper. In none of the cases included in this study was direct reference made to these men.

This section of the literature review consisted of articles and dissertations which examined the development of a postsecondary two-year college system in Nebraska. The first junior college began operation in McCook in the fall of 1926, and after two defeats, the Nebraska legislature gave legal recognition to the junior colleges in 1931. In 1941, the legislature established a state trade school in Milford and in 1965 created area vocational technical schools. These three types of schools, junior college, trade school, and area vocational technical school, became part of a single system when the legislature enacted a bill in 1971 creating the

technical community colleges. Some modification of the system occurred after 1971, the most notable being legislation in 1978 which defined the role and mission of all institutions of higher education in Nebraska.

The authors of the articles and dissertations reviewed in this section used historical analysis and survey to examine the legislation and other public documents which lead to the creation and development of the technical community college system. An examination of the legislation passed in 1931, which gave the junior college legal standing in Nebraska, indicated a desire of the legislature to be specific and precise in establishing the provisions for organization, control, curriculum, and financing of the junior colleges. The establishment of a state trade school and the creation of area vocational technical schools were in partial response to an increased emphasis on vocational technical education by the federal government and the need for the state of Nebraska to provide training for its citizens. The technical community college system resulted from the perception of legislators and educators that Nebraska needed a unified system for the two-year colleges, governed by a separate state board, but with local control.

Chapter Summary

The twentieth century has been a time of growth and change in education in the United States and the emergence of the community college has been one of the significant changes. The purpose of this review of related literature was to identify those factors which influenced the legislative process, to discover the methodological approaches used to study legislation, and to identify different types of source materials. Surveys of state constitutions and statutory provisions identified some of the legal changes and increased legal support. Legislative histories documented and traced the evolution of the community college in Nebraska and the United States. In the literature reviewed, several articles and dissertations identified variables and factors which influenced the outcome of the legislative process, studied the inputs and outputs, examined the environment in which that process occurred, and explored the methodologies and sources of materials used in these studies.

The literature review was divided into three sections: legislative histories, legislative histories of junior/community colleges, and Nebraska junior/community college histories. In the first section, Legislative Histories, the authors used different approaches, including historical inquiry, the case study approach, and the use of

conceptual frameworks to examine inputs and outputs and to identify factors which influenced the legislative outcome of educational issues. Easton's systems analysis was used to study the passage of a non-money bill in the North Carolina Legislature, while Campbell's conceptual framework of four stages was used to examine a specific piece of legislation in the Congress. The author used newspapers, public documents, legislative proceedings, and minutes of public meetings. From the data collected the authors concluded that judicial decisions, federal legislation, social, economic, and political factors influenced the outcome of legislation concerned with educational issues.

The second section, Legislative Histories of Junior/Community Colleges, emphasized the evolution of the legal basis for junior/community colleges through survey, description, historical analysis, and oral history. Some authors described the legislative provisions within the various states, while others established criteria for appropriate junior college legislation or evaluated existing legislative provisions based on criteria. They concluded that the early legal requirements within the United States for establishing a junior college generally required a minimum enrollment in secondary schools, minimum assessed valuation, and minimum size. But through the years provisions became

more specific and states increased their control over two-year public colleges.

The third section, Nebraska Junior/Community Colleges, examined the evolution of the system of technical community colleges unique to Nebraska. The system grew from the establishment of the first public junior college in McCook in 1926 to legislation permitting the establishment of junior colleges, to laws which created the state trade school at Milford, to the creation of area vocational technical schools. Legislation which unified the system was approved in 1971. Historical analysis and survey methods used by the authors in this section provided insight into the factors which influenced the success of legislation creating the system. Local economic interests, the desire for educational opportunity, federal subsidies and legislation, and educational and legislative support were factors in the successful creation of the technical community college in Nebraska.

CHAPTER III.

TRENDS IN THE EVOLUTION OF JUNIOR/COMMUNITY COLLEGES

An examination of the legislation affecting the growth and development of the technical community college system in Nebraska is enhanced by placing that growth and development in historical perspective. The American educational system evolved over a period of approximately 350 years through imitation and modification, such that a unique system of higher education exists in America today. One of the distinctly American institutions of higher education is the junior/community college, an institution influenced by nineteenth and twentieth century educational leaders, state and federal legislation and initiatives, and changing economic, political, and social forces. As Diener stated, "the plight of the junior college is indicative of the condition of higher education in the United States, that is, a social institution permanently in flux."¹ As social, political, and economic conditions changed, the junior/community college changed and became an integral part of America's system of higher education.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the historical evolution of the junior/community college through a review of

¹Thomas J. Diener, Federal Influence on the Junior College Search for Identity (ERIC Document Reproduction Service ED 068 095, 1971), p. 1.

the origins of the idea for a junior/community college and an examination of three areas of change which affected these colleges. This chapter traces the development of the junior/community college from the perspective of historiography.

The idea for the junior/community college emerged in response to the indefiniteness between upper secondary and higher education. It evolved through the modification and adoption of educational systems found in other countries, particularly Germany and France. The junior/community colleges grew in numbers and expanded their functions as demands on education increased and legislatures enacted laws which legalized their position within the educational system. As Brown and Mayhew declared, "the junior colleges may become for the twentieth century what the land-grant colleges were for the nineteenth."² The changing economic, social, and political conditions which impacted their development nationally and in Nebraska are examined in the specific chapters into which this study has been divided: the junior college and the state trade school 1926-1941; and the technical community college system 1941-1986. The three areas of change identified in this chapter are: the

²Hugh S. Brown and Lewis B. Mayhew, American Higher Education (New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1965), p. 39.

expanding functions performed by junior/community colleges, the growth in numbers of institutions and students, and legitimization or legalization through state legislation.

The Idea

The ideas which lead to the development of the junior/community colleges in American emerged because the indefiniteness between secondary and higher education encouraged education leaders to seek alternative methods of providing the first two years of collegiate education, and because American educators studied the educational systems overseas, particularly in Germany and France, and borrowed from them. Some authors have suggested that the origins of the idea for the junior/community college began in colonial America. According to Wills

at William and Mary, under the statutes of 1736, there was a prototype of the junior college and senior college organization in the Grammar School, having a latin course of four years, and the philosophy school, where two years were required for the attainment of the degree of Bachelor and four years for that of master.³

At William and Mary, then, a student who had acquired the necessary skills in Latin and Greek elsewhere could obtain the bachelor's degree in just two years. And according to

³Elbert V. Wills, The Growth of American Higher Education (Philadelphia: Dorrance & Company, Inc., 1936), p. 211.

Hughes, Pierre S. DuPont de Nemours suggested that university preparation was the purpose of the college.⁴ In addition in the 1750s the academy offered work found in both the upper elementary school and colleges of that period.⁵ Thus in colonial America the problem of dividing the upper elementary, or secondary course work from that of higher education emerged as an area of concern for educators.

But according to Koos, the antecedents of the junior college could also be found in the system of higher education which developed in Germany and France in the nineteenth century.⁶ He suggested that there were significant points of similarity between the "French and German organization of secondary and higher education with that proposed by those who urge the upward extension of our own high school by the addition of junior college years. . . ." ⁷ As Wills stated

In the German Gymnasium or the French Lycee the courses have been such as to prepare students for entering upon the work of the University at a level fully equivalent to that of the beginning of the junior year in American college courses.⁸

⁴Kathryn H. Hughes, "History of the Public Junior Colleges of Nebraska" (M.A. thesis, University of Nebraska, 1942), p. 1.

⁵Hughes, pp. 1-2.

⁶Leonard V. Koos, The Junior College Movement (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1925), p. 235.

⁷Koos, p. 235.

⁸Wills, p. 211.

The German gymnasium and the French lycee provided the elementary and secondary education and approximated the first two years of collegiate work in America. Several noted American educators reached the conclusion that the first two years of American colleges were, in fact, a continuation of the secondary system in terms of methodology of instruction and content, and thus could be separated from the university.

Tappan suggested placing the first two years of college work in the high school or secondary schools. He stated in 1851 that the development of a true university would be based on "the creation of a university of the Continental type. . . . The general extension of such a plan would have made the American college a secondary school."⁹ At his inaugural address as president of the University of Michigan in 1852, he also suggested that the work of the secondary departments be transferred from the university to the high school.¹⁰ Tappan believed that the possibility of developing such a system lay with the state universities of the West.

Folwell, as President of the University of Minnesota suggested in 1869 a system of education for the United States of three levels: common schools, colleges or secondary

⁹Willis, p. 213.

¹⁰F. M. McDowell, "The Junior College," Department of the Interior Bulletin, no. 32, 1919, p. 10.

schools, and the university.¹¹ He believed that the university was distinct and above the college. He further suggested that great gains would be made if the secondary schools were to assume those studies which constitute the first two years of study at American colleges.¹² Other leaders in American education in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries came to agree with these ideas.

William Rainey Harper, the president of the University of Chicago, believed that because the first two years of college were a continuation, both in subject matter and methodology, of high school courses, the methods of instruction used by the university would not be affective until the junior year.¹³

Jesse, President of the University of Missouri, suggested in 1896 that

the first two years in college are really secondary in nature. I always think of the high school and academy as covering the lower secondary period, and the freshman and sophomore years at college as covering the upper secondary period. In the secondary period and in at least the first two years at a college not only are studies almost identical, but the character of teaching is the same.¹⁴

Both Harper and Jesse perceived the freshman and sophomore

¹¹Hughes, p. 4.

¹²Hughes, p. 4.

¹³McDowell, p. 12.

¹⁴McDowell, pp. 14-15.

years of college as secondary in nature with content and instructional methodologies that were similar and believed that changes in the American educational system were needed to correct this situation.

Jordan from Stanford and Lange of the University of California saw the need for some structural change. Jordan stated in 1912 his expectation that larger high schools would assume responsibility for the first two years of university study as "The instruction of these two years is of necessity elementary and of the same general nature as the work of the high school itself."¹⁵ In the Bulletin of the University of California in 1915, Lange further suggested that the universities support of the junior college was based on a reshaping of the university around two ideas. First, the university really began in the junior year of the four-year college scheme, and second, the freshman and sophomore years of college were in fact secondary education.¹⁶

Because of the positions taken by these educational leaders, Fields suggested that the major impetus for the junior college came from the universities, since those states in which the junior/community college had university support

¹⁵McDowell, p. 18.

¹⁶McDowell, p. 19.

had the greatest growth.¹⁷ Although the universities and their presidents played a significant role in the evolution of and the idea for the junior college, the idea was also influenced by the rapid growth of the universities, by a move toward an upward extension of the normal schools, by an extended high school, by the evolution of small four-year colleges into two-year institutions, and by social, political, and economic forces.¹⁸

In the 1930s, a number of individuals interested in education promoted the junior college as an institution of higher education including the United States Commissioner of Education, P. P. Claxton and Walter C. Eells.¹⁹ According to Diener, Eells believed that two-year colleges were to be considered separate and unique parts of the educational system above the high school, but below the university.²⁰ But those who advocated the junior/community college as part of higher education were outnumbered by those who "supported the merger

¹⁷Ralph R. Fields, cited by James L. Ratcliff in "A Re-examination of the Past: Some Origins of the Second Best Notion," Community/Junior College Quarterly of Research and Practice 8 (1984):273-284.

¹⁸James L. Ratcliff, "A Re-examination of the Past: Some Origins of the Second Best Notion," Community/Junior College Quarterly of Research and Practice 8 (1984):273-284.

¹⁹Diener, p. 9.

²⁰Diener, p. 10.

of upper high school and lower college years," individuals, such as Koos and Zook.²¹ However, after World War II,

Neither junior college leaders nor Office of Education officials debated in those terms again. The junior college in theory, as well as practice, was moving in the realm of higher education.²²

Despite this suggestion that junior/community colleges were generally perceived as being part of higher education, the debate continued because the comprehensive nature of junior/community colleges became more pronounced after the war as these institutions began to perform functions previously performed by high schools, such as vocational, adult, and remedial education. The debate has been exacerbated as universities attempted to decrease their responsibilities in some of these areas as a means of cutting costs and/or using resources more efficiently.

The idea for the junior college emerged as an alternative institutional structure within the educational system in the nineteenth and early twentieth century because the division between secondary and higher education was not clearly defined. As a result educators searched for solutions that would overcome that problem. They relied not only on their experiences in the United States but on their knowledge of

²¹Diener, p. 10.

²²Diener, p. 11.

educational systems overseas, particularly in Germany and France. American educators, such as Tappan, Folwell, Harper, Jesse, Lange, Jordan, Eells, Koos, and Zook identified a need to create a separate institution within the American educational system, although there was disagreement as to whether the junior/community college was an extension of the high school or an integral part of higher education. The expanding functions of the junior/community college made it even more difficult to develop a consensus on this issue.

The Changing Functions of the Junior/Community College

The function of the junior/community college and the services it performs has changed since the idea for the junior college emerged and that idea was transformed into the concept of the community college. Since the impetus for the junior/community college was the perceived need to move the first two years of collegiate study into the secondary school system, the initial orientation of the junior colleges was the transfer function or professional and preprofessional training. As the junior/community college expanded across the United States and increased in size and numbers, so the functions expanded as well.

Cohen and Brawer suggested numerous reasons for the

changing functions of the junior/community college.²³ "The demystification of higher education, occasioned by the democratization of access" has changed substantially not only the numbers of students attending higher education but also the composition of the student body. Ethnic and racial minorities, the poor, and the academically marginal student enrolled.²⁴ Junior/community colleges provided a means of upward mobility and the focus turned to vocationalism. Financial support, specifically the increase in federal aid, influenced and altered the purposes of these colleges as did state-level coordinating boards as they tried to assign role and mission to the component parts of higher education. By the 1980s, these colleges were performing many functions, including the transfer function, vocational and technical education, adult education, remedial education and community service.

Eells discussed the four most commonly recognized functions of the junior/community college: popularizing, preparatory, terminal, and guidance.²⁵ The popularizing

²³Arthur M. Cohen and Florence B. Brawer, The American Community College (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing, 1982), pp. 19-23.

²⁴Cohen and Brawer, p. 19.

²⁵Walter C. Eells, Why Junior College Terminal Education? (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Junior Colleges, 1941), pp. 3-5.

function extended general education to high school graduates and members of the community who could not attend college because of distance and expense. The preparatory or transfer function provided the first two years of higher education for those who planned to specialize at a university. Terminal education prepared students for jobs in specific occupations or gave general education to those who did not plan to continue their formal education beyond the two years at a junior college, while the guidance function focused on the welfare of the individual student.

While the functions of the junior/community college were perceived by some as very broad and all inclusive, George Vaughan described the original function of these institutions.

Before 1930 the 'junior college' function was mainly academic and the primary purpose of public and private two year colleges was generally seen as providing the first two years of the baccalaureate degree. By the 1930s occupational-technical education had also become a permanent and major component of the community college curriculum.²⁶

Thus early in its evolution the junior/community college changed from primarily providing arts and sciences offerings to providing a more comprehensive curricula with the addition of vocational and technical classes in the 1930s.

²⁶George B. Vaughan, The Community College in America: A Short History Revised (ERIC Document Reproduction Service ED 255 267, 1985), p. 7.

Johnson also identified the importance of the addition of vocational and technical offerings and concluded that it was perhaps the most significant change of the 1930s.²⁷ By 1930 the offerings in the junior colleges were primarily designed for transfer students, but the addition of vocational technical education had been accepted by the junior college movement as a whole. In addition, he noticed that during this period of time the number of adult education programs increased. Thus as junior colleges assumed a responsibility for vocational technical and adult education, a more comprehensive college emerged. But in some instances

many of our present community colleges have grown out of schools and institutions originally established solely for vocational and adult education . . . it clearly demonstrates the close connection between vocational and adult education and the community serving institution.²⁸

The two-year postsecondary colleges changed as colleges which began by providing primarily vocational and adult education courses added arts and sciences offerings. Vocational and adult education offerings were added to colleges whose primary offerings had been arts and sciences, resulting in

²⁷Max R. Johnson, "A History of the Public Two-Year College Movement in Iowa: 1918-1965" (Ed.D. dissertation, Colorado State College, 1967), p. 183.

²⁸Tyrus Hillway, as cited by Max R. Johnson in "A History of the Public Two-Year College Movement in Iowa: 1918-1965" (Ed.D. dissertation, Colorado State College, 1967, p. 186.

more comprehensive institutions. As the types of institutions changed, their basic functions or purposes also changed in response to the need to better define their roles and distinguish between secondary and higher education.²⁹ The junior/community college's primary purpose was to overcome the gap between secondary and university education.

A major stimulus for changing the functions of the junior/community college after World War II was the Report of the President's Commission on Higher Education. It called for the establishment of locally governed 'community colleges' that fit within a comprehensive statewide system of higher education.

Whatever form the community college takes, its purpose is educational service to the entire community, and this purpose requires a variety of functions and programs. . . . It will attempt to meet the total post-high school needs of its community.³⁰

The national government identified the function of the junior/community college to be educational service to the entire community including transfer course offerings, vocational technical offerings, adult education programs, and educational needs beyond the secondary level.

²⁹Brown and Mayhew, p. 35.

³⁰President's Commission on Higher Education, Higher Education for American Democracy (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, December 1947), vol. I, p. 67.

Although opinions vary as to the proper role of the junior/community college, they generally have been established for the following purposes:

1. to present the first two years of college level studies, upon the completion of which students may transfer to a four year institution;
2. to provide technical-vocational terminal programs of such quality that students will be prepared to enter a vocation upon completing their schooling;
3. to provide the general education needed by all students regardless of the focus of their academic work;
4. to provide adult education in vocational, avocational, and liberal courses; and
5. to serve as a cultural center for the supporting community.³¹

Many educators have supported this comprehensive view, including Koos, Eells, Medsker, and Gleazer.³² In addition the American Association of Junior Colleges has supported this evolution of the junior colleges into comprehensive community colleges.

The junior/community colleges began primarily as transfer institutions, but in the late twenties and early thirties a more comprehensive view developed as vocational-technical and adult education courses became an integral part of many

³¹Brown and Mayhew, pp. 36-37.

³²Brown and Mayhew, pp. 36-37.

junior/community college's offerings. Some institutions that had essentially provided vocational or technical education began to offer college parallel classes. After World War II the national government encouraged the comprehensive development of the junior/community colleges by raising expectations as to what these institutions should be providing to the community. In the 1980s the comprehensive community colleges have been challenged to meet the educational needs of the entire community which may include quality transfer offerings, vocational-technical programs, general education, adult education, economic development, and to serve as a focal point for the local community. Thus as the functions of the junior/community colleges changed so did the need for more institutions close to the citizenry and consequently the number of institutions and the number of students served increased.

Growth in Numbers and Students

The growth of the junior/community college, both in number of institutions and number of students, has been almost uninterrupted since the 1920s. From approximately 207 two-year colleges (both public and private) with an enrollment of about 16,000 in 1921, junior/community colleges grew to 1,231 institutions with enrollments of almost five million in

1980.³³ The percentage of public two-year colleges increased from 34 percent in 1920 to 85 percent in 1980. The growth occurred because of the increased demands society placed on public education, the efforts of some universities to establish feeder institutions, the post-war baby boom, and the emphasis on economic development.³⁴

Several sources provided opportunities to study the changes in the number of junior/community colleges and changes in the numbers of students. McDowell, Koos, and Eells have provided substantial amounts of information regarding the growth of the junior/community colleges in the early years, and the "Directory of the Junior College" either as found in the Junior College Journal or as published separately since 1960.

Despite the early efforts of the University of Chicago and the University California to develop the junior college in 1892, the junior college movement experienced very little growth over the next fifteen years.³⁵ Although in 1901, a public junior college was founded in Joliet, Illinois, and continues to this day as the oldest continuous public junior college in America, the passage of legislation legalizing the

³³Cohen and Brawer, p. 10.

³⁴Cohen and Brawer, p. 2.

³⁵McDowell, p. 41.

junior colleges as an extension of the high schools in California in 1907, stimulated the growth of junior colleges.³⁶

McDowell discovered that during the period between 1907 and 1917, the total number of junior colleges in operation increased each year. With the exception of one year at least two new junior colleges were begun each year during that period.³⁷ By 1917 39 public and 93 private junior colleges existed. In about the same time frame, 1909-1920, the college age population increased about 600,000, and the percentage of those attending higher education rose from 1.9 percent, approximately 350,000 students, to 3.1 percent or a little over 580,000 students.³⁸

The junior college enrollments continued to grow throughout the twenties as more people attended and graduated from high school and a more literate population was needed by an industrializing society.³⁹ The number of junior colleges more than doubled during the twenties and enrollment more than quadrupled. The number of junior colleges increased from 207 (70 public and 137 private) in 1921-1922 to 436 (178 public

³⁶McDowell, p. 41.

³⁷McDowell, p. 40.

³⁸Cohen and Brawer, p. 30.

³⁹Johnson, p. 67.

and 258 private) in 1929-1930, while the enrollments increased from 16,031 in 1921-1922 to 74,088 in 1929-1930, representing an increase in the percentage enrolled in public junior colleges from 52 percent to 61 percent.⁴⁰

Although junior colleges were also affected by the Great Depression they continued to grow, as "a number of states recognized the need to provide higher education for the jobless yet able high school graduates."⁴¹ Many young people had stayed home rather than move across the country to seek jobs. Consequently, the junior colleges were helped as much by the depression as they were hurt.⁴² During most of this period the number of junior colleges and students increased. In 1930-1931 there were 436 public and private junior colleges with 74,088 students.⁴³ By 1940-1941 these numbers had grown to 610 institutions serving 236,162 students.⁴⁴ There were of

⁴⁰Edmund J. Gleazer, Jr., "Analysis of Junior College Growth," The Junior College Journal 10 (February, 1960):353.

⁴¹Diener, p. 5.

⁴²Johnson, p. 177.

⁴³"Directories of the Junior College," The Junior College Journal 2 (January, 1931):223.

⁴⁴"Directories of the Junior College," The Junior College Journal 12 (January, 1942):279.

course fluctuations during this period, with the number of colleges decreasing in the 1935-1936 year and the number of students enrolled showing a slight decrease in 1932-1933. Otherwise, every other year showed an increase from the previous year in both the number of institutions and the number of students enrolled.

During the war years (World War II and the Korean Conflict, 1941-1955) the number of junior colleges declined but total enrollments more than doubled.⁴⁵ In 1941-1942 there were 624 junior colleges, which declined to a low of 584 in 1943-1944, and enrollments fell from 314,349 in 1941-1942 to 249,788 in 1943-1944 as individuals entered the armed forces or opted to work on war-related projects.⁴⁶

Following World War II the number of colleges increased to a high of 663 in 1946-1947, while student enrollments almost doubled to 455,048 that same year.⁴⁷ The onset of the Korean conflict marked the beginning of a decline in the number of colleges to 595 in 1951-1952, but saw a substantial increase in the number of students enrolled, up to 696,321 in 1954-1955.⁴⁸ The fluctuations in student enrollments were

⁴⁵Johnson, p. 310.

⁴⁶Johnson, p. 310.

⁴⁷Johnson, p. 310.

⁴⁸Johnson, p. 310.

directly attributable to returning servicemen entering the junior colleges and the involvement of the national government in providing educational opportunities for these veterans. The growth experienced by the junior/community colleges from the 1920s to the 1940s was thus for reasons other than to provide relief for the universities. Some four-year schools became junior/community colleges to survive, others created junior/community college appendages to stay open and some technical schools converted to junior/community colleges.⁴⁹

The junior colleges continued to increase in the 1960s expanding from 635 institutions in 1955 to 771 in 1965 and enrollments grew from 765,551 in 1955 to almost 1.3 million in 1965.⁵⁰ By 1981 there were 1,231 institutions, eighty-five percent of them public, with enrollments nearing five million.⁵¹

Throughout most of the twentieth century the number of junior/community colleges increased as did the number of students attending those institutions. The increases were attributable to a variety of reasons: increased numbers of high school graduates, increased demand for individuals with education beyond high school, increased state and federal

⁴⁹Brown and Mayhew, pp. 36-37.

⁵⁰Johnson, p. 496.

⁵¹Cohen and Brawer, pp. 10-11.

involvement particularly funding, the creation of feeder institutions by some colleges, and the increased demand for vocational-technical skills. From about 207 institutions with sixteen thousand students in 1921 the junior/community colleges grew to over one thousand two hundred colleges serving almost five million students and providing many services to the community. A major force in the growth and support of the junior/community college was the legitimization of these institutions through state legislation and the creation of statewide systems with increased financial support.

The Legalization of the Junior/Community College

The legalization of public junior/community colleges and subsequent provisions for financial support and governmental control began in 1907. California passed legislation that permitted high school districts to provide courses beyond those offered in the high schools. Since then states have developed their own laws governing public two-year colleges, how they are financed, and what position they hold in the educational system. In the process, the states have become increasingly more involved in the establishment, financing, and control of these colleges. Thus by 1980, all states had some type of legislation establishing a legal foundation for

junior/community colleges.⁵²

The legislation not only gave these colleges a legal foundation but in varying ways described the type of financial support, if any, that was permitted. It also described the role junior/community colleges were to fulfill within the state educational system. The evolution of the enabling legislation and provisions for the financial support and development of community and junior colleges was not well planned.

California's 1907 legislation, which permitted high schools to offer grade 13 and 14 coursework, did not mention the term community or junior college. It was not until the legislation of Kansas and Michigan in 1917 that other states began to establish a legal basis for junior colleges. Their legislation provided for courses which were viewed as an extension of high school and academic in nature.⁵³ During the 1920s, seven states added similar legislation: Mississippi (1922), Minnesota (1925), Arizona (1927), Iowa (1927), Missouri (1927), Louisiana (1928), and Texas (1929). In addition, California in 1917 and 1921 and Mississippi in 1928 enacted legislation which provided for vocational and

⁵²Cohen and Brawer, p. 5.

⁵³Frederick R. Struther, "The Development of Community Junior College Legislation in the United States to 1961" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1963), p. 274.

technical courses in junior colleges as well as the academic ones.³⁴ By the end of the decade, ten states had enacted general legislation pertaining to the establishment of junior/community colleges, all but two of them emphasized the transfer function.

Although the state legislatures used various approaches, a pattern of financial assistance and control emerged during the twenties. The state legislatures which enacted general legislation usually did not provide financial assistance. In some instances these junior/community colleges--considered extensions of the high schools--received funds on the same basis as the high schools. However, in seven of the ten states with general legislation (Arizona, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Missouri) no special provisions for state aid existed. In addition, the legislation usually gave control over the accreditation of courses and the establishment of standards to the state department of education or its superintendent. The actual operation of the college was often left to the local sponsor. Thus funding was generally done at the local level through a limited mill levy or tuition, while control rested in the department of education at the state level.

Beginning in 1930 and until the United States entry into

³⁴Struther, p. 275.

World War II, the number of states providing a legislative foundation for junior/community colleges nearly doubled. The states of North Dakota (1931), South Carolina (1935), Kentucky (1936), Illinois (1937), Florida (1939), Montana (1939), and Oklahoma (1939) created institutions that provided for the establishment of colleges that primarily served the academic function, while the legislatures of Nebraska (1931), Colorado (1937), Idaho (1939), and Washington (1941) created two-year institutions that were more comprehensive by providing for course work equivalent to the first two years of college as well as vocational and/or technical work.

Clement and Smith suggested that the decline in interest during the early part of the 1930s occurred due to the worsening economic conditions and the belief that specific legislation was unnecessary.²⁵ They noted a lack of uniformity in the legislation and identified four tendencies. First, legislation became more detailed as the states exerted more control over the institutions by setting specific minimum requirements for organization and maintenance. Second, there was a tendency to specify the state department of education as the agency with authority to approve, standardize, and supervise the junior colleges. Third, the universities

²⁵J. A. Clement and Vivian T. Smith, "Public Junior College Legislation in the United States," Bureau of Educational Research Bulletin, no. 61 (1932), pp. 23-27.

determined standards and accredited the colleges. And fourth, junior/community colleges were patterned after four-year colleges but the statutes treated them as part of the secondary system.

The increased legislative activity beginning in 1935 reflected the impact of the economic depression as towns and communities struggled to train local people who were out of work and to keep them in the community. The closer the educational opportunity, the more likely was the individual to stay at home. In addition as the decade of the thirties neared an end, the national government became more and more involved in promoting vocational and/or technical education through a variety of legislative acts which encouraged the creation and expansion of the vocational-technical education. Another factor was the developing international crisis which required that the United States have better trained citizens for war time production. Thus by the end of World War II twenty-two states had general junior college legislation.⁵⁶

The general legislation enacted by states included minimum requirements for the establishment of public junior colleges, procedures to do so, the types of support, provisions for governance, academic standards, and provisions

⁵⁶Charles Wesley Simms, The Present Legal Status of the Public Junior College (Nashville, Tennessee: George Peabody College for Teachers, 1948), p. 16.

concerned with the tenure and retirement of junior college faculty. Simms noted that general junior college legislation varied from state to state.⁵⁷ He found however, that 19 of 22 states with such legislation established population requirements, 8 of 22 had minimum tax valuation requirements, and 10 of 22 had some type of minimum student enrollment required.

Although the pace of legislative enactment slowed after World War II when compared to that of the 1930s, state legislatures continued to provide the necessary legislation for the creation of junior/community colleges. According to Struther, by 1962 thirty-three states had enacted legislation creating these institutions. He concluded

that courses began as academic offerings, expanded to include technical and vocational offerings and later included other functions. The authorization to offer comprehensive courses and other functions did not imply state support for such activities.⁵⁸

Conceptually then, these colleges changed from predominately arts and sciences or college transfer programs to include vocational-technical education as well as adult education, generally without additional financial support.

As the legislatures expanded the role of the junior/community college, they increased state aid and exerted

⁵⁷Struther, pp. 14-26.

⁵⁸Struther, p. 276.

greater state control.⁵⁹ According to Gleazer, 28 states provided some form of state aid by 1963 for support of current operations and 14 provided financing for capital construction.⁶⁰ The trend in terms of financing was away from local aid and toward significant state aid. According to Cohen and Brawer 94 percent of the income for public two-year colleges in 1918 was local aid, tuition and fees provided 6 percent, while there was no state aid.⁶¹ By 1950, the percent of local aid had dropped to 49 percent, tuition accounted for 9 percent and state aid had increased to 26 percent. By 1980 state aid accounted for 60 percent of the income for two-year colleges, tuition and fees 15 percent, and local aid 11 percent.

The California legislature enacted the first general junior/community college legislation in 1907. Since that time the rest of the state legislatures have also enacted legislation providing for the establishment, control, and financing of these institutions. Three trends were discovered. First, while the initial legislation tended to provide for the offering of college transfer courses, the curricula of the two-year colleges became increasingly more

⁵⁹Struther, p. 289.

⁶⁰Gleazer, p. 353.

⁶¹Cohen and Brawer, p. 129.

comprehensive as vocational, technical, and adult education were added to the available courses, as well as the general direction of providing community services. Second, financial support moved significantly from local resources to state support, and to a lesser degree, national aid. And third, a tendency to centralize the control of the junior/community colleges as more and more responsibilities for the governance of curricula, organization, and taxation were placed in the hands of state agencies, specifically, the departments of education or the superintendent of that agency. Both growth and change became significant elements in the evolution of the junior/community college.

Chapter Summary

The junior/community college evolved in Nebraska from several junior colleges offering basic college transfer and preprofessional programs into a statewide system of public two-year colleges providing a comprehensive program of college transfer, vocational-technical, and adult education, as well as community based services. The number of students served and the number of institutions providing this education has also grown substantially. The changes in functions and numbers of students and institutions began when the first junior college was established in McCook, Nebraska, and

continued with passage of legislation in 1931 providing a legal foundation for the junior college within the state. These changes did not occur in a vacuum, but have been influenced by changes outside the borders of the state. This chapter reviewed the development of the junior/community college concept and then examined three areas of change experienced by those colleges nationally since the first piece of legislation was enacted in California in 1907. The purpose of this chapter was to identify trends in these three areas of change in order to put the changes which have occurred in Nebraska in historical perspective.

The idea of a junior/community college emerged because of the difficulty some American educators had with the vagueness created when they tried to distinguish between upper secondary and higher education. Some perceived the first two years of an American college to be an extension of the high school, while others believed them to be part of higher education. In an effort to respond to this situation the junior/community college emerged. Although the debate has not stopped the trend discovered in this study suggested that the junior/community colleges were initially seen as part of secondary education but by the end of World War II they were generally perceived as part of higher education.

The first area of change examined in this chapter

involved the changing functions of junior/community colleges. While they began as primarily college transfer institutions, they soon began to add functions. By the 1930s vocational and technical programs had been added as well as some adult education. After World War II they became more comprehensive by responding more and more to community needs. The trend has been toward expansion of offerings and functions.

The second area of change examined was the change in numbers of students and numbers of institutions classified as junior/community colleges. These colleges have increased in enrollments and numbers of colleges almost without interruption since 1907. Despite, or because of, economic, political, and social change students in increasing numbers and from diverse backgrounds have enrolled in these institutions. To provide the access demanded government created more and more colleges. From a few colleges serving several thousand students the junior/community colleges have grown into over twelve hundred colleges serving almost 5,000,000 students. The trend generally has been continuous growth at least through the early eighties.

The third area of change studied in this chapter was the addition of general legislation to provide the legal support for the junior/community colleges. From 1907 to 1920, only three states had enacted such legislation, but by 1931, ten

additional states had provided this legal foundation. By the end of World War II twenty-two states had such legal provisions, by 1962 thirty-five, and by 1980 almost all states had some type of legislation relative to these colleges.

The idea grew out of the need to solve the problem of the division between secondary education and the first two years of American higher education. Once the idea was formulated into the concept of the junior/community college the functions it performed grew. As the functions grew, it attracted more and more students from diverse backgrounds. This created legislative support for what is commonly called the comprehensive community college, a two-year postsecondary college providing programs, courses and services to meet community needs.

CHAPTER IV.

THE JUNIOR COLLEGE AND THE STATE TRADE SCHOOL:

1925-1941

During the period between World War I and America's entry into World War II, the junior college movement expanded in numbers of institutions, enrollments, and course offerings. This growth was in response to significant social, economic, political, and educational change. Eells described the twenty years following World War I as a bloodless revolution in which men and women could not find their places in the world of politics, commerce, industry, war, and home.¹ This revolution included rapid industrialization, mechanization of agriculture, increased access to public education, changed population patterns, and the drive for social and economic equality. These factors influenced the evolution of the junior colleges, their growth, and the adoption of legislation establishing their legal bases.

Changes in Nebraska and the nation prior to World War II influenced junior college and trade school legislative initiatives and created a need for expanded educational opportunities. There was a "recognition of the ever growing demand for advanced training by groups of young men and women

¹Walter C. Eells, Why Junior College Terminal Education? (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Junior Colleges, 1941), p. vii.

who can not bear the expense of leaving the home community to obtain this education."² Educational systems, as social institutions, often reflect changing societal conditions. The junior college, as a publicly-supported postsecondary educational institution, provided educational opportunity for students not provided by other institutions of higher education or not provided in the same manner. But advocates of junior college education needed public support to obtain a legislative basis for them. In 1931 the Nebraska legislature established a legal foundation for several locally controlled and financed public junior colleges and in 1941 created one state supported and controlled trade school.

The McCook School Board authorized the first Nebraska public junior college in December 1925. The board established a junior college as an extension of and supported by the public school system. There was no legal basis for junior colleges at the time. While efforts to legalize the public junior college had begun before the McCook Junior College held its first classes in September 1926, attempts to pass the legislation authorizing the establishment of junior colleges failed in 1927 and 1929 before gaining approval in 1931. The 1931 law created the junior college as part of the

²Malcolm A. Love, "The Iowa Public Junior College: Its Academic, Social, and Vocational Effectiveness," Iowa Studies in Education 10 (May 1938):6.

secondary school system, governed by the local public school board and superintendent.

The effort to establish a vocational trade school in Nebraska began in 1937 through the introduction of legislation which provided for a state trade school in Broken Bow. The legislative proposal passed, but the governor vetoed it. The issue came before the legislature again in 1939 and was indefinitely postponed. In 1941 legislation was introduced to establish a state trade school in Milford. The law as enacted and signed by the governor, provided that a state vocational board, an arm of the Department of Education, governed the institution and that state funds were used to begin and operate the school. Thus by the time the United States officially entered World War II, Nebraska had legally provided for locally controlled and operated junior colleges and one state controlled trade school.

This chapter examines the effort in Nebraska to create postsecondary educational opportunities and to establish a legal foundation for junior colleges and a state trade school. These were the beginnings of a statewide system of technical community colleges. The major economic, social, political, and educational changes which occurred during the years between World War I and World War II in Nebraska and the nation, and their impact on junior and technical college

legislation, are examined. Arguments for and against the legislative proposals are presented, groups and individuals significant in the process identified, and debate issues examined. Many factors, including changes in secondary school attendance, shifts in population from rural to urban, the economic distress of the Great Depression, and the increased political power of Nebraska's two largest counties (Douglas and Lancaster) influenced the adoption of legislation in 1931 creating a legal foundation for junior colleges and the creation of a state trade school in 1941.

Social, Economic, and Political Changes Between World War I and World War II

The decades of the 1920s and 1930s represented periods of substantial change in American society. New technologies were developed or improved.²³ The computer, airplanes, radar, sonar, and plastics were in their infancy. Radio changed the marketing of products, while the development of trucks and buses changed their delivery. The multi-purpose tractor, hybrids, new insecticides and herbicides, and rural electrification influenced the development of agriculture. The dominant Republican party of the 1920s gave way to the New

²³Alan I. Marcus and Howard P. Segal, Technology in America: A Brief History (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1989), pp. 257-309.

Dealism of Franklin Roosevelt and the Democrats in the 1930s. The result was the expansion of government responsibilities and involvement in almost all aspects of American life, including education. Prior to this transition in political power the stock market crash in October 1929 signaled economic and social change. The Great Depression was not just a financial or economic crisis, but rather was a "manifestation of a veritable social revolution" including: rebellion against government, the loss of power by age-old social institutions (such as the church and home), and lack of respect for the law.⁴ This social revolution, combined with changes in the economic and political structure of American society, influenced the evolution of American education.

The social and economic changes in the first third of the twentieth century transformed American urban schools as state authority over education increased, justified by the need to create good citizenship. Because of the growth of industrial capitalism, the educational system equated good citizenship with the efficient operation of a modern economic system.⁵

⁴Fred J. Kelly, "Higher Education Meeting the Depression," Junior College Journal 3 (May 1933):420-425.

⁵Paul C. Violas, The Training of the Urban Working Class (Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Company, 1978), pp. 229-236.

As a result an objective of the educational system became the development of vocational training and guidance programs to create productive workers for an industrial society.⁶ This transformation in turn affected the growth of junior colleges. Although the early junior colleges generally were established to provide college transfer and preprofessional education, the importance of terminal or vocational education had been recognized nationally in the 1920s.

The terminal function of junior college education was

the function of giving specific preparation along vocational lines for occupations on the semiprofessional and other levels which will qualify students who finish them for immediate places in specific occupations; and of giving general education for citizenship and for life to other students who cannot continue their formal education beyond the junior college.⁷

Eells, who chronicled the changes in junior college education in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, suggested that terminal education included three elements. First, education "designed to prepare students for social citizenship and for individual happiness," or general education.⁸ Second, semiprofessional education requiring about two years of

⁶Violas, p. 230.

⁷Eells, Why Junior College Terminal Education?, p. 4.

⁸Eells, Why Junior College Terminal Education?, p. 1.

preparation halfway between a trade and a profession. And third, "other types of vocational education, designed to prepare students for economic independence."⁹ He supported the concept of a junior college providing both a general education and one which prepared an individual to learn to earn a living, viewing these two as complementary. Thus in the period before World War II, the nation was faced with

a new awakening to the effect that below the strictly professional we have the semi-professional and skilled occupations which demand education adapted to that large mass of American People who are not going to be the scholars, but rather the workers in their respective fields.¹⁰

Educators thus became more aware of the need for terminal or vocational instruction. That coupled with a commitment to compulsory education, or state laws requiring school attendance up to a certain age, generated new programs for an increasing number of students.

The effect of compulsory education on the development of the junior/community college had been profound. According to Eells, between 1900 and 1940 compulsory education laws changed markedly and kept young people in school longer.¹¹ By 1915, 29 states required school attendance to at least age sixteen,

⁹Eells, Why Junior College Terminal Education?, p. 1.

¹⁰Carl E. Seashore, The Junior College Movement (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1940), pp. 5-6.

¹¹Eells, Why Junior College Terminal Education?, p. 41.

and by 1940, 44 states had such requirements covering approximately 90 percent of the population. Nebraska was one of those states requiring compulsory education, and did so as early as 1891.¹² Consequently there was a noticeable increase in secondary school enrollments. As Table 1 indicates there had been a steady increase in the school enrollments, as a percentage of 14 to 17 year old individuals.¹³ The percentage of Nebraska's secondary school enrollment generally exceeded that of the nation. Because compulsory education required individuals to attend secondary school longer, it thus increased the probability of higher secondary school attendance and graduation rates and potentially prepared more students to enter junior colleges.¹⁴

The number of students enrolled in secondary schools and who graduated had increased significantly before World War II. From 1880 to 1940 secondary school enrollments increased 4,000 percent, but the population as a whole increased only

¹²James C. Olson, History of Nebraska (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 345.

¹³Bureau of the Census, "Abstract of the Fifteenth Census of the United States," (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1933), pp. 266-267; Bureau of the Census, "Sixteenth Census of the United States," (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), vol. II, part 1, pp. 33-34, and vol. II, Part 4, pp. 593-594.

¹⁴Eells, Why Junior College Terminal Education?, p. 43.

Table 1. School Enrollment by Age for the United States and Nebraska: 1920, 1930, and 1940

The United States						
School Enrollment by Age	1920		1930		1940	
	Number Attending	%	Number Attending	%	Number Attending	%
14 to 15	3,124,129	(79.9)	4,156,378	(88.8)	4,347,665	(90.0)
16 to 17	1,644,061	(42.9)	2,669,857	(57.3)	3,361,266	(68.7)

Nebraska						
School Enrollment by Age	1920		1930		1940	
	Number Attending	%	Number Attending	%	Number Attending	%
14 to 15	43,315	(86.0)	48,300	(91.1)	44,756	(91.5)
16 to 17	23,830	(49.7)	33,995	(63.2)	37,475	(73.7)

Source: 1930 and 1940 United States Census

150 percent.¹⁵ The number of secondary school graduates had increased substantially since 1890, almost doubling each decade from 1890 to 1940.¹⁶ The number of graduates had risen from 44,000 to over 1,200,000 during the same period. The 1940 census provided the first data on the educational attainment of individuals; it reported that 14.1 percent, or over 10,500,000 persons twenty-five years of age or older, had

¹⁵Seashore, p. 3.

¹⁶Eells, Why Junior College Terminal Education?, p. 46.

completed four years of high school.¹⁷ In Nebraska 17.1 percent of these individuals had completed high school.¹⁸

During the 1920s and 1930s secondary school enrollment, both nationally and in Nebraska, increased numerically and as a percentage of the total number of those attending. This was partially the result of the enactment of compulsory education laws. As graduation rates for the nation increased, the pool of potential junior college or trade school students expanded and increased the demand for and the support of legislation establishing such institutions. But in addition to changes in educational status other factors affected the effort to create a legal basis for junior colleges and trade schools.

One of the factors affecting the creation of a legal basis for junior colleges and trade schools was a decline in the use of child labor. Because of enlightened public opinion, changed economic conditions, and restrictive legislation the national child labor rate of 4.7 percent and the Nebraska rate of 2.0 percent in 1930 had been reduced to near zero in 1940.¹⁹ The use of child labor was not as

¹⁷Bureau of the Census, "Sixteenth Census of the United States," (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), vol. II, part 1, p. 11.

¹⁸Sixteenth Census of the United States, 1940, Part 4, p. 599.

¹⁹Eells, Why Junior College Terminal Education?, p. 16.

extensive in Nebraska as in the United States as a whole and the practices had all but disappeared by 1940. It thereby increased the potential for junior college or trade school enrollments. Table 2 illustrates the decrease in child labor during the first part of the twentieth century.²⁰ Because of changes in the way data was collected in the 1940 census and because the amount of child labor was considered small, the amount of child labor found in 1940 was negligible.

Table 2. Percent Aged 10 to 15 Employed in the United States and Nebraska: 1910, 1920, 1930, and 1940

	United States				Nebraska			
	1910	1920	1930	1940	1910	1920	1930	1940
Boys	24.8	11.3	6.4	Neg.	14.8	5.5	3.4	Neg.
Girls	11.9	5.6	2.9	Neg.	2.0	1.2	0.5	Neg.
Average	18.4	8.5	4.7	Neg.	8.4	3.4	2.0	Neg.

Source: 1920, 1930, and 1940 United State Census; Eells, Why Junior College Terminal Education?

Changing population patterns also created the need for and support of junior colleges and trade schools. National

²⁰Bureau of the Census, "Abstract of the Fourteenth Census of the United States," (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1923), p. 537; Bureau of the Census, "Abstract of the Fifteenth Census of the United States," (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1933), pp. 368-369.

population continued to increase during the early part of the twentieth century, advancing from approximately 75 million in 1900 to over 131 million in 1940.²¹ During the same period, the population in Nebraska went from just over 1 million in 1900 to almost 1.4 million in 1930.²² Between 1920 and 1930 Nebraska's population increased 6.3 percent from 1,296,000 to 1,377,000. However the state lost population during the thirties with heavy emigration to other states. By 1940 its population dropped to approximately 1.3 million, a decline of 4.5 percent from the 1930 population.²³

In addition to the changing numbers in the population of the nation and Nebraska, there also was a realignment to urban from rural residence. The move from rural to urban areas was more pronounced in Nebraska than in the United States as a

²¹Bureau of the Census, "Abstract of the Fourteenth Census of the United States," (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1923), p. 18; Bureau of the Census, "Sixteenth Census of the United States," (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), vol. II, part 1, p. 18.

²²Bureau of the Census, "Abstract of the Fourteenth Census of the United States," (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1923), p. 18; Bureau of the Census, "Abstract of the Fifteenth Census of the United States," (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1933), p. 12.

²³Bureau of the Census, "Sixteenth Census of the United States," (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1943), vol. II, part 4, p. 483.

whole, reflective of the fact that the West had been more predominately urban.²⁴ The percent of urban population in the United States was 45.8 percent in 1910, 51.4 percent in 1920, 56.2 percent in 1930, and 56.5 percent in 1940.²⁵ For Nebraska the percent of urban population was 26.1 percent in 1910, 31.3 percent in 1920, 35.3 percent in 1930, and 39.1 percent in 1940. The growth in urban areas created a need for the development of skills essential in non-farm related jobs.

The development of new jobs skills was necessary because urbanization led to increased competition and created a new division of labor. This competition, mainly economic in nature, was "likely to be a struggle for livelihood rather than sheer survival. . . ." and created a disequilibrium.²⁶ A new equilibrium occurred later. But the 1920s and 1930s were not periods of stabilization and order, but rather a time of

²⁴Earl Pomeroy, The Pacific Slope (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), p. 6.

²⁵Bureau of the Census, "Abstract of the Fourteenth Census of the United States," (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1923), p. 585; Bureau of the Census, "Abstract of the Fifteenth Census of the United States," (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1933), p. 15; Bureau of the Census, "Sixteenth Census of the United States," (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1943, vol. II, part 1, p. 51.

²⁶William L. Kolb, "The Social Structure and Function of Cities," Economic Development and Cultural Change 3 (May 1954):31.

uncertainty, particularly economic uncertainty, and change.

During the period between World War I and World War II economic conditions varied throughout the country. The 1920s were perceived as a period of general prosperity. But Nebraska did not share in that prosperity. The

average farm price index in Nebraska from 1922 to 1929 was slightly less than thirty-five percent above the prewar level. During the same time, however, the wholesale price index averaged slightly more than forty-four percent above the prewar level. Another factor affecting the farmer's economic position . . . was the high tax schedule. . . . In 1927 the levy was 184 percent higher than that of 1913.²⁷

In addition to the relative decline in farm prices and higher taxes, net farm income during the 1920s averaged about \$1,795, compared to \$3,087 between 1914 and 1919, a drop of over forty percent.²⁸ While the United States appeared to be prosperous, Nebraska suffered depression in the 1920s. They

were years of depression rather than prosperity . . . (and) so weakened the states' economy that when the crash came in 1929, to be followed by drouth and deep depression in the early thirties the economy came closer to complete collapse. . . .²⁹

The twenties in Nebraska meant plunging farm prices, reduced income, foreclosures and bank failures.

²⁷Olson, p. 287.

²⁸Olson, p. 287.

²⁹Olson, p. 285.

The crash in 1929 created a precipitous drop in farm prices, increased unemployment, and increased state responsibilities. Since the junior colleges were dependent on local financial support, the economic distress reduced the willingness and ability of communities to support these institutions. As a result, staff was reduced, course offerings streamlined, and extracurricular activities curtailed.

The financial distress extended into and throughout the 1930s, exacerbated by severe drouth. In addition to a fifty percent decline in farm income, manufacturing levels fell, property valuation plummeted, and the need for public assistance programs increased. The Farm Credit Administration provided \$185 million through the Federal Land Bank of Omaha, the Farm Security Administration extended credit of over \$12 million to destitute farm families, public assisted amounted to over \$170 million between 1936 and 1942.³⁰

Despite the national government's programs to alleviate the problems of farm credit, farm debt, production controls, and unemployment,

one must come to the conclusion that all in all, though the disastrous depression of the early thirties had been turned back, Nebraska's economy throughout the decade was far from being prosperous

³⁰Olson, pp. 297-302.

--at least in terms of prosperity of pre-1929 years.³¹

During the thirties Nebraskans continued to experience declining income, increased unemployment, and decreased manufacturing. This in turn affected the source of revenue and the ability of the state to provide for its citizens.

Table 3 indicates the magnitude of the decline in total assessed valuation, changes in the mill levy, and their impact on state revenue.³² With the exception of small increases over the previous year in 1929, 1936, and 1939, the assessed valuation declined throughout the 1930s. From a high in 1926 to a low in 1940 the assessed valuation declined by 39.5 percent. Total assessed valuation did not exceed the 1926 level again until 1953 when it reached \$3,383,619,610. As a result of the decline in property valuation and changes in the mill levy, state revenue from the property tax, which was \$5,718,886 in 1926, fell to \$3,732,183 in 1936, and stood at \$5,751,790 in 1940.

The decline in farm income and manufacturing caused substantial reduction in revenue for the state since Nebraska did not have a sales or income tax and was almost totally dependent upon property taxes for its revenue. Consequently,

³¹Olson, p. 303.

³²Nebraska Blue Book 1986-1987 (Lincoln: Nebraska Legislative Council, 1987), p. 720.

Table 3. Total Assessed Valuation, Total Levy in Mills, and Total Amount of State Levy in Nebraska: 1926-1940

Year	Total Assessed Valuation	Total State Levy in Mills	Total Amount of State Levy
1926	3,177,159,318	1.80	5,718,886
1927	3,141,146,610	3.75	11,779,299
1928	3,125,855,462	2.06	6,439,262
1929	3,167,489,383	2.40	7,645,798
1930	3,102,050,571	2.34	7,258,798
1931	3,045,793,706	2.04	6,213,419
1932	2,521,000,981	2.37	5,974,772
1933	2,073,283,250	2.39	4,955,147
1934	2,059,678,928	2.10	4,424,207
1935	2,030,243,533	2.15	4,467,760
1936	2,060,835,168	1.76	3,732,183
1937	2,058,224,967	2.64	5,536,161
1938	2,033,302,482	2.68	6,213,375
1939	2,047,519,591	2.61	6,111,012
1940	1,922,271,788	2.57	5,751,790

Source: Nebraska Blue Book 1986-1987, p. 720

a fiscally conservative pay-as-you-go philosophy dominated state government throughout the 1930s. Between 1929 and 1934 state taxes were reduced 37 percent and property valuation dropped 35 percent.³³ At the same time, however, the state reduced its bonded indebtedness as did local subdivisions. Although the state government reduced expenditures for long established government services, its relief programs grew substantially after 1936 and as a result government

³³Nebraska Legislature, House of Representatives, Journal, 3 January 1935, p. 43.

expenditures and taxes had increased.³⁴ In fact to raise the same revenue in 1939, compared to 1929, would have required 50 percent more taxes.³⁵ As a result of declining farm income, population, and manufacturing the state proceeded during the period between World War I and World War II on a course of retrenchment and fiscal conservatism.

The fiscal conservatism and economic depression of the 1930s affected the development of the road system in Nebraska. Although \$10 billion was spent nationally to construct asphalt and concrete highways in the 1920s, Nebraskans were unwilling to go into debt or raise taxes to finance highway construction.³⁶ In fact, Nebraska and Florida were the only states in the 1920s which did not incur public debt for road construction. In 1922, the legislature passed a resolution against accepting federal-aid because the matching fund requirements resulted in property taxes that were too high. Although Nebraska did not cease participation in the federal highway program altogether, the state consistently failed to take full advantage of federal-aid throughout the 1920s and

³⁴Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 5 January 1939, p. 32.

³⁵Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 5 January 1939, p. 35.

³⁶George E. Koster, A Story of Highway Development in Nebraska (Lincoln: Nebraska Department of Roads, 1986), p. 22.

1930s. Seventy percent of the construction on the Nebraska highway system in the 1930s occurred during emergency federal funding. By 1940 the state maintained 9,000 miles of state highways: 4,784 miles were graveled, 3,804 hard-surfaced, and 412 dirt surfacing.³⁷

The economic depression of the 1920s and 1930s caused the Nebraska legislature to react cautiously to the demand for more and better roads. Because of the conservative fiscal policy Nebraska constructed highways with a smooth dirt surfacing and became a national leader in the construction of dirt highways.³⁸ However, by 1929 Nebraska ranked fourteenth nationally in terms of miles graveled or better. Most paved roads were in Omaha, Grand Island, or Lincoln.

The economic conditions of the twenties did not lessen Nebraskans preference for Republican candidates. In 1930 all state offices were filled by Republicans except the governorship. The Republican party retained control of both houses of the Nebraska legislature. But in 1932 the Democrats won almost all statewide elective offices and elected all but two members of the Nebraska Senate and seventeen members of the House of Representatives.³⁹ Support for the New Deal was

³⁷Koster, p. 43.

³⁸Marcus and Segal, p. 22.

³⁹Olson, p. 295.

strong in this traditionally Republican state throughout the mid-thirties, but by 1940 the voters had returned to their preference of electing Republicans. Thus during the volatile period between World War I and World War II, Nebraskans temporarily embraced the New Deal and the Democratic Party, but returned to the Republican Party which represented traditional conservative values of local control and decision making. Despite the trend toward local control, the legislature established a state controlled and financed trade school at Milford in 1941. They were motivated to do so because of the availability of state property and a need for vocational and technical education at the state and national level.

One preserving political accomplishment of the 1930s was the vote of the people of Nebraska to amend their state constitution to provide for a distinctive unicameral legislature. Prior to 1937, the Nebraska legislature had been a bicameral legislature elected on a partisan basis, consisting of a 100 members in the House and 33 members in the Senate. The constitutional change created a one-house legislature of not more than 50 nor less than 30 members and provided for nonpartisan elections.⁴⁰

⁴⁰Nebraska Blue Book 1986-1987 (Lincoln: Nebraska Legislative Council, 1987), pp. 97-138.

The Nebraska legislature accepted the idea of a one-house legislature in 1914 and it was the topic of much legislative discussion over the next 20 years.⁴¹ Not until 1934, however, did the proposition appear on the ballot.

Early in 1934, Senator George W. Norris, who at that time had served in Congress for more than thirty years and had only recently promoted administrative reform in Congress, assumed active leadership in promoting the new legislative system. This time the state was receptive. It was in the depths of the Great Depression, the dust was blowing, and the heat was rolling in; in times of drought and distress, the state seemed interested in innovations, as it had shown during the 1890s. The new system promised efficiency and, even better, economy in government; and the voters had faith in Norris.⁴²

As a result of the economic conditions and the active leadership of Senator Norris, the amendment was adopted. The 1935 legislature implemented the constitutional amendment, creating a legislature of 43 members and apportioned the state accordingly.

Proponents of the unicameral system suggested

that the new plan would eliminate delays and deadlocks incident to the procedure of a two-house body; that the higher salary and greater prestige attached to membership would attract a higher type of citizen; that the non-partisan ballot would

⁴¹Nebraska, A Guide to the Cornhusker State, Compiled and written by the Federal Writers' Project of the Works Progress Administration for the State of Nebraska (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), p. 70.

⁴²Dorothy Weyer Creigh, Nebraska (New York: Norton & Company, Inc., 1977), pp. 197-198.

reduce the element of politics to a minimum; and that the familiar practice of shifting responsibility from one house to another would be eliminated. They further contended that the new system would be more economical, since the aggregate of the salaries would be less than that formerly paid to 133 members, the mileage allowances lower by half, and the employees considerably fewer.⁴³

During a period of economic distress, Nebraska citizens were willing to experiment with change in order to make their government more efficient and economical. The change to a unicameral legislature altered the voting strength of different parts of the state.

The change to a unicameral system increased the voting strength of the two largest counties, Douglas (Omaha) and Lancaster (Lincoln). Under the bicameral system, representatives from these two counties had approximately 26 percent of the vote in the Senate, but only 19 percent in the House. Under the unicameral system, these two counties had a combined vote of a little over 23 percent (10 of 43). Thus the change to a unicameral legislature, motivated by a desire to have more efficient and economical government, increased the strength of the urban areas in the Nebraska legislature.

The social, political, and economic conditions in the 1920s and 1930s also lead to an expanded role in education for the national government, particularly in vocational education.

⁴³Nebraska, A Guide to the Cornhusker State, p. 72.

During the inter-war period Congress passed legislation which provided aid for vocational education and the training of individuals for the trades. The national government had become involved with vocational education with the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 which provided funds for states to promote and develop vocational programs primarily in secondary schools. In 1936, the George-Deen Act expanded programs covered and provided additional funding. The impetus for the expanding role of the national government in creating educational opportunities in vocational schools and training in skilled trades came from two areas: the need to put people back to work as well as the deteriorating and increasingly threatening international situation in the late 1930s. The international conflict required more vocational and trade training to meet the need for skilled workers in an expanding defense industry. The United States government cooperated with the states

to assist vocational schools to set up training for the aircraft industry, upgrade training in the skilled trades, and cooperate with the Labor and War Departments in an analysis of occupations in essential industries on which to base the training.⁴⁴

Although Americans generally preferred to let the Europeans

⁴⁴Bernard Gyger, "A History of Adult Education in the Omaha Public Schools. 1873-1946" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1975), p. 274.

settle their disputes, by 1940 the American government supported the British and their allies and began to prepare should conflict come. The bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 brought the United States directly into the international conflict.

While the drift toward international conflict affected Nebraska and its citizens, the primacy of agriculture conditioned their outlook.⁴⁵ Most of the immigrants to Nebraska were poor and had worked hard to pay off their farms. Because the farm economy was susceptible to wide price fluctuations and agriculture was not stable in the 1920s and 1930s, citizens were limited in their ability to support schools, churches, and other cultural areas. Despite the conditions created by the economic distress the state supported four state colleges and a university throughout this period of time.

The legislature established four institutions of higher education in addition to the university in Lincoln. These four were: Peru (1866) in extreme southeast Nebraska, Kearney (1905) in south central Nebraska, Wayne (1910) in northeast Nebraska, and Chadron (1911) in extreme northwest Nebraska. The location of these schools provided greater geographical opportunities for higher education within the

⁴⁵Olson, p. 341.

state. They began as two-year normal schools, but in 1921 the legislature authorized them to grant four-year degrees in education. Throughout the 1920s enrollments in the normal schools increased continuously and peaked in 1928 with a combined enrollment of 5779.⁴⁶ While enrollments declined after 1928, they remained relatively high and averaged 5550 total students per year between 1928 and 1938. Nebraskans generally supported funding for the four state colleges and the university. They recognized the commercial benefits a college brought to local communities and had a genuine desire to provide the opportunity for higher learning.⁴⁷ The interest in obtaining the commercial benefits and providing these educational opportunities lead to the establishment of the first public junior college in the state.

Significant economic, technological, demographic and political change in the United States and Nebraska in the 1920s and 1930s enhanced the desirability of postsecondary education as commercial/community betterment and as a means of providing educational opportunity. Industrial capitalism required a trained and productive work force. The move within states to enact legislation supporting compulsory education

⁴⁶Nebraska Blue Book (Lincoln: Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, 1938), pp. 244-247.

⁴⁷Nebraska Blue Book (Lincoln: Nebraska Legislative Reference Bureau, 1938), p. 345.

and the elimination of child labor increased secondary school enrollment, as did urbanization and the growth in population. The road system expanded and the surfacing of the roads improved. Declining income, depressed manufacturing markets, and the instability of agricultural markets weakened the ability of the state and local governments to meet educational needs. These economic, technological, demographic, and political changes provided the environmental setting in which McCook established the first public junior college in Nebraska in 1926 and the legislature legalized public junior colleges in 1931.

The First Public Junior College in Nebraska

The first public junior college in Nebraska began its operation in the city of McCook. McCook is located in the southwestern part of the state in Red Willow County, which borders Kansas and is relatively close to Colorado. The city's Board of Education authorized the junior college in December 1925, and it enrolled forty-five students in September 1926. The college provided an opportunity for advanced education at a low cost and enabled the extension of parental influence over young adults.⁴⁶

⁴⁶McCook Junior College Bulletin, cited by Theodore Easton, "The Development of Community Colleges in Nebraska" (Ed. D. thesis, University of Colorado, 1973), p. 21.

McCook became interested in establishing a junior college because of its isolation from the educational centers in Nebraska and the potential commercial benefits derived from a college. The closest state school was located in Kearney, approximately 75 miles northeast of McCook, while the University of Nebraska in Lincoln was about 200 miles east. Higher education was important to McCook because

McCook visualized itself as a commercial center for southwestern Nebraska. . . . A junior college was seen as an asset, as were the museum, public library, country club and the completion of rail and highway connections with Denver and Omaha.⁴⁹

This link between education and commercial interests was succinctly expressed by the Superintendent of the McCook Schools in his annual report in June 1925, when he wrote,

We believe it is a fine thing for the town commercially to encourage the students in McCook's trade territory to attend the McCook High School because if the children are in school here the parents will come to McCook twice each week to get them and bring them back again and will be apt to make McCook their trading point. . . . McCook is the trade center of Southwest Nebraska. We are ambitious to make it the educational center also.⁵⁰

Thus education and commerce, working together, sought to benefit the entire community.

⁴⁹James L. Ratcliff, "'First' Public Junior Colleges in an Age of Reform," The Journal of Higher Education 58 (March/April 1987):166.

⁵⁰"Superintendents Report for the School Year Ending June, 1925," McCook Public Schools, McCook, Nebraska, 1925, p. 39.

The junior college benefitted the entire community. In the American West, "every place that claimed the honors of a city set about justifying itself by seeking to conjure up suitable metropolitan institutions."⁵¹ This meant that communities sought newspapers, hotels, and colleges as a means of supporting their claims to be a city. "It was generally believed that one of the surest ways to promote the growth of a young city was to make it the seat of a college."⁵² McCook, desirous to promote itself as a trading center in southwest Nebraska, believed that a college would enhance its image and promote economic growth.

The catalyst for the junior college in McCook was C. H. Boyle, a McCook pioneer lawyer.⁵³ After returning from a vacation to California in 1925, Boyle called J. A. True, the superintendent of McCook public schools, and asked him to go for a ride in the country. He told True about the junior college movement which he had observed in California. Because of his interest in seeing a progressive and growing community in McCook, he believed that the city should start such an institution.

⁵¹Daniel J. Boorstin, The Americans: The National Experience (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 152.

⁵²Boorstin, p. 155.

⁵³Wendell Cheney. Interview with author. McCook, Nebraska, 20 August 1987.

True took the idea to the Board of Education which became enthusiastic about it, as did the entire community. The strongest support came from the Chamber of Commerce and the local service clubs.²⁴ The superintendent wrote in his report to the Board December 1, 1925:

The Plans for a Junior College in McCook has been discussed in various meetings of the community and has meet with almost universal approval. The idea has been unanimously endorsed by the Mothers' Club and the Chamber of Commerce. The Newspapers have been most liberal in giving wide publicity to letters which we have received from towns that now have a Junior College.²⁵

From the beginning, McCook Junior College was a community project. The concept received broad public support because it promised enhanced educational opportunities and increased the potential for further cultural and economic development of the area. This local support was translated into efforts to obtain legitimization at the state level.

To legitimize the junior colleges, two things were required. The credits earned at the junior college needed to be recognized as college-level by other institutions of higher education. The junior college organization, as part of the high school, also needed a legal basis upon which to operate. Two people instrumental in gaining recognition for credits

²⁴Cheney.

²⁵"Superintendent's Report," McCook Public Schools, McCook, Nebraska, 1 December 1925, p. 10.

awarded at McCook Junior College were A. A. Reed, Director of Extension at the University of Nebraska, and W. E. Sealock, Dean of the Teachers College of the University of Nebraska. Both favored the junior college concept and worked with Superintendent True to get the Board of Regents to recognize and accept credits from the proposed junior college. Upon their recommendation in May 1926 the Board of Regents approved an agreement that provided recognition of college courses carried in the McCook Junior College.⁵⁶ Credits would transfer to the University of Nebraska from the junior college if it used instructors and offered a curriculum recognized by the extension division of the university.

To secure the second requirement for legitimization, McCook took the lead in advocating state legislation for the junior college. Wendell Cheney, whose father was a member of the McCook school board, recalled that the board and Superintendent True were anxious to obtain state enabling legislation for the junior colleges. They sought legal standing because it enabled the school district to charge tuition and to establish the college as an entity separate from the high school.⁵⁷ Efforts to obtain the desired

⁵⁶Nebraska Board of Regents, "Minutes," 15 May 1926 (October 18, 1924-August 31, 1926, Part 2), p, 389.

⁵⁷Interview with Wendell Cheney.

legislation began in December, 1926.

Superintendent True met with delegates from North Platte, Norfolk, and Scottsbluff "for the purpose of discussing proposed legislation for junior colleges in Nebraska. . . and those present finally agreed to draft a bill of three sections."²⁸ The proposed piece of legislation would: 1) allow any school district with a population of 5,000 or more to organize a junior college, 2) permit the collection of tuition at said colleges, and (3) permit a tax levy for maintenance not to exceed three mills. In addition to these sections, a second bill was discussed that would ask the legislature to appropriate \$75,000 to those school districts maintaining a junior college "on the basis of one hundred twenty-five dollars for each full-time pupil enrolled."²⁹ Thus began about a five-year effort to educate the public about junior colleges and gain state legislative approval for junior colleges in Nebraska and give them legal standing.

House Role 351 (1927)

The initial attempt to establish a legal foundation for junior colleges in Nebraska occurred in 1927 when five state

²⁸"Superintendent's Report," McCook Public Schools, McCook, Nebraska, 4 January 1927, p. 11.

²⁹"Superintendent's Report," McCook Public Schools, McCook, Nebraska, 4 January 1927, p. 11.

representatives introduced a bill, House Roll 351 (HR 351), that provided for the establishment and maintenance of junior colleges. The proposal followed closely the legislation suggested at the meeting in December 1926 between interested persons from McCook, Norfolk, North Platte and Scottsbluff. It provided for "junior colleges in school districts of the state having a population of more than five thousand," granted authority to charge tuition, and established a local mill levy to maintain the colleges.⁶⁰ But the sponsors of the legislation were unable to obtain sufficient support for the bill and it was indefinitely postponed in a vote in the Committee of the Whole in the House.

The five legislators who introduced the legislation were: Carson Russell, a McCook lawyer and Republican; W. M. Barbour, a Scottsbluff Rancher and a Republican; H. Yensen, a Scottsbluff farmer and a Democrat; Thomas Axtell, a North Platte Engineer and a Democrat; and Henry Hansen, a North Platte rancher and a Republican.⁶¹ This bipartisan group represented areas and communities of western Nebraska which had expressed some interest in establishing junior colleges, lacked higher educational opportunities, and aspired to become

⁶⁰"Superintendent's Report," McCook Public Schools, McCook, Nebraska, 4 January 1927, p. 314.

⁶¹Nebraska Legislature, House of Representatives, Journal, 27 January 1927, pp. vi-xi.

commercial and educational centers of that part of the state. They saw the economic and educational benefits of a junior college for their communities.

After being introduced, House Roll 351 was sent to the House Education Committee on January 28, 1927. Members of that committee and the counties they represented were: Davis (Cass), Aurand (Merrick), Hovis (Dawson), Kendall (Dixon), Miner (Buffalo), Van Kirk (Lancaster), Wildman (York), Wilson (Dawes), Brown (Stanton), Landgren (Fillmore), and Pitney (Webster). Davis, Van Kirk, and Wildman represented counties near the University of Nebraska (Lancaster County), Wilson the county in which Chadron State College was located, while Brown came from the county adjacent to Wayne State College. Aurand represented a county in east central Nebraska, Hovis, south central Nebraska, and Kendall extreme northeast Nebraska. On March 4, after discussion and a public hearing, the Education Committee reported out House Roll 351 despite the fact that none of the sponsors were members of the Education Committee. The sponsors were unable to gain enough support in the entire House and on March 14, 1927, by a vote of 51 to 37 the bill was indefinitely postponed.⁶² Although there is no record of the vote taken in the House Education Committee, when the

⁶²Nebraska Legislature, House of Representative, Journal, 27 January 1927, p. 1006.

legislature voted to indefinitely postpone the legislation 6 members of the Education Committee voted against the proposal and 3 supported it. Table 4 indicates how each member of the House Education Committee voted. In total, 36 Republicans and 15 Democrats voted to indefinitely postpone the legislation while 24 Republicans and 13 Democrats voted to continue to consider the bill. Although discussion of the bill was not partisan in nature, sixty percent of the Republicans opposed it and the Democrats were fairly evenly divided. Since no companion bill had been introduced into

Table 4. House Education Committee Vote on HR 351

Name	County	Party	Vote
Davis	Cass	Republican	Against
Aurand	Merrick	Republican	For
Hovis	Dawson	Republican	For
Kendall	Dixon	Republican	For
Miner	Buffalo	Republican	Not voting
Van Kirk	Lancaster	Republican	Against
Wildman	York	Republican	Against
Wilson	Dawes	Republican	Against
Brown	Stanton	Democrat	Against
Landgren	Fillmore	Democrat	Not voting
Pitney	Webster	Democrat	Against

Source: Nebraska House of Representatives, Journal,
January 27, 1927

the Nebraska Senate, the initial legislative effort in 1927 to

legalize junior colleges failed.

An analysis of the vote indicates that support for House Role 351 came from legislators who represented extreme western and southwestern Nebraska, areas which included Scottsbluff, North Platte, and McCook; and from Madison County, which included Norfolk, and Adams County, which included Hastings. Although Hastings had its own college, the President of the college had supported the junior college concept in Nebraska.⁶³ None of these communities were close to public postsecondary educational institutions (Figure 1). Scottsbluff is within 30 miles of the Wyoming border, over 100 miles from the state normal school in Chadron, and over 400 miles from Lincoln, the location of the state university. McCook is 200 miles from Lincoln and 75 miles from Kearney, the location of another state normal school. North Platte is 50 miles from Kearney and 250 miles from Lincoln. Norfolk is 50 miles from the state normal school in Wayne and 200 miles from Lincoln, while Hastings is 50 miles from the state normal school in Kearney and 75 miles from Lincoln. As Representative Yensen of Scottsbluff argued, "the establishment of junior colleges would permit parents to watch over their children instead of sending them down here to run

⁶³"Junior College is Natural Development," McCook Daily Gazette, 8 December 1925, p. 1.

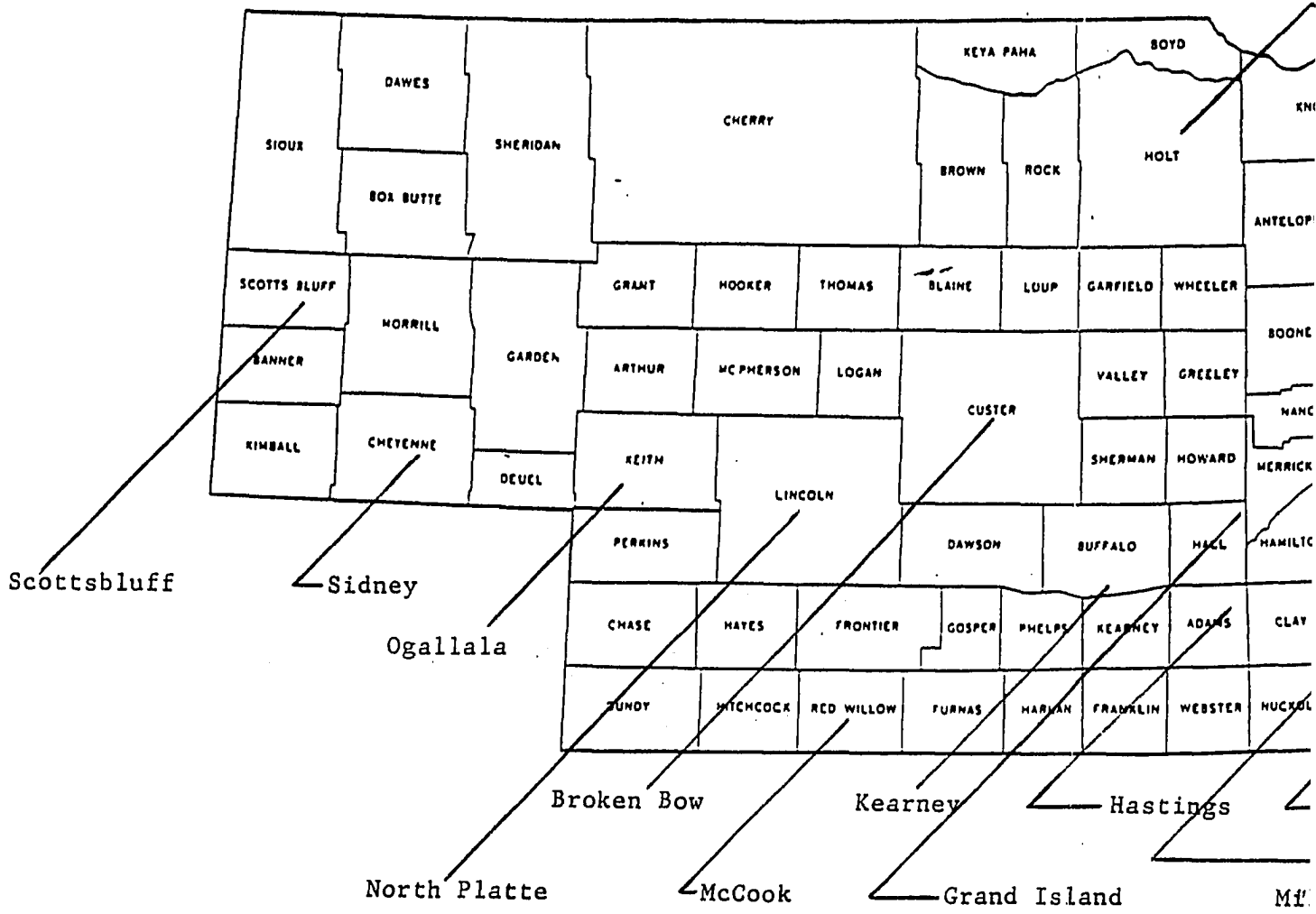
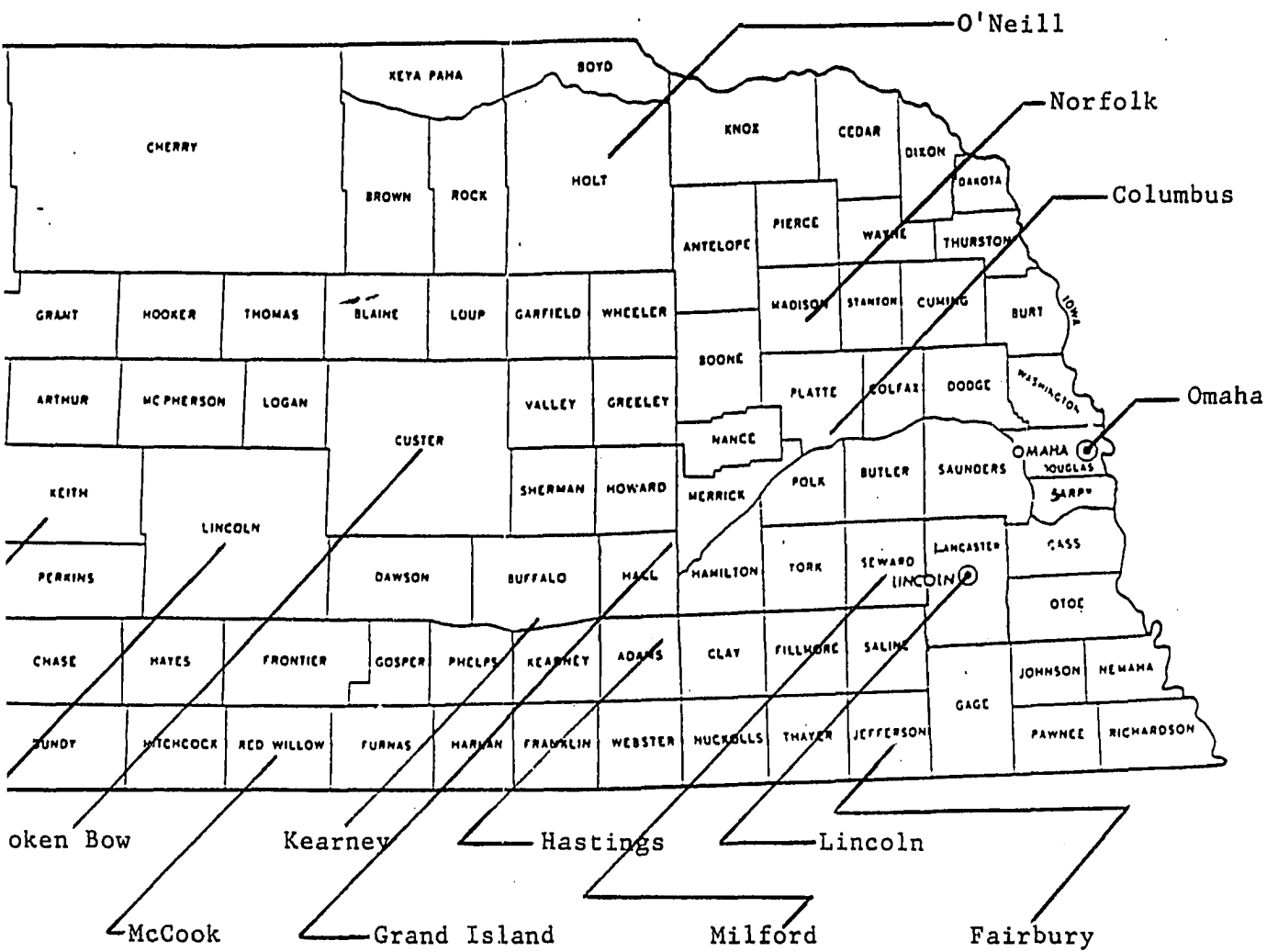


Figure 1. Communities Involved in the Evolution of the Technical Community (





red in the Evolution of the Technical Community College System



around wild."⁶⁴ Support for House File 351 came from those parts of the state which lacked nearby postsecondary educational opportunity.

Representatives from areas that contained the state normal schools, the University of Nebraska, and the private colleges opposed the legislation. And in the two most populous counties where the cities of Omaha and Lincoln are located, legislators voted to postpone by a combined vote of fifteen to two. Thus the legislators whose communities were the farthest from public postsecondary educational institutions favored the legislation, while those whose districts included such institutions tended to oppose it.

In addition to proximity, the benefits of having a postsecondary educational institution in a community were important to supporters of the legislation. Businesses, civic groups, particularly the chambers of commerce and service clubs, and officials from McCook supported the legislation. McCook more than any other community actively worked for passage of the legislation. A review of the newspapers in Scottsbluff, Norfolk, and North Platte revealed minimal news coverage of the legislative effort and the newspapers in those communities provided little information

⁶⁴"Junior College Bill Is Killed In Lower House After Argument," Scottsbluff Daily Star Herald, 15 March 1927, p. 3.

about junior colleges in general. Supporters emphasized the need to give voters in their own communities the opportunity to decide whether or not to establish junior colleges. Of all the communities expressing interest in the legislation the citizens of McCook provided the leadership in the effort to legalize junior colleges in 1927.

Opposition to House Roll 351 centered on three issues. First the establishment of junior colleges was seen as a threat to existing institutions of higher education. The threat was two-fold. On the one hand, fewer students would attend the existing public and private institutions, while on the other, reduced attendance would diminish the economic benefits in cities housing the university, private colleges, and state normal schools.

The second issue concerned public financial support for the junior colleges. The legislation provided for local support through a tax levy and those opposing the legislation did so because of opposition to an increase in the local tax burden. In addition, opponents argued that the legislation would eventually lead to state support of these colleges. Even before it was officially introduced, the legislation was opposed because of the belief "that the educational spenders

were simply running wild."⁶⁵ one legislator explained his vote in the following way: "Believing this will be an increase of taxes which will burden the taxpayers I vote for the postponement of this bill."⁶⁶ Consequently, the provision in the proposed legislation which allowed school districts to support the junior college through a local levy and the belief that this would eventually lead to state support for junior colleges represented major reasons for opposition to the legislation.

The third issue concerned the provision that permitted the establishment of a junior college in high school districts with a population of five thousand or more. This provision caused some legislators to oppose the bill because, they argued, such communities already provided the equivalent of the first two-years of college. Others opposed the legislation without a population requirement because it would permit the proliferation of hundreds of junior colleges within the state.⁶⁷ The house amendment that eliminated the

⁶⁵"Legislators Get Opinions," Grand Island Independent, 31 December 1926, p. 7.

⁶⁶Nebraska Legislature, House of Representatives, Journal, 27 January 1927, p. 1006.

⁶⁷Galen Saylor, ed., "Junior College Studies," No. 166, Extension Division, University of Nebraska, November 1948), p. 100.

population requirement in the original bill reduced the likelihood that the legislation would pass.⁶⁸ According to the Kearney Daily Hub, this amendment "turned favor away from the measure . . . on the contention that the amended bill made possible a junior college in every locality of the state."⁶⁹ Thus some legislators opposed the bill if a population requirement was not included, while others opposed it if it was included.

The legislation introduced in 1927 provided the legal foundation sought by those who believed that the presence of a junior college within a community enhanced it culturally and economically and brought educational opportunity to those who otherwise could not leave home. Support for the junior college legislation came from the business and civic groups, particularly the chambers of commerce and service clubs. The opposition defeated the legislation by focusing on three issues: competition with existing state and private schools, increased taxation, and the size of the population requirement. In addition, the legislation failed because of a lack of information statewide about public junior colleges. While McCook leaders had educated its citizens about the

⁶⁸"Junior College Bill Is Killed In Lower House After Argument," Scottsbluff Daily Star Herald, 15 March 1927, p. 3.

⁶⁹"Kill Bill That Provided More Colleges," Kearney Daily Hub, 15 March 1927, p. 1.

benefits of junior colleges, no parallel information campaign had been conducted throughout the state. Also, political leadership was absent since none of the sponsors of the legislation were on the education committee. At the time the legislation was introduced, the McCook Junior College had been in existence less than six months and information about junior colleges was publicized most widely in the McCook area. But the lack of information and experience changed as supporters began to provide more information to the legislators about the junior college and as McCook Junior College was perceived as a successful institution after graduating its first class in 1928.

The social and economic conditions were favorable to the establishment of junior colleges in Nebraska in 1927. A substantial increase in high school attendance and graduation, the mechanization of agriculture, and the needs of business for more skilled employees were forces in Nebraska in the twenties. The junior college was perceived by many as an economic and cultural asset and made postsecondary education available to many who otherwise were unable to leave home for such education. For those communities in western Nebraska the availability of postsecondary educational opportunity had become important.

The beginning of 1927 was one of optimism in Nebraska,

although agriculture and particularly the cattle industry had suffered through several years of the depressing effects of postwar deflation. As Governor McMullen stated:

Our progress is substantial and well balanced. While our state is exclusively agricultural it is gratifying to note that the industrial and commercial sides of our development are making growth commensurate to the output of our farms and ranches.⁷⁰

Although agriculture and the cattle industries had suffered, 1927 was expected to be better.

The failure of the legislature to pass the junior college proposal did not dampen the enthusiasm for the public junior college in McCook. C. H. Boyle, president of the McCook Chamber of Commerce Junior College Committee, stated that the negative vote did not impact the situation in McCook and "that the situation is substantially what it would have been had the bill been passed. . . ."⁷¹ The McCook Chamber of Commerce voted unanimously not only to continue the college but to expand it. The college kept young people at or near home and provided educational opportunity to those who otherwise could not afford a college education. The failure of the initial effort to gain legal status for the junior colleges did not

⁷⁰Nebraska Legislature, House of Representatives, Journal, 6 January 1927, p. 25.

⁷¹"Junior College is Endorsed," McCook Daily Gazette, 16 March 1927, p. 1.

deter its supporters. In fact, it laid the foundation for eventual passage of such legislation.

Senate File 102 (1929)

On January 23, 1929, Nebraska State Senators P. W. Scott, J. C. McGowan, and A. B. Wood introduced Senate File 102 (SF 102) into the Nebraska Senate.⁷² Scott was a McCook lawyer, McGowan was a machinist from Norfolk, and Wood was a newspaper editor from Gering, which is located in Scotts Bluff County. Senate File 102 called for "the establishment of junior college districts, and maintenance and support of junior colleges. . ."⁷³ The legislation, as amended, permitted the formation of junior colleges districts as part of the secondary school system.⁷⁴ School districts with a total average daily attendance of 200 or more pupils and an assessed valuation of \$4,000,000 qualified as a potential junior college district as long as any point of the district did not come within 25 miles of an existing school offering similar courses. After the submission of two petitions, one

⁷²Nebraska Legislature, Senate, Journal, 23 January 1929, p. 221.

⁷³Nebraska Legislature, Senate, Journal, 23 January 1929, p. 221.

⁷⁴Nebraska Legislature, Senate, Journal, 13 March 1929, pp. 798-806.

containing 500 signatures of qualified voters and a second of the signatures of a majority of the board of education in the proposed district, the county superintendent called for an election. If a majority of the votes cast favored the establishment of a junior college district, it was formed. For the junior college district to continue to operate, the average daily attendance in the district must exceed 40 after the second school year. The board could prescribe non-resident tuition and levy up to four mills in school tax for the operation of the college.

The purpose of the bill was to provide legal standing for junior colleges in Nebraska, and it would have permitted the establishment of nine public junior colleges within the state. Cities eligible under the proposal were: Scottsbluff, Alliance, Sidney, McCook, North Platte, Norfolk, Falls City, Beatrice, and Fairbury.⁷⁵ The bill was sent to the Education, Universities, Normal Schools and Library Committee, which included Senator Wood and was chaired by Senator Scott. Senate File 102 was reported out of committee and initially approved as amended on March 13, 1929, by a vote of 18 to 13.⁷⁶ During the debate on SF 102 Senator Scott argued that

⁷⁵"Junior College Measure Final Action Delayed," Norfolk Daily News, 8 March 1929, p. 1.

⁷⁶Nebraska Legislature, Senate, Journal, 13 March 1929, p. 806.

the junior college legislation gave individuals who otherwise could not afford to go away from home the opportunity to acquire postsecondary education. He urged the senators to approve the legislation.⁷⁷ Senator Griswold, whose district included the normal school at Chadron, and Senator Welsh, whose district bordered Lancaster County where the University of Nebraska is located, led the attack against the proposal.⁷⁸ Senator Griswold countered that he thought being away from home was a benefit. Senator Welsh labeled the junior college an expensive luxury. Following the debate in the Committee of the Whole, the Senate approved the proposed legislation.

The Senate approved Senate File 102 by a vote of 18 to 13. Fourteen Republicans and 4 Democrats voted in favor, while 9 Republicans and 4 Democrats were against the proposal. This junior college legislation was not a partisan issue.⁷⁹ Although the earlier vote in the Committee of the Whole and the vote on final passage were the same, votes shifted. Senators Kennedy of Broken Bow, Vance of Hastings, and Welch of Milford voted not to advance the bill, but on final passage they supported the legislation. Two senators who supported

⁷⁷"Junior College Bill Advanced In Senate," Norfolk Daily News, 14 March 1929, p. 1.

⁷⁸"Junior College Bill Advanced in Senate."

⁷⁹Nebraska Legislature, Senate, Journal, 25 March 1929, pp. 976-977.

the legislation initially did not vote on final passage, and one senator, Easton of Omaha, changed from an affirmative to a negative vote on final passage.

An analysis of the vote suggests that support for the legislation came from senators who represented western and southwestern counties. The opposition tended to come from senators whose districts included postsecondary educational institutions, such as the University of Nebraska and three of the four state normal schools. In the case of the state normal school at Wayne, the senator representing that area lived in Norfolk and supported the legislation. In Omaha, the senators voted three to two in favor of the legislation.

After passage in the Senate the House of Representatives received Senate File 102. The House voted to indefinitely postpone the legislation by a vote of 44 to 41, with 17 members not voting.⁸⁰ Of the 41 who voted to continue to discuss the bill, 26 were Democrats and 15 were Republicans, while 35 Republicans and 9 Democrats voted against the proposal. The representative from Chadron, a professor in the History Department at Chadron State Normal School, believed it was fortunate that the junior college bill was defeated despite heavy lobbying by its supporters. He had worked hard

⁸⁰Nebraska Legislature, House of Representatives, Journal, 19 April 1929, p. 1562.

to defeat these "vicious" school bills.⁸¹

Support in the House came from western and southwestern Nebraska, while opposition came from representatives whose districts included the University of Nebraska, Lancaster County, and the state normal schools. In Lancaster County 4 voted against the legislation and 2 abstained. A significant shift however occurred in the voting of the Douglas County (Omaha) representatives. This time 9 representatives voted not to postpone, 1 voted to postpone, and 3 abstained. This shift in votes occurred because supporters of the junior college bill endorsed legislation to establish a four-year municipal college in Omaha.⁸² The Lincoln Star reported that:

The day before the junior college bloc had helped the Douglas County delegation to put through its bill for a municipal university in Omaha. In return most of the Douglas County members threw their support to the Junior college proposal, but the combination was not quite able to put it over.⁸³

Supporters of the junior college legislation had gained some valuable allies although there were not enough votes to pass the junior college legislation.

Five Omaha senators had introduced legislation to permit

⁸¹"Professor E. P. Wilson Talks About the Recent Session of Legislature," Chadron Journal, 3 May 1929, p. 1.

⁸²"Legalization Bill Is Again Advanced," McCook Daily Gazette, 13 March 1929, p. 1.

⁸³"Junior College Bill Is Killed," Lincoln Star, 20 April 1929, p. 3.

the creation of a municipal university in Omaha. The bill, Senate File 244, provided for the establishment, maintenance, and support of a municipal university in cities of the metropolitan class.⁸⁴ The legislation passed in the Senate 32 to 1 and in the House 70 to 12, and was signed into law by the governor. An analysis of the vote indicates that the legislation was supported by most of the legislators who supported junior college legislation. In fact, most of the opposition came from the eastern half of the state. Only 4 representatives who supported the junior college legislation voted against Senate File 244. In explaining his vote for Senate File 244, one Omaha legislator indicated that he favored the bill "because it gives the voters of the city of Omaha the right to vote on the question."⁸⁵ Senate File 244 then was similar to the type of legislation that junior college advocates desired; a opportunity to let the local voters decide if they wanted a junior college.

During the legislative process of considering the junior college bill, a variety of newspaper articles identified groups and individuals who opposed or supported the legislation. Opposition came from four sources: the

⁸⁴Nebraska Legislature, Senate, Journal, 30 January 1929, p. 298.

⁸⁵Nebraska Legislature, House of Representatives, Journal, 19 April 1929, p. 1549.

denominational colleges, the state normal schools, the University of Nebraska and the Board of Regents, and the business interests in eastern Nebraska. The displeasure of several educational interests in Nebraska was evident at a public hearing on the legislation on February 20, 1929.⁶⁶

At the hearing February 20, the presidents of Midlands College in Fremont, Grand Island College in Grand Island, and Nebraska Central College in Central City argued against the legislation. Based on his experience in Iowa, the president of Midlands College, G. F. Martin, said that the establishment of junior colleges in communities of less than 100,000 would necessitate state aid. "Church colleges feel that the junior college bill will result in the most destructive competition that they could have and yet keep their doors open."⁶⁷

President Carrell of Central College warned the legislators of the cost of establishing and maintaining junior colleges. Dr. Wells of Grand Island College objected to school superintendents serving as heads of the junior colleges as the bill provided. Whether it was a question of state aid, cost, or administration, these denominational schools feared the competition the junior colleges represented.

⁶⁶"Local Men Appear for College Move," McCook Daily Gazette, 20 February 1929, p. 1.

⁶⁷"Local Men Appear for College Move," p. 7.

In April before the vote in the Nebraska House of Representatives, the presidents of Luther College in Wahoo and York College in York stated their objections to the legislation. They believed that the junior college would become a tax burden on the communities and eventually would have to be maintained by state appropriations.⁸⁸ Cities with junior colleges, they argued, would then constitute a "dangerous political block . . . composed from cities in which junior colleges will be established under this bill."⁸⁹ This political power would then be used to obtain state aid to maintain the schools. The denominational colleges argued that the legislation created a wedge through which the junior colleges could obtain state aid and that the junior colleges posed a threat to their continued existence because of the competition for students.

The state normal schools opposed the legislation for essentially the same reasons as identified by the denominational colleges. At the February 20 hearing Mr. Reiche, secretary of the state normal boards, stated that he had no objection to the bill, but experience in other states, such as Oklahoma, suggested "that junior colleges ultimately

⁸⁸"New Colleges Are Attacked by Foes," McCook Daily Gazette, 3 April 1929, p. 1.

⁸⁹"New Colleges Are Attacked by Foes."

have to call for state aid for maintenance and support."⁹⁰ At the hearing, a letter was also presented from the state normal school at Wayne by its president stating his opposition to the bill, presumedly to offset the affirmative vote by the senator that represented his district but lived in Norfolk. A review of the minutes of the state normal board between 1925 and 1931 failed to discover any discussion of the junior college legislation, although Mr. Reiche, a resident of Chadron, had been given the authority to represent the board before the legislature. Representative Russell charged that Reiche lobbied continuously against Senate File 102.⁹¹

As part of their legislative program, the normal schools supported a bill during the 1929 session that would have extended their curricula to include freshmen and sophomore years of arts and sciences.⁹² Those favoring the junior college bill believed that the effort to expand the normal schools' curricula was an attempt to defeat their bill. One of the sponsors of the legislation to expand the normal school offerings, Senator Johnston of Antelope, contended that it had

⁹⁰"Local Men Appear for College Move," McCook Daily Gazette, 13 April 1929, p. 1.

⁹¹"Junior College Bill Is Defeated In House," Norfolk Daily News, 20 April 1929, p. 1.

⁹²"Push Normal Bill For Third Reading," McCook Daily Gazette, 13 April 1929, p. 1.

nothing to do with the junior college proposal. The bill to enlarge the two-year arts and sciences curricula at the normal schools passed the legislature but was vetoed by the governor. He saw it as a means of creating four new state universities. Thus the normal schools failed in their effort to expand their curricula.

The University of Nebraska and the Board of Regents also opposed the junior college legislation, although their position seemed unclear. During final consideration of the junior college bill on April 20, Representative Russell suggested that it had the support of the chancellor of the state university. However, a month and a half earlier, one of the sponsors of the legislation, Senator Scott, noted that "without reservation . . . the University of Nebraska was solidly and coveredly (cowardly) against the bill."³³ The university, according to the senator, "is doing even more effective work against the bill than are the state normals and the denominational schools by suggesting to the legislators that legalization means establishing a state financial responsibility for these school."³⁴ The opposition by the University of Nebraska reflected an effort to stem the junior

³³"Editorial," McCook Daily Gazette, 2 March 1929, p. 4.

³⁴"College Bill Has Chance To Be Law," McCook Daily Gazette, 1 March 1929, p. 1.

college movement by the Nebraska Board of Regents.⁹⁵

They instructed Extension Director Reed to notify the junior college authorities that work would be recognized for one year only and that such relations would not be continued. . . . The University's Board of Regents countermanded Dean Sealock and Director Reed's advocacy of the 1929 proposed junior college bill (S.F. 102) and instructed the president of the Board and the chancellor of the University to lobby informally against the bill.⁹⁶

The Board of Regents feared the possibility of sharing educational funding at the state level with the junior colleges and decided to withdraw their support from the junior college movement. The possibility of educational funds going to the junior colleges and the ensuing competition for students encouraged the Board of Regents to informally oppose the legislation.

Opposition to the junior college legislation (Senate File 102) also came from the economic interests of eastern Nebraska, particularly those in Lincoln and Omaha. Although specific groups or individuals were never identified an editorial in the McCook Daily Gazette stated that "the selfish commercial interests of Lincoln and Omaha" provided the main opposition to the legislation.⁹⁷ These commercial interests

⁹⁵Ratcliff, p. 170.

⁹⁶Ratcliff, pp. 170-171.

⁹⁷"Editorial," McCook Daily Gazette, 18 February 1929, p. 4.

did not want to lose the benefits of student and state spending in their areas.

Although the opposition came from a variety of people and organizations, the education interests in Nebraska, specifically postsecondary educational interests, fought the hardest to prevent the passage of the legislation legalizing junior colleges. On reflection about the defeat of the legislation in the House, H. D. Strunk, editor of the McCook Daily Gazette, noted, "Defeat of the junior college bill is the direct result of selfish interests on the part of state normals, the University of Nebraska and the church schools."⁷⁰ These school interests suggested that local taxes would have to be levied to support these colleges and that the legislation provided a means by which the junior college would eventually receive state aid. There was also concern about the impact on enrollments at the state normal schools, the University of Nebraska, and denominational colleges. With a limited number of students to draw from these postsecondary educational institutions and their communities feared the impact of a loss of students and public funds. In addition to these concerns an anonymous letter influenced the discussion of the junior college legislation.

⁷⁰"Junior College Bill Is Defeated," McCook Daily Gazette, 20 April 1929, p. 1.

The House of Representatives discussed the proposal to permit the establishment of junior colleges on the last day of the session. As the legislation, Senate File 102, was taken up an anonymous letter appeared on each House members desk.⁹⁹

The letter said:

Dear Sir: In answer to you letter of recent date will say. In talking to the general run of the public, they seem to not favor the bill. In talking to some folks from McCook it seems as though a majority of them are against it . . . it looks to me like as though we shouldn't do any more to raise taxes. Things around here are looking pretty well.¹⁰⁰

In commenting on this tactic, Representative Russell suggested that "the normal schools were responsible for it, but as yet I have been unable to learn the name of the person who is supposed to have written it. The Normal people resorted to every dishonorable and disreputable means to defeat the bill."¹⁰¹ The anonymous letter and the arguments against the legislation were sufficient to defeat it despite the counter-arguments presented by supporters.

Support for the legislation came primarily from three sources: 1) the McCook School, businessmen and civic leaders; 2) legislators representing those areas in which postsecondary

⁹⁹"Editorial," McCook Daily Gazette, 23 April 1929, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰"Editorial," McCook Daily Gazette, 23 April 1929, p. 4.

¹⁰¹"Editorial," McCook Daily Gazette, 23 April 1929, p. 4.

educational opportunities were absent or not easily available; and 3) the office of the state superintendent of schools. In supporting Senate File 102, they emphasized the need for expanded educational opportunity and argued that junior colleges were not a threat to existing institutions nor was the legislation a wedge to gain state aid.

Senate File 102 provided for locally controlled and supported junior colleges. The debate was whether or not to provide a local option to establish junior colleges. If people in a school district wanted to establish a junior college "they ought to have the right to tax themselves to maintain it."¹⁰² But the requirements to start a junior college were so restrictive that only a few school districts qualified. The proposal required an assessed valuation of \$4,000,000 and prohibited a junior college within 25 miles of an existing college. As a result, only 9 school districts would be eligible to begin a junior college. Thus there would not be massive proliferation of colleges. A Norfolk lawyer, speaking before a PTA meeting, noted that junior colleges provided educational opportunities for those who could not leave home, kept the family intact two years longer, and

¹⁰²"Junior College Bill Is Defeated," McCook Daily Gazette, 20 April 1929, p. 1.

allowed parents to keep track of their sons and daughters.¹⁰³

Representatives from McCook prepared a brief for presentation during the debate in the House of Representatives over Senate File 102.¹⁰⁴ The three pages prepared by Superintendent True's office presented "every point in favor of establishing junior colleges" and refuted arguments against them.¹⁰⁵ The brief emphasized that junior colleges were not just a fad, but rather a growing national trend. In addition, junior colleges were cost efficient. The median cost of attending a public junior college was \$192.46, compared to a cost of \$238 per student at the state university in Lincoln, and an average cost of \$313.58 at public universities and colleges in other states. The pamphlet stated that 85 percent of McCook Junior College students indicated that they attended the junior college because it was close and cheap. The pamphlet also denied that junior colleges must secure state aid to exist and argued that junior colleges were not a threat to denominational schools. Supporters, including those from McCook, however, were unable

¹⁰³"Boyle, Gramly Speak Before PTA Members," Norfolk Daily News, 12 March 1929, p. 7.

¹⁰⁴"Friends of Junior College Measure Prepare Data on Facts of the Case," McCook Daily Gazette, 11 April 1929, p. 4.

¹⁰⁵"Friends of Junior College Measure Prepare Data on Facts of the Case."

to gain approval for Senate File 102 in the House.

The legislation to permit establishment of junior colleges in Nebraska barely failed in 1929, although it had advanced much further than had previous legislation in 1927. Opposition was strong from the church schools, the state normal schools, the Regents and business interests in the eastern part of the state. They argued that the legislation would ultimately lead to state aid for the junior colleges and that the junior colleges posed a threat to the very existence of some of the other colleges. Support was primarily generated from McCook, and to a lesser extent from other communities interested in establishing junior colleges, from legislators representing those areas, and from the state superintendent. But their arguments that the junior college did not present a threat and would not require state aid were not strong enough. As the dean of McCook Junior College, J. R. Johnson commented after the legislative defeat:

'I think the fact that the junior college bill was defeated will furnish the impetus for all interests to start a new fight for the legalization of the schools. There should have been more agitation on behalf of the bill. I think the fight will be continued and that the bill will come up at the next term of the legislature.'¹⁰⁶

Johnson's comments were prophetic. The first Senate bill of

¹⁰⁶"Junior College Bill Is Defeated," McCook Daily Gazette, 20 April 1929, p. 1.

the 1931 legislative session called for the establishment, maintenance, and support of junior colleges within junior college districts.¹⁰⁷

Senate File 1 (1931)

State Senator Scott of McCook introduced Senate File 1 (SF 1) on January 8, 1931. It provided for the establishment of junior colleges in communities with an assessed valuation of \$4,000,000 or more and stipulated that no junior college could be established within 25 miles of an existing college. In essence, it was identical to the legislation, Senate File 102, considered during the 1929 legislative session.

The proposal was sent to the Education Committee, chaired by Senator Scott. The committee reported Senate File 1 out favorably by a vote of 8 to 3. The 3 negative votes were from senators who represented Lincoln, Kearney, and Milford. Initial approval by the Senate occurred on February 5 by a margin of 19 to 13, with 14 Republicans and 5 Democrats supporting the legislation and 6 Republicans and 7 Democrats opposing it. As had occurred in both 1927 and 1929, support was strongest from those districts in western and southwestern counties. Opposition continued from senators whose districts

¹⁰⁷Nebraska Legislature, Senate, Journal, 8 January 1931, pp. 43-44.

included the state normal schools at Chadron and Kearney as well as the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. The senator whose district included the state normal school at Wayne continued to support the legislation, while the senator from Falls City whose district included the state normal school at Peru switched his vote from 1929 and supported the 1931 legislation.

An issue continued to be the potential for state aid through future legislation. If the legislation establishing junior colleges was passed, would subsequent legislation ask for state funding of these colleges? One senator explained his negative vote by declaring that "If the bill . . . passes . . . I am afraid it will not be long until state aid will be asked to sustain them."¹⁰⁸ Another senator suggested "It has been the experience of other states where junior colleges have been established they would demand state aid and add to the already heavy burden that taxpayers bear."¹⁰⁹ Despite such opposition, supporters of the junior college measure persevered.

The measure was sent to the House and referred to the Education Committee, the chairman of which represented the two

¹⁰⁸Nebraska Legislature, Senate, Journal, 5 February 1931, pp. 371-372.

¹⁰⁹Nebraska Legislature, Senate, Journal, 5 February 1931, p. 372.

most southwestern counties in Nebraska. The representative from McCook and a co-sponsor of the legislation, W. H. Meyers, also served on that committee. The committee reported the bill out with three major amendments.¹¹⁰ The first amendment required that a vote be taken not only in those communities wanting a junior college but also in those communities where junior colleges existed. The second changed the requirement for approval from a simple majority to a sixty percent approval. And the third provided that,

Junior colleges organized under the provisions of this act shall never apply for or receive any appropriation of State Funds or financial aid for their organization, maintenance or support.¹¹¹

These amendments kept the junior colleges out of the state treasury and made it more difficult to gain public approval for the establishment of them. A motion in the House to indefinitely postpone was defeated by a vote of 55 to 32 and the bill advanced for the third and final reading.

Opposition in the House came from legislators who argued that Senate File 1 would create economic hardship throughout the state. The leader of the opposition, Representative Havekost of Hooper, suggested: "It simply means the

¹¹⁰Nebraska Legislature, House of Representatives, Journal, 16 March 1931, pp. 791-792.

¹¹¹Nebraska Legislature, House of Representatives, Journal, 16 March 1931, pp. 791-792.

shouldering of more bonds . . . if we build these colleges in North Platte and Norfolk, we have to build them everywhere."¹¹² Senator Sprick of Fontenelle argued that there was no limit on what property might be included. "If it passes . . . you can take in farms and enact a confiscatory tax."¹¹³ And Senator Crozier of Osceola said, "I'm opposed to this purely on financial grounds. . . . The State is now overbonded. What good is a degree if everyone is broke."¹¹⁴ Heeding arguments that the legislation merely permitted a local decision on whether to establish a locally controlled junior college for those who could not afford to leave home, the House of Representatives on March 17, 1931 approved Senate File 1, as amended, by a vote of 58 to 27. Thirty-three Republicans and 25 Democrats supported the proposal, while 14 Republicans and 13 Democrats opposed it. Thus, the junior college legislation was not a partisan issue.

Support for the legislation on final vote came from the western half of the state and from representatives from Norfolk, McCook, North Platte, Columbus, Scottsbluff, and Falls City, "the six cities directly concerned in the passage

¹¹²"Junior College Bill Advanced In Lower House," Norfolk Daily News, 16 May 1931, p. 1.

¹¹³"Junior College Bill Advanced In Lower House".

¹¹⁴"Junior College Bill Advanced In Lower House."

of the bill."¹¹⁵ In Omaha 10 representatives voted for passage and 3 abstained, while in Lincoln 4 voted in favor while 2 abstained. The representatives from the Chadron area voted for the measure. Opposition came from the representatives of rural districts, counties with small denominational colleges, and the Wayne and Peru districts.

The opposition of those who feared an implied state financial commitment to these new colleges had been silenced with the no tax clause. Those who were concerned that the legislation would create an unnecessary proliferation of postsecondary institutions found solace in the provisions that (a) required a sixty percent majority to establish a junior college, (b) established high school enrollment minimums, and (c) set minimum assessed valuation requirements for districts wishing to found a college. Under these provisions only nine Nebraska communities could qualify in 1931. Another serious obstacle to the passage of the legislation was removed when the University of Nebraska chancellor, new to the position since 1929, indicated that the university would not oppose the legislation.

According to Wendell Cheney, a member of the first graduating class of McCook Junior College in 1928, the

¹¹⁵"Junior College Bill Passes," McCook Daily Gazette, 20 March 1931, p. 1.

decision by the chancellor not to oppose the junior college legislation was the result of his father's close affiliation with the university. Wendell Cheney's father was a member of the McCook school board during much of this period, a graduate of the University of Nebraska, and a very loyal and active alumnus.¹¹⁶ Prior to final passage of the legislation legalizing the junior college, Cheney, Senator Scott, and the chancellor met at the University Club in Lincoln. As a result of the meeting, Senator Scott was able to tell members of the legislature that the chancellor was not opposed to the legislation. "This more than anything else made passage possible."¹¹⁷ When the amended version was returned to the Senate for concurrence, it was approved 29 to 2 and sent to the governor. He signed the legislation on March 26, 1931. Thus, the effort to legalize junior colleges in Nebraska had succeeded.

Summary

The 1920s represented a time of significant growth for junior colleges in America and a critical period for the establishment and legalization of junior colleges in Nebraska. Various social, economic, and political changes influenced the

¹¹⁶Cheney.

¹¹⁷Cheney.

development of these colleges within the state.

Compulsory education, a decline in the use of child labor (ages 10 to 15), and increased urbanization led to increased secondary enrollments within Nebraska and increased the potential number of students interested in attending a junior college. This coupled with a lack of educational opportunity evenly distributed around a large state generated support for the junior college idea and its legalization.

A major inhibitor to the growth of junior colleges in Nebraska was the poor economic conditions of the late 1920s and 1930s. While the nation seemed prosperous, Nebraska's economy weakened during the 1920s. When the market crashed in 1929 the problems of low farm prices and increased unemployment were exacerbated. This in turn led to fiscally conservative government policies. As a result, government initiatives which had the potential of increased taxes were not popular.

Although the junior colleges in Nebraska did not have statutory authority until 1931, four communities had junior colleges in operation prior to that time. McCook began operations in 1926, Norfolk and Walthill in 1928, and Scottsbluff in 1929.¹¹⁸ Three of the four, McCook, Norfolk,

¹¹⁸Galen Saylor, ed., "Junior College Studies," No 166, Extension Division, University of Nebraska (November 1948), p. 105.

and Scottsbluff, were in operation when legalization occurred.

The legalization effort, which began in 1927, was spawned by a variety of forces. A rise in the number of high school graduates which consequently increased a demand for greater opportunities in higher education coincided with the efforts in a number of communities to develop as economic, cultural, and educational centers. This was particularly true of McCook, North Platte, and Scottsbluff in western Nebraska, communities far removed from institutions of higher education but ambitious to develop into regional commercial centers.

The ambition to develop regional commercial centers motivated several communities to become involved in the legislative process to legalize junior colleges in Nebraska, a process through which proponents and opponents discussed the merits of such legislation. Support came from three areas. First, people from the western half of the state supported the junior college legislation because postsecondary education was not easily and inexpensively available. Second, the chamber of commerce, business and civic groups in various communities favored the legislation as part of an effort to become regional centers. And third, business and civic groups from McCook vigorously promoted the junior college legislation.

Those opposed to the junior college legislation were concerned about the loss of students and money. Opposition

came from those communities which had or were near existing postsecondary educational institutions, particularly the denominational colleges and the state normal schools. The University of Nebraska initially supported the junior college efforts (1925-1926), then opposed them (1927-1929), and finally removed its opposition to the legislation (1931). Commercial interests in communities with or near the denominational and state normal schools did not favor the legislation for fear of loss of business. Opposition came from legislators who did not want to increase local taxes or who feared that the bill would eventually lead to state aid for junior colleges. Also some were concerned that the number of colleges would proliferate to the extent that the whole system of Nebraska higher education would be weakened and the quality diminished.

The successful passage of the enabling legislation in 1931 was influenced by several individuals. In 1931, both sponsors of the junior college legislation, Senator Scott and Representative Meyer, were members of the majority party and both served on the committees on education in their respective houses of the legislature. Scott served as chairman in the Senate. In the House of Representatives, the chairman was from a small community southwest of McCook. In addition, several McCook residents had ties to the University in Lincoln

and helped to persuade the new chancellor not to oppose the legislation in 1931.

Two legislative events in 1929 shaped the future of the junior college legislation. First, the legislature authorized Omaha to establish a four-year municipal university. Consequently, once Omaha received legal recognition for its own college, representatives from that area became more inclined to vote for the junior college legislation which would benefit other parts of the state. Second, the governor vetoed legislation which would have permitted the state normal schools to offer freshmen and sophomore arts and sciences classes. Passage of such legislation would not have met the needs of communities, such as McCook, Scottsbluff, and North Platte, and inhibited the legislature from authorizing additional institutions of higher education.

In addition to the influence of individuals and events, the amendments offered in 1931 enhanced the probability of passage substantially. They were intended to remove major objections to the legislation concerning taxation, proliferation of postsecondary educational institutions, and local control.

And finally, success can be attributed to the efforts of those community and civic leaders, particularly from McCook who continued to push for the legislation. The success of

McCook Junior College itself permitted people to see that the junior college could be a viable part of the educational system. Although the Nebraska legislature legalized junior colleges in 1931, only two cities, McCook and Scottsbluff, voted to continue their junior colleges. Attempts in 1931 and 1932 in Grand Island and Norfolk to establish junior colleges failed to garner the required sixty percent approval of the voters. In 1941 Grand Island and Norfolk approved the establishment of junior colleges in their communities. By 1937 the educational emphasis had changed from junior colleges offering transfer and preprofessional programs to institutions which provided educational opportunities in vocational and trade areas.

The State Trade School

Senate File 1, passed in 1931, resulted in the establishment of two public junior colleges in Nebraska. Their primary functions were to provide transfer and preprofessional programs. However, economic, political, and social changes after 1931 within Nebraska and the nation created an additional need for public vocational education. These economic, political, and social changes influenced the creation of a state trade school in 1941, although the initial proposal for a state trade school was introduced in 1937.

The period after 1931 saw continued change in employment patterns of men 18 and 19 years of age. According to information provided by Eells, in 1930 62.1 percent of the men in this age group were gainfully employed and 26 percent were in school.¹¹⁹ By 1937 only 46.6 percent were gainfully employed and 30 percent were in school, but 23.4 percent were not gainfully employed or in school.

This striking increase in the number and proportion of young men of junior college age unemployed and not in college is one of the immediate challenges to the junior college of the present and of the future.¹²⁰

As a result, much of emphasis during the 1930s was on finding employment for those without jobs. But in some cases, the problem was the lack of men with sufficient skills to fill the position.

According to Eells, "a shortage of skilled and semiprofessional workers prevails in many industries, and scant educational provision has been made to train people for the vacancies."¹²¹ Changes in the training of apprentices made the problem even worse; in many trades, education had assumed the responsibility for their training. Consequently,

¹¹⁹Eells, Why Junior College Terminal Education?, p. 22.

¹²⁰Eells, Why Junior College Terminal Education?, pp. 22-23.

¹²¹Eells, Why Junior College Terminal Education?, p. 26.

the changing employment patterns for the 18- and 19-year old people, and the lack of apprenticeship positions indicated a need for public education to fill the void.

Another need created by the economic conditions of the 1930s was financial. Students could not afford to attend college nor could many schools provide vocational programs without government assistance. Although the cooperative relationship between states and the federal government in vocational education dated back to the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917, it was expanded in 1936 with the passage of the George-Deen Act. This legislation provided annual grants, matched by the states, to improve education in agriculture, trades and industry, home economics, and distributive occupations. In the late 1930s federal programs provided large sums to junior colleges for these areas.¹²² Although no funds came to Nebraska, Eells identified sixty-two junior colleges which received funds under the vocational education laws.¹²³

Nationally the economy was in shambles. Record unemployment and low prices, coupled with bank failures and

¹²²Walter C. Eells, Present Status of Junior College Terminal Education (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Junior Colleges, 1941), p. 27.

¹²³Eells, Present Status of Junior College Terminal Education, p. 30.

foreclosures, required government relief programs. As a result the scope of government expanded substantially.

In addition to the economic problems, the international situation worsened. Hitler began his expansion in Europe and Japan invaded Manchuria. World War II began in September 1939. Although Eells did not perceive how the growing international crisis would permanently affect terminal education, he recognized "that many aspects of the immediate problems of terminal education have been affected markedly by the present intense emphasis on various aspects of the defense program."¹²⁴ While the international crisis might not have a permanent impact on terminal education, it required the expansion of war industries in the United States and increased the demand for skilled workers.

The economic crisis which crippled the nation was also severe in Nebraska. Banks were closed, farms foreclosed, streets filled with the unemployed, and business was at a virtual standstill.¹²⁵ This was aggravated by a dry decade and record drought in 1934 and 1936. The recovery of the middle and late 1930s, however, seemed like prosperity to the farmers, as government payments propped up farm income and

¹²⁴Walter C. Eells, Why Junior College Terminal Education?, pp. 39-40.

¹²⁵Olson, p. 296.

additional programs created a favorable outlook for the future.¹²⁶

The economic conditions of the 1930s required the establishment of public assistance programs in Nebraska. Although public assistance did not appear in the state's budget prior to 1936, two years later it was second in spending only to highways and accounted for approximately 25 percent of the entire budget.¹²⁷ State expenditures for public assistance hit a high of \$29,939,186 in 1938-1939.

Politically, the Democrats dominated politics in Nebraska from 1932 to 1938. In 1938 the Republicans made a comeback. In the 1940 election only one Democrat was elected statewide.

In 1941 the Nebraska legislature established a state trade school. It was ten years after the passage of legislation providing a legal foundation for junior colleges. Legislation had been introduced in 1937 and 1939 to create such a school in Broken Bow. However, in 1937 the governor vetoed the legislation and in 1939 the legislature indefinitely postponed it. Then in 1941, Senator Matzke introduced legislation to establish a vocational and trade school at the closed Old Soldiers' and Sailors' Home in Milford. The proposal, approved without a negative vote in

¹²⁶Olson, pp. 300-301.

¹²⁷Olson, p. 302.

the legislature and signed by the governor, established a state-supported, state-run vocational and trade school. This school later became part of the technical community college system.

The addition of a state trade school in 1941 followed a period of substantial social, economic, and political change in Nebraska and the nation. The Nebraska economy, weakened in the twenties by agricultural depression, was further damaged by several years of severe drought in the 30s. The population declined as Nebraskans emigrated to other states, child labor practically disappeared, the tax base narrowed, and the recoveries in 1937 and 1939 created demand for people trained in the trades. The Nebraska legislature changed from bicameral to unicameral and partisan to nonpartisan, and the federal government increased funding for education, particularly vocational education. As the nation struggled to extricate itself from the economic depression, the world moved inexorably toward conflict. As a consequence, the need for skilled workers grew as the economy recovered and the demand for men to work in defense related plants increased. These changes created a political climate in Nebraska inclined to be fiscally conservative, embracing a pay-as-you-go attitude, which affected the effort to establish a trade school in Nebraska.

The first attempt to establish a vocational and trade school in Nebraska occurred in 1937, when State Senator W. T. Haycock of Callaway, Custer County introduced Legislative Bill 364 (LB 364), a proposal to establish a vocational trade and industrial school in Broken Bow.¹²⁸ The proposal was introduced during a time of great change. Nationally, after almost five years of economic decline the economy had rebounded in 1936 and the prospects for 1937 were good. Several economists suggested that the worst was over, that the economy was moving toward permanent stability, and that 1937 would represent "the psychological turn in the depression."¹²⁹ According to one, 1937

will be a year of genuine business expansion, considerable real estate activity, constant labor troubles, shortages of skilled workers, rising prices and living costs and brisk retail trade.¹³⁰

Although optimism was high economists realized that with expanding construction and business activity the nation faced a shortage of skilled workers and individuals trained in the trades. Nebraskans shared this optimism but the economics of

¹²⁸Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 15 February 1937, p. 386.

¹²⁹"Economists Warn Against Boom: Say Worst Is Over," Omaha World Herald, 1 January 1937, p. 11.

¹³⁰"Babson Forecasts Gains in All Lines," Omaha World Herald, 1 January 1937, p. 11.

immediate past suggested caution.

In his address to the Nebraska legislature Governor Cochran reminded the legislators that the state had just suffered through a fifth year of drouth. He stated that because the Nebraska economy tended to be dependent on the well-being of agriculture, the drouth and depression had reduced the capacity of the state to provide services to its citizens.¹³¹ Therefore, he urged fiscal constraint and further economies in government.

Legislative Bill 364 (1937)

The concept of an industrial trade school as part of the Nebraska educational system originated with Arthur W. Melville. Melville was a Broken Bow lumberman who enlisted the support of the chamber of commerce to promote the idea.¹³² In the summer of 1936, he became aware of a shortage of skilled workers to build new homes and do general repairs. Individuals desiring such services were unable to find the qualified people.¹³³ By February 12, 1937, his idea for a

¹³¹Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 7 January 1937, pp. 31-35.

¹³²"Bill Introduced For A Vocational School At B. Bow," Custer County Chief, 18 February 1937, p. 2.

¹³³"Panorama of Nebraska: Training of Youth in Trades Is Sought," Sunday Omaha World Herald, 2 May 1937, p. 12A.

trade school crystallized in a meeting with several businessmen. Melville, who was also president of The Public Service Club, or chamber of commerce, of Broken Bow

assembled about twenty-five Broken Bow citizens at the club rooms to discuss the matter of asking the legislature to establish such a vocational and trade school at Broken Bow.¹⁹⁴

As a result of this meeting a bill was drafted, and State Senator Haycock was asked to introduce the bill into the Unicameral. He introduced Legislative Bill 364 (LB 364) on February 15, 1937.

Haycock's bill established the school in Broken Bow, the Custer County Seat, located in west central Nebraska approximately 200 miles from Lincoln. It was to be open to men and boys over the age of sixteen and governed by the state Board of Vocational Education.¹⁹⁵ The purpose of the legislation was to "better equip men and boys . . . to enter upon the work of a trade, craft, or other industrial pursuit."¹⁹⁶ The bill called for a state appropriation of \$53,000 which would be used to construct a building, buy equipment, and hire faculty. The curricular offerings were not specified in the proposal but the initial discussions

¹⁹⁴"Bill Introduced For A Vocational School At B. Bow."

¹⁹⁵"Bill Introduced For A Vocational School At B. Bow."

¹⁹⁶"Bill Introduced For A Vocational School At B. Bow".

among Broken Bow supporters had suggested programs for carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers, painters, air conditioners, machinists, blacksmiths, and auto-truck-tractor repairmen, to name a few.¹³⁷ The legislation was referred to the Appropriations Committee of which Senator Haycock was a member.

Melville and the bills supporters hoped that the Appropriations Committee and the entire legislature would see the merits of the proposal. Such a school provided an alternative to the apprentice system which had lapsed during the depression.¹³⁸ The school offered training employers were unable to provide. Such training helped put people to work and replaced the skilled workmen who were near retirement. As reported in the Custer County Chief

Young men are finishing our public schools and looking for employment. . . . Many hundreds of them drifting about in Nebraska with no jobs available. Building is on the eve of great activity and the next few years promise the greatest revival of business in all trade lines this country has seen in many years. . . . The young men of today without a trade or profession has a future none to bright, while the trained workman of the future will have little worry in getting a job with the coming of greater business activity.¹³⁹

The proposed school would provide training for individuals to

¹³⁷"Bill Introduced For A Vocational School At B. Bow."

¹³⁸"Bill Introduced For A Vocational School At B. Bow."

¹³⁹"Bill Introduced For A Vocational School At B. Bow."

fill existing openings and new jobs that would be available as the economy expanded. Supporters of the legislation identified a present need for such an institution, saw it as a solution to an existing problem, and promoted it as an aid to future development and a benefit for future generations.

The idea for the trade school was advanced as a unique program within the state, an addition to postsecondary education unlike any existing school. It did not duplicate vocational programs already in existence in high schools, particularly Omaha and Lincoln, nor did it compete for the same students. The high schools and postsecondary schools provided training for stenographers, bookkeepers, and secretarial workers, and the Smith-Hughes Act encouraged agricultural training. However, no schools encouraged preparation for the trades.¹⁴⁰

According to a survey reported in the Omaha World Herald, 16 percent of the Nebraska students entering school in 1937 planned to continue their education in colleges and universities. This in spite of the fact that the professions were overcrowded. The report also noted that 98 percent of the state's education dollar, excluding locally funded support for elementary and secondary education, went to the group

¹⁴⁰"Senators Will Hear Vocation School Plans," Custer County Chief, 25 March 1937, p. 1.

planning to attend a college or university.¹⁴¹ Thus only two percent of the money was left to educate and train the remaining 84 percent in other occupations including the trades. Although one expected the Technical High School in Omaha to provide preparation in the trades, it had become "little more than a professional guidance course."¹⁴²

Therefore, the creation of a trade school contributed to a more equitable distribution of funds and created educational opportunity for a larger number of high school graduates.

On March 29, 1937, the Appropriations Committee held a public hearing on LB 364 and reported it out of committee by a unanimous vote.¹⁴³ A Broken Bow committee of three, lead by Arthur Melville testified in favor of the legislation. Also testifying were Senator Haycock, the state vocational director and a civil engineer from Kearney, who happened to be in the building at the time of the hearing.¹⁴⁴ The witnesses emphasized: the need for skilled workmen, the lack of educational opportunity in the trades, the non-competitive

¹⁴¹"Panorama of Nebraska: Training of Youth in Trades Is Sought."

¹⁴²"Panorama of Nebraska: Training of Youth in Trades Is Sought."

¹⁴³"Trade School Bill On Its Way In Legislature," Custer County Chief, 1 April 1937, p. 1.

¹⁴⁴"Trade School Bill On Its Way In Legislature."

nature of the proposed school, and the overcrowded nature of the professions and white collar jobs.

A week after the committee hearing, Senator Haycock explained the provisions of his bill to Custer County residents in a letter published in the Custer County Chief.¹⁴⁵ He wrote that the \$53,000 appropriation would be used to obtain a building (\$20,000), buy equipment (\$8,000 to \$13,000), and hire instructors (\$20,000). The number of students entering the professions was greater than the state needed. The impending economic recovery would create a great demand for skilled tradesmen and they would be in short supply without the school. He concluded "that the skilled workman will be bringing home a pretty fair-sized check every Saturday night."¹⁴⁶ Senator Haycock justified the trade school as a response to the need for workmen trained in the trades and as a means of providing employment for the unemployed.

In addition to its economic importance proponents saw the trade school as a moral and social necessity.¹⁴⁷ It represented a commitment to young men in Nebraska "who have completed high school or who have quit high school and who are

¹⁴⁵"Senator Haycock Tells Of Trade School For B. B.," Custer County Chief, 8 April 1937, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶"Senator Haycock Tells Of Trade School For B. B."

¹⁴⁷"Proposed Vocational Trade School At B. Bow is Before Legislature," Custer County Chief, 15 April 1937, p. 1.

totally unequipped to make a decent living for themselves and their families."¹⁴⁸ The school represented a future by creating hope for those individuals who otherwise would become a burden to the community and society as a whole. With such a school these individuals would become skilled and efficient workmen, without it "drifters and loafers devoid of hope and ambition."¹⁴⁹ Society was obligated to provide this opportunity for its citizens. Supporter of the trade school believed that it would equip the young men of Nebraska with skills to provide a decent living and extricate themselves from welfare.

On April 20, 1937, Haycock spoke to the members of the Senate, explaining the great need for training young men as skilled tradesmen, emphasizing the overcrowded professions, and discussing the benefits to young men and their families of acquiring well paid jobs.¹⁵⁰ The Senate then advanced his bill, LB 364, to a final vote. The vote was 26 in favor to 8 opposed, with 9 members not voting. Even those who opposed the bill supported the concept, but believed it was

¹⁴⁸"Proposed Vocational Trade School At B. Bow is Before Legislature."

¹⁴⁹"Proposed Vocational Trade School At B. Bow is Before Legislature."

¹⁵⁰"Final Action Soon On B. Bow Trade School," Custer County Chief, 22 April 1937, p. 1.

inappropriate to approve a \$53,000 state expenditure in view of the weakened Nebraska economy. For Broken Bow, central and western Nebraska, the expenditure would "be more far-reaching and more beneficial than any like sum ever appropriated by the legislature."¹⁵¹ While the expenditure seemed large during a period of economic difficulty, western and central Nebraska would greatly benefit from the establishment of the school and the expenditure of the appropriated funds.

A week after the Unicameral advanced LB 364, it was given final approval by a vote of 26 to 14.¹⁵² During the debate Senator Ashmore from southwestern Nebraska, a farmer, offered an amendment authorizing the designation of one of the existing normal schools as a trade school instead of Broken Bow. Supporters of the Haycock bill argued that it would be unconstitutional for that board to have supervision of such a school. Unless the school was placed under the state vocational board, matching federal funds would not be available. The amendment lost on a vote of 10 to 25. Thus the bill, which senators friendly to it described as "a poor man's college," was sent to the governor for his consideration.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹"Final Action Soon On B. Bow Trade School."

¹⁵²"Haycock Bill Is Now Up To Gov. Cochran," Custer County Chief, 29 April 1937, p. 1.

¹⁵³"Haycock Bill Is Now Up to Gov. Cochran."

An analysis of the vote indicates that support for the legislation came from eastern and north central Nebraska and from urban areas, while opposition came from western and southwestern Nebraska and from legislators whose districts were rural. Under the unicameral system 28 of the 43 state senators were from the eastern third of the state. Consequently the senators representing the more populous areas and those closest to or adjacent to Custer County supported the legislation. Senators representing Scottsbluff and McCook, where the only two public junior colleges were located, voted against the proposal.

The voting suggests that the prospect of additional state spending and a corresponding increase in property taxes, caused farmers and rural residents, hardest hit by the depression and drought, to oppose the legislation, while the urban representatives favored the bill as a means to reduce the unemployment, to meet demand for new construction, and to encourage individuals to enter the trades. The representatives from Custer County did an outstanding job of promoting the legislation, for according to an Omaha World Herald article:

To half a dozen spirited members of the Broken Bow Chamber of Commerce should go the unicameral medal for the slickest piece of lobbying this season. They performed a miracle when they roped enough votes in the Senate last week to pass their bill authorizing establishment of an industrial trade

school in their thriving city and got a 53 thousand dollar appropriation to boot.

When crusading enthusiasm and sheer persuasion failed, they relied on telegrams from business friends in various parts of the state to turn in the votes. Veteran lobbyists stood by in open mouthed amazement.¹⁵⁴

The enthusiastic supporters from Broken Bow effectively lobbied LB 364 to get the necessary votes for passage. Senator Haycock, as a member of that support group, was particularly influential in its success. He was part of the majority Democratic leadership in the House in the 1935 legislature, chairman of the Committee on Committees, and a member of the House revenue committee before the change over to a unicameral system.¹⁵⁵ Although the Unicameral was non-partisan, he was a candidate for speaker in 1937 as the Democrats had a majority of twenty-two to twenty-one. He came in third.

The proposal to establish a vocational and trade school in Broken Bow did not generate a lot of discussion outside of the town. It did gain support from senators representing those counties with large cities and counties near Custer County. The proposal for this school began as a response to the increasing demand for men skilled in the trades and as a

¹⁵⁴"Panorama of Nebraska: Training of Youth in Trades Is Sought."

¹⁵⁵Nebraska Legislature, House of Representatives, Journal, 1 January 1935, p. 1.

means of providing an opportunity for many young men to become skilled and obtain well paying jobs. Broken Bow was seen by its supporters as an ideal location for a trade school. Since such a school did not exist in Nebraska, the proposed school benefitted the entire state. Opposition to the proposal centered on two basic issues. First, the state could not afford an expenditure of \$53,000 at this time. Second, if the state were to establish such a program, it would be better to locate it at one of the existing normal schools rather than build a whole new set of buildings. However the bill's fate rested with the governor.

On May 3, 1937, Governor Cochran vetoed the legislation. Although he sympathized with the supporters of the legislation, he believed that:

This education should be provided under our present educational facilities without establishing a new state institution, which once established, will be a fixed charge against the taxpayers in increased amounts for all time to come.¹⁵⁶

From the outset of the legislative session, the governor had indicated he was opposed to any new state construction, except for new facilities at the state mental hospitals.¹⁵⁷ As a result of the governor's fiscal conservatism, the trade school

¹⁵⁶"Vetoes School To Teach Mechanics," Lincoln State Journal, 4 May 1937, p. 14.

¹⁵⁷Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 7 January 1937, pp. 35-36.

legislation did not become law.

In expressing dismay at the governor's veto, the Custer County Chief reiterated the advantages of the establishment of a vocational trade school in Broken Bow.¹⁵⁰ After reviewing the advantages of such a school in Broken Bow, the newspaper suggested that:

A peculiar feature of the campaign to establish this school is that all opponents of the bill who took part in the discussion in the floor of the Senate declared themselves in favor of trade school training.¹⁵¹

Although most state senators favored the concept of trade school training, several had opposed it because of the cost and the belief that one of the existing normal schools could provide this type of educational opportunity. That the legislature approved the legislation over these objections was to have minimal significance since the governor vetoed the bill.

The concept of a vocational and trade school offering a variety of building and mechanical programs was the outgrowth of a need for such skilled workers. As the economy began to

¹⁵⁰"Nebraska's New Coach At Dinner Here Last Week," Custer County Chief, 6 May 1937, p. 1. (This title was incorrectly placed with the story. An article entitled, "Trade School Bill Doomed By Governor's Veto," discussed the new coach's visit on the same page).

¹⁵¹"Nebraska's New Coach At Dinner Here Last Week."

recover from the depression and the drouth subsided the demand for those services increased in Nebraska. A Broken Bow merchant who was president of the Public Service Club initiated the idea. He obtained the backing of the chamber of commerce and persuaded the local state senator to introduce the bill. The proposed legislation made the legislature conscious of the need for a vocational and trade school.

Supporters tried again in 1939 to establish the institution at Broken Bow. Although Senator Haycock did not return to the legislature in 1939, Senator Van Diest, whose district included Custer County, introduced a legislative proposal identical to LB 364. Broken Bow was not going to be the site of the first state vocational trade school.

Legislative Bill 196 (1939)

On January 26, 1939 Legislative Bill 196 (LB 196) was introduced into the Nebraska Unicameral.¹⁶⁰ It was a bill identical to Haycock's 1937 legislation. The bill provided for the appropriation of \$53,000 "or so much thereof as may be necessary for the establishment and operation of a vocational trade and industrial school for men and boys in the city of

¹⁶⁰Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 26 January 1939, p. 190.

Broken Bow, Custer County, Nebraska."¹⁶¹ This time the proposal languished in the legislature's Education Committee and eventually was indefinitely postponed. Thus no recorded vote on the proposal was ever taken, but an examination and comparison of the 1939 legislature with that of 1937 indicated why the legislation made no progress.

First, Senator Haycock was no longer in the legislature, representing the Broken Bow district. His influence and stature as a former member of the leadership had been a driving force behind the success in 1937. Second, the legislation was referred to the Education Committee which did not include the senator from Custer County. Third, of the 9 members of the Education Committee, 4 had been members of the legislature in 1937, all of whom opposed LB 364 then, including the current chairman. Of the districts represented on the committee, the vote in 1937 was 5 against and only 3 in favor. Fourth, it was the chairman of the Education Committee who made the motion late in the legislative session to indefinitely postpone all bills not acted upon, including LB 196, from his own committee. Although the legislature in 1939 refused to establish a vocational and trade school in Broken Bow, the 1941 legislature did inally approve the

¹⁶¹Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 26 January 1939, p. 190.

establishment of a trade school.

Legislative Bill 148 (1941)

On January 28, 1941 State Senator Matzke introduced legislative Bill 148 (LB 148) to establish a trade school in Milford. This was a town within his legislative district and was approximately twenty miles southwest of Lincoln.¹⁶² The proposal provided that the soldiers' and sailors' home in Milford be transferred from the Board of Control of state institutions to the Board of Vocational Education for the purpose of creating the Nebraska State Trade School. The facility would be established initially with an appropriation of \$32,000 matched by \$71,000 in federal funds.¹⁶³

While the immediate emphasis would be placed on teaching the enrollees to fill the gaps in the defense program, the school would eventually branch out to include many other phases of vocational training.¹⁶⁴

Senator Matzke believed that the expanding defense programs required additional skilled workers. He suggested that for "every man educated in the mechanical trades there are five

¹⁶²Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 28 January 1941, p. 163.

¹⁶³"Matzke Proposes \$300,000 Plant Be Used to Train Skilled Men for Industry," Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star, 9 February 1941, p. 8.

¹⁶⁴"Matzke Proposes \$300,000 Plant Be Used to Train Skilled Men for Industry."

jobs waiting."¹⁶⁵ The proposed legislation provided for the immediate training of workers in defense related areas and future training in many other vocational programs.

The school would be open to young men and boys seventeen and older and offer a curriculum including: aircraft sheet metal work; general welding; radio operating, receiving, and service; blue print reading; drafting; and mechanical assembly related to aircraft. These offerings would help meet the needs of national defense programs and be available initially to men having mechanical experience. These men would first learn the various steps in aircraft assembly.¹⁶⁶ The proposed school was unlike any other in the state and filled a gap in Nebraska's educational system.

Several factors influenced the passage of LB 148, including the need for skilled workers, particularly in defense industries. Also contributing to support of the bill was the lure of matching federal funds, the proximity of Milford to the population centers of Nebraska, and the availability of an existing facility. The legislation from the beginning had virtually no opposition and passed the legislature without a negative vote. The governor signed the

¹⁶⁵"Matzke Proposes \$300,000 Plant Be Used to Train Skilled Men for Industry."

¹⁶⁶"S. and S. Home May Become Trade School," Milford Review, 13 February 1941, p. 1.

legislation and the Nebraska Trade School at Milford began operations on May 1, 1941.

The Nebraska Trade School began with an initial enrollment of twenty-four students. The curriculum included machine tool operation, electrical motor maintenance and armature winding, two courses in auto mechanics, one in auto electricity and carburetion and one in automobile engine, transmission and differential repair and one in foundry pattern making.¹⁶⁷ For the first time, Nebraska had a state school specifically established to provide vocational and trade education for its citizens.

The driving force behind the enactment of the proposal for the school was State Senator Matzke whose district included the town of Milford. Matzke sponsored the legislation "after lengthy study of the situation at Milford before reaching the conclusion that a state trade school was the answer to the problem."¹⁶⁸ The problem he alluded to was what to do with the soldiers' and sailors' home in Milford. In 1937, the legislature had closed the facility and moved the residence to Grand Island, but it was costing about \$3,000 a year to maintain. The facility contained in excess of twenty

¹⁶⁷"State Trade School Opened Thursday, May 1," Milford Review, 1 May 1941, p. 1.

¹⁶⁸"Legislative Hearings," Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), 7 February 1941, p. 9.

five acres and had eight main buildings generally in good repair. As a result, Matzke, proposed the establishment of a trade school in the facility.

In presenting the proposal to the Appropriations Committee, Matzke acknowledged the importance of the school for the defense program. He also emphasized the need to train young men who would return to their home towns and become successful businessmen. He further suggested that:

At present we are spending 97 percent of our education money to educate 8 percent of the people and that leaves only 3 percent to educate 92 percent. The people of the small towns are paying their share but they are not getting the benefits. It is an economic loss to the state to have those few that we do train leave the state for jobs and that is what is happening to a large number of our college graduates. This bill gives Nebraska youth a chance to become self sustaining and yet it does not interfere in any way with the schools that are now operating in Nebraska on taxpayers money.¹⁶⁹

The vast majority of expenditures for education in Nebraska benefitted a relatively few students. The proposal to establish a trade school in Milford did not take away from any students but provided opportunity for those who did not then have it.

Senator Matzke invited a number of witnesses to the legislative hearing on February 6, 1941 to testify on the

¹⁶⁹"School to aid youth in state," Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), 13 February 1941, p. 1.

LB 148. The witnesses included the vocational rehabilitation director, the acting director of the state vocational education department, the chief surgeon for the Orthopedic Hospital at Lincoln, the executive secretary of the Nebraska League of Municipalities, the director of the North Dakota State Trade School, the president of the Milford Junior Chamber of Commerce, a Seward businessman, and the president of the Nebraska Federation of Labor.¹⁷⁰ They all supported the legislation; no one spoke against it.

At the February 6 hearing on LB 148, J. R. Jewell, the state vocational rehabilitation director, explained the costs involved in establishing a state trade school at Milford. Sidney Owen, acting director of the state vocational education department, discussed the purpose of the state trade school.¹⁷¹ Jewell noted that converting the soldiers' and sailors' home into a state trade school for immediate operation would cost \$32,000, \$14,000 of which would be for instructors salaries and \$18,000 for construction work and repairs, and the state could receive \$71,000 in federal funds. This amount would run the school until July 1, 1941, at which time the state would need to appropriate \$100,000 for the biennium and would receive \$50,000 from the federal

¹⁷⁰"Legislative Hearings."

¹⁷¹"Legislative Hearings."

government. Owen, outlined the purpose and suggested that now was an opportune time to start the school because the demand for national defense workers was high. Owen said that officials of the Glenn Martin Bomber Plant, scheduled to open in 1941 in Omaha, were worried about a shortage of skilled labor in the Midwest.

In addition to the testimony of Jewell and Owen, the chief surgeon for the Orthopedic Hospital at Lincoln said he hoped the school would provide an outlet for children who graduated from the hospital but who were too young for the vocational rehabilitation programs. The executive secretary of the Nebraska League of municipalities suggested that "it would stop a lot of youths from loafing around pool halls," and the director of the North Dakota state trade school discussed the success of the school in that state since 1922.¹⁷² Following the testimony of these individuals, LB 148 moved quickly and without opposition through the Unicameral.

The legislature opened debate on LB 148 on February 14, 1941.¹⁷³ There were no objections to the bill as it was read section by section. However, Senator Crossland of Wayne, the location of one of the normal schools, reminded the

¹⁷²"Legislative Hearings."

¹⁷³"Trade school bill may get big support," Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), 15 February 1941, p. 4.

legislators that their first obligation was to existing educational institutions. In previous sessions, the legislature had cut the budgets of other educational institutions within the state. He noted that high schools and the normal schools also provided some vocational training. Despite these words of caution, the senator supported the legislation, as long as the state could afford the expense. During the debate the chairman of the Appropriations Committee offered an amendment which included a \$32,000 appropriation to equip and operate the facility until July 1, 1941. The Unicameral adopted the amendment unanimously.

Members of the legislature supported the trade school concept and appropriated funds for it. One amendment which called for the school to be self-supporting evoked substantial discussion.¹⁷⁴ Senator Greenamyre of Norfolk, who supported the legislation, proposed the amendment because discussions in committee implied that tuition would be sufficient to make the school nearly self-supporting. In addition, Norfolk established a locally supported junior college in 1941. Senator Grossland of Wayne supported the amendment because the public expected the school to function with minimal state funding. Senator Matzke did not oppose the

¹⁷⁴"Progress Made On Trade School Bill," Lincoln Star, 14 February 1941, p. 1.

amendment because it merely allowed the state board of vocational education substantial latitude in determining tuition rates, but opposition was strong in the Unicameral.

Those opposed to the amendment suggested several reasons for rejecting it. First, the state of Nebraska funded five institutions of higher education and did not require them to be self-supporting. Therefore, it was not fair to require the trade school to support itself through tuition.¹⁷⁵ Students received "cultural" education at the university and normal colleges with little or no tuition, but when a poor boy wanted to attend a trade school he had to pay the full cost. If the state trade school had to be self-supporting, then the other institutions of higher education should be required to do the same. Thus, to require the trade school to be self-supporting was unfair and discriminatory.

A second reason to reject the amendment was because there were "practically no young men learning any of the skilled trades and . . . it should be made as easy as possible to obtain admission to trade school."¹⁷⁶ The tuition needed to make the school self-sufficient might discourage attendance. Third, the cost compared to other state institutions was small. A refusal to spend \$50,000 for a trade school when the

¹⁷⁵"Progress Made On Trade School Bill."

¹⁷⁶"Progress Made On Trade School Bill."

legislature spent \$3 million on the university and over \$1 million on the normal schools would be unfortunate. And fourth, the requirement to be self-supporting might jeopardize the federal funds. Based on these reasons, the legislature defeated the amendment by voice vote. This meant that the trade school would operate like other state schools, that is, the state would be expected to supplement tuition from tax sources.

Once the amendment to require the school to be self-supporting was defeated, the legislature advanced LB 148 without a dissenting vote to the third and final reading on February 18, 1941.¹⁷⁷ At that time Senator Matzke stated that the purpose of the school was to provide long-term educational opportunity to Nebraska's young men who were unable to take advantage of other types of educational opportunities offered by the state and as a supplement to existing federal vocational training acts. He also believed that to be successful, the school needed to be located near Nebraska's population center but not in a large community.

The legislature approved the proposal thirty-eight to zero on March 27 and the governor signed it into law the next

¹⁷⁷"Trade School Bill Advanced for Review," Nebraska State Journal, 19 February 1941, p. 20.

day.¹⁷⁸ The legislation transferred control of the former soldiers' and sailors' home in Milford from the board of control to the state board of vocational education, and appropriated \$32,000, supplemented by \$71,000 in federal funds, to carry the school until July 1, 1941, at which time an additional \$50,000 matched by federal funds would be available. Although the legislature considered the needs of national defense the purpose of the institution was to plan and build

a more permanent stabilization in the state in the years when the current emergency will pass. Peace time economy is paramount in the mind of the introducer. . . . The main idea . . . is a Nebraska Trade school suited and adapted to the needs of Nebraska now and for the years to come—a school which will enable 90 percent of our boys who can not avail themselves of higher educational advantages to learn a peace time trade which will assist them in becoming worthwhile citizens.¹⁷⁹

Thus, the legislature established the school to provide long-term benefits to the state and to open educational opportunity to the majority of men and boys unable to attend other types of higher education. It allowed men and boys over seventeen to acquire useful and productive skills for the future. In the short run, it also met a more immediate need for defense

¹⁷⁸Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 27 March 1941, pp. 789-791.

¹⁷⁹"Trade school at Milford authorized," Nebraska State Journal (Lincoln), 28 March 1941, p. 13.

training. As the Milford Review noted, Senator Matzke was the individual responsible for the success of the legislation, legislation important to Milford and to the entire state because it filled a gap in the educational system.¹⁰⁰

Summary

The effort to establish a vocational trade school in Nebraska began in 1937, when citizens of Broken Bow initiated legislation to create a trade school in their community. The school, to have been started with a state appropriation of \$53,000, would have offered a variety of courses in the trades, such as plumbing, carpentry, and automotive. The proposal was approved by the legislature, but vetoed by the governor.

Supporters of the legislation argued that the school would provide training for individuals to fill the demand for skilled workmen, help alleviate the problems of unemployment, and encourage Nebraskans to stay in Nebraska and raise their families. Senators voting for the legislation tended to be from eastern and north central Nebraska and from urban areas where the need for tradesmen was high.

Opponents of the legislation believed that additional expenditures at a time of great economic distress was unwise.

¹⁰⁰"The Nebraska State Trade School Established At Milford," Milford Review, 3 April 1941, p. 1.

In addition, they believed that the function of the trade school, which they supported, could best be performed at one of the existing normal schools. Senators from western and southwestern Nebraska, essentially rural districts, did not support the proposal. These concerns were shared by the governor as indicated in his veto message.

In 1939, the same proposal to establish a vocational trade school in Broken Bow was introduced into the legislature. No action was formally taken on the proposal, and it was indefinitely postponed. A lack of leadership and opposition to the proposal by the Education Committee members and the committee chair doomed the legislation. But in 1941, legislation was introduced to establish a trade school in Milford.

The proposal for a trade school in Milford had virtually no opposition. The most controversial part of the legislative debate of the proposal was an amendment to make the school self-supporting. The school was perceived as providing long-term benefits by training men and boys in a variety of trades and met the immediate need for skilled workmen in defense-related areas. The legislation passed without a negative vote. After the governor's signature, the school opened May 1, 1941. Thus, by the time the United States entered World War II, the Nebraska legislature had provided a legal

foundation for public junior colleges and established a state run and financed trade school. Two elements of the technical community college system were in place.

Chapter Summary

The emergence of the junior college and increased interest in vocational trade education prior to World War II has been the result of changing societal forces, forces which affected the evolution of the educational system in Nebraska. The Nebraska legislature provided a legal foundation for public junior colleges in 1931 and established a state trade school in 1941. This chapter examined the effort to establish a legal foundation for these schools as the beginning of the technical community college system and identified societal changes, the debate issues, and significant individuals involved in the process. Many factors influenced the establishment of public junior colleges in Nebraska and the creation of a trade school.

During the period between World War I and World War II, society witnessed significant social, economic, political, and educational changes which influenced legislative behavior. There was truly a social revolution as established institutions, such as church and family lost power and society rebelled against authority. The state improved existing road surfaces and expanded the transportation system to provide a

better movement of goods across and within its boundaries. The economic recessions and depressions required greater government intervention, the political change from the dominate Republican Party to the Democratic Party represented a change in the philosophy of government, and the extension of adolescence through compulsory education and reduced child labor created needs in society to which the junior college and trade school could respond.

An analysis of the passage of Senate File 1, permitting public junior colleges, and Legislative Bill 148, which created the trade school at Milford, suggests several common elements about educational legislation in Nebraska during the inter-war years. First, both proposals were initiated by individuals interested in the development of their communities. Second, community support, particularly in the case of McCook and Broken Bow, was essential in obtaining legislative approval. The establishment of such booster colleges promoted the civic and economic growth of these communities. The economic interests, represented by the chamber of commerce and service clubs, were particularly significant in this regard. Third, in both instances the justification for the proposals was to fill a void in the educational system, a void created by the changing societal conditions. In the case of junior college legislation

concerns of distance and expense of attending existing state colleges and the university, as well as the desire for continued parental supervision, were important. But the trade school legislation responded to a need for skilled tradesmen due to the decline in the apprenticeship system, increased economic activity, and the growing international crisis in the late 1930s. The existing colleges and university were not prepared to meet these needs.

Fourth, leadership in the legislature is important. Positions of leadership within the legislature itself and on those committees which initially screened the legislation are a prerequisite for success. And last, at no time did the questions surrounding these proposals become partisan. Neither in the voting examined nor in public comments did the issues of junior college or trade school legislation have partisan overtones.

The strongest opposition to the junior college legislation came from existing educational institutions and businesses who feared the competition. Since no other public institution provided training in the trades at the time Legislative Bill 148 became law, this was not a concern when trade school legislation was discussed. But in the legislative effort for both types of schools, there were questions about additional governmental expenditures and

increased taxes. Although societal changes continued and accelerated after World War II, no significant legislative change in the postsecondary educational system in Nebraska occurred until the mid-1960s.

CHAPTER V.

THE TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

World War II was the catalyst for many social, economic, political, and technological changes. These in turn contributed to the growth of comprehensive community colleges and the passage of legislation which created them. The junior colleges, whose primary function had been college transfer and preprofessional training, evolved into comprehensive community colleges to serve more people and to provide a greater variety of programs and services. Not only did the comprehensive community colleges provide college transfer courses but they also provided vocational, technical, and community services. Although the move toward comprehensiveness began prior to the Second World War, the changes within the junior colleges during the war and subsequent social, economic, political, and technological changes within society after the war accelerated the process.

Nationally social, economic, political, and technological changes influenced the development of the comprehensive community college. Junior colleges increased educational opportunity through expanded course offerings and flexible schedules to meet war time needs and the needs after World War II. After World War II there was an immediate need to prepare adults for peace-time employment. In addition, the baby boom

of the late 1940s and 1950s increased the number of students enrolled in secondary education. The national government provided financial assistance to higher education through programs for veterans, national defense, and vocational technical education. Automation and computerization created a need for a trained work force. Employment by occupation shifted from laborer/agricultural worker to service, professional/technical, and clerical ones. Population increased by almost one hundred million. More students entered the educational system than ever before. These changes occurred within a period of general economic prosperity: low inflation rates, low unemployment, and economic growth. Social, economic, political, and technological change impacted the evolution of the community colleges after World War II nationally and in Nebraska.

In Nebraska the number of people employed as non-farm labor and farm laborers declined. Service, professional/technical, and clerical jobs increased. Agricultural employment fell but manufacturing, whole sale/retail, and service employment expanded. Nebraska became more urban and its total population increased every decade after 1940. School enrollments climbed. Nebraska experienced general economic stability as the value of agricultural and manufacturing production increased. The state adopted a sales

and income tax in 1967 and removed the state property tax. These forces in Nebraska created an environment in which the educational system changed.

Edmund Gleazer, the President of The American Association of Community and Junior Colleges recalled the forces at work:

The basic, inexorable, unmistakable fact and force to deal with is that of CHANGE-unparalleled and unprecedented change that perplexes the public, confounds the authorities, and demands response from education, one of its instigators.¹

The unprecedented changes during and after World War II required legislation to finance, organize, and create a public two-year postsecondary system.

By the time the United States officially entered World War II in 1941, the public two-year postsecondary institutions in Nebraska consisted of four locally controlled and financed junior colleges and one state run and financed trade school. No significant changes occurred between 1941 and 1965. Following legislative studies in 1960 and 1964, the 1965 Nebraska legislature enacted three pieces of legislation concerned with postsecondary education in Nebraska. Legislative Bill 581 (LB 581) created locally controlled and financed area vocational schools. Legislative Bill 482 (LB

¹Edmund J. Gleazer, Jr., The Community College: Values Vision & Vitality (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1980), p. 2.

482) provided for a state system of vocational technical schools. And Legislative Bill 176 (LB 176) authorized an additional state vocational technical school in Sidney. These laws substantially increased postsecondary opportunities in Nebraska, although the public postsecondary schools were not unified into a single system and lacked coordination.

In 1967, the Unicameral passed Legislative Resolution 82 (LR 82) which called for a legislative study of the coordination of postsecondary education in Nebraska. The study committee reported that because of the increase in college age youth, the competition for financial support from the state among the two-year postsecondary institutions, and greater demand for vocational technical education, postsecondary education needed coordinating.² The 1969 legislature responded to the study committee report and passed Legislative Bill 979 (LB 979).

LB 979 unified public postsecondary education and provided for greater coordination through the creation of community college areas. The governor vetoed LB 979 because he considered the plan too costly. In addition to the cost, he considered it unconstitutional. The attorney general of

²Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report of the Nebraska Legislative Council Committee on Coordination of Higher Education. Report No. 169. Lincoln: Author, November 1968.

Nebraska issued an opinion which stated that the transfer of assets from a junior college or vocational technical school to a community college area violated the Nebraska Constitution.²³ As a result of the debate over LB 979 in 1969 and the support of the existing junior colleges and vocational schools, the 1971 legislature enacted Legislative Bill 759 (LB 759).

LB 759 created eight technical community college districts. LB 759 required that all Nebraska counties join a community college district by 1973. In 1973 the legislature placed all counties who had not voluntarily become part of a community college district into the system and reduced the number of districts to six. Omaha and the Eastern Technical Community College districts merged in to a single district as did the Lincoln Technical Community College and fifteen southeastern counties. LB 759 created the current technical community college system in Nebraska, but the last major change in the technical community college system occurred in 1978.

The Unicameral assigned role and mission responsibilities to all elements of higher education within the state in a master plan through the passage of Legislative Bill 756 (LB 756) in 1978. As a result, Nebraska has a technical community

²³Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 24 July 1969, pp. 3140-3142.

college system which incorporated the state technical schools, the area vocational technical schools, and the junior colleges into six comprehensive community colleges under central coordination. Although LB 756 specified these schools' role and mission as well as established a state funding formula, they remained locally controlled.

Many factors influenced the passage of the various pieces of legislation that led to the creation of the statewide system. This chapter examines the evolution of the locally-controlled junior colleges and the state trade school in 1941 into a coordinated technical community college system, consisting of six technical community college districts. The social, economic, political and educational changes in the United States and Nebraska since 1941 are discussed; arguments for and against the legislative proposals which created the system are presented, groups and individuals significant in the process identified, and debate issues examined.

Social, Economic, and Political Changes During and After World War II

Social, economic, and political changes which occurred during and after World War II contributed to the growth of the comprehensive community college concept and the creation by the Nebraska legislature of a technical community college system. The effects of World War II on American society were

substantial. As a result the national government's role in higher education increased. The Truman Commission's study of higher education and increasing financial support for higher education changed the relationship between the national government and higher education. Changes in population and technology stimulated a demand for more comprehensive educational programs. During the war significant changes within the junior colleges themselves influenced their evolution into comprehensive community colleges. Through an analysis of 142 reports and articles published between 1940 and 1946, S. V. Martorana identified seven factors which "were determined to have significant implications for the future of junior college education."⁴ First, special student enrollments had increased from 15.2 percent (20,750 students) in 1938 to 64.8 percent (160,000 students) in 1945. Martorana concluded that junior colleges would provide services to all segments of the population, whether in or out of school, and thus popularized the junior colleges.⁵ Second, junior colleges included new and short courses which resulted in offerings that reflected changing community needs and emphasized flexibility. Third, junior colleges established

⁴S. V. Martorana, "Implications of Wartime Adjustments for Junior Colleges," Junior College Journal, 17 (1946):11-17.

⁵Martorana, p. 12.

advisory committees to ascertain the needs of instructional programs. This would improve articulation between levels of education and help junior colleges determine what services to offer.⁶ Fourth, college evening and summer programs, which were stimulated by demands of war industries, would continue to grow, responding to the demands of returning service personnel, youth, and displaced war workers and leading to year-round operation. Fifth, the use of instructors from industry and commerce would encourage junior colleges to hire instructors with practical work experience as well as the appropriate academic degree. Sixth, there was the need to train workers quickly during World War II. This had resulted in a variety of school-industry cooperative programs which would continue since they helped finance the education, permitted indefinite and continuous training, and led to immediate employment upon the completion of the training. And seventh, new junior colleges emerged from defense or veterans' institutes that were established during World War II.

Although these seven factors influenced the vocational and technical programs most directly, Martorana suggested that junior colleges should provide both preparatory and vocational technical educational opportunity.⁷ These factors indicated

⁶Martorana, p. 13.

⁷Martorana, pp. 11-17.

to him that junior colleges would make services more accessible to more individuals and would respond to the demands within the community. He believed that junior colleges would develop programs which would integrate general, theoretical, and practical training. Martorana concluded that "more complete democratization of junior college education appears to be the final result of all the adjustments noted."⁸ These adjustments made junior colleges more democratic in that educational services became more accessible and the services provided by the junior colleges met the demands placed on them. The junior college's primary purpose was to provide educational opportunity for those students beyond the secondary level but below the four-year college. The process of democratization opened educational opportunity to a large number of Americans after World War II.

This trend toward democratization promoted educational opportunity.⁹ Gilbride suggested that "perhaps the first decisive step of actual democratization was President Truman's Commission on Higher Education."¹⁰ This commission encouraged

⁸Martorana, p. 17.

⁹Sister M. James Francis Gilbride, O.S.U., "The Coming of the Community College to Ohio: The Enabling Legislation and the Founding of Cuyahoga Community College, 1946-1963" (Ph.D. dissertation, Kent State University, 1979), p. 51.

¹⁰Gilbride, p. 51.

increased educational opportunity and advocated strong vocational, technical, and general education in public two-year postsecondary schools. The commission suggested that the means of providing education services to the most people could be accomplished by community colleges, institutions created to serve the local community needs.¹¹ The community colleges opened educational opportunity to all citizens and made postsecondary education accessible to the poor and middle class and not just the wealthy.¹²

The President's Commission on Higher Education in 1947 recommended that community colleges expand educational opportunity to meet the changing needs of the community.¹³ To do this, the community colleges had to possess five characteristics. First, they had to undertake frequent surveys to determine the educational needs of the community and create the appropriate programs for its potential students. Second, these schools had to provide for alternative periods of attendance and provide cooperative procedures. Third, the general and vocational educational

¹¹President's Commission on Higher Education, Higher Education for American Democracy (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1947) vol. III, p. 53.

¹²Gilbride, p. 2.

¹³Alfred B. Bonds, Jr., "Community Colleges-The Next Major Step in American Education," Junior College Journal, 18 (1948):425-433.

effort had to be well integrated into a single program. Fourth, these schools had to continue to meet the needs of those students seeking transfer to other colleges and universities. And fifth, they had to provide comprehensive adult education programs. The commissions emphasis on community colleges encouraged their growth in the United States.

Gleazer suggested that changes in programs offered and the means of delivery continued into the sixties and seventies.¹⁴ He observed that community colleges changed the methods by which they made educational opportunities available in their communities through multiple locations and flexible times. The community college provided part-time programs for those who worked full-time and emphasized the preparation for employment or the improvement of job-related skills. In addition, both the financial support and the controls of the institutions became centralized within states. Consequently, the community colleges had made educational opportunity more easily accessible and available to more people.

Besides the changes in programs and means of delivery identified by Gleazer, the community colleges' origins and clientele influenced their growth. Jencks and Riesman

¹⁴Edmund J. Gleazer, Jr., The Community College: Values, Vision, & Vitality, pp. 2-3.

suggested that community colleges took advantage of: (1) a backlash against national institutions, (2) the resentment of lower-middle and working-class families against professional exclusiveness, and (3) the anxiety of adults caused by unsupervised young adults on residential campuses.¹⁵ In addition to capitalizing on this backlash, resentment, and anxiety, community colleges grew because of the clientele they attracted.

According to Jencks and Riesman, community college clientele came from four principal groups.¹⁶ These groups represented people who did not or could not attend a four-year college or university because they (1) wanted to stay home, (2) could not afford a four-year college or university, (3) had inadequate high school records, or (4) wanted less than a baccalaureate degree. Community colleges expanded because they provided

a safety valve releasing pressure that might otherwise disrupt the dominant system. It contains these pressures and allows the universities to go their own way without facing the full consequences of excluding the dull witted or uninterested majority.¹⁷

¹⁵Christopher Jencks and David Riesman, The Academic Revolution (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1977), p. 482.

¹⁶Jencks and Riesman, pp. 485-487.

¹⁷Jencks and Riesman, p. 492.

The community colleges attracted students because they released the four-year colleges and universities from responsibility of educating the less able or uninterested students.

Community colleges grew because of changes in their programs, methods of delivery, in response to negative attitudes toward four-year universities and colleges, and their willingness to admit students who could not or did not want to go to the university. In addition, during the 1950s and 1960s the national government took an active legislative role in higher education. It expanded its role in vocational technical education. These legislative initiatives created additional growth and development of two-year postsecondary institutions.

Congressional Legislation for Postsecondary Education

The growth and development of the comprehensive community college was greatly influenced by the increased participation of the national government in higher education, particularly, with regard to funding. This involvement began prior to World War II when the national government provided part-time employment for students between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five during the Great Depression. During World War II the national government extended loans to students. Moreover,

the passage of the G. I. Bill in 1944 represented a basic shift in national policy toward higher education.¹⁶ The G. I. Bill of Rights provided educational benefits for those service people who fought in World War II. These benefits were extended to Korean War Veterans in 1952. Then in 1966 and 1967, Congress provided benefits for Vietnam veterans and "all men and women who had been honorably discharged after six or more months of service in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, and Coast Guard since the original G. I. Bill expired on January 31, 1955."¹⁷ These benefits made it possible for many individuals to obtain postsecondary education, and the funding provided much needed resources for higher education.

In addition to veterans benefits Congress significantly enlarged financial aid to higher education in 1958 beginning with the enactment of the National Defense Education Act. Congress expanded its provisions with a series of laws and amendments culminating in the amendments passed in 1972. In general, these laws expanded the scope, function, and funding of the National Defense Education Act. They provided a variety of programs which funneled money into higher education either through students or directly to the educational

¹⁶Americo D. Papati, Education and the Federal Government (New York: Mason/Charter, 1975), p. 65.

¹⁷Papati, pp. 66-67.

institution.

The launching of Sputnik in 1957 provided a catalyst for the passage of the National Defense Education Act of 1958 (NDEA).²⁰ It was enacted to provide sufficiently trained manpower for national defense. The law provided low interest student loans, incentives to improve science and math curricula, and provided funds which had to be matched by the states "to train highly skilled technicians for occupations requiring scientific knowledge."²¹ Through regulations established by the United States Office of Education junior colleges and area vocational schools used these funds in their vocational and technical programs.²² The funds provided under NDEA were used to train and retrain thousands of highly skilled technicians, helped improve vocational and technical education, and increased understanding of technical education.²³ Congress continued to provide federal assistance through grants to higher education in the sixties.

Congress passed the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963. It provided grants for the construction of

²⁰Papati, p. 72.

²¹Papati, pp. 73-74.

²²Grant Venn, Man, Education, and Work: Postsecondary Vocational and Technical Education (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1964), pp. 115-116.

²³Venn, p. 118.

undergraduate academic facilities, 22 percent of which "must be allotted to the states for public community colleges and public technical institutes."²⁴. This was followed by the Higher Education Act of 1965 which encouraged the expansion of community services and educational programs. It also provided funds for developing institutions, 22 percent of which was to go to two-year colleges. The legislation provided grants, loans, and work-study programs for students. These laws updated and revised previous legislation and extended their provisions and increased the appropriations. For community colleges, however, the Education Amendments of 1972 were of particular interest.

Through the legislation passed in 1972, Congress encouraged greater coordination of higher education within the states, financially supported community colleges, and promoted occupational education. The amendments to the Higher Education Act of 1965, passed in 1972, included section 1202. This section resulted in the establishment of state coordinating commissions or 1202 commissions. These commissions included all types of postsecondary education (public, private, two-year, and four-year) in developing

²⁴Venn, p. 78.

statewide planning and coordination of higher education.²⁵ The law specifically excluded occupations considered professional or which required a bachelor's or advanced degree. Thus, the national government encouraged the expansion of educational opportunity in higher education by providing financial support both to the schools themselves and to the students. Some of these funds were earmarked specifically for community colleges and the development of occupational programs, but the Congress also enacted legislation specifically designed for vocational and technical education.

The national government's interest in vocational technical education which was not college level, began in 1917 with the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act. That bill appropriated funds which were to be matched by the states, to promote vocational and agricultural education as well as the preparation of vocational teachers.²⁶ Congress extended this law several times over the next forty years and increased the appropriations. But between 1917 and 1957 the legislation establishing the programs remained essentially unchanged in four areas. First, the courses were restricted to less than

²⁵James Watterbarger and Louis Bender, eds., New Directions for Higher Education Improving Statewide Planning (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1974), p. 12.

²⁶Lapati, p. 98.

college grade. Second, programs were weighted toward rural areas and courses were often in vocational agriculture and home economics subjects. Third, these funds were not available for capital expenditures or the establishment of programs that included related or general education. And fourth, the legislation required courses which put learned skills to practice, such as shop work or supervised farming.²⁷ Then in 1958, the National Defense Education Act made these basic provisions permanent. However, the financing of these laws resulted in a disproportionate share of the funds going to rural states with large farm populations. Nevertheless, an important outcome had been to increase and develop interest in technical education among educators, industry, and the public.²⁸

In 1961 President Kennedy initiated a study to review and evaluate the federal government's support of vocational education.²⁹ The study indicated a need for more training and retraining opportunities because of the increased number of youth entering the labor market and the need for skilled workmen. The President recommended two changes: increased funding for training and retraining programs in force, such as

²⁷Venn, p. 114.

²⁸Venn, p. 118.

²⁹Lapati, p. 105.

the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962 and a new grant-in-aid program for vocational training.

Congress passed the Manpower Development Training Act in 1962 in recognition of the national need for trained workmen to meet the needs of the new technologies.³⁰ It authorized the creation of programs for the unemployed and the underemployed. However, as the study initiated by President Kennedy indicated, the approach embodied in the Manpower Development and Training Act alone was inadequate to meet the need for skilled workmen.

The grant-in-aid program advocated by Kennedy became law after his death. President Johnson signed the Vocational Education Act of 1963 on December 18, 1963. This act authorized grants to states to maintain existing programs, helped to develop new programs, and provided part-time employment to those students who needed the income to continue with their vocational technical education.³¹

Congress passed two additional laws which had particular significance for the emerging role of the federal government in vocational education. The Vocational Education Amendments of 1968 provided federal funds for vocational education for high school graduates or dropouts who sought work and/or

³⁰Venn, p. 119.

³¹Venn, p. 107.

wanted to advance professionally.⁹² In addition, the act provided funds for vocational guidance and counseling. The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973 combined several of the previously enacted manpower programs and made them more responsive to local needs.

After World War II, Congress expanded the scope of the federal government's involvement in postsecondary education through a variety of programs. It provided funds to help veterans attend school, assisted in the national defense effort, and encouraged the growth of vocational and technical programs. Congress responded to the need for skilled workmen with additional programs and increased substantially the funding for them and assisted individuals in obtaining additional education. A larger work force and new technology created that need.

Technological Changes

The changing technological and manpower needs of society created an environment for change. The affluence and abundance in American society

hides the spreading blight of social crisis in America--a crisis compounded by insufficient economic growth, a rising number of unemployed, increasing racial tensions, juvenile delinquency, swelling public welfare rolls, chronically

⁹²Venn, pp. 114-115.

depressed areas, an expanding ratio of youth to total population, and a growing disparity of educational opportunity. At the center of the crisis is a system of education that is failing to prepare individuals for a new world of work in an advanced technological society.³³

Thus, education, while not the only solution to these socioeconomic problems, was where "the tragic cycle of low economic growth, unemployment, automation, and inadequate education can best be broken. . . ."³⁴ The technological changes in automation and computers required an expansion of educational opportunities to overcome these social and economic problems.

The technology of the post-World War II period changed rapidly. These changes included: (1) the development of nuclear power; (2) space exploration; (3) television; (4) high-tech electronics and the microchip revolution; (5) robotics; (6) the development of new pesticides, herbicides, and hybrids; and (7) biotechnology (manipulation of plant and animal genetics).³⁵ In addition to these changes, the road system improved and an interstate system was built. By 1973 82 percent of the interstate system was completed, and

³³Venn, p. 157.

³⁴Venn, p. 157.

³⁵Alan I. Marcus and Howard P. Segal, Technology in America: A Brief History (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1989), pp. 315-346.

all but 1,000 miles done by 1986.³⁶ In Nebraska, World War II also provided an impetus for the improvement and expansion of the road system.

Because of concern for national security, the national government designated a Strategic Network of Highways.³⁷ These highways received priority for supplies and maintenance. In Nebraska these highways included: (1) US 75 from Omaha to the Kansas border, (2) US 30 from Omaha to the Wyoming State Line, and (3) US 281 from South Dakota to O'Neill, then US 275 from O'Neill to Norfolk, and US 81 from Norfolk to the Kansas border. In 1941 the first four-lane road in Nebraska was built from South Omaha to Fort Crook, the location of the Martin Bomber Plant which produced B-29 aircraft. Despite the priority for national defense, only 44 percent (4,050 miles) of Nebraska's 9,119 miles of highways were paved by 1944.³⁸

After World War II road materials were scarce and Nebraskans were unwilling to increase the gas tax or vehicle registration fees to finance road construction. In 1950, Nebraska voters defeated a gas tax increase (207,408 to

³⁶Marcus and Segal, pp. 340-341.

³⁷George F. Koster, A Story of Highway Development in Nebraska (Lincoln: Department of Roads, 1986), p. 44.

³⁸Koster, p. 49.

195,130) and an increase in the motor vehicle registration fee (202,098 to 186,854).³⁹ Nebraskans refused to provide financing for road construction even though about 5,000 miles of the state system were gravel.

The national government initiated a massive road building program in the 1950s. The Federal-Aid Highway Act in 1956 established a highway trust fund to finance and complete the interstate highway system within 16 years. The law required only 10 percent matching funds from the states and helped states meet their transportation needs. Interstate 80, which stretched from Omaha west to Lincoln and then followed the Platte River Valley through Grand Island, North Platte, and Sidney, was completed in 1974. In 1967, the Unicameral proposed a constitutional amendment to permit the issuance of bonds for highway construction. The amendment was approved by a vote of 224,927 to 208,758.⁴⁰ The bond sale generated 20,000,000 dollars cash for highway construction. In 1970, the highway system in Nebraska consisted on 8,909 miles of hare-surfaced roads, 782 miles graveled, and 34 miles dirt surface. By 1980 all but 201 miles (gravel) of the 9,880 miles of the Nebraska highway system was hard-surfaced. Improved roads in Nebraska increased the mobility of

³⁹Koster, p. 58.

⁴⁰Koster, p. 80.

Nebraskans and made education more accessible.

The technology after World War II, including an expanded highway system, expanded the need for vocational and technical education. A study in 1964, sponsored by the American Council on Education, suggested that

VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION have recently assumed a new importance in this country. The dramatic rise in youth unemployment and under-employment, the shortage of badly needed personnel in many technical, semiprofessional, and skilled occupations, the retraining and continuing education needs of workers displaced by automation, and the rising demand for new educational opportunities both at the secondary and postsecondary levels have forced a re-examination of this nation's long-standing neglect of occupational education.⁴¹

According to the report, if postsecondary education did not quickly assume a greater role in the preparation of men and women for changing technology; the economic and social damage would be irreparable.⁴²

The rapid change in technology created a demand for trained individuals and reduced the ability of unskilled workers to obtain employment. Table 5 suggests that between 1950 and 1960 employment that required skills increased substantially, while unskilled positions and farm related jobs declined dramatically. Professional and technical employment showed the greatest percentage increase nationally in the

⁴¹Venn, p. v.

⁴²Venn, p. 1.

fifties. Although this increased substantially in Nebraska, the largest percentage increase was in the area of services. Nevertheless, the nation and Nebraska both needed more skilled workers and less laborers and farm workers.

Table 5. Employment by Occupation in the United States and Nebraska: 1950 and 1960

Occupation	1950		1960		Percentage Change 1950-1960	
	US	Nebr	US	Nebr	US	Nebr
Prof/Tech	701,000	41,000	1,323,000	52,000	88.9	26.8
Sales	428,000	35,000	658,000	36,000	53.7	2.9
Clerical	1,585,000	53,000	2,097,000	67,000	32.2	26.4
Managers	691,000	44,000	892,000	48,000	29.0	9.1
Service	273,000	42,000	287,000	59,000	5.1	40.5
Laborers (Non Farm and Mine)	1,269,000	29,000	1,038,000	21,000	(18.2)	27.6
Farms Mng. & Laborers	150,000		109,000			27.3

Source: "Vocational Training For Industry in the Northern Plains: Northern Natural Gas Company Areas Development Project," Omaha, Nebraska, 1965, Appendix E (Tables 2 and 3)

An examination of the trends by industry in Nebraska also suggests a decline in a need for unskilled workers. Table 6 indicates that between 1940 and 1970, the number of agricultural workers in Nebraska went from 161,954 to 77,513, a decline of over fifty percent. During the same period manufacturing, wholesale/retail, and service industries all

expanded numerically and as a percent of the workers. The decline in farm-related jobs and concurrently the increase in manufacturing, services, and wholesale/retail encouraged individuals, particularly those seeking first time employment,

Table 6. Employment by Industry in Nebraska: 1940, 1960, and 1970

Industry	1940		1960		1970	
	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)	(%)
Agriculture	161,954	37.4	111,425	21.2	77,513	13.2
Manufacturing	29,725	6.9	64,135	12.2	76,653	13.1
Whole Sale/ Retail	74,489	17.2	102,537	19.5	125,501	21.4
Services	31,000	7.2	111,513	21.2	148,048	25.0

Source: The United States Census, 1940, 1970, and 1980

to leave the rural areas and move to larger towns and cities where jobs were more plentiful. Even though there were many job openings, the lack of nonagricultural skills reduced employment opportunities and unskilled workers found it difficult to secure full-time employment.

In addition to the problem of skills matching available jobs, population trends after World War II created other problems. Since the fifties, Nebraska and the United States experienced positive population growth and both became more urban. Table 7 compares the change experienced nationally and in Nebraska between 1940 and 1980. In general, the growth

rate nationally, as a percent, was greater than in Nebraska but the change in urban population, as a percent of the total, increased more dramatically in Nebraska. In 1960, 64 percent of the national population was urban, 46.9 percent in Nebraska. By 1980, 73.7 percent nationally was urban, but 62.9 percent in Nebraska. The increase in population and the growth in urban areas meant that an increasing number of workers needed training to acquire the skills necessary to obtain a job in the city.

Table 7. Population Trends for the United States and Nebraska: 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, and 1980

UNITED STATES			
	Population	Percentage Change from Previous 10 years	Percentage Urban
1940	132,165,000	7.3	56.5
1950	151,326,000	14.5	64.0
1960	179,323,000	18.5	69.9
1970	203,302,000	13.4	73.5
1980	226,546,000	11.4	73.7
NEBRASKA			
1940	1,316,000	(4.5)	39.1
1950	1,326,000	.7	46.9
1960	1,411,000	6.5	54.3
1970	1,485,000	5.2	61.5
1980	1,570,000	5.7	62.9

Source: The United States Census: 1970 and 1980

Although Nebraska's population increased and became more urban, the change in population was unevenly distributed within the state. During the post-World War II period, 16 of Nebraska's 93 counties experienced steady growth and reached their highest population in 1980. However, counties recorded their peak population in 1930 or before. By 1980 the 16 counties which experienced steady growth contained 66 percent of the state's population but only 16 percent of the land area. They represented the state's more populous and economically diversified counties and were near Interstate 80 or the Platte River.⁴³ Several of the growth counties contained communities who had an interest in additional postsecondary educational institutions. This included the cities of Kearney, Omaha, Grand Island, Ogallala, North Platte, Norfolk, and Columbus.⁴⁴

The change in population influenced enrollments in schools as the post-war baby boomers began to move through the educational system. In Nebraska in 1950 there were 60,000 students in secondary education, but by 1970 that number had climbed to 97,000. The larger secondary enrollments increased the potential for college and postsecondary educational

⁴³Nebraska Blue Book 1986-1987 (Nebraska Legislative Council, Lincoln, 1987), p. 796.

⁴⁴Nebraska Blue Book 1986-1987, pp. 798-800.

demands.

In addition to an increased number of students within the educational system, a relatively stable and prosperous economy opened educational opportunities to more people. The United States economy adjusted well after World War II, although inflation was a problem as the economy expanded to provide jobs for individuals previously employed in war-related industries. But overall, prices and unemployment remained relatively stable during the fifties and sixties, even though there were recessions in 1958 and 1961. Nebraska's economy remained stable during this period and Nebraskans enjoyed prosperity.

The period of Nebraska history between 1940 and 1965 was described by James Olson as "A Quarter-Century of Prosperity."⁴⁵ By 1965 a whole generation of Nebraskans had been

born and reared to maturity without having experienced the trials that at sometime or other beset every previous generation in the history of the state.⁴⁶

Unlike the economic distress experienced prior to World War II, the Nebraska economy and its people were prosperous.

According to Olson, this prosperity resulted from

⁴⁵James C. Olson, History of Nebraska (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 328.

⁴⁶Olson, p. 328.

several factors.⁴⁷ First, with the exception of 1943, 1955, and 1956, the state received normal or near normal rainfall. And between 1945 and 1965, the number of acres irrigated increased from approximately 874,000 to 2,900,000. Second, crop yields increased significantly. Third, livestock production increased. Fourth, higher prices raised farm income to record highs, rising from less than one \$500 million to over \$1.5 billion in the sixties. The farm population declined but urban population increased by almost fifty percent. Manufacturing increased, the number of employees in manufacturing rose from 47,000 in 1947 to 66,000 in 1963, and wages increased from \$119,9230,000 in 1947 to \$352,000,000 in 1963. In general, Nebraska experienced a stable economic environment after World War II.

Until 1967, the primary source of revenue in Nebraska for state and local government was the property tax. But the 1967 Unicameral changed Nebraska's tax system by enacting the state's first sales and income taxes. The legislature agreed to changes in the tax structure as part of Governor Tiemann's plan to attract new industry into the state and broaden the tax base.⁴⁸ According to Dr. Floyd Miller, Commissioner of

⁴⁷Olson, p. 328.

⁴⁸"Governor Views Success, Failures," Omaha World Herald, 21 July 1967, p. 37.

Education, enactment of the sales and income tax provisions was the most significant piece of legislation in 1967.⁴⁹ Nebraska's period of prosperity following World War II was not without problems, however. One of those problems was how to expand the educational system to accommodate new students and new social expectations. The solution was elusive until the sales and income tax revenues made the expansion possible.

Prior to 1967, the primary source of school support in Nebraska was the property tax. General state aid to elementary and secondary education had not existed since 1907.⁵⁰ But the 1967 Unicameral passed legislation which provided state aid to public education and public junior colleges. These changes were also part of the plan to attract business to Nebraska. State aid to junior colleges allowed the junior colleges to expand their physical facilities, accommodate increased enrollments, and provide more terminal programs.⁵¹

Nebraska's five junior college are now providing terminal programs for about one-third of their students. The national trend is for junior colleges to provide terminal programs for two-thirds of the

⁴⁹"Development of Nebraska Education 1854-1967," Prepared for Dr. Floyd A. Miller, Commissioner of Education, by Mrs. Ginger Jensen, January 1968, p. 155, unpublished report.

⁵⁰Olson, p. 336.

⁵¹"Junior Colleges Feel Growth Pains," Omaha World Herald, 28 March 1967, p. 11.

students enrolled.⁵²

The expanded financial role of state government made it possible for Nebraska's junior colleges to provide additional educational opportunity for its students.

Between 1941 and 1975, there were significant changes in America's social, economic, and political system. These changes had a dramatic impact on public two-year postsecondary education and influenced the passage of the legislation which expanded the educational opportunity at that level. The necessities of war influenced the evolution of the junior colleges into comprehensive community colleges, colleges created to make education more accessible to more people. This democratization process increased expectations for educational opportunity. In response, the national government became more involved in both higher education and vocational technical education. Through a variety of acts, Congress provided funds to individuals, institutions and states to encourage the expansion of educational opportunity and participation. In addition, population changes after World War II increased the demand for educational facilities as the baby boomers progressed first through the elementary and secondary levels and then by the mid-1960s entered college and the work force. The technological trends created a

⁵²"Junior Colleges Feel Growth Pains."

dramatic decline in the demand for unskilled farm and industry laborers. The expanded highway system increased individuals mobility. As a result government officials, specifically legislators, faced significant choices in the educational areas, particularly in two-year postsecondary education.

The Study of Higher and Vocational Education:
1959 to 1963

Social, economic and political changes after World War II led the Nebraska Unicameral to make education in general, and vocational technical training in particular, more available and to provide vocational and technical training through the creation of a technical community college system. This system was to provide transfer, vocational technical, and community service programs. These programs were to be in response to public demand for greater educational opportunity, the need for skilled workers as technology reduced the job opportunities for unskilled workers, and increased enrollments in the Nebraska educational system. During the 1955-1956 school year there were 253,173 students enrolled in public schools. By 1963-1964 enrollments were 312,157, and increase of over 23 percent. Support for the programs offered in the technical community college system required state action because of the inability or unwillingness of local government to provide the necessary funds. The Nebraska legislature

acted and created a system of technical community colleges in response to these changes.

The initial action leading to the creation of the technical community college system in Nebraska was the passage of Legislative Resolution 33 (LR 33) in 1959. The resolution called for a study of higher education in Nebraska by a legislative study committee. According to LR 33 Nebraska needed the study for three reasons.²³ First, higher education had become increasingly important to the people of Nebraska. Second, institutions of higher education continued to demand and compete for additional funds. And third, no study had been conducted recently to develop and integrate a plan for higher education within the state. The study proved to be a catalyst for changes in postsecondary education in Nebraska. It initiated a dialogue within and between interested communities and among the legislators through the involvement of educators and legislators in the study. They studied two significant points: financing public education and the need for additional vocational technical programs. As a result of this dialogue five bills were introduced in 1963 to establish five additional state-governed and state-financed trade schools. These schools were to be located in Sidney, O'Neill,

²³Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 11 May 1959, pp. 1563-1564.

Grand Island, North Platte, and Ogallala. Each community lobbied for its particular bill. However, the legislature did not approve any new state operated vocational technical schools in 1963 because the Unicameral passed Legislative Resolution 7 (LR 7).

LR 7 provided for a legislative study of the need for vocational technical education in Nebraska. Based on the report generated by LR 7, the Unicameral in 1965 established a second state vocational technical school in Sidney, and provided for a system of additional state trade schools, such as the one in Milford. In addition the legislature enacted permissive legislation which allowed the establishment of locally controlled and financed area vocational technical schools. These legislative acts were the first structural changes in the public two-year postsecondary schools since the establishment of the state trade school in 1941 at Milford.

The leaders of Nebraska's colleges and universities agitated for changes in postsecondary education.³⁴ Factors, such as large projected enrollment increases, curricular changes, and finances, worried the educators. They discussed their concerns with members of the legislature in 1958 and requested legislative action. As a result, the Unicameral

³⁴Lyman A. Glenny, The Nebraska Study of Higher Education (Lincoln, Nebraska: Legislative Council, January, 1961), p. xi.

passed Legislative Resolution 33 (LR 33) in 1959.

LR 33 called for a legislative study of higher education in Nebraska. It was introduced by Senators Marvel, Syas, and Otto. Marvel lived in Hastings and was in the insurance business; Syas was from Omaha and by occupation a machinist for Union Pacific Railroad; and Otto was a contractor from Kearney.⁵⁵ The three communities each contained at least one institution of higher education. A state teachers college was located in Kearney. At Hastings there was a private four-year school, and in Omaha several private colleges as well as the Municipal University of Omaha. Because of the location of institutions of higher education in their communities, these senators had a vested interest in the direction that higher education in Nebraska should or would take.

LR 33 was approved by a 26 to 6 vote. The bill established a Legislative Council Committee on Higher Education to examine higher education in Nebraska.⁵⁶ According to the resolution, such a study was needed because of the increased importance of higher education to the people of Nebraska, the increased demand for funding of higher

⁵⁵Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 1959, p. iv-vi.

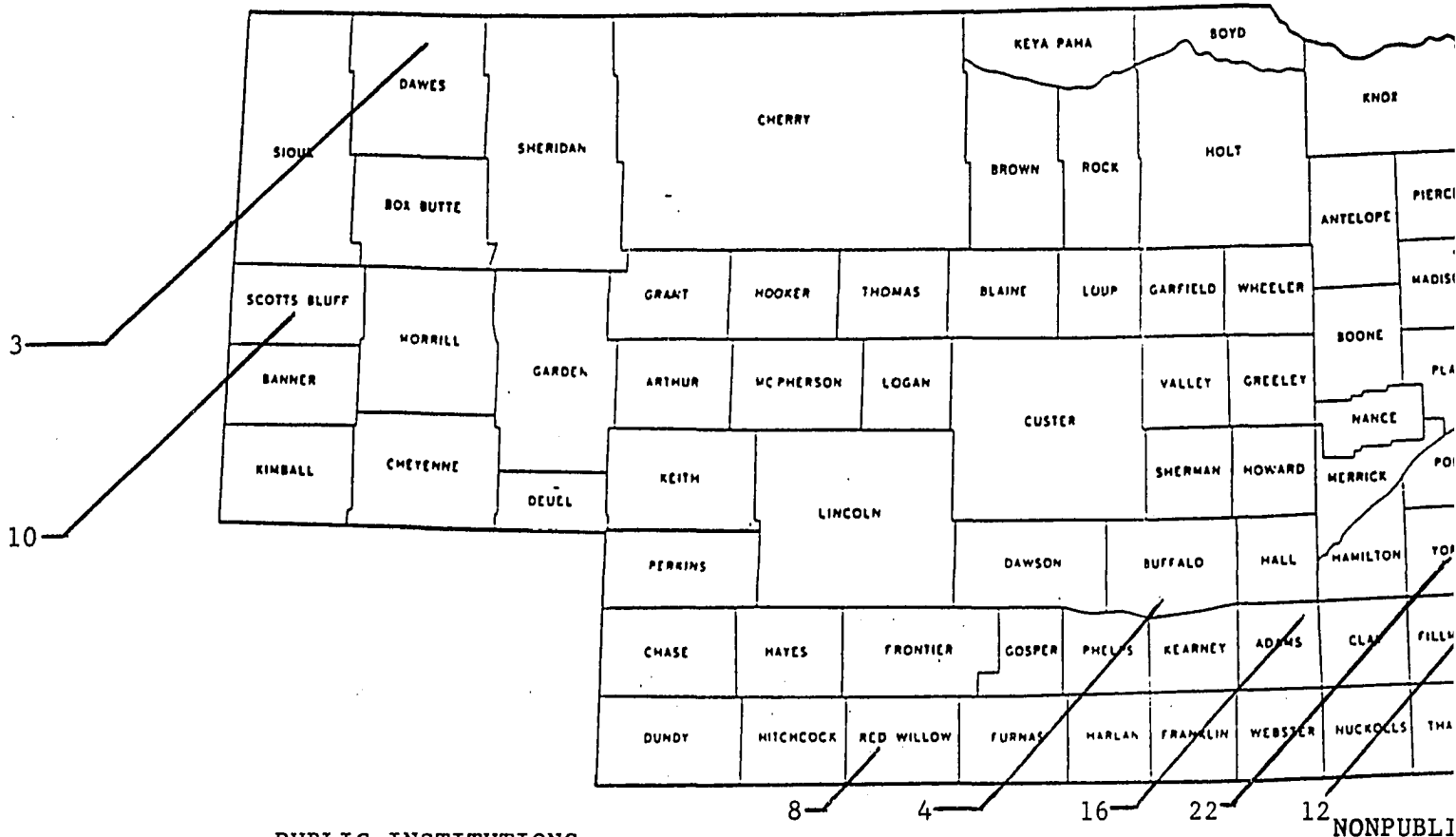
⁵⁶Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report of the Nebraska Legislative Council Committee on Higher Education. Report No. 110. Lincoln: Author, January 1961, p. 1.

education, and the absence of any recent study on higher educational needs.

The Unicameral appointed seven members to the Study Committee, charging them with the examination of the facilities, faculties, and enrollments of public and private institutions of higher education and to examine the interaction between these institutions. In addition, the Committee examined Nebraska's needs for the next ten years and explored the methods of financing these needs.⁵⁷

The Committee was chaired by Senator Marvel. All senators serving on the Committee had some type of institution of higher education in their district. No member was from the district in which the University of Nebraska in Lincoln was located. The committee engaged Lyman A. Glenny, Associate Professor of Government at Sacramento State College, to direct the study. Under his leadership the committee evaluated ten public institutions of higher education and twelve non-public institutions (See Figure 2 for their locations). They examined eleven areas of interest to higher education: the institutions of higher learning in Nebraska, college enrollments and projections, student academic affairs, institutional programs, faculty, finances of institutions, physical facilities, economic prospects of Nebraska, the

⁵⁷Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report No. 110.



PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

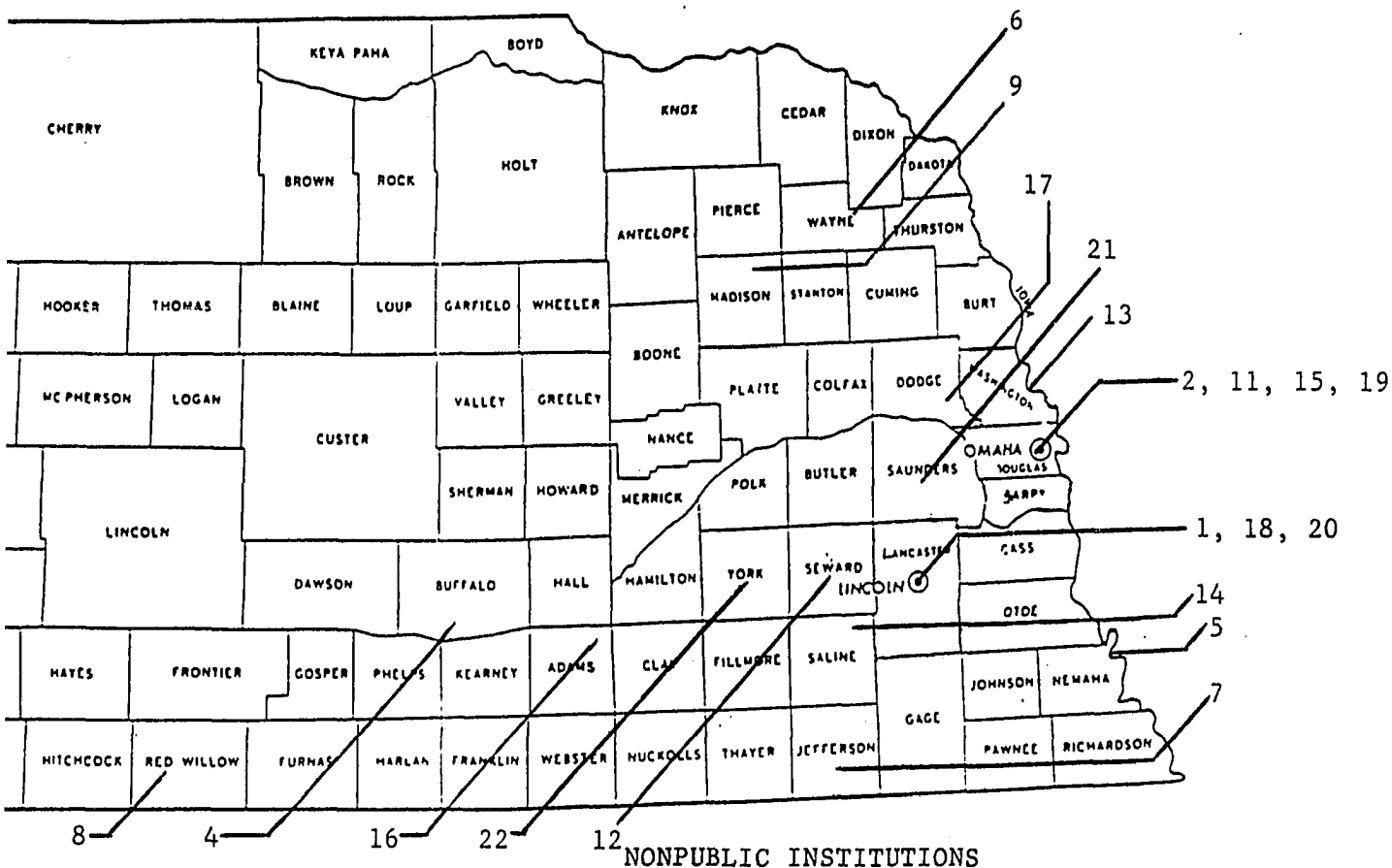
- | | |
|--|--------|
| 1. University of Nebraska - Lincoln | (1871) |
| 2. University of Omaha - Omaha | (1908) |
| 3. Chadron State College - Chadron | (1911) |
| 4. Kearney State College - Kearney | (1905) |
| 5. Peru State College - Peru | (1866) |
| 6. Wayne State College - Wayne | (1891) |
| 7. Fairbury Junior College - Fairbury | (1941) |
| 8. McCook Junior College - McCook | (1926) |
| 9. Norfolk Junior College - Norfolk | (1928) |
| 10. Scottsbluff Junior College - Scottsbluff | (1928) |

NONPUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

- | |
|---|
| 11. Creighton University - Omaha |
| 12. Concordia College - Sedgewick |
| 13. Dana College - Blair |
| 14. Doane College - Crete |
| 15. Duchesne College - Omaha |
| 16. Hastings College - Hastings |
| 17. Midland College - Fremont |
| 18. Nebraska Wesleyan College - Lincoln |
| 19. College of St. Mary - Lincoln |
| 20. Union College - Lincoln |
| 21. Luther Junior College - Lincoln |
| 22. York Junior College - York |

Figure 2. The Location and Founding Dates of Public and Nonpublic Institutions





- | | | |
|--------|---|--------|
| (1871) | 11. Creighton University - Omaha | (1878) |
| (1908) | 12. Concordia College - Seward | (1905) |
| (1911) | 13. Dana College - Blair | (1899) |
| (1905) | 14. Doane College - Crete | (1873) |
| (1866) | 15. Duchesne College - Omaha | (1886) |
| (1891) | 16. Hastings College - Hastings | (1882) |
| (1941) | 17. Midland College - Fremont | (1919) |
| (1926) | 18. Nebraska Wesleyan College - Lincoln | (1888) |
| (1928) | 19. College of St. Mary - Omaha | (1923) |
| (1928) | 20. Union College - Lincoln | (1891) |
| | 21. Luther Junior College - Wahoo | (1923) |
| | 22. York Junior College - York | (1956) |

g Dates of Public and Nonpublic Institutions of Higher Education as of 1960



public junior college, the government of collegiate institutions, and state responsibilities. The resulting report, also known as the Glenny Report, made fifty-seven recommendations. Particularly significant for public two-year postsecondary education were the reports, observations, and recommendations concerning junior colleges. The study did not include the state school at Milford because it was of less than college grade.

Four areas of the report pertinent to Nebraska junior colleges were: (1) the location of the junior colleges, (2) the programs offered, (3) enrollments and enrollment projections, and (4) financing. The report noted that two of the four junior colleges were located in the western half of the state. No private public colleges were located in the western half of Nebraska. There was only one public four-year college at Chadron in extreme northwest Nebraska. Three of the four junior colleges were in counties which bordered other states.⁵⁶ The western half of the state was virtually void of higher educational institutions.

According to the report, the junior colleges in Nebraska ascribed to the four functions: (1) college transfer, (2) terminal programs, (3) adult education and community service,

⁵⁶Lyman A. Glenny, The Nebraska Study of Higher Education, pp. 1-2.

and (4) guidance and counseling. The report asserted that, in reality, junior colleges only provided college transfer curricula. The junior colleges confined their vocational and trade offerings to accounting, business, and secretarial science. Nebraska's junior colleges did not

provide terminal programs in engineering, electronics, mechanics, aeronautics, or other fields of a truly technical nature such as are found in junior colleges in industrial states.⁵⁹

The lack of terminal programs in the technical area was because of the limited financial base of the colleges and the expensive nature of many technical programs.

Because of these findings, the committee recommended three changes. First, the report recommended that:

The junior colleges of the state continue to provide two-year liberal arts and preprofessional programs for students who wish to transfer to four-year institutions, but make greater effort toward fulfilling the functions of providing technical-terminal and adult education programs, and effective guidance and counseling services.⁶⁰

Second, the study found that the junior colleges had only two major sources of income, tuition and local taxes. These colleges had increasing difficulty in raising the necessary funds for expansion of facilities and course offerings.

⁵⁹Lyman A. Glenny, The Nebraska Study of Higher Education, p. 68.

⁶⁰Lyman A. Glenny, The Nebraska Study of Higher Education, p. 100.

According to the report, the local tax levy for the four junior colleges doubled between 1955 and 1959. Because of the difficulty of obtaining financial support, the study committee recommended that the state provide aid to public junior colleges in the amount of \$100 a year for each full-time-equivalent student.⁶¹ Third, the report urged the state Department of Education to study the occupational needs of Nebraska and to determine what vocational technical programs were most suitable.⁶² The study examined the financial resources of the junior colleges and their curricular offerings. It recommended the expansion of technical terminal adult education programs supported with state funds.

The report of the Legislative Council's Committee on Higher Education also contained enrollment projections. Using 1950 and 1959 figures, it projected an increase of 15,605 students, 80.3 percent, in higher education by 1970. Using the actual number of high school graduates over a four-year period as a base, the study projected increased enrollments in eastern Nebraska, in central Nebraska along the Platte River, and to a lesser degree, in the north central areas. Moreover, sixty percent of the increase would be in Douglas (Omaha) and

⁶¹Lyman A. Glenny, The Nebraska Study of Higher Education, p. 105.

⁶²Lyman A. Glenny, The Nebraska Study of Higher Education, p. 105.

Lancaster (Lincoln) counties because of their large population base.⁶³ Thus a substantial number of students would be entering higher education in Nebraska throughout the 1960s.

The Glenny Report projected a substantial increase in the number of students, recommended the addition and expansion of vocational and technical offerings of junior colleges and advocated state aid. The Legislative Council accepted 34 of the 57 report recommendations, including state aid for junior colleges, and a study of occupational needs in Nebraska. The legislature took no action on most of the recommendations. However, they discussed the prospect of establishing more vocational technical schools like the one at Milford. As a result they approved additional funds for expansion of programs at Milford because it was at capacity and turning away prospective students.

In 1963 Legislators introduced five separate bills each of which called for the establishment of state supported vocational technical schools in five different communities. Each bill patterned the school after the one at Milford. The five communities were: Sidney, Grand Island, Ogallala, O'Neill, and North Platte. Sidney, Grand Island, Ogallala, and O'Neill developed brochures which touted the advantages of

⁶³Lyman A. Glenny, The Nebraska Study of Higher Education, pp. 16-17.

locating a second vocational technical school in their particular communities and offered various incentives, such as free land or the use of local facilities. None of the five proposals became law because the Legislature created a study committee through Legislative Resolution 7 (LR 7) to examine vocational needs within the state before establishing a new trade school in any particular community. The Education Committee hearings gave local communities the opportunity to identify the need for more vocational and technical training and promote their own areas for the establishment of a second state trade school. During 1963 a variety of changes in postsecondary education were proposed and discussed in the Unicameral, but the legislature decided to study further the need for additional vocational technical schools within the state.

The need for additional vocational and technical training had been discussed by business groups in communities, such as Sidney and Grand Island, prior to the 1963 legislative session. The Unicameral developed a heightened interest in vocational technical education during that session. According to Ross Rasmussen, Chairman of the Unicameral's Education Committee from 1963 to 1967, the interest occurred for several reasons. First, the cost of funding locally supported services became too expensive. Second, many of the community

leaders were veterans. They pressed for educational opportunity in their communities since many of them had received benefits through the G. I. Bill.⁶⁴ And third, businesses demanded technically trained workers who would stay in small communities. Many businessmen complained that the rush toward higher education meant that the most qualified individuals were in college and not available for local businesses. The burden of high property taxes and business demand for skilled workers combined with new leadership in some communities to generate considerable interest in additional vocational technical schools in Nebraska.

Bernard Gyger, the Director of Vocational Technical and Adult Education in the Omaha Public School System from 1946 to 1964, was also the school district's lobbyist during that period. He suggested that the underlying motivation for legislation to create additional vocational and technical schools in 1963 was the need for skilled workmen because of the increased demand for consumer goods.⁶⁵ According to Gyger, every community had a business interest in vocational technical training. The programs at Omaha's Technical High School provided businesses with a good source of beginning

⁶⁴Ross Rasmussen, Interview with author, 21 June 1988, Hooper, Nebraska.

⁶⁵Bernard Gyger, Interview with author, 15 July 1988, Omaha, Nebraska.

employees. Since the smaller communities could not bear the financial burden of vocational technical programs, they came to the state for help. Under the provisions of the NDEA, both the Omaha Technical High School and the State Vocational Technical School at Milford were designated area schools and received federal vocational education funds. The NDEA provided funds if (1) a school enrolled students who were not served by vocational technical programs, (2) offered defense related programs, and (3) was of less than college grade.⁶⁶ Gyger believed that the legislative initiatives in 1963 to establish additional state trade schools, resulted from the demand for educational opportunities that local entities could not afford, the need for skilled workers, and the desire of businessmen for their communities to prosper and grow as a means of enhancing the local areas.

In his inaugural address of January 3, 1963, Governor Morrison suggested that Nebraska needed more vocational technical education. Changes in the structure of the Nebraska economy and changing school enrollment patterns created that need.⁶⁷ Nebraska's growth depended upon agriculture. Because farming units had consolidated and agriculture had mechanized,

⁶⁶Venn, pp. 115-116.

⁶⁷Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 3 January 1963, pp. 55-71.

new job opportunities were needed to retain the states population.⁶⁹ The 1964 high school graduating class in Nebraska would be the first class of the war babies and would be twenty percent larger than the preceding 1963 class. He also noted that the 1965 class would be almost twenty-five percent larger than the 1964 one.⁷⁰ Thus, increased enrollments in schools and the structural changes in the Nebraska economy necessitated the creation of more jobs.

According to the governor the state realized "the importance of attracting other industries . . . and giving encouragement to the expansion of our domestic industrial economy."⁷¹ The new emphasis on economic development meant a new emphasis on technical education and expanded technical programs.

For those seeking post-high school graduate work in strictly technical fields we must provide adequate instruction at Milford and expand similar programs not only to our high schools but in our junior colleges and other institutions throughout the state. In approaching this problem let us be reluctant to spend money for additional buildings until we have adequately staffed and equipped

⁶⁹Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 3 January 1963, p. 56.

⁷⁰Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 3 January 1963, p. 60.

⁷¹Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 3 January 1963, p. 56.

existing facilities.⁷¹

Because the governor opposed a general sales or income tax to pay for additional government services, he argued that the state lacked the funds necessary for the construction of new facilities. The state should make use of what was available.

In 1963 five communities, Sidney, Ogallala, North Platte, Grand Island, and O'Neill proposed the establishment of state-governed and state-financed trade schools in their communities. Figure 3 indicates the location of these five communities. Each community wanted to be the first in with legislation and hoped that this would enable them to get a trade school, if and when the legislature authorized one. The initiation for the promotion came from the local chambers of commerce and/or industrial development organizations of each city. The cities proposed the establishment of vocational technical schools based on need, location, community attributes, and facilities.

Sidney

On May 15, 1962 the Sidney Chamber of Commerce and the Rural Area Development Committee sponsored a public meeting to discuss a trade school in Sidney. They were aware that one of

⁷¹Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 3 January 1963, p. 61.

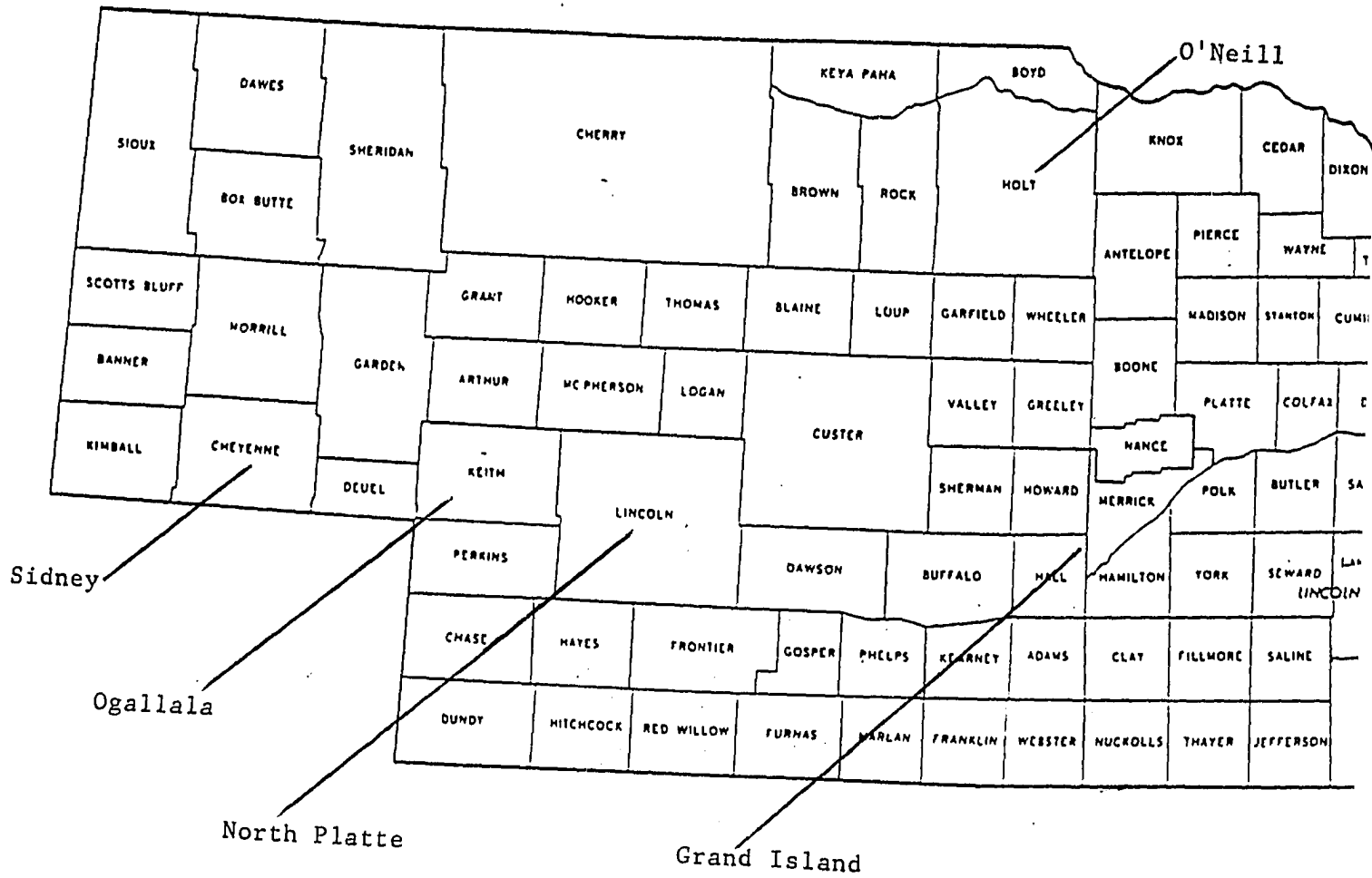
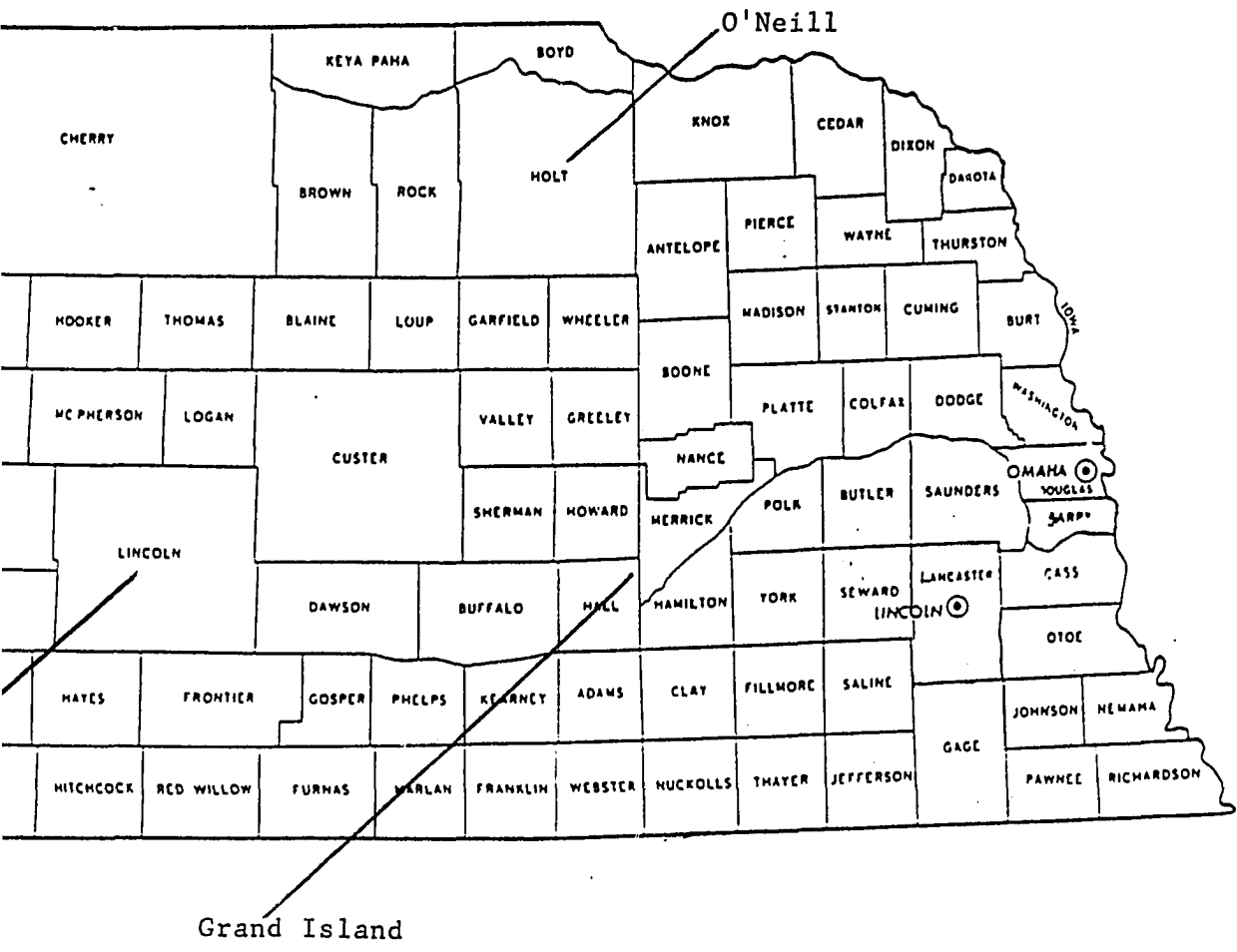


Figure 3. Location of Five Communities Who Sought a State Trade School in 1963



ties Who Sought a State Trade School in 1963

the leading issues in the 1963 legislature was likely to be the establishment of a second trade school in western Nebraska.⁷² The Sidney Chamber of Commerce and the Rural Area Development Committee wanted to get an early lead on other communities to insure that, if an additional school was established, it would be in Sidney. The state senator from Sidney, George Fleming, told the meeting that the legislature had discussed additional trade schools during the 1961 legislative session. As a result, he believed numerous bills would be introduced in 1963. Therefore, he advised Sidney to be prepared.⁷³

To familiarize themselves with the trade school concept, the Sidney Chamber of Commerce sponsored a bus trip to tour the school at Milford and arranged to have a breakfast with Governor Morrison. On their return, they visited the Republican gubernatorial candidate, Fred A. Seaton.⁷⁴ The tour attracted 23 businessmen from Sidney.⁷⁵ At a meeting following the tour, a series of committees were established to

⁷²"Trade School Meeting Here Wednesday Nite," Sidney Telegraph, 18 May 1962, p. 1.

⁷³"Sidney Group Interested In Trade School," Sidney Telegraph, 18 May 1962, p. 1.

⁷⁴"Trade School Inspection Trip Seen As Essential to Program," Sidney Telegraph, 28 May 1962, p. 1.

⁷⁵"Eastern Nebraska 'Invasion' Seeks State Trade School Data," Sidney Telegraph, 4 June 1962, p. 1.

develop "an effective program for presentation to the state, if and when the legislature should decide that another trade school is needed."⁷⁶ The chair of the legislative committee was Gerald Matzke, a Sidney Lawyer and son of the founder of the Milford School. The Sidney businessmen decided to pursue the establishment of a state trade school in their community.

Senator Fleming of Sidney announced plans on December 28, 1962 to introduce legislation for the establishment of a trade school in Sidney.⁷⁷ At that time, he said:

There is a great need for a school providing technical and vocational training in Western Nebraska. It is certain that the state of Nebraska will need to establish several such schools within the next few years to meet its responsibility to our young people.⁷⁸

Because of the need for technical and vocational training in western Nebraska Senator Fleming believed that the legislature would create such a school in a few years, and it should be in Sidney.

To promote Sidney as a site for an additional vocational technical school, the Sidney Chamber of Commerce prepared a brochure that extolled the benefits of locating a new school

⁷⁶"Trade School Drive To Get Additional Effort; Committees Named," Sidney Telegraph, 15 June 1962, p. 1.

⁷⁷"Sidney Trade School Bill To Unicameral," Sidney Telegraph, 28 December 1962, p. 1.

⁷⁸"Sidney Trade School Bill To Unicameral."

in Sidney.⁷⁹ The brochure emphasized the need for a vocational technical facility in western Nebraska, identified Sidney as the transportation hub of the area, and boasted of its other attributes. In addition, the city offered a forty acre site for the school at no cost to the state.

According to the brochure, western Nebraska needed a vocational technical school for two reasons.⁸⁰ First, a fall 1962 survey of 460 schools by the Vocational Division of the Nebraska Department of Education indicated that 449 seniors would have enrolled in a vocational technical program if it had been closer to home. However, because of the distance to Milford, none of them had planned to attend the vocational technical school. Second, according to the 1960 census, there were 2,955 males between the ages of 18 and 20 in the 27 counties of western Nebraska. If 50 percent of the male high school graduates attended college, the remaining half (approximately 1,500 over a three year period) might be interested in postsecondary education but not at the baccalaureate level. Because of its location on two major US highways 30 and 385 and the presence of air and rail

⁷⁹"Sidney Pushes Bid For Technical School Location," Sidney Telegraph, 7 January 1963, p. 1.

⁸⁰"The Case For A Western Nebraska Technical Vocational School At Sidney, Nebraska," unpublished brochure obtained from Senator Ross Rasmussen.

transportation services a vocational technical school in Sidney would be accessible to most people in western Nebraska. In addition, the Sidney Chamber of Commerce brochure included pictures of the city park, hospital, municipal pool, a local bowling alley, and one of twenty churches.

Sidney presented its case before the Education Committee in public hearing on February 15, 1963.^{¶1} Forty citizens went by bus to lend their support. The Sidney Chamber of Commerce organized the trip and Gerald Matzke was selected as the spokesman for the group. At the public hearing Matzke stressed the need for the postsecondary education "to teach skills that will keep Nebraska youth home" and cited Milford as an example of what had been done.^{¶2} He indicated that land would be available without cost to the state, that Sidney's location was ideal for serving people in the panhandle, and that "with ample housing, recreation and transportation facilities the town seemed to have many attributes which would recommend it for the location of a technical training center."^{¶3} Although there was no opposition to the proposal

^{¶1}"Sidney Pushes Bid For Nebraska Trade School; Matzke Stresses City Offer of Good Location," Sidney Telegraph, 15 February 1963, p. 6.

^{¶2}"Sidney Pushes Bid for Nebraska Trade School; Matzke Stresses City Offer of Good Location."

^{¶3}"Sidney Pushes Bid For Nebraska Trade School; Matzke Stresses City Offer of Good Location."

during the hearing, Bernard Gyger, representing the Omaha Public School District, indicated that Omaha would be happy to establish such a school itself. Although no legislation was formally introduced to that end, Omaha became a prospect for an additional vocational technical school.

Grand Island

Although Sidney had been discussing the possibility of a vocational technical school for sometime, Grand Island was the first to announce publicly plans to initiate legislation to establish a vocational technical in its community. On December 27, 1962, the chair of the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce's Education Committee and other prominent citizens held a press conference. They proposed the location of a second trade school at the Cornhusker Ordnance Plant in Grand Island.⁶⁴ At that time a brochure of twenty pages and thirty "plates" or exhibits was distributed and it was announced that copies had been sent to each legislator. The committee recommended that the Ordnance Plant be renovated and the trade school established there.

The brochure, "A Challenge to Nebraskans The Need for Additional Trade School Facilities for the State of

⁶⁴"Trade School Pushed," Grand Island Daily Independent, 27 December 1962, p. 1.

Nebraska" was prepared jointly by the Education Committee of the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce, the Grand Island Kiwanis Club, and the public and parochial schools of Grand Island.²⁵ The brochure contained information organized into five types: the need for additional trade schools, Nebraska's future industrial growth, the quality of the Milford School, the Ordnance Plant facilities, and the transportation advantages of Grand Island.

In presenting a need for additional trade schools in Nebraska, the brochure reviewed the success of the Milford Vocational Technical School, and noted that as of May 1962, the school was full and had a waiting list of 456 applicants. Most of the students who attended Milford came from the southeastern and southcentral portion of Nebraska. The brochure further noted that an overwhelming number of the students at Milford came from smaller communities. Only about ten percent came from Omaha and Lincoln, primarily because Omaha and Lincoln had successful vocational education programs in their high schools.

In March 1962, Grand Island surveyed four hundred and

²⁵"The Need for Additional Trade School Facilities for the State of Nebraska," A cooperative study by the Education Committee of the Grand Island Chamber of Commerce, the Grand Island Kiwanis Club and the Public and Parochial Schools of Grand Island, unpublished brochure obtained from Senator Ross Rasmussen.

fifty public and parochial school superintendents, excluding those in Omaha and Lincoln. They requested information about the senior class of 1962.⁸⁸ The survey results presented the state divided into three sections: western, central, and eastern. The responses from 199 school superintendents (44 percent) showed that 988 students indicated a desire to attend a trade school. Results identified 206 students in the Western Section (21 percent), 454 students in the Central Section (45 percent), and 328 in the Eastern Section (34 percent). The survey report also contained in the brochure indicated a need for at least one additional trade school that was centrally located to serve both ends of the state. The brochure urged the Unicameral to act because by 1965 there would be a 63 percent increase in 12th graders (17,620 in 1962 to 27,540 in 1965).

In examining Nebraska's future industrial growth the brochure made several observations. First, the state of Nebraska on the average lost 8.7 percent of its population per county through out migration. Several counties lost over 25 percent. Second, technology had changed the number of workers needed in agriculture and eliminated many jobs. Third, additional trained workers were needed. Fourth, the ratio of

⁸⁸"The Need for Additional Trade School Facilities for the State of Nebraska."

college students to trade school students was 33:1. Nebraska could not attract industry without trained workers. The 20 to 24 age group was the largest out-migration group in the state. The state spent 37 times more tax monies on academic training than it did for vocational and technical education. And fifth, Nebraska needed to develop a pool of skilled workers to attract industries to the state.

The Grand Island brochure also discussed the satisfactory performance of the Milford school and described the Ordinance Plant facilities and the cost of converting the Ordinance Plant to a vocational school. The brochure described Grand Island as the transportation crossroads of Nebraska. It was served by two transcontinental highways, airline service of four daily flights, and two major railroads with passenger service. Grand Island, then, was the ideal place for locating a second trade school because:

1. Grand Island seems to be a happy compromise between the western section of the state with its vast geographical areas and sparse populations and the eastern section of the state with its preponderance of population.

2. Grand Island is adequately served with a transportation network of roads and highways, rail and bus transportation and airways that reach into the four corners of the state.

3. Grand Island's proximity to the industry concentrations of the state also provides a selling point to those students desiring a vocational education as well as the employers of the state in

manufacturing and service industries.⁶⁷

Support for a trade school in Grand Island came from a variety of sources. The president of the Grand Island Industrial Foundation suggested that a major obstacle to obtaining industry was a lack of skilled labor.⁶⁸ A trade school would help alleviate that problem. The owner of Farrall Instrument Company in Grand Island wrote "that there is a larger labor supply in Nebraska, however this labor is useless to us because they are not trained for technical work."⁶⁹ In addition, he noted that

We have discussed this problem with a number of technically oriented companies in Nebraska. Most of them agree that if they were asked by a company interested in locating in this area this lack of properly trained workers would be a major disadvantage for any company.⁷⁰

Without additional vocational technical schools, the large reservoir of labor could not be utilized and companies would not locate in Nebraska for lack of skilled workers.

Public support also came from the Central Chapter of the Nebraska Welfare Association. The association urged the state

⁶⁷"The Need for Additional Trade School Facilities for the State of Nebraska, p. 20.

⁶⁸"Trade School Pushed."

⁶⁹"G. I. Trade School Backing Is Sought," Grand Island Daily Independent, 7 January 1963, p. 3.

⁷⁰"G. I. Trade School Backing Is Sought."

legislature to "make available more vocational and technical training facilities in Nebraska and expressed belief that for reasons of economy and location a trade school should be located at Grand Island."¹ The association believed that, by making people more self-sufficient, expenditures for welfare could be cut.

On February 21, 1963, Grand Island argued its case before the Education Committee of the legislature.² A Grand Island spokesman emphasized the need for additional trade schools and focused on the facilities available at the Cornhusker Ordnance Plant. The estimate for renovation of the ordnance plant was about \$146,000, while a new facility would cost \$681,760. The Hastings and Kearney chambers of commerce also attended the hearing and supported the Grand Island proposal.

Ogallala

Soon after Grand Island and Sidney publicized their decisions to try for a state trade school, Ogallala State Senator Don McGinley announced that Ogallala would also seek a

¹"Approval Urged for School Here," Grand Island Daily Independent, 15 February 1963, p. 1.

²"Measures Argued," Grand Island Independent, 22 February 1963, p. 1.

state trade school.²³ Although he did not describe details of the bid initially, he suggested that Ogallala's presentation to the Education Committee would be impressive. According to the Keith County News, Ogallala would emphasize to the Unicameral its recreational facilities, assistance from local industries, and its location. US Highway 26 to northwestern Nebraska began in Ogallala, U.S. Highway 30, a major east-west road, and north-south State Highway 61 passed through Ogallala.²⁴ In addition, Ogallala was 125 miles from the state's western border. Because of the recreational facilities, assistance from local industry, and its proximity to several U. S. highways, Ogallala was an ideal location for another state trade school.

Ogallala presented its case before the Education Committee on February 21, 1963 and supported the presentation with a booklet.²⁵ Eight Ogallalians assisted in the presentation. They were: the chamber of commerce president, vice-President and manager; the president of Ogallala Civic Improve Association; two industry leaders; the public school curriculum coordinator; and Frank B. Morrison, Jr. The

²³"McGinley To Introduce Trade School, Redistricting Plan," Keith County News, 31 December 1962, p. 1.

²⁴"McGinley to Introduce Trade School, Redistricting Plan."

²⁵"Ogallala Presents Trade School Testimony At Unicameral," Keith County News, 21 February 1963, p. 1.

presentation was made in three parts: need; available technical assistance; and site, tuition program, housing, recreation, and facilities.

Supporters of the Ogallala trade school cited a Nebraska Department of Education study indicating there was as much interest in the western three sections of the state as in the eastern three sections for technical training. They noted that one Ogallala firm had a backlog of 200 job applicants who were denied jobs because they lacked the necessary technical training. Any location west of Ogallala would serve only the Panhandle, while anything east of Ogallala would be too far away from the Panhandle.

The businesses of Ogallala which employed technical workers offered to help a trade school located in Ogallala. They offered to provide equipment, employment opportunities, and the use of staff for lectures. In addition, Ogallala offered a 40 acre plot of land at no cost to the state and made available a 500 seat lecture hall in the new High School. The supporters discussed recreational opportunities for students and staff in the area, offered a tuition loan program through two local banks, and identified housing available for students.

Ogallala's booklet, "A Trade School At Ogallala To Serve Nebraska" was divided into six parts: The Need, The

Facilities, Technical and Business Assistance, The Tuition Loan Program, Housing, and Business and Economic Information.⁷⁶ The brochure suggested that Nebraska's two largest cities, Omaha and Lincoln, provided vocational and technical education but that small towns and rural areas did not. The Milford Trade School was overcrowded with a long waiting list. New workers brought quantity, not quality and the migration from the farms to the cities increased the need for trained individuals. Thus the changing work force made vocational and technical education very important. The work force would increase 14.5 percent during the 1960s. The highest unemployment and lowest wages were projected to be among the 14 to 24 age group. By 1965, there would be 7 jobs for every 5 professional or technically trained individuals but only 3 jobs for every 5 unskilled workers. The booklet concluded that the trade school should be located in Ogallala for six reasons. First, the work force had changed. Second, eastern Nebraska had vocational and technical education available but western Nebraska did not. Third, a survey indicated that there was as much interest in the western three districts of Nebraska as in the eastern three districts. Fourth, most students came from small rural communities and

⁷⁶"A Trade School At Ogallala To Serve Nebraska," unpublished brochure obtained from Senator Ross Rasmussen.

Ogallala was located to best serve those students. Fifth, Ogallala was located at the vortex of the three western districts and possessed transportation links with the rest of the state. And sixth, the city had available buildings, industrial assistance, and recreational facilities.

Following the Ogallala presentation, J. R. Jewell, the first director of the State Vocational Technical School at Milford suggested that:

there would have been no Western Electric plant in Lincoln were it not for the Milford Trade School. There also would have been no Martin Bomber Plant in Omaha but for vocational training offered at Omaha Technical High and Milford. . . . The question is not if a school is built but where and when . . . the when is now and the where is up to the Education Committee. Nebraska needs more than one more trade school. ¶7

Several plants and many jobs had been created because of the availability of vocational training in eastern Nebraska, but the opportunity for such training was needed throughout the state and it was needed now.

O'Neill

The town of O'Neill presented its story to the Education Committee on February 21, 1963. It was the same day that Grand Island and Ogallala appeared before the committee. At

¶7 "Unicameral Is Expected To Kill Or Advance Trade School Bills This Week," Keith County News, 25 February 1963, p. 1.

that hearing, Senator Frank Nelson of O'Neill argued that the demand for vocational and technical training around O'Neill was great. He "urged committee members to ask themselves whether institutions such as a trade school 'should be concentrated in one area or spread out over the state to serve all the population.'"⁹⁹ O'Neill needed the type of educational opportunity offered by a trade school and urged the Unicameral to locate one in O'Neill

O'Neill prepared a booklet entitled, "O'Neill Hub of North Nebraska."⁹⁹ The booklet, which consisted of black and white photographs of the city, the hospital, post office, and country club, presented a very general argument for locating the trade school in O'Neill. There was a need.

As our community is primarily farming and ranching and as we all know the operation of these type of units is becoming fully mechanized, we have a definite need for our youngsters to acquire vocational skills. O'Neill has been trying for years to induce Industry into this area. But without a source of skilled labor to supply these industries they have been cool towards our locality."¹⁰⁰

O'Neill needed a trade school to help its local citizens acquire marketable skills and to attract new industry. Using

⁹⁹"Measures Argued."

⁹⁹"O'Neill Hub of North Nebraska," unpublished brochure obtained from Senator Ross Rasmussen.

¹⁰⁰"O'Neill Hub of North Nebraska, pp. 5-6.

a report from the State Education Office O'Neill projected that a school in O'Neill could possibly serve 3,200 boys. A narrative emphasized the cities location, the lack of vocational technical schools in North Central Nebraska, intense new construction, and offered forty acres without cost to the state. O'Neill bid for a trade school for two reasons. First, the mechanization of agriculture created a need for skilled workers. And second, O'Neill needed to create a supply of skilled laborers to attract industry to the community.

North Platte

In addition to the legislative proposals to establish a trade school in Sidney, Grand Island, Ogallala, and O'Neill, a proposal to establish a trade school some where west of North Platte was introduced by Senator Craft of that community. Craft's bill did not specifically designate North Platte as a trade school site. Rather than prepare justification for locating a school there, the North Platte Chamber of Commerce and the North Platte Development Corporation opposed bills to create such a school in Grand Island, Ogallala or O'Neill.

At the urging of the Development Corporation in North Platte, Senator Cecil Craft introduced Legislative Resolution 7 (LR 7) to establish a study committee. Although Craft had

offered to introduce legislation to establish a trade school, members of the North Platte Development Corporation board believed such a proposal would be defeated because it would be one of many proposals.¹⁰¹ The board members felt that a scientific study was in order to determine such an important issue. "To have a school located through 'Chamber of Commerce enthusiasm' as Craft put it, might be convenient and beneficial to one city but detrimental to the state as a whole. . . ." ¹⁰² Nevertheless, the president of the North Platte Development Corporation suggested that there was a need for a second trade school in Nebraska. North Platte was the logical choice since it was some distance from Milford, situated in the west central part of the state.

Each community presented its case before the Education Committee of the Unicameral. However, the legislature had passed Legislative Resolution 7 (LR 7), calling for a study of the needs for additional vocational technical training. This bill lessened the likelihood that the Unicameral would choose to locate a trade school in any of the interested communities. Despite the expectation that the legislature would not authorize any trade schools in 1963, the Education Committee

¹⁰¹"Platters to Hearing On School," Telegraph-Bulletin, 18 February 1963, p. 1.

¹⁰²"Platters to Hearing On School."

hearings were held. They served to educate committee members and the Unicameral about the need for vocational technical education in Nebraska.

Legislative Resolution 7

The 1963 Unicameral debated the expansion of vocational technical education in Nebraska. Several bills were introduced to establish additional state vocational technical schools in a variety of communities. The Education Committee did not report any of the bills out for consideration by the Unicameral. However, this session of the legislature produced a Legislative Council Committee to study the need for vocational technical schools, through Legislative Resolution 7 (LR 7). According to the resolution, the committee was to study the vocational technical needs of Nebraska and recommend the location of any additional vocational technical schools if they were needed.

The Legislature's Committee on Vocational Technical Schools consisted of seven members of the Unicameral: Senator Orme, Chairman, from Lancaster County (Lincoln); Senator Bowen, representing Franklin, Webster, and Nuchols counties; Senator Claussen, from Wayne County; Senator Danrow from Gage County; Senator Syas from Douglas County (Omaha), Senator Kremer representing Clay, Hamilton, and Polk counties; and Senator Adamson, representing Cherry, Brown, and Sheridan

counties. Six of the seven members were from the eastern third of the state, only Senator Adamson represented the western two-thirds. Each senator's district either included an institution of higher education or bordered a county which did. Senator Orme's district included the University of Nebraska, Senator Claussen's the state college in Wayne, and Senator Syas's the Municipal University in Omaha. Senator Bowen's district was directly south of the State College in Kearney, Senator Danrow's east of Fairbury Junior College, Senator Kremer's east of Grand Island, and Senator Adamson's east of the state college in Chadron.

In its report issued in November 1964, the legislature's Committee on Vocational Technical Schools noted that the biggest problem for youth in Nebraska was qualifying for, getting, and keeping a job.¹⁰⁹ Jobs which required college degrees employed only twenty-five percent of the labor force, yet schools and colleges provided offerings primarily directed toward those occupations. The report concluded that:

We cannot allow machines to displace men, either in agriculture or industry, without providing those men with the opportunity to find and qualify for other employment. We cannot allow it because it deals with the welfare of human beings, with the future of our resources and our youth and adult citizens, with principles and ideals relating to

¹⁰⁹Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report on the Need for Vocational Technical Schools in Nebraska. Report No. 139. Lincoln: Author, November 1964, p. 4.

human dignity and with values we regard as vitally important.¹⁰⁴

These changes necessitated training that provided jobs and reduced unemployment.

The Legislature's Committee on Vocational Technical Schools studied the vocational technical needs of Nebraska. It obtained information about vocational technical education from the university, junior colleges, and private college colleges and consulted with professional educators, such as the chancellor of the university, the deans of junior colleges, and the commissioner of education. The Committee conducted hearings in Alliance, Broken Bow, Chadron, Columbus, Curtis, Grand Island, Hastings, McCook, Norfolk, North Platte, Ogallala, Omaha, O'Neill, Scottsbluff, Sidney and Wahoo, cities who had either expressed an interest in a vocational technical school or appeared to be a logical site for one. At these hearings in the sixteen communities, the Committee solicited information regarding the availability of part-time work, transportation, recreational and housing facilities, possible sites for the school facilities, availability of churches, fire and police protection for school property, community interest in a vocational technical school. Where available, the committee also reviewed local studies which

¹⁰⁴Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report No. 139, p. 5.

indicated interest and need for postsecondary vocational technical education in each community.

The legislature's Committee on Vocational Technical Schools conducted hearings in 16 communities throughout Nebraska. They obtained information about these communities that the committee deemed important when considering the location of a state vocational technical school. This information, along with that obtained from postsecondary schools and professional educators in Nebraska, allowed the committee to evaluate each city.

After assimilating all of this information the Legislature's Committee on Vocational Technical Schools scrutinized each city on the basis of eleven factors "and their relevance to the establishment of area vocational technical schools".¹⁰⁵ These factors included: employment potential, the number of high school students, student interest in vocational technical education, taxable wealth, and the number and types of training agencies in the area. In addition to visiting the sixteen communities that were potential sites, the committee also surveyed school administrators to determine the academic and career plans of the high school seniors, the class of '63.

¹⁰⁵Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report No. 139, p. 9.

For the purposes of the study, the Committee on Vocational Technical Schools divided the state into six geographical areas. Data was analyzed by area and for the entire state. The committee concluded that the state of Nebraska needed to broaden the scope of vocational technical offerings and make them available to all citizens regardless of where they lived. In addition, it found that the need for vocational technical education was at both the secondary and postsecondary level. The committee concluded the Nebraska legislature needed to provide greater financial support and supervision for training and retraining youth and adults.

The 'baby boom' youngsters of the 1940's are coming of age. Nebraska youth can expect keener competition for available jobs. An outcome of the increase in population, automation, and other factors is a surplus of unskilled workers for the available jobs. At the same time many jobs requiring skilled workers go unfilled.¹⁰⁶

The Committee believed that Nebraska needed legislation for vocational technical education to alleviate these problems.

The Committee on Vocational Technical Schools made several discoveries. First, only 42 percent of the 1963 graduates actually enrolled in college, although school administrators in Nebraska expected 54 percent to attend college. Second, only 20 percent of the responding students

¹⁰⁶Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report No. 139, p. 38.

indicated that they would enroll if a school were located in their communities. Third, 900 students expressed an interest in the Nebraska Vocational Technical School at Milford, but 600 were discouraged from attending for financial reasons. Fourth, twice as many students planned to attend vocational technical schools other than Milford. Fifth, projections indicated that 1,753 seniors, three times the capacity of the Nebraska Vocational Trade School at Milford, would attend a vocational technical school if located in their area. And sixth, auto mechanics, auto body, and data processing technician ranked high in interest, as did agriculture, business, clerical and stenographic, cosmetology, foods, practical nursing, and printing.¹⁰⁷ The committee concluded that:

Nebraska must recognize a tragic recess in her educational program--vocational technical education. The resulting loss of manpower and brainpower to individuals, the state and to the nation is one of the greatest problems of our day. She should act to bridge the gap.¹⁰⁸

Nebraska lacked vocational technical education to maintain its manpower needs. Because of this information, the committee made five recommendations.

¹⁰⁷Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report No. 139, p. 40.

¹⁰⁸Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report No. 139, p. 41.

First, the Nebraska legislature should provide financial support for the equipping and operation of vocational technical programs. Second, when the state identified a need for an additional vocational technical school, the local community should provide the facilities for it. If the local community would not, then the state should build the school. Third, the state vocational technical school at Milford should be operated twelve months a year. Fourth, the state Board of Vocational Education should work to develop a comprehensive vocational technical education program. And fifth, the first vocational technical school be in North Platte. The Legislature's Committee on Vocational Technical Schools recommended the expansion of vocational technical education in Nebraska through the use of state funds, expanded operating hours for the trade school at Milford, the development of a comprehensive state program, and the establishment of an additional vocational technical school in North Platte. Thus, the expansion of vocational technical education in Nebraska required more state and local support, year round operation of the school in Milford, the development of a comprehensive vocational technical program, and the establishment of additional state trade schools.

In addition to the five recommendations, the study committee concluded that "Politicians, parents, professional

educators, and the public must look beyond the vested interests of their own districts and join in forging a state-wide plan."¹⁰⁹ The philosophy conveyed by the committee was contained in the last sentence of the report as it quoted Dr. Milo Bail, president of Omaha University.

The people of Omaha don't have horns and neither do the people of Lincoln. For once, lets not do something for Omaha or for Lincoln or for out-state or for in-state. . . . Lets do something for the whole state of Nebraska.¹¹⁰

Thus the state needed additional vocational technical training, and for the benefit of the state, the legislature needed to provide that regardless of local interest. The Legislature's Council Committee on Vocational Technical schools issued its report to the Unicameral. It did not gain the support of the governor.

Initially the Governor did not support the creation of any new state vocational technical schools and did not agree with the committee's recommendations to establish state-operated schools.¹¹¹ In his 1965 inaugural address he reiterated his belief that no new schools should be built

¹⁰⁹Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report No. 139, p. 45.

¹¹⁰Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report No 139, p. 45.

¹¹¹"School Year of 12 Months Is Proposed," Omaha World Herald, 20 December 1965, Sec. B, p. 1.

until existing facilities were fully used. He also opposed expenditures for new buildings.

Summary

Between the initiative created by Legislative Resolution 33 in 1959 to study higher education in Nebraska and the legislative session in 1965, legislators introduced several resolutions and proposals to establish additional vocational technical schools. These legislative studies, together with the presentations to the Education Committee by interested communities, evidenced the need for vocational technical training in the state. These legislative studies also promoted political discussion of local versus state control and of the methods of financial support for two-year postsecondary education. The representatives from Sidney, North Platte, Grand Island, Ogallala, and O'Neill argued that an additional state-governed and state-supported vocational school should be located in their communities, based on need, location, facilities, and community attributes. Although the legislature did not enact legislation to create additional vocational technical schools in 1963, the discussions influenced the Unicameral's decisions during the 1965 legislative session.

The Development of the Technical Community
College System: 1965 to 1986

The 1965 Unicameral considered several bills concerned with vocational technical education. The 1963 Legislative Council on Vocational Technical Schools recommended two bills: Legislative Bill (LB 482) which provided for a system of state technical schools, and Legislative Bill 480 (LB 480) which called for the establishment of a vocational technical school at North Platte. In addition, other bills were proposed to locate a vocational technical school at Sidney (LB 176), O'Neill (LB 156), Ogallala (LB 636), Broken Bow (LB 772), and Norfolk (LB 512). The representatives of the Grand Island-Hastings-Kearney area drafted a bill to permit the establishment of area vocational technical schools through local initiative, supported by local taxes (LB 581). Of these eight bills, five made it to final reading. The legislature approved only three, LB 482, LB 581, and LB 176. In summary, the 1965 Legislature created locally controlled area vocational technical schools, established a system of state trade schools, and authorized a second trade school in Sidney.

All eight bills were referred to the Committee on Education. The committee consisted of Rasmussen, Chairman (Hooper); Crandall (Curtis); Harsh (Bartley); Kremer (Aurora); Moulton (Omaha); Ruhnke (Plymouth); Syas (Omaha); and Warner

(Waverly). Six of the eight members (Rasmussen, Kremer, Moulton, Ruhnke, Syas, and Warner) represented districts in the eastern half of the state. Although six of the committee members voted in favor of LB 581 (Area Vocational Technical Schools) on final reading, the Committee members were equally divided on the bills which called for the establishment of a state trade school in North Platte, O'Neill, Norfolk, Ogallala, Broken Bow, and Sidney. As the 1965 session neared its end, the Unicameral voted at the behest of Senator Fleming of Sidney to take LB 176 (Sidney) out of committee.

There were indications that sponsors of other trade school bills gave Fleming their support in the belief and hope that LB 176 could become the vehicle, by amendment, for placing trade schools at the other sites also.¹¹²

No community was able to advance its bill unilaterally from the Committee on Education, but by voting to remove LB 176 each community hoped to establish a trade school by amending LB 176. Because the Unicameral decided to advance LB 176, the Committee on Education voted to report all of them out for floor debate.¹¹³ Committee on Education Chairman Rasmussen believed that if one bill was advanced to the floor, then they all should be advanced.

¹¹²"Legislature Stalls Bills For Nebraska Trade Schools," Frontier and Holt County Independent, 1 July 1965, p. 1.

¹¹³"Trade School Debates Will Be July 12th," Sidney Telegraph, 30 June 1965, p. 1.

On July 13, the Unicameral killed LB 772 (Broken Bow), LB 636 (Ogallala), and LB 156 (O'Neill). Only 14 voted to advance LB 636 and 13 voted to advance LB 772 and LB 156.¹¹⁴ Following their failure to advance, the three bills were indefinitely postponed; LB 772 by a 20 to 9 vote, LB 636 by a 28 to 9 vote, and LB 156 by a 32 to 9 margin. The three remaining bills to establish a trade school in Sidney, Norfolk, and North Platte were advanced.

There were three notable differences in the legislative activity in 1965 compared to 1963. First, Grand Island did not propose a school specifically in its community, but residents in that area agreed to an area concept. This concept, contained in LB 581, permitted the establishment of locally governed, locally taxed, area vocational technical schools. Second, Sidney was able to offer additional facilities for an area vocational school because the United States government deactivated the Sioux Army Depot, and Sidney made it available to the state at no cost. And third, Broken Bow and Norfolk asked that a vocational technical school be established in their communities. But arguments presented for the establishment of a trade school in the six communities were essentially the same as those in 1963.

¹¹⁴"Sidney Is One Of Three Still 'Alive' For Trade School," Sidney Telegraph, 14 July 1965, p. 1.

When the 1963 Study Committee on Vocational Technical Schools had introduced LB 480, it provided that North Platte be the first site of any new trade school. Although the committee introduced the proposal based on its investigation, the North Platte Chamber of Commerce and North Platte Development Corporation spearheaded the effort to gain its approval.

At a meeting to solicit support for LB 480, residents of North Platte were urged to contact state legislators to indicate their support for a North Platte vocational technical school.¹¹⁵ Speakers at the meeting expressed a variety of ideas. One suggested that several industries had located outside Nebraska because of a lack of vocational training facilities. Another, believed that if the state spent \$30,000 to \$35,000 to educate a doctor, the state should be willing to spend \$1,500 to \$3,000 for vocational training. And a third speaker indicated that North Platte was the best choice for three reasons. There was a need for trained workmen. It was located in the west central part of the state. And North Platte's commitment to higher education as exemplified by the recent establishment of a junior college in North Platte. Speakers at the meeting supported a vocational technical

¹¹⁵"Tough Fight Seen For Trade School," Telegraph-Bulletin, 3 February 1965, p. 1.

school for North Platte and believed that the state should provide financing.

Wendell Wood, a member of the joint Chamber-Development Corporation Committee working for the trade school, suggested that there were three concepts of vocational technical schools before the legislature:

the so-called Milford concept of a state-supported institution responsible to the state for administration (this is the type of school sought for North Platte); the area concept of organization which calls for the banding together of four or five counties or school districts to support a trade school; and the Manpower Development Program which is a program entirely supported by the federal government.¹¹⁶

Of these three concepts for vocational technical schools, the Development Corporation supported the Milford type. If the Unicameral failed to establish a trade school in North Platte, the corporation favored the establishment of a statewide system of Milford type schools.

Dr. Charles Heider, president of the Development Corporation, suggested that the area approach was advanced by some communities because they were not considered for a second trade school. The Development Corporation opposed the area concept for three reasons. First, if several communities where in an area, only one would be chosen for the location of the school. Therefore, the other communities probably would

¹¹⁶"Tough Fight Seen For Trade School."

not be willing to be taxed for it. Second, only three areas had sufficient population and tax base to develop schools under the area plan: Omaha, Lincoln, and Grand Island-Hastings-Kearney. And third, without centralized direction of a state school, the vocational technical schools might train too many people in one field. The North Platte Chamber and Development Corporation opposed the area concept because it would be difficult to implement. It was probable in only three major cities, and it might lead to a lack of coordination in the training of skilled workers.

Speaking before the North Platte Rotary Club, Wendell Wood stated that the Corporation would

first favor LB 482 which designates that a system be set up in the state, and favor next in order or importance LB 480 which designates North Platte specifically as the first location for a trade school in the state system.¹¹⁷

Wood suggested that LB 482 created the mechanics to establish several schools, and "if needs dictates two or three schools, that's what the legislature will provide funds to start."¹¹⁸

If the Unicameral did not support LB 482, then the North Platte Chamber and Development Corporation supported the establishment of a vocational technical school in Grand

¹¹⁷"Trade School System Pressing State Need," Telegraph-Bulletin, 17 March 1965, p. 1.

¹¹⁸"Trade School System Pressing State Need."

Island.

As the hearings for the nine bills approached, Education Chairman Ross Rasmussen of Hooper said:

We have a real knotty problem. I don't know how you can please everyone. But I hope we might come up with some answers. The group must decide, in addition to possible locations, such basic questions as whether additional schools should be state-financed or locally financed, state controlled or locally controlled, and whether the junior colleges fit into the picture. . . .¹¹⁹

Rasmussen believed that the Unicameral would try to establish an overall system and provide a basic foundation, although he was not sure what that might be.

Although the Legislative Council Committee on Vocational Technical Schools (1963) recommended that the first of any additional state vocational technical schools be established in North Platte, the legislature decided to place the first school in Sidney. The business community of Sidney was very interested in the growth and expansion of the Sidney economy and the creation of jobs. During the 1964-1965 period, the city became a Manpower Training Center, lured a branch of a business college out of Kansas City, sought a state agricultural experimental farm, and won the battle for the state's second vocational technical school. Draughton's College of Commerce announced plans to open the Business

¹¹⁹"Trade School Issue In The Spotlight," Telegraph-Bulletin, 20 March 1965, p. 1.

Institute of Sidney in June 1965. The president of the chamber of commerce noted that the new college was part of Sidney's "determined campaign to build new businesses and new payrolls for the continued growth of the community and the area."¹²⁰ Sidney vigorously pursued the vocational technical school as part of that campaign. Sidney advocates used its recent growth and expansion of businesses, its location in southwest Nebraska, and the availability of a facility for the trade school to persuade the Unicameral to locate a new trade school in the community there.

Because of the cost advantages of the Sioux Army Depot, Governor Morrison supported the Sidney location. He opposed the expansion of state facilities until all others were fully utilized. Subsequent to a visit to the Sidney facilities in October 1964, the governor indicated that he was impressed with the facilities as a possible site for vocational technical training. He stated that he opposed spending millions of dollars for another state vocational technical school when the Sioux Army Depot could be obtained for nothing.¹²¹

State Senator Fleming of Sidney used this theme in his

¹²⁰"Business School To Open In Sidney," Sidney Telegraph, 7 October 1964 p. 1.

¹²¹"Governor Says Army Depot Is Ideal Trade School Location," Sidney Telegraph, 14 October 1964, p. 1.

discussions with other legislators prior to the 1965 session. He emphasized the possibility of the state acquiring millions of dollars worth of buildings and equipment at virtually no cost.¹²² He told newly elected members of the legislature that Sidney could offer a built-in trade school at no cost, if the Sioux Army Depot were used for a vocational technical school.¹²³

The Sidney Chamber of Commerce lobbied the legislature, particularly newly-elected members unfamiliar with the issue. Also it sent copies of stories about the Occupational Training program at the Sioux Army Depot to all legislators. A cover letter cited two advantages of Sidney as the location for an additional trade school.¹²⁴ First, the Occupational Training programs already in operation at the Depot complemented the proposed vocational technical education. Second, the Sioux Army Depot provided facilities for vocational technical education without construction costs, a savings of millions of dollars to Nebraska taxpayers.¹²⁵ Therefore, the

¹²²"Fleming Thinks Sidney Still Has Strong Hand In Trade School Derby" Sidney Telegraph, 20 November 1964, p. 6.

¹²³"Fleming Thinks Sidney Still Has Strong Hand In Trade School Derby."

¹²⁴"City, C of C Push Trade School Bill," Sidney Telegraph, 16 December 1964, p. 1.

¹²⁵"City, C of C Push Trade School Bill."

establishment of a Sidney vocational technical school would provide educational programs in western Nebraska with virtually no capital expenditures needed.

Despite the advantages of experience and low cost, The Western Nebraska United Chambers of Commerce voted nine to two to support North Platte's bid for the trade school.¹²⁶ Only Scottsbluff supported Sidney's bid. The Sidney representative argued that Sidney had an advantage because the manpower retraining program operated at the Sioux Army Depot and the buildings, equipment, and living quarters there would save millions. These arguments did not convince the chamber organization to support Sidney's bid.

During the 1965 legislative session, the governor reiterated his belief that the Sioux Army Depot would be a good site for a trade school. "We should make maximum use of the facilities we have and that is why I recommend that the trade school committee make a full investigation of the tremendous free facilities available at the Sioux Army Depot."¹²⁷ Even though the governor supported the Sidney location, he did not believe the legislature would appropriate funds to build such a school.

¹²⁶"Other Cities Deny Sidney Vo-Tech Bid," Sidney Telegraph, 27 January 1965, p. 5.

¹²⁷"Governor Impressed By Sioux Depot as Trade School Site," Sidney Telegraph, 5 February 1965, p. 1.

The Education Committee endorsed LB 176, a bill to establish a vocational technical school in Sidney, at a hearing on March 23, 1965.¹²⁸ Ten businessmen described what Sidney had to offer.¹²⁹ The conversion of the Sidney Army Depot for use as a state vocational technical school provided: office space; shops and equipment for auto and tractor mechanics; metal working; diesel mechanics; heavy equipment; a paint and carpentry shop; and locomotive repair shop. In addition, the facility contained its own generating plant, central heating plant, a 300-person cafeteria, as well as housing for students, faculty, and staff. There was a grocery store, interdenominational chapel, central TV tower, a twenty five bed dispensary, a sewer disposal system, a sub post office and a fully equipped fire station. The testimony convinced the committee and they approved LB 176.

When the Committee on Education recommended adoption of LB 176, Sidney obtained a lobbyist to advocate its position before the Unicameral. Former Governor Crosby and his law partner were hired to advance the Sidney trade school bill. The proposal moved through the Unicameral and passed on final

¹²⁸"St. Senator Commends Local Group On Trade School Plea, Sidney Telegraph, 24 March 1965, p. 1.

¹²⁹Nebraska Legislature. "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 22 March 22 1965, p. 1.

reading 26 to 11.¹³⁰ Bills sponsored by other communities were not approved.

Norfolk community leaders tried to convince the 1965 legislature to establish a state vocational technical school in their community. LB 512 was co-sponsored by the senator from Norfolk. The chairman of the Education Committee, whose district was just south of Norfolk, alleged that Norfolk had not grown after World War II because of a lack of civic leadership.¹³¹ However, in the early 1960s Norfolk wanted to be the leader of northeast Nebraska, and the presence of a vocational technical school would allow it to fulfill part of that role.

The Norfolk Chamber of Commerce argued before the Education Committee that the town needed the school to strengthen its economy, retard the decline in population, and meet a critical shortage of skilled and semi-skilled workers.¹³² The state owned fifty-three acres of land at the Norfolk State Hospital, and it was a suitable site for such a school. The Norfolk bill did make it to final reading but was

¹³⁰Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 29 July 1965, p. 2609.

¹³¹Rasmussen Interview.

¹³²"Norfolk Area Growth Needs Trade School," Norfolk Daily News, 24 March 1965, p. 3.

defeated by a vote of 17 to 21.¹³³

Opposition to LB 512 came from legislators whose districts were in south central and western Nebraska, and from six of ten senators from Omaha. They opposed LB 512 for three reasons. First, although the state owned the land in Norfolk, the expense of constructing a school there was three to four times that which would be needed in Sidney. Second, the Legislative Council Committee on Vocational Technical Schools (1963) identified a need for vocational technical education in western Nebraska, and Norfolk was in the eastern third of the state. And third, the Omaha Public School District already had vocational technical training in the high schools. Support for LB 512 came from legislators whose districts were near or adjacent to Madison (Norfolk) County. The northeastern part of Nebraska needed a vocational technical school to strengthen a declining economy and to alleviate a shortage of skilled and semi-skilled labor.¹³⁴ The Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and supporters in the Unicameral did not, however, have enough votes to get LB 512 passed.

The proposals to establish trade schools in Ogallala, O'Neill, and Broken Bow were indefinitely postponed after they

¹³³Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 29 July 1965, pp. 2607-08.

¹³⁴"Norfolk Area Growth Needs Trade School."

failed to gain more than 14 votes to advance following floor debate. They did not receive the support that North Platte, Sidney, and Norfolk did. The Ogallala Chamber of Commerce proposed the creation of a state electronics school to take advantage of the several electronics firms in the area.¹³⁵ Such a facility would be less costly than a second state trade school and "would meet the most drastic need for vocational training" (the highest enrollments at Milford were in electronics).¹³⁶ Ogallala also offered to the state at no cost a forty acre tract and use of an auditorium in the new high school. Despite this offer, the cost of building a state trade school in Ogallala would exceed the cost of preparing the Naval Depot in Sidney by three or four times.

Representatives from O'Neill argued that, if the Unicameral approved a new state vocational technical school, it should be located in O'Neill. There were no state supported educational facilities in north central Nebraska. The state taxed O'Neill citizens but did return much of that tax money in the form of benefits. O'Neill and the surrounding communities needed people trained in the areas of diesel, refrigeration, and electronics, as well as machinists.

¹³⁵"Norfolk Area Growth Needs Trade School."

¹³⁶"Whitney Will Propose Ogallala As Location For Electronics School," Lincoln Star, 30 January 1965, p. 3.

Twenty-four citizens from O'Neill attended the hearing on the proposal. The president of the O'Neill Chamber of Commerce told the committee that

times have changed and that young people are deserting the farming communities all over the state. He told them the only way we can keep the youth in our state is to provide some type of skills so they can become useful citizens of the state.¹⁹⁷

Because O'Neill lacked state supported educational facilities and needed skilled workers, the chamber of commerce asked the legislature to provide a state trade school.

Broken Bow representatives argued that Broken Bow was the geographic center of the state and the second fastest growing community in the state.¹⁹⁸ The Broken Bow Chamber of Commerce suggested that the town provided the most convenience for the greatest number of students. The community was central to Ogallala, North Platte, Norfolk, and O'Neill. And besides, Broken Bow deserved to be picked because it was one of two cities considered in 1941. But the legislature selected neither Ogallala, O'Neill, nor Broken Bow. Of the communities which sought to obtain a state trade school, only Sidney succeeded.

The Unicameral chose Sidney for essentially three

¹⁹⁷"O'Neill Delegation Of 24 Attend Hearing On O'Neill Trade School," Holt County Independent, 25 March 1965, p. 1.

¹⁹⁸"Chamber Talks Up Trade School," Custer County Chief, 25 March 1965, p. 1.

reasons. First, the legislative proposals in 1963 and 1965 as well as the legislative study in 1964 substantiated the need for at least one additional trade school. Second, a second trade school that efficiently served the needs of Nebraska should be located in the western part of the state. And third, the availability of the Sioux Army Depot attracted legislative support because acquisition of the Depot did not require any capital expenditures. The governor had stated his opposition to building new buildings when existing ones were available. He had supported the Sidney location, if the legislature wished to establish additional trade schools. The establishment of a trade school in North Platte or Norfolk would have cost almost a million dollars. By providing for a vocational technical school at the Sioux Army Depot, the state received property and equipment valued in the millions. All that Sidney needed was a couple hundred thousand dollars a year to operate. Thus, a second vocational technical or trade school was added to Nebraska's postsecondary educational system. But of greater significance for the development of the postsecondary system was the passage of LB 581 and LB 482.

Legislative Bill 581 (1965)

Senator Kremer of Aurora, whose district was near Grand Island, Hastings, and Kearney, introduced Legislative Bill

581 (LB 581). Senator Kremer's proposal permitted the establishment of area vocational technical schools by two or more counties, school districts, or municipalities.¹³⁹ The proposal did not provide for the use of state funds, but permitted the area schools to take advantage of matching federal funds. The bill allowed voters to decide if such a school was to be established and provided local control under the supervision of the State Board of Vocational Education. Kremer believed that the permissive legislation in LB 581 responded to a need for a system of vocational education in Nebraska and was the most effective way to implement it quickly.

After the legislature defeated the Grand Island trade school bill in 1963, interested people in the Grand Island, Hastings, and Kearney region sought other means of providing vocational technical training in that part of the state. They concluded that the only hope of meeting their needs for vocational technical training was to do something locally.¹⁴⁰ After the Interim Legislative Committee recommended North Platte as the site for a second state trade school, a group of central Nebraska citizens organized the committee on Area

¹³⁹Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 22 March 1965, p. 3.

¹⁴⁰Ken Wortman, Telephone interview with author, Aurora, Nebraska, 18 August 1988.

Vocational-Technical Schools for Central Nebraska. This Committee represented seven counties in central Nebraska (Adams, Hall, Kearney, Buffalo, Hamilton, Clay, and Merrick) as indicated in Figure 4.¹⁴¹ The purpose of the Committee was to promote the creation of area vocational technical schools.

The Committee on Area Vocational-Technical Schools selected Ken Wortman, an Aurora businessman, to chair the group.¹⁴² According to Wortman business people in Grand Island, Hastings, and Kearney each sought to obtain a vocational school in their towns. They asked Wortman to chair the group because he "was in a neutral corner and that would prevent bickering between the three cities."¹⁴³ His leadership was valuable in gaining support for LB 581.

The Committee on Area Vocational-Technical Schools recognized the need to provide young people with the opportunity to obtain vocational technical training. According to a brochure produced by the committee and distributed to chambers of commerce in central Nebraska, Congress developed the area concept for vocational technical

¹⁴¹"Trade School Bill Will Be Drafted," Hastings Daily Tribune, 8 December 1964, p. 7.

¹⁴²"Ken Wortman Heads Committee for Area Technical-Vocational School," Aurora News-Register, 3 December 1964, p. 1.

¹⁴³Wortman, Interview.

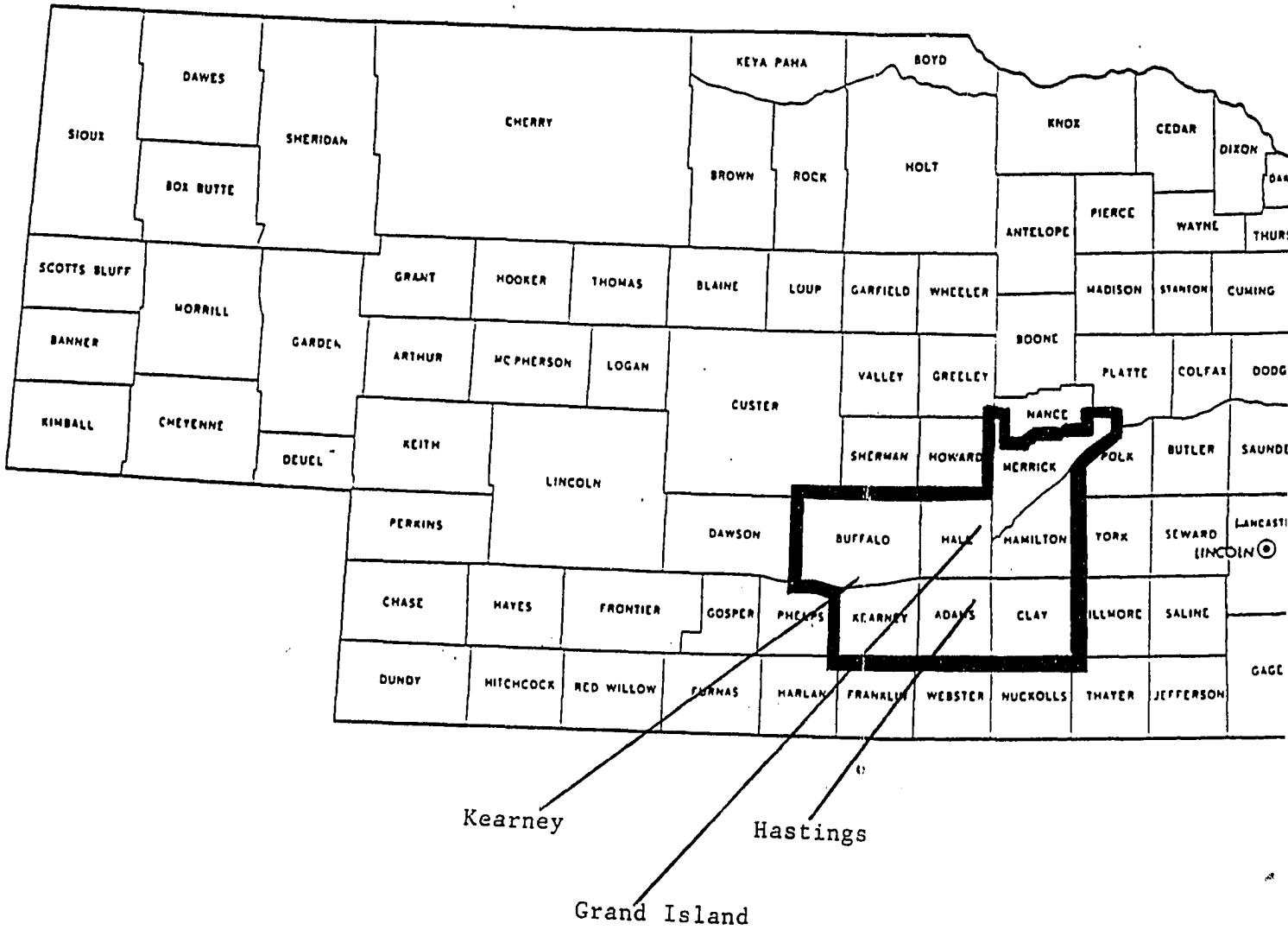
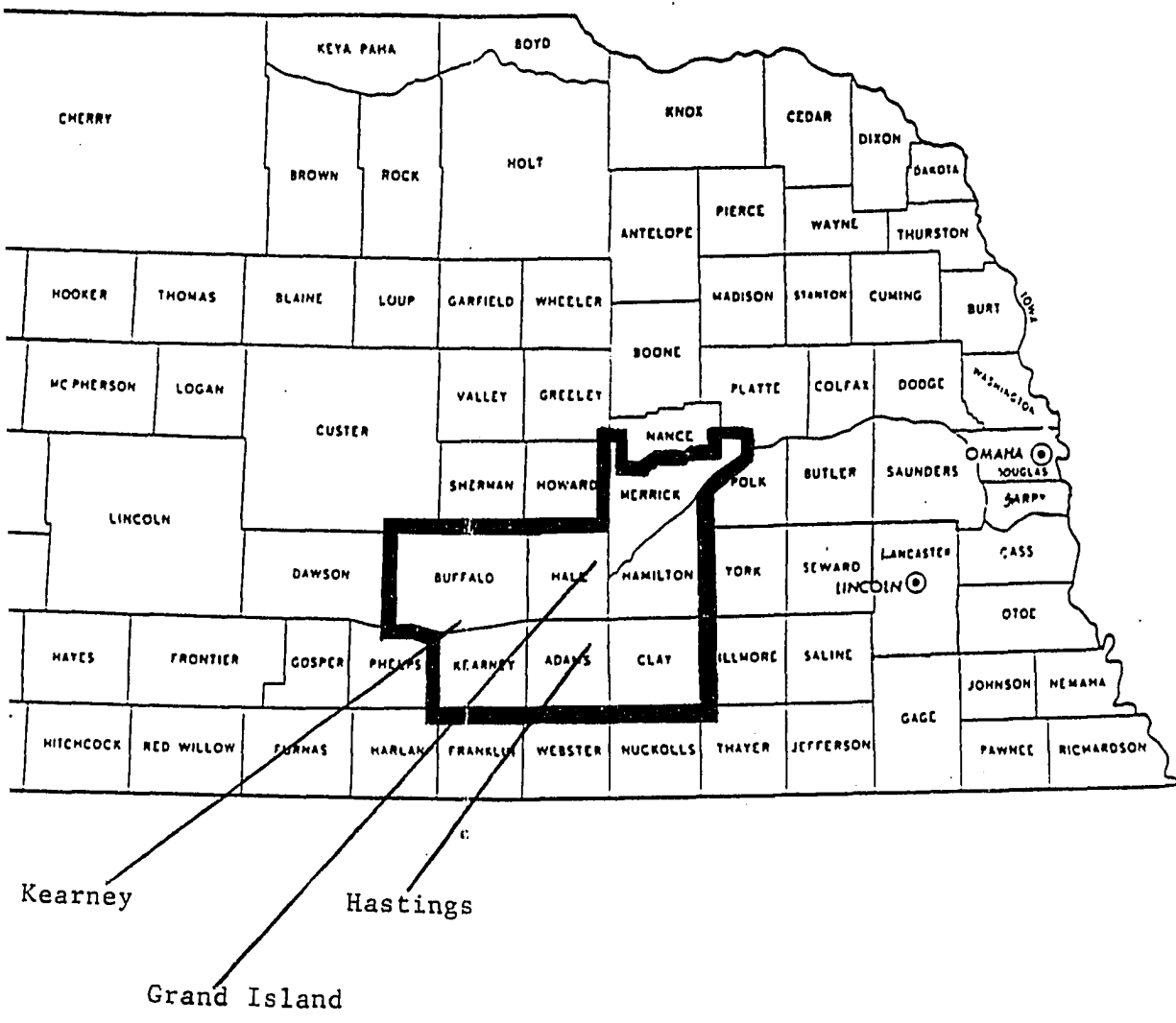
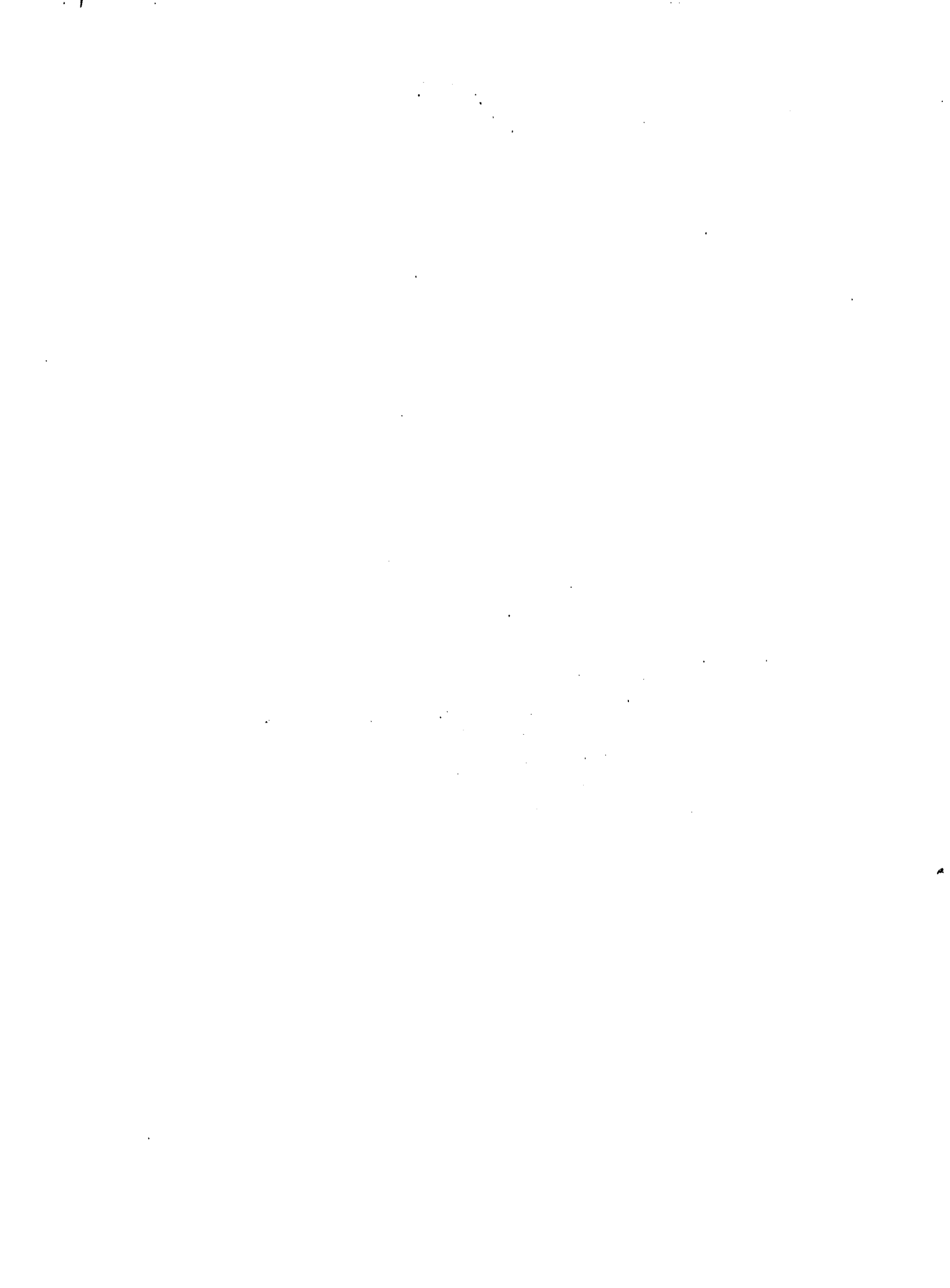


Figure 4. The Counties from Which Representatives on the Committee on Area Vocational-Technical Schools for Central Nebraska Were Chosen





representatives on the Committee on Area Vocational-Technical
schools were Chosen



training in 1958. Ken Wortman recalled that the idea of area vocational technical schools in Nebraska came from a Kearney attorney, DeWayne Wolf.¹⁴⁴ Wolf had previously worked for the creation of irrigation districts, government subdivisions that crossed county boundaries. Wolf understood what the legal requirements were to create such political subdivisions. He chaired the sub-committee of the Committee on Area Vocational-Technical Schools which developed the principles included in LB 581.¹⁴⁵

On December 7, 1964, the Committee on Area Vocational-technical Schools met in Grand Island and formally adopted the eight principles developed by Wolf's subcommittee.¹⁴⁶ First, the schools would provide vocational, technical, and adult education on a full-time basis during the day and evenings. Second, counties could form the schools, but if they failed to do so, smaller subdivisions could. Third, the areas would be organized and approved by the voters. Fourth, the schools would be locally administered by elected officials. Fifth, the schools would be financed by bond issues, a mill levy, state and federal aid, and tuition. Sixth, the trustees would

¹⁴⁴Wortman, Interview.

¹⁴⁵"Group Urges Area Vocational Training Center," Kearney Daily Hub, 8 December 1964, p. 1.

¹⁴⁶"Schools Topic of Talk," Grand Island Daily Independent, 8 December 1964, p. 1.

determine admission requirements. Seventh, the trustees would determine the location of the schools. And eighth, the state Board of Education would use state and federal funds to support and maintain the schools, but each political subdivisions would provide the same mill levy. The committee adopted the subcommittees report after one and a half hours of discussion. These eight principles were then incorporated into the proposal (LB581) introduced by Senator Kremer and presented in a brochure distributed by the Committee.

According to the brochure produced by the Committee on Area Vocational Technical Schools, the area concept for vocational technical schools was a part of a continuing effort to found a trade school in the region.¹⁴⁷ People in the region were concerned with the great out-migration, the lack of jobs, and the inability to attract new industry. The brochure noted that 74 of Nebraska's 93 counties lost population between 1950 and 1960. The committee believed the 19 counties (Kimball, Cheyenne, Keith, Hooker, Buffalo, Hall, Kearney, Phelps, Platte, Madison, Seward, Lancaster, Cass, Sarpy, Saunders, Douglas, Dodge, Dakota, and Washington) which gained population were suitable for implementing the area

¹⁴⁷"New On the Horizon Area Vocational-Technical Schools," an unpublished brochure produced and distributed by the Committee on Area Vocational-Technical Schools, Ken Wortman, Chairman, Aurora, Nebraska.

concept of vocational technical training. The brochure suggested that several states, including North Carolina and Georgia, developed extensive systems of area schools as part of an industrial development program. This program resulted in industrial expansion and new jobs. The area schools provided a curriculum which served the community, educational, and industrial needs of the area.

According to the brochure, the area schools should offer programs in four areas: the skilled trades (air conditioning, refrigeration, diesel mechanics, and welding), health occupations (practical nursing, dental assistant, x-ray technician), office occupations (clerk-typist, secretary, data processing), and technologies (electronic, mechanical, chemical, and construction). In addition to a large curriculum, the area concept of vocational technical training broadened the base for educational needs and permitted local control.

Wortman believed that LB 581 was enacted as the result of Senator Kremer's hard work. Kremer spent "95 percent of his time during the legislative session on this bill."¹⁴ Wortman indicated that the strongest opposition came from Stan Matzke. "He got a vocational school for Milford and did not want anyone else to have one. He lobbied against the bill and was

¹⁴Wortman Interview.

very detrimental."¹⁴⁹ LB 581 passed due to Kremer's strong leadership and despite Senator Matzke's objections.

The Committee on Area Vocational-Technical Schools from Central Nebraska proposed regional service areas in LB 581. According to Wortman, it was a practical solution to community rivalry and had been successful in other states.¹⁵⁰ The one mill tax allowed in the bill generated enough funds to operate a school without state money. Under the proposal local boards governed the new schools, keeping the schools in touch with local needs. In addition, LB 581 allowed local interests to create a school without lobbying the legislature.

The Education Committee conducted a public hearing on LB 581 on March 22, 1965.¹⁵¹ In addition to Senator Kremer, those who testified in favor of the proposal included: Ken Wortman, the chairman of the Committee on Area Vocational-Technical Schools from Central Nebraska; Dr. Richard Short, the superintendent of Hastings Public Schools; Bud Curry, the general manager of the Rockwell Manufacturing Company Plant in Kearney; Mrs. E. J. Roberts, the president of the Omaha

¹⁴⁹Wortman Interview.

¹⁵⁰"Wortman Stresses Area Concept and Control, in Response to the Governor," Aurora News-Register, 24 December 1964, p. 1.

¹⁵¹Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 22 March 1965, pp. 1-7.

Council of Parent Teachers Association; Dr. Edwin Parrish, The director of Vocational and Adult Education of the Omaha Public School System; Richard C. Brown, the executive secretary of the Nebraska State School Boards Association; Bernard Gyger, the assistant to the superintendent of the Omaha Public Schools; and Robert Daught, Chairman of the Vocational Council of Chambers of Commerce. Each individual reported its groups support for the legislation. Curry and Wortman both submitted lengthy written testimony in support of the legislation as well.

Wortman's organization consisted of educators, merchants, industrialists, an attorney, and an accountant. He stated that:

while area schools are new to Nebraska, they are doing a good job in several of the other states. . The technical need in various areas of a State are quite different and with a network of area schools, these needs can best be handled. Part time employment and commuting are two problems that can best be solved by area adaption. Re-training of workers or evening classes for employed people can only be accomplished through area schools.¹⁵²

He presented the Committee on Area Vocational Technical Schools maps of Minnesota, Georgia, and Kansas which showed the distribution of vocational technical schools. These states offered successful models of area vocational schools.

¹⁵²Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education, Exhibit 'A'," 22 March 1965, p. 1.

Nebraska's manpower needs had changed as agriculture declined and as manufacturing increased. He believed that the area concept permitted the state to more easily adjust to such changes.

Wortman suggested that smaller communities had lost population because service personnel had not kept up with new technology. The smaller communities needed individuals in the building trades, electricians, as well as electrical and appliance maintenance personnel. The area vocational technical schools would help alleviate this problem by providing skills for agricultural workers who were no longer employed. Wortman concluded stating that Nebraska spent forty times as much money on academic education as it did on vocational technical training. Consequently, he argued:

Boys and girls by the hundreds are wanting such training, only to be denied it because of inadequate facilities and programs. We sincerely believe this inequity needs to be corrected now.¹⁵⁹

The urgency of the problem dictated that something be done, but the establishment of a state school with the necessary site development might take two or three years. LB 581 permitted local action immediately.

In his written testimony F. A. Curry, general manager of Rockwell Manufacturing, cited his personal experiences as an

¹⁵⁹Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 22 March 1965, p. 2.

employer in Kearney.¹⁵⁴ Rockwell faced two major problems in trying to be profitable, he said. First, there was a lack of trained personnel. Second, the labor market was very tight.

I have tried in vain for the last three and one-half years to recruit the necessary number of people to run my plant in an efficient and economical manner. This has been a serious, uphill battle and one which already has caused some serious repercussions and some retrenchment of our operating level.¹⁵⁵

As a result, the lack of trained individuals meant a cut back in the companies operations and a subsequent loss of jobs.

He outlined the costs to the company of training unskilled workers. Curry believed an area vocational technical school would make workers more productive more rapidly and lead to economic growth. He concluded that the presence of educational facilities and opportunities would help keep young people in Nebraska and provide an expanded employer base.

The state spends considerable funds of money every year trying to attract new industry to the state. It is my contention that they had better soon start taking care of the industry that they already have within the state. What better means can they provide than to be the instrument of a vocational-technical educational school system which would provide for Nebraska business and industry the qualified, skilled help which they so desperately

¹⁵⁴Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education, Exhibit 'B'," 22 March 1965, p. 1.

¹⁵⁵Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 22 March 1965, p. 2.

need.¹⁵⁶

He believed that the legislature should help firms already operating in the state just as it tried to attract new industry to the state.

Those opposed to the bill at the hearing included:

Harold Bacon, representing the Board of Directors of the North Platte Chamber of Commerce; Dr. Robert Morgan, representing the Alliance Chamber of Commerce; and Robert Shively, general manager of the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce. Morgan believed that the state had the responsibility to provide education after the twelfth grade. He posed two questions. "Would the areas in and around a state college be included in any of these vocational areas?" "Will areas actually build and finance schools as provided in this bill?"¹⁵⁷ Since the bill did not provide for state control or supervision, he questioned whether the western part of the state could provide such a school? He did not believe it could.

Shively opposed the bill because it did not provide the training to meet the states needs for skilled workers. Only Omaha, Lincoln, and the Grand Island-Hastings-Kearney areas would be able to use the legislation to establish area

¹⁵⁶Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 22 March 1965, pp. 6-7.

¹⁵⁷Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 22 March 1965, p. 5.

vocational technical schools because of the property valuation specifications included in the bill. But neither Omaha nor Lincoln needed the legislation because of the strong vocational technical programs in the high schools. In addition, LB 581 circumvented the Study Committee recommendation; it placed the financial burden of operating these schools on local government when the state should finance it. Senator Syas of Omaha asked Shively if the area concept in the bill would have made it easier for Norfolk to financially support its junior college? Shively responded that Norfolk had asked for state aid because of the financial burden, but he believed it would be impossible to get enough support from the area around Norfolk to establish a vocational technical school without state aid.

Bacon also noted that the need in western Nebraska was immediate, and that LB 581, as permissive legislation only, meant that nothing would in fact be done. He objected to LB 581 because of the time required to establish such a school.

Opposition to the legislation centered on location, the problem of state versus local control and financing, and the ability to initiate additional vocational technical schools quickly. Despite the objections the committee advanced LB 581.

In his closing comments in support of LB 581, Short

stated:

Almost everyone here has agreed that we do need some vocational-technical schools. We view our proposed legislation as a supplemental approach. I don't think I need to remind the Legislature that you have the power to set up any schools you so desire. We do not think that the state ought to step out of its responsibility in this area. We are not asking for a mandate or a complete answer.¹⁵⁸

Supporters of LB 581 believed that the area concept was the better method to met the need for additional vocational technical education. This approach allowed local control, local financing, kept the school in touch with the local needs, and permitted the establishment of a school as soon as the people in an area agreed to start it.

The floor debate on LB 581 was July 2, 1965. Senator Kremer led the discussion in support of the legislation. He noted that:

Nebraska's phenomenal change from an agricultural economy and the mass migration of its citizens from the rural areas to the larger population centers has created a tremendous problem for the state. . . . In spite of increased programs of industrial development, only a few of the states population centers have developed sufficient momentum to end the flow of net out migration that's taken place particularly in the 18-30 years age group. A critical analysis (analysis) of the state and nations's unemployment picture shows that those in the ranks of the unemployed and underemployed are the unskilled or underskilled workers. Without a doubt, the rapidly developing technology of industry and agriculture is demanding higher levels

¹⁵⁸Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Education Committee," 22 March 1965, pp. 6-7.

of training in both the academic and vocational levels of education.¹⁵⁹

Nebraska, then, needed an educational system which trained unskilled and underskilled people and accomplished two objectives. First, the state needed a system which alleviated a labor shortage of skilled and semiskilled workers. Second, it needed to keep its young workers in their rural communities.

Senator Kremer argued that if the legislature would appropriate enough money to establish even one state school he would support it, but the legislature would quarrel over where to put such a school. He believed that the permissive legislation contained in LB 581 would lead to the establishment of four or five schools throughout Nebraska. Kremer predicted that under LB 581 schools probably would be established in Sidney, Central Nebraska, the Columbus and Norfolk areas, as well as Omaha and Lincoln. LB 581 would provide the most schools for the least money.

During the floor debate, Senators expressed concerns about LB 581. Senator Fleming from Sidney wanted to know how long it would take to set up the area schools. He referred to a letter from the commanding officer of the Sioux Army Depot indicating that the depot would not be available much longer.

¹⁵⁹Nebraska Legislature, "Floor Debate, LB 581," 2 July 1965, p. 2510.

The area approach might take too long. Senator Marvel, co-sponsor, suggested that LB 581 gave local control to fit local needs. Whether it be Sidney, Grand Island, or Hastings, the proposal would utilize these facilities if and when they were available.

Senator Matzke raised the question of state financial support. LB 581 had no provision for state financing. If LB 482, a proposal to establish a system of state trade schools modeled after Milford which provided some state financing were defeated, Senator Kremer would ask the legislature to approve some funding. But without LB 482 the area schools could operate with local funds and federal monies. Senator Kremer believed that if LB 482 were not passed, he would offer amendments to LB 581 to accomplish the same purpose. But Senator Matzke cited the director of vocational education in Minnesota as stating that Minnesota paid \$18,000,000 for maintenance and operation of area vocational schools.

Matzke continued by asking if the approach contained in LB 581 was really workable. First, people would have to vote to establish a taxing district. Then, voters would have to approve bonds to build buildings. Because the areas must be large, how will the location of such buildings be determined. Matzke said that:

It's the practical working out that bothers me very much. I want a state-wide system of vocational

technical schools, I don't want to see us go off in too many directions at once. I do believe there's a place in Nebraska, especially the western end for another vocational technical school, but I'd hate to bog down in a proceeding like this where two years or four years from now we were engaged in a number of local area squabbles and still no vocational technical training. . . . I'm just not satisfied that with all this necessary to get it into working that we're going to be able to offer the instruction that is so badly needed.¹⁶⁰

Senator Matzke who was instrumental in the establishment of the state trade school in Milford spoke of his concerns about the process established in LB 581. However, according to Wortman, Matzke did not really want other vocational technical facilities other than those in Milford because he feared a loss of state funds.¹⁶¹

In response to Matzke's concerns, Ross Rasmussen, chairman of the Education Committee, argued that the people of Nebraska were ready to move to establish more educational opportunity in vocational technical education. He named Norfolk, Sidney, Grand Island, Hastings, Omaha, and Lincoln as areas where he knew interest was high. He suggested that it was far more difficult for local people to pressure the legislature into establishing a state school than to raise \$100,000 of matching money as provided in LB 482.

¹⁶⁰Nebraska Legislature, "Floor Debate, LB 581," 2 July 1965, p. 2515.

¹⁶¹Wortman, Interview.

After praising Matzke for his role in Milford, Senator Kremer asked him how many schools would be needed to meet Nebraska's needs, and how long it would take Nebraska to establish facilities to meet these needs. Matzke responded that the number depended on the approach, but two or three schools with twelve to twenty course offerings would meet the need and suggested that the state needed facilities to train approximately 3,000 students. He believed that utilization of facilities at Hastings and Sidney would permit a quick start.

Kremer concurred, noting that he was enthusiastic about the area approach because the schools could be initiated at the local level very quickly. "I think that we would accomplish the whole picture much sooner by the route of the area schools than by taking the other route and saying the State of Nebraska shall provide."¹⁶² Senator Nore, whose district included Columbus, noted that Columbus had already lined up 25 to 30 acres of land as donations. LB 581 would permit the Columbus operation to start. He suggested that Grand Island, Norfolk, Broken Bow, and O'Neill were engaged in wishful thinking if they thought that they would receive state-supported schools in the next ten to fifteen years. Columbus would support an area school with or without state

¹⁶²Nebraska Legislature, "Floor Debate, LB 581," 2 July 1965, p. 2517.

and federal aid. In addition, Nore believed that the area schools would do for the industrial field what vocational technical education had done for the farm boys and girls.

Senator Paine from Papillion, a suburb of Omaha, argued that the people of Nebraska supported the area concept and questioned why anyone would oppose a do-it-yourself approach. The area approach was a good way to create good schools at low cost to the state.¹⁶³ If voters turned down the proposal, then that was the message. If the legislature created a state school, then taxpayers were forced to pay for something they did not want.

Several senators suggested that the only way the state of Nebraska was going to get additional vocational technical schools was if they were state supported. The real problem, according to one senator, was that the legislature was not sure that it wanted to establish any more state schools.

In his closing remarks, Senator Kremer commented on several areas. First, he believed that local areas would move quickly to establish area vocational technical schools, because a school of 400 to 500 students was an industry. Communities were willing to provide incentives to attract new businesses so they would raise the \$100,000 required in LB

¹⁶³Nebraska Legislature, "Floor Debate, LB 581," 2 July 1965, p. 2518.

482. Second, those who do not go to college or vocational technical school would end up on welfare.

In order to help keep pace industrially with other competing states, Nebraska must produce on a mass basis those skills and techniques among its citizen workers which will attract industry to provide the job necessity (necessary) to hold the youth of Nebraska at this time and we're not doing the job.¹⁶⁴

According to Kremer, then, LB 581 was critical in permitting the state of Nebraska to compete for new industry and to minimize the out migration of young people.

On its final reading, July 29, 1965, LB 581 passed by a vote of 36 to 8.¹⁶⁵ Of the 8 members of the Education Committee, the vote was 6 in favor, one opposed, and one abstention. The lone dissenter from the Education Committee was Senator Ruhnke whose district included Milford. Of the 8 no votes 6 were farmers concerned about the addition of another tax at the local level. Eight of 10 senators from Douglas County (Omaha) supported the LB 581, while 4 of 5 senators from Lancaster County (Lincoln) voted for it as well.

Opposition also came from the senators from the districts that included the state college in Wayne, the state college in Chadron, Norfolk Junior College, and the State Trade School in

¹⁶⁴Nebraska Legislature, "Floor Debate, LB 581," 2 July 1965, p. 2524.

¹⁶⁵Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 29 July 1965, pp. 2603-2604.

Milford, and one senator from Omaha. They did not believe that LB 581 would benefit their areas since it would be difficult to establish an area school in the districts they represented and they opposed additional property taxes.

There was opposition to this bill and several individuals argued against it. They suggested that the area concept would be workable in only three parts of the state: Omaha, Lincoln, and Grand Island-Kearney-Hastings. Since Omaha and Lincoln had extensive vocational technical programs in their high schools, the legislation could only mean the establishment of only one additional school in the Grand Island-Kearney-Hastings area. The needs of western Nebraska would not be met. Local control would reduce coordination and lead to too many programs. Postsecondary vocational technical education, they believed, was a state responsibility and should be state funded.

The Unicameral approved a philosophy of area vocational technical schools in passing LB 581. The bill permitted the creation of area vocational technical schools through local initiative if the area contained a minimum assessed valuation of \$150 million.¹⁶⁶ The legislation required local elections and authorized the area school to levy up to two mills in

¹⁶⁶"Reconsideration Asked on Trade School Bills," Omaha World Herald, 30 July 1965, p. 40.

taxes. But since LB 581 did not include funds to initiate the area schools, the legislature gave approval to Legislative Bill 482 (LB 482).

Legislative Bill 482 (1965)

The hearing for LB 482, considered by some as a companion bill of LB 581, was held the same day as was the hearing for LB 581.¹⁶⁷ According to Senator Orme's statement of purpose,

rather than to repeatedly legislate identical regulations for each and every additional school which might be established, LB 482 seeks to pluralize the group of statutes currently pertaining to only the Milford school. In many instances, it has been only necessary to change the work THE to EACH by way of making the existing statutes apply to any future schools which might be established.¹⁶⁸

LB 482 provided for a system of state-operated area vocational technical schools, based on the results of the Interim Study Committee on Higher Education. The proposal included an appropriation of \$500,000 to be used by the first five communities which started a vocational technical school.

Those who testified before the committee supporting LB 482 were: Dr. Stanley, state Board of Vocational Education;

¹⁶⁷Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of The Committee on Education," 22 March 1965, pp. 7-10.

¹⁶⁸Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Education Committee, Introducer's Statement of Purpose LB 482," 17 March 1965.

Elton Berch, representing the Nebraska Farm Union; Richard Goodding, Nebraska Farm Bureau Federation; Dr. Charles Heider, past president of the North Platte Development Corporation; Gene Kemper of Alliance; Robert Shively, Norfolk Chamber of Commerce; Eileen Dutz, Nebraska Council of PTA; and Wallace Agee, president of the North Platte Chamber of Commerce and the Western Nebraska United Chambers of Commerce.¹⁶⁹ Agee read a prepared statement in which he emphasized the need for vocational technical training in western Nebraska. Relying on a survey of Nebraska's Business Climate, he indicated that Nebraska ranked fiftieth among the states in support of vocational technical training. He believed that the responsibility for post high school education belonged to the state, to provide for the fifty percent of the high school graduates who did not go to state supported colleges. According to Agee, LB 482 called for additional state schools, supervised by the state Board of Vocational Education but also encouraged local participation.

According to Agee, LB 482 deserved the Unicameral's support for five reasons.¹⁷⁰ First, it provided for the immediate establishment of several schools. Second, the

¹⁶⁹Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 22 March 1965, pp. 7-10.

¹⁷⁰Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education, Exhibit 'E'," 22 March 22 1965, p. 2.

legislation called for the coordination and supervision of these schools by the state Board of Vocational Education. Third, LB 482 encouraged local participation in their creation. Fourth, the law encouraged local school districts to expand programs they offered. And fifth, the bill was what the legislative study committee recommended.

Senator Rasmussen explained that LB 482, as amended by the Education Committee, contained three sections. Section one provided the philosophy and legislative intent for establishing vocational technical schools. Section Two allowed students to attend vocational technical school if the service was not provided in their communities. And Section Three provided state financing of \$500,000 (\$100,000 per school with a limit of five schools) to be matched with local funds.

Senator Craft raised questions about the local taxation provisions of the bill. Senator Kremer explained that the committee thought that LB 482 was good legislation because it provided a system of locally-controlled and economically viable area schools. State aid to these schools meant a fair burden on the local area but placed the responsibility with the state.

The legislature gave final approve to LB 482 on July 29,

1965 by a vote of 31 to 13.¹⁷¹ An analysis of the final vote revealed that north central and western Nebraska senators did not support the legislation, and that 9 of the 13 votes against the proposal were farmer/ranchers. The senators who opposed LB 482 represented areas in and around O'Neill, Ogallala, and Broken Bow. Farmers and ranchers opposed LB 482 because it increased the tax levy.

The passage of LB 581, LB 482, and LB 176 during the 1965 legislative session represented a two-pronged solution for the vocational technical needs in Nebraska. The Unicameral created a second state operated school at Sidney and approved a system for the addition of more state schools. The legislature also enacted a bill to permit local areas to start vocational technical schools.¹⁷² For the first time since 1941, the legislature altered the public two-year postsecondary schools by establishing a process by which local entities could create area vocational technical schools. In less than a year, Central Nebraska Vocational School, the first of five area vocational technical schools, began operation.

Area Vocational Technical School No. 1, or the Central

¹⁷¹Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 29 July 1965, p. 2604-2605.

¹⁷²"Trade School At Sidney Approved," Lincoln Star, 30 July 1965, p. 9.

Nebraska Vocational School, included the cities of Grand Island, Hastings, and Kearney and encompassed a seventeen county area (Adams, Buffalo, Clay, Dawson, Franklin, Furnas, Gosper, Hall, Hamilton, Howard, Kearney, Merrick, Nance, Nuckolls, Phelps, Platte, and Webster). Voters approved the area school by a vote of 41,388 (83 percent) to 8,561 (17 percent).¹⁷³ The school established its first campus in Hastings at a deactivated United States Naval Depot and opened in the summer of 1966.

The Naval Ammunition Base near Hastings offered considerable space and facilities for a vocational school.¹⁷⁴ The base contained over 400 acres and 14 buildings including a machine shop and equipment suitable for vocational training. The facility was nearly complete for immediate operation. According to Wortman, the sudden availability of the US Naval Depot in Hastings in the fall of 1965 and the demand for trained workers were keys in the establishment of the school. Wortman stated that "there never was anything that clicked like this. The timing was perfect and the citizens ready."¹⁷⁵ Thus, within one year of the passage of LB 482 the first area

¹⁷³State Board of Education, "Minutes of Meeting," 7 June 1966, p. 3.

¹⁷⁴"Group Tours Naval Depot As Vocational School Site," Aurora News-Register, 7 October 1965, p. 1.

¹⁷⁵Wortman, Interview.

vocational school began operation in Hastings and used the facilities at the vacated naval base.

Area Vocational Technical School No. 2, or Mid-Plains Area Vocational Technical School, received an affirmative plurality of 58.84 percent (15,128 for and 10,582 against).¹⁷⁶ This area school combined the cities of North Platte, Ogallala, Broken Bow, and McCook into one district and included ten counties (Arthur, Chase, Custer, Dundy, Keith, Lincoln, Logan, Perkins, Red Willow, and Thomas).

The third school, Area Vocational Technical School No. 3, or the Northeast Nebraska Area Vocational Technical School, comprised fourteen counties (Antelope, Boyd, Burt, Cedar, Cuming, Dixon, Holt, Knox, Madison, Pierce, Stanton, Thurston, Wayne, and Wheeler) of northeast Nebraska and included the city of Norfolk. It received an affirmative plurality of 81.75 percent (10,066 for and 2,247 against).¹⁷⁷

Because they both had extensive vocational technical programs in their high schools, the fourth and fifth area vocational technical schools were established in Omaha and Lincoln respectively under legislation which exempted these two communities from having a vote of the people. Omaha and

¹⁷⁶State Board of Education, "Minutes of Meeting," 6 December 1966, pp. 2-3.

¹⁷⁷State Board of Education, "Minutes of Meeting," 14 July 1967, pp. 2-3.

Lincoln were the only individual school districts which met the tax valuation requirement of \$150 million to establish an area school. Senators Warner, Knight, and Luedtke, all from Lancaster County in which Lincoln was located, sponsored the legislation, LB 742. LB 742 gave Lincoln and Omaha "improved priority on federal funds available for vocational technical schools."¹⁷⁶ The state Board of Education accepted the petitions of the boards of education of Omaha and Lincoln on June 7, 1968.¹⁷⁷ Area Vocational Technical School No. 4, or the Omaha Area Vocational Technical School, and Area Vocational Technical School No. 5 or the Lincoln Area Vocational Technical School were thus established.

Support for additional vocational technical schools was strong even though their establishment meant increased property taxes. Within two and a half years the state of Nebraska had five area vocational technical schools. But despite the successes in the 1965 legislature and the establishment of the five area schools, two-year postsecondary education was fragmented into three types of institutions: the junior colleges, the state trade schools, and the area vocational technical schools, and they lacked coordination.

¹⁷⁶"Area Trade School Bill Is Passed," Lincoln Star, 19 July 1967, p. 30.

¹⁷⁷State Board of Education, "Minutes of Meeting," 7 June 1968, pp. 1-2.

The 1965 session of the Unicameral, through its landmark legislation on vocational technical education, began the move toward a state system of technical community colleges. This movement was to culminate in the passage of the role and mission legislation in 1978.

Legislative Action (1967)

In 1931 the Nebraska legislature passed permissive legislation that allowed local school districts to establish junior colleges. In 1941, the Unicameral created the state's first state-run and financed trade school. And in 1965, permissive legislation again led to the establishment of locally-controlled area vocational technical schools. The legislature created a second state trade school in that year. The final stage of the process which created the technical community college system began in 1965. It concluded in 1971 when the Unicameral created the technical community college system. Legislative action in 1967 and 1969 provided substantial changes in education generally and in the postsecondary educational system in particular.

The mid-sixties were years of economic prosperity in Nebraska. The unemployment rate remained low, inflation was stable, and the level of personal income increased. Nebraskans were secure economically and accepted and promoted

change. The people had rejected an income tax proposal in the 1966 election and had repealed the state property tax. This left the state with no major revenue source.¹⁰⁰ Consequently, the 1967 legislature had to broaden the tax base. Governor Tiemann provided unprecedented leadership and helped produce significant legislative change. With the governor's leadership, the 1967 Unicameral created significant changes.¹⁰¹

According to an article in the Lincoln Star, the

1967 Unicameral, meeting in Nebraska's centennial year of statehood, smashed traditional barriers in almost every field—in taxation, in budgeting, in a host of state assistance programs, in governmental reorganization, education, penology, labor and welfare.¹⁰²

The 1967 legislature passed Nebraska's first ever sales and income taxes, for the first time provided general state aid to cities, counties, junior colleges and Omaha University, and authorized the merger of the University of Nebraska with Omaha University, subject to the approval of the Omaha voters. The 1967 legislature enacted the state's first minimum wage law, statewide voter registration, and authorized collective

¹⁰⁰"134-Day Session Made Big Changes in State," Lincoln Sunday Journal and Star, 23 July 1967, p. 1.

¹⁰¹"Tax, Aid Programs Highlight '67 Session," Lincoln Star, 22 July 1967, p. 1.

¹⁰²"Tax, Aid Programs Highlight '67 Session."

bargaining for public school teachers. The Unicameral also enacted laws which permitted counties to withdraw from an area vocational school district and approved a bill which allowed Lincoln and Omaha to apply for status as an area vocational technical school without a vote of the people (both cities had well established vocational programs in their high schools). Many of these changes required state funding, and as a result, the legislature increased the 1967-1969 budget 39 percent over the 1965-1967 one.

In his inaugural address on January 5, 1967, Governor Tiemann asked the legislators to review the structure of Nebraska's educational system and provide the best use and coordination of facilities, staff, and funds.¹⁶³ In addition, he urged the Unicameral

to establish a system of junior colleges and vocational technical schools to relieve the pressure of increased enrollment at our colleges and university and to provide trained manpower for present and future industries. There is clearly an immediate need for such a vocational technical school in Omaha's near north side to improve the employment opportunities of citizens in that area and to provide additional skilled workmen in the most industrialized part of the state.¹⁶⁴

The governor recommended a system of junior colleges and

¹⁶³Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 5 January 1967, pp. 70-76.

¹⁶⁴Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 5 January 1967, p. 72.

vocational technical schools for three reasons: to relieve enrollment pressure on colleges and the university, to provide employment opportunities, and to train more skilled workers. The governor supported other pieces of legislation as well as a change in the state's tax structure. This in turn influenced Nebraska postsecondary education.

Soon after the 1967 legislative session began, the residents of Lincoln voted on the establishment of a junior college. According to an article in the Lincoln star, approval of the proposal would not create just a liberal arts oriented school nor just vocational technical education, but

it will be the first public two-year college in the state to offer vocational, technical, and semi-professional training supported by related academic work for credit that is transferable to other colleges and universities.¹⁰⁵

The only issue in the election from a legal standpoint was the availability of college credit.¹⁰⁶ However, the proposal fell short of the required 55 percent voter approval (only 52.3 percent of the voters approved it).

This junior college gained support from many Lincoln

¹⁰⁵Lloyd MacDowell, "Feb. 7 Vote to Decide Fate of Proposal," Lincoln Star, 29 January 1967, sec. B, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶Lloyd MacDowell, "Junior College Vote Holds Key to Scope of Education," Lincoln Star, 5 February 1967, sec. B, p. 1.

organizations.¹⁸⁷ The Chamber of Commerce, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, Unions, and several educational groups. The Board of Regents for the university stated in a resolution that such a college would not conflict with programs at the University. Representatives of Union College and Nebraska Wesleyan, both located in Lincoln, saw the proposed college as complementary. The dean for the Occupational Education Division at the University of Nebraska and a University of Nebraska regent, Edward Schwartzkopf, believed that the proposed junior college in Lincoln presented no problems for the university.¹⁸⁸ Faculty from the university currently taught in the vocational education program of the high school on a part-time basis. Lincoln High School provided a machine shop class for the University. Students registered through the Extension Division of the University and received credit for the course. The junior-technical proposal had precedents and support of various business, civic, and industrial groups.

Business and industry saw the junior college "as a means of training, retraining and upgrading skills for present and prospective employees."¹⁸⁹ Commercial interests viewed "it as

¹⁸⁷MacDowell, "Junior College Vote Holds Key to Scope of Education."

¹⁸⁸MacDowell, "Junior College Vote Holds Key to Scope of Education."

¹⁸⁹MacDowell, "Feb. 7 Vote to Decide Fate of Proposal."

a way to fill the gap in Lincoln's educational system in order to attract new industry by providing skilled manpower."¹⁹⁰ Labor leaders were also interested in the college "as a means of improving skills with the result of increasing incomes and retraining for new jobs that result from technological developments."¹⁹¹ Business, industry, commerce, and labor supported the college because it prepared skilled workmen, attracted industry, and increased the income of those who improved their skills.

However, the proposal did not receive enough support at the polls. In an editorial, the Lincoln Star suggested that the proposal lost because voters did not understand the issue before them. They were concerned about the junior college's financing, and some voters objected to the state providing vocational technical education.¹⁹² According to the editorial, voters did not trust the Lincoln school system to spend money. Some had raised questions "relative to suspected conflicts of interest on the Board of Education and relative to capital expenditures through a general fund mill levy rather than a bond issue."¹⁹³ Despite the defeat of the

¹⁹⁰MacDowell, "Feb. 7 Vote To Decide Fate of Proposal."

¹⁹¹MacDowell, "Feb. 7 Vote to Decide Fate of Proposal."

¹⁹²"Vocational J. C. Out," Lincoln Star, Editorial Page, 4 February 1967, p. 4.

¹⁹³"Vocational J. C. Out."

effort to create the first comprehensive two-year college in Nebraska, the governor, and legislature continued to explore changes in Nebraska's postsecondary educational system.

According to the Governor Tiemann, changes in the educational system and taxation laid the groundwork for economic growth and industrial expansion.

The industrialists indicate they are now looking at Nebraska because we have completely changed our complexion in matters of revenue raising and in attitudes toward education. We can become an industrial center.

Economic development means more jobs. This means the young people who are spending our money in education will stay in the state.¹⁹⁴

The opportunity for these significant changes occurred during the 1965 session, but it was the 1967 legislature that broke with tradition.¹⁹⁵

Two general trends marked the 1967 legislative session.¹⁹⁶ First, the legislature was willing to assume financial responsibility for concerns previously relegated to local governmental units. Second, the power of the Omaha and Lincoln delegation in the success of legislation became significant. Together, Omaha and Lincoln had eighteen votes, just seven under an absolute majority. The willingness of the

¹⁹⁴"Governor Views Success, Failure," 21 July 1967, p. 37.

¹⁹⁵"134-Day Session Made Big Changes in State," p. 1.

¹⁹⁶"134-Day Session Made Big Changes in State," p. 7.

Unicameral to assume greater state financial responsibility and the increased voting strength of the Omaha and Lincoln state senators influenced the legislation creating the technical community college system in Nebraska.

During the 1967 legislative session, Senators Marvel of Hastings, Pederson of Omaha, Knight of Lincoln, and R. Rasmussen of Hooper introduced LB 661. The legislation proposed "to create the Nebraska Commission on Higher Education," which was to develop a master plan for higher education and review all proposals "for the establishment of new junior colleges, vocational technical schools, and new degree programs."¹⁹⁷ At the Education Committee hearing on LB 661, the governor, the boards of the University of Nebraska and Omaha University, and the chairman of the State Normal Board supported the legislation.¹⁹⁸ However, the Nebraska Attorney General's Office issued an opinion that LB 661 was unconstitutional because it provided for two legislators to serve on the coordinating council.¹⁹⁹ Following the issuance of the Attorney General's opinion, LB 661 was defeated on the

¹⁹⁷Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 30 January 1967, p. 327.

¹⁹⁸Virgil Fallon, "Higher Education Commission Backed," 29 March 1967, Lincoln Star, p. 1.

¹⁹⁹"Legislature Kills Education Coordinating Council Bill," Lincoln Star, 14 July 1967, p. 13.

floor of the Unicameral when a motion to strike the enacting clause was approved thirty-four to zero. This technical method effectively killed the legislation for the session.

Upon the defeat of LB 661, Senators Pedersen of Omaha, Rasmussen of Hooper, Marvel of Hastings, Swanson of Lincoln, Knight of Lincoln, and Hughes of Humboldt introduced Legislative Resolution 82 (LR 82).²⁰⁰ LR 82 provided

1. That the Executive Board of the Legislative Council appoint a committee to study existing state policy in the field of higher education, considering the needs of the people, the needs of the state, and the role of individual public and private institutions within the state in fulfilling these needs.

2. That such committee shall make a complete report of its study to the next regular session of the Legislature, such report to include a determination as to whether there is a need for greater coordination of higher education and, if such a need is found to exist, its specific recommendations on a method of providing this coordination.²⁰¹

The Unicameral approved LR 82 on July 20, 1967 by a vote of thirty-two to zero. It justified LB 82 on several grounds: the increased budgets and enrollments at the state schools, the merger between the University of Nebraska and the Municipal University of Omaha, the establishment of several new private schools, the rapid growth of junior college and

²⁰⁰Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 13 July 1967, pp. 2891-2892.

²⁰¹Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 13 July 1967, p. 2892.

vocational technical schools, and the lack of coordination of higher education.

The Executive Board of the Legislative Council appointed nine members to the Nebraska Legislative Council Committee on Coordination of Higher Education. The senators were: Knight of Lincoln (Chair), Marvel of Hastings, Matzke of Milford, Moulton of Omaha, Brauer of Norfolk, Harsh of Bartley, Swanson of Lincoln, Robinson of Kearney, and Pedersen of Omaha. These senator's districts included: the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, Hastings College in Hastings, the state trade school in Milford, the Municipal University of Omaha, Norfolk and McCook Junior Colleges, and the State College in Kearney. The Nebraska Legislative Council Committee on Coordination of Higher Education issued its report in November 1968.²⁰²

The report suggested seven reasons for increased legislative concern with long range planning and coordination. First, there was a rapid increase in college age youth at a time when the state was pressed to finance and improve higher education. Second, the state financed most higher education at a time of increased attendance and greater awareness of vocational technical programs. Third,

²⁰²Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report of the Nebraska Legislative Council Committee on Coordination of Higher Education. Report No. 169. Lincoln: Author, November 1968.

technological advances and specialization in the biological and natural sciences, as well as engineering, "require more complex courses and apparatus especially at the graduate and professional levels."²⁰³ Fourth, to maintain quality costs more. Fifth, vocational technical schools in Nebraska insist that they deserve state-funding because they serve a state need and the cost of providing technical education has increased. Sixth, the problems of "the knowledge explosion, the extension of educational opportunity to portions of the population not now reached, and improvement in methodology will increase the cost of education."²⁰⁴ And seventh, the primary and secondary schools as well as higher education compete for the same funds. The committee believed that the state must recognize and address these seven concerns.

Unlike other prior legislative studies, this report included vocational and technical education as part of higher education. The study defined higher education as "all education, both public and private, offered to persons who have terminated their attendance in a primary or secondary

²⁰³Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report No. 169, p. 4.

²⁰⁴Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report No. 169, p. 5.

school."²⁰⁵ The Nebraska Legislative Council Committee on Coordination of Higher Education noted two areas of particular concern.²⁰⁶ First, Nebraska provided education in the thirteenth and fourteenth grades through a variety of types of institutions. There were state supported vocational technical schools, area vocational technical schools, and junior colleges. Because of this concern the Committee on Coordination of Higher Education appointed a group to assist them. Those appointed consisted of representatives from the University of Omaha, the University of Nebraska, the Nebraska Vocational Technical School in Milford, and Scottsbluff Junior College. The second problem area was the duplication of effort and the unwillingness of educators to communicate among themselves.²⁰⁷

Objectivity as an approach to higher education in Nebraska often seems to stop when it might mean a loss of a program, fewer tax dollars, or even accepting transfer credits from a difficult vocational-technical course to an academic institution. Academic tradition at all levels often threatens innovation as well as economy.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁵Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report No. 169, p. 8.

²⁰⁶Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report No. 169, p. 9.

²⁰⁷Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report No. 169, p. 10.

²⁰⁸Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report No. 169, p. 10.

The interests of education groups threatened their ability to coordinate activities and develop alternatives to provide the educational opportunity efficiently.

Following the completion of its study, the Legislative Council Committee on Coordination of Higher Education recommended that legislation be

drafted to implement a Coordinating Council for Higher Education in Nebraska. . . . Basic to the recommendation is the unanimity of the committee on the need for coordination, the goals of coordination and the often expressed desire for quality education together with the efficient use of the dollar.²⁰⁹

The coordination recommended by the committee included master planning and a council that was more than advisory. Because the committee supported statewide coordination of higher education in Nebraska, it developed legislation to accomplish that purpose.

Legislative Bill 573 and Legislative Bill 979 (1969)

During the 1969 legislative session the Unicameral continued to examine various elements of postsecondary education. It approved a name change of area vocational technical schools to technical colleges, it approved a study of vocational technical education in Nebraska (LR 95), and it narrowly approved legislation to establish a community college

²⁰⁹Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report No. 169, p. 18.

system in Nebraska. This system combined the vocational technical schools and the junior colleges into community college districts. Governor Tiemann vetoed the community college system legislation for three reasons. First, he believed that it was too costly. Second, it was not consistent with the governor's economic development plans. And third, the Nebraska Attorney General issued an opinion that the transfer of assets from junior colleges and vocational technical schools to community colleges violated Nebraska's Constitution. The legislature sustained the veto.

Two groups developed the legislation to create comprehensive community colleges in Nebraska.²¹⁰ The first was the Interim Study Committee on Higher Education, charged by the 1967 legislature to study coordination of higher education in Nebraska and to make recommendations to the 1969 legislature. The Interim Study Committee discovered that Nebraska had followed

a shotgun approach to the thirteenth and fourteenth years of higher education . . . we have junior colleges, state supported vocational-technical schools, area supported vocational-technical schools, private junior colleges, four new private four-year schools, which also serve these same two years, a University of Nebraska agricultural-technical school at Curtis, two public school systems very active in this area, and other public

²¹⁰Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 3 March 1969, pp. 1-2.

school systems somewhat less active."²¹¹

The task force which studied the problem made several recommendations which were incorporated in Legislative Bill 573 (LB 573).

Senator Knight, of Lincoln, testified before the Education Committee on March 3, 1969. Since he was a member of the 1967 taskforce that studied higher education in Nebraska, he outlined the recommendations contained in LB 573. First, Nebraska should establish comprehensive community colleges "as the prime postsecondary, sub-baccalaureate institution," providing general education, transfer, occupational, and continuing education programs.²¹² Second, no fewer than five occupational areas should be offered at the community colleges ranging in short courses to the associate degree. Third, community college district should be organized and administered by an elected board. Fourth, the districts should be financed through tuition, local taxes, state and federal monies. And last, the state should establish a state-level community college board. Senator Knight testified that despite the fact that the Legislative Council Committee on Higher Education on which he served had developed LB 573, he

²¹¹Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 3 March 1969, p. 1.

²¹²Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 3 March 1969, p. 2.

preferred LB 979 because it provided greater detail.²¹³ He suggested that his testimony on either LB 573 or LB 979 would be the same.

A second group worked on the same concept and initiated Legislative Bill (LB 979) which Senator Carpenter of Scottsbluff introduced.²¹⁴ This bill divided Nebraska into eight community college districts or areas. Area I in western Nebraska included Scottsbluff Junior College and the Sidney State Trade School. Area II contained North Platte Junior College and the Mid-Plains Area Vocational School. Area III included a junior college and an area vocational technical school in Norfolk. Area IV combined McCook Junior College and Central Nebraska Tech. Area V placed Fairbury Junior College and the Nebraska Vocational Technical School in Milford in the same area, while Areas VI, VII, and VIII had no public junior colleges. At the hearing for LB 979, Senator Ziebarth asked "Who wrote 979?"²¹⁵ Verne Moseman, the spokesman for the vocational technical schools, answered that representatives from each of the junior colleges and area

²¹³Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 3 March 1969, p. 3.

²¹⁴Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 3 March 1969, p. 3.

²¹⁵Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 3 March 1969, p. 17.

vocational technical schools sat down the principles and agreed to them. The purpose of LB 979 was

to provide for a comprehensive community college system to put it into areas of local control to be administered by state committee and financed by mill levy. It is felt that the time has now come to attempt to direct the expansion, direction and control of junior colleges and others of like position.²¹⁶

Those who supported LB 979 desired a community college system that was locally controlled and financed but coordinated at the state level. Such a system enhanced the ability of two-year postsecondary institutions to expand.

The Education Committee examined both LB 573 and LB 979. The committee consisted of the following senators: Harsh of McCook (Chairman), Ziebarth of Wilcox, Keyes of Papillion, Kennedy of Newman Grove, Wenglauff of Sutton, Pedersen of Omaha, Nore of Geneo, and Clark of Sidney. After hearings the Education Committee approved LB979.

At the Education Committee hearing on March 3, 1969 several people testified in favor of LB 573 and LB 979; no one spoke in opposition. Senators raised several questions during the testimony. Senator Ziebarth of Wilcox asked what were the criteria used to establish the community college districts and why were certain counties placed in certain

²¹⁶Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education, Attachment," 3 March 1969.

districts? Senator Clark of Sidney asked what would happen to Milford? Senator Harsh, a McCook farmer, questioned the use of the property tax to support the system. And Senator Nore, a Genoa farmer, wondered why Platte County was not in the same district. Senator Knight directed many of the questions to Dr. Paul Kennedy, the dean of education at Omaha University. He worked on the Study Committee on Higher Education.

Speaking on behalf of the Interim Study Committee, Paul Kennedy indicated that the criteria in establishing the eight districts was total population, school population, and property valuation, as well as "cultural-social factors that might influence in regard to trade or travel or some of those kinds of characteristics."²¹⁷ In addition, the Interim Study Committee believed that Milford should be included within one of the districts so that the State no longer directly governed any of the single institutions.

The junior colleges and vocational technical schools initiated LB 979. Prior to the 1969 legislative session, presidents of four of the junior colleges in Nebraska endorsed the idea of creating community college districts.²¹⁸ The idea, similar to one discussed in 1968 by the Nebraska

²¹⁷Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education, Attachment," 3 March 1969, p. 5.

²¹⁸"Junior Colleges Seek Broader Tax Base," Omaha World Herald, 5 January 1969, sec. J, p. 15.

Association of County Superintendents, broadened the tax base. The junior colleges needed greater assessed evaluation and the expansion to community college districts provided that. William Ptacek, president of Nebraska Western Junior College in Scottsbluff, and president of the junior college presidents' board in Nebraska, mentioned that he "would like to see the state redistricted so Nebraska Western could tax all property in the Panhandle."²¹⁵ A. W. Kuper, president of McCook Junior College, stated that a new music building constructed in 1968 was the first new building in 30 years. The college needed funds for capital improvements. To do this he suggested that McCook's tax base be extended to cover the southern tier of counties of Nebraska from Colorado to Franklin County. Ivan Simpson, president of Fairbury Junior College indicated that the big draw back in state aid enacted in 1967 was the lack of funding for facilities and equipment. The president of Norfolk Junior College, Dr. Michael Paradise, further argued that the state should redistrict into junior college districts, increase financial resources, and lower the local mill levy. The presidents saw the need for the junior colleges to expand their tax base in order to provide for building and equipment.

Verne Moseman, a Grand Island C.P.A., presented the view

²¹⁵"Junior Colleges Seek Broader Tax Base."

of the vocational technical schools. Before briefly reviewing LB 979, he noted how the proposal was developed.

The junior colleges

recognized the problem that they are having with a very limited tax base and also the need for coordination. The voc-tech schools also recognize the problems of the void areas which I mentioned earlier and also the fact that we have no transferability of credits and the need to expand these opportunities to all areas of the state. As a result the two groups got together a few months ago, and the degree of cooperation between these two groups has been remarkable. We've met separately three or four times. We've met jointly at least four times and in smaller groups two or three times beyond that and have agreed on the principles that are contained in LB 979.²²⁰

Each junior college and area vocational technical school was represented in the joint committee meetings.

Moseman also explained that the two groups considered the location of existing schools, the balance of valuation and the ratio of population to valuation, socio-economic factors, transportation facilities, and the wishes of the people interviewed when they drew district lines on a map.²²¹

Although they tried to include one junior college and one vocational technical school in each district, there were not enough institutions to do that. However, LB 979 had the

²²⁰Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 3 March 1969, p. 8.

²²¹Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 3 March 1969, p. 9.

support of many area chambers of commerce, the state chamber of commerce, and the Nebraska Association of Commerce and Industry.

During Moseman's testimony, senators raised questions about competition within an area between different communities, and why the group did not recommend putting one junior college or vocational technical school in each district. As Senator Nore, a Genoa farmer suggested, "That's the only problem we have is the districts."²²²² He questioned the placement of McCook and Hastings in the same district and Fairbury and Platte College in another district. And Senator Wenzlaff expressed concern about the distances for students to travel in western Nebraska. In response to these questions, Moseman stated that the purpose of the legislative proposal was to eliminate duplication and broaden the tax base. Districts must provide comprehensive programs. The concept of the community college was to offer arts and sciences, vocational technical, and community services. To place one of the existing schools in each district defeated one of the basic purposes of LB 979, the expansion of the areas of support for these colleges. This group did not have a recommendation as to what to do with Sidney and Milford, but

²²²²Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 3 March 1969, p. 6.

as LB 979 was presented, these two schools would remain state schools.

Ken Wortman represented the Nebraska Association of Commerce and Industry and appeared in support of LB 979.

For many years Nebraska employers have been handicapped by a shortage of skilled labor supply and in some cases an unskilled labor supply as well. For this reason the Nebraska Association of Commerce and Industry has long supported the expansion of vocational-technical education in Nebraska. An improved labor supply is absolutely necessary, not only if Nebraska is to attract new industry, but if existing industry is to expand as well. We have examined LB 979 in detail and support the principles of a statewide community college system sponsored by the bill. ~~***~~

Commercial and industrial interests in Nebraska supported LB 979 as a means of increasing the supply of skilled workmen and as a draw for new and expanding businesses.

Don Pederson, a North Platte attorney and member of the North Platte Board of Education and the North Platte Junior college Board, testified as a representative of the Nebraska junior colleges in support of LB 979. He noted that LB 979 was modeled after a bill adopted in the State of Washington in 1967 and modified to specifically apply to Nebraska. He suggested that the advantage of the community college concept was its ability to provide educational opportunity to all members of a community and meet the interests of a broad

~~***~~Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 3 March 1969, p. 22.

spectrum of individuals.

The State Planning Coordinator, Doug Bereuter, testified in support of the concept as a representative of Governor Tiemann, but emphasized the executive's concern that the districts created fit with the governor's economic development plans.²²⁴ For purposes of economic development, the state had been divided into 26 areas based on projected growth.

Ross Rasmussen represented the state school board. He testified that they have long supported the concept represented in LB 979. He believed that for the first time, and maybe the only time, the junior colleges were willing to combine with the area vocational technical schools and create community colleges. These community colleges provided greater educational opportunity, avoided duplication, and reduced costs.

Stan Matzke, testified as an individual interested in vocational technical education. He had two concerns. First, he hoped the creation of the community college districts did not dilute vocational technical education. Second, that this approach represented a move toward academics because "the tendency for a community college system is to move toward the

²²⁴Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 3 March 1969, pp. 26-28.

academic way and away from vocational-technical education."²²²²
 Matzke was concerned with maintaining and strengthening vocational technical education, although he believed that the community college concept was important for the utilization of funds and coordination.

Senator Knight suggested that "the comprehensiveness of the community college is the best answer today in alleviating this fragmentation and compartmentalism of educational opportunities."²²²⁶ He believed that the concept was advancing nationally and that Nebraska would benefit from such a system.

Senators discussed several issues during the Education Committee's hearings on LB 573 and LB 979. These issues included the boundaries of the districts, taxation, and competition among schools. The major difficulty was the creation of the districts. The Education Committee reported LB 979 out for floor debate and final action.

During floor debate of LB 979, Senator Wylie of Elgin moved to indefinitely postpone the legislation.²²²⁷ The Nebraska attorney general had issued an opinion that parts of

²²²²Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 3 March 1969, p. 30.

²²²⁶Nebraska Legislature, "Minutes of the Committee on Education," 3 March 1969, p. 32.

²²²⁷Nebraska Legislature, "Floor Debate, LB 979," 24 July 1969, p. 3219.

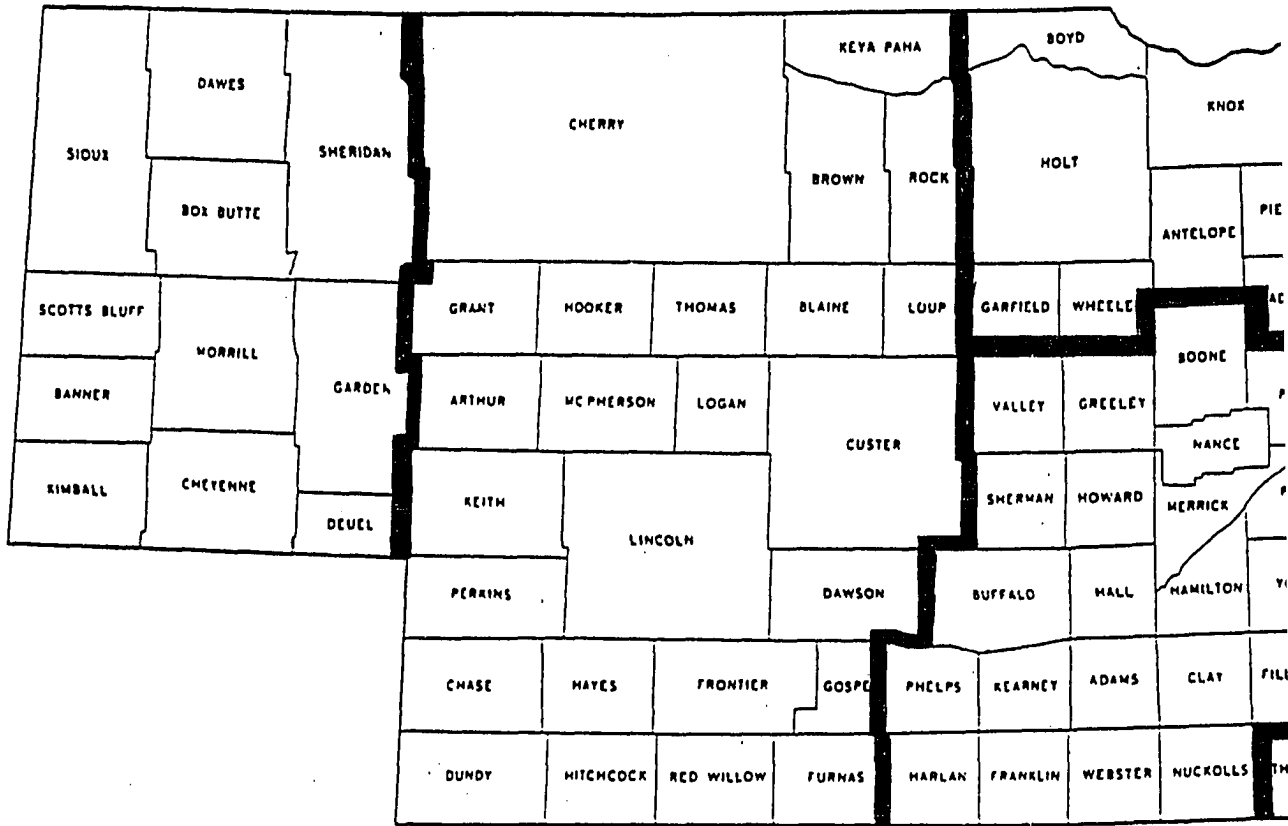
LB 979 were unconstitutional.²²⁸ Provisions which transferred the assets of a junior college or vocational technical school to a community college area constituted invalid class legislation. In addition, the provision which allowed the governor to decide on the allocation and disposition of assets violated separation of powers. Therefore, the attorney general was of the opinion that LB 979 would be difficult to defend. The motion was withdrawn after some discussion. Those interested in the bill prepared amendments to remove some of the attorney general objections.

The proposal was approved by a vote of twenty-five to eighteen.²²⁹ The final bill created seven community college districts, as indicated in Figure 5. These districts were expected to offer junior college, vocational technical, and community service programs. Elected boards would govern the districts which would operate the area vocational technical schools and the junior colleges.²³⁰ The legislature authorized the area boards to levy a local tax not to exceed 2 mills (1 mill after 1971) and authorized one-half mill for

²²⁸Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 24 July 1969, pp. 3140-3142.

²²⁹Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 18 September 1969, pp. 4186-4187.

²³⁰Don Walton, "Community College System Approved," Lincoln Star, 19 September 1969, p. 1.

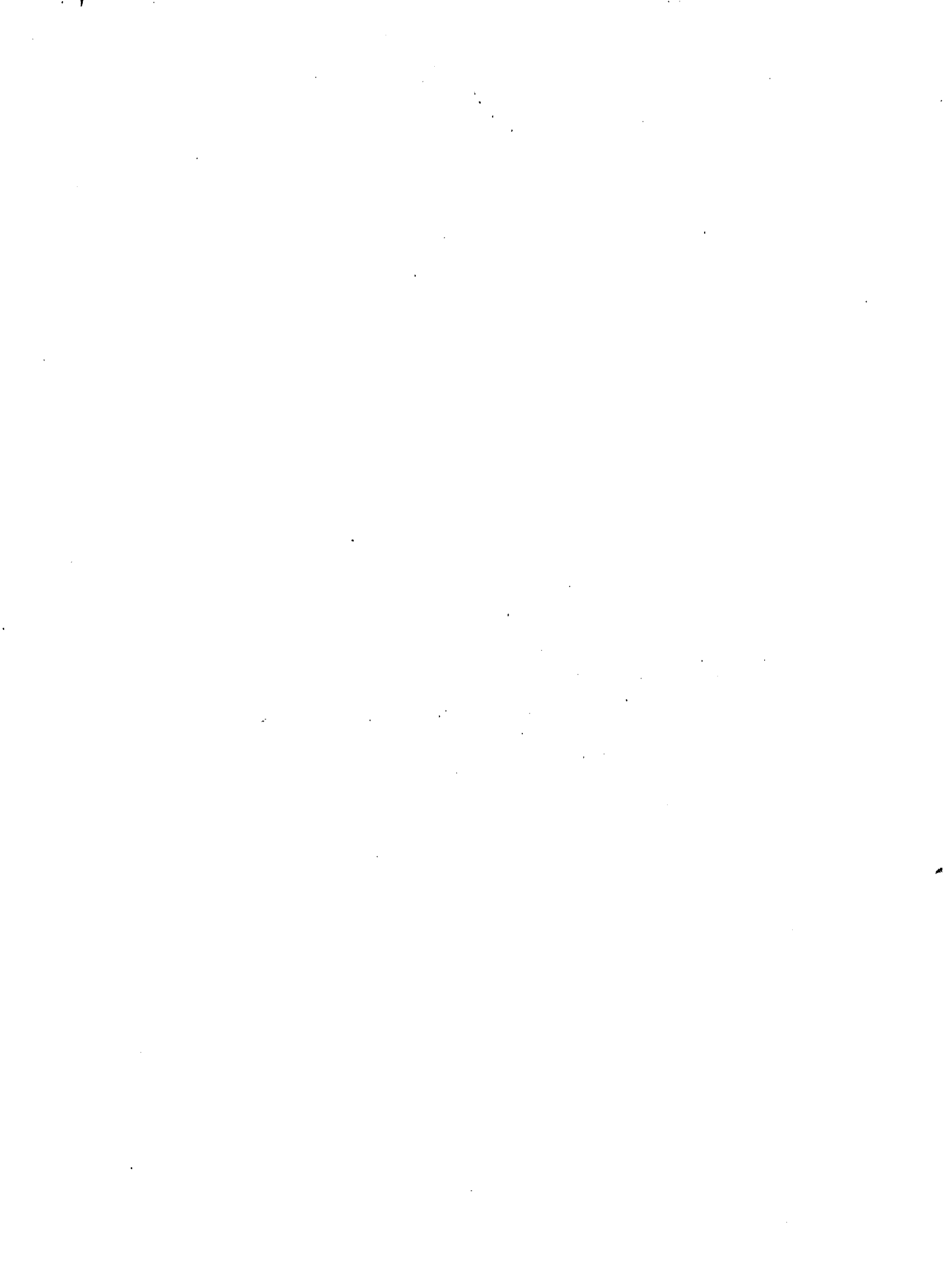


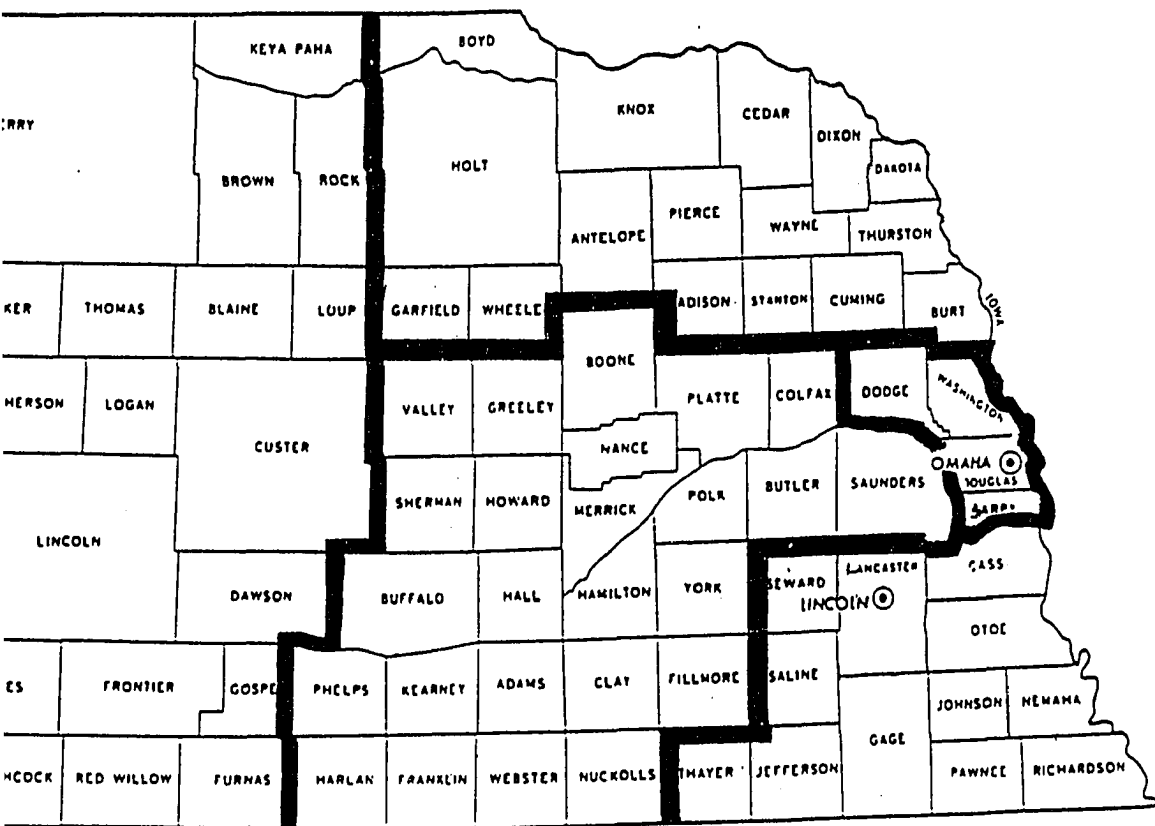
Community College Areas

Counties

- No. I Sioux, Dawes, Sheridan, Box Butte, Scotts Bluff, Morrill, Gar
- No. II Cherry, Keya Paha, Brown, Rock, Grant, Hooker, Thomas, Blaine
- No. III Keith, Perkins, Lincoln, Dawson, Chase, Hayes, Frontier, Gosp
- No. IV Boone, Platte, Nance, Colfax, Butler, Valley, Greeley, Sherma
- No. V Hamilton, York, Saunders, Phelps, Kearney, Adams, Clay, Fillm
- No. VI Lancaster, Cass, Otoe, Gage, Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee, Richard
- No. VII Dodge, Washington, Douglas, and Sarpy (excluding Omaha School
- Boyd, Holt, Knox, Cedar, Dixon, Dakota, Garfield, Wheeler, An
- Stanton, Cuming, and Burt.
- Omaha School District.

Figure 5. Seven Community College Districts Approved Under Legislative Bill 979





lan, Box Butte, Scotts Bluff, Morrill, Garden, Banner, Kimball, Cheyenne, and Deuel.
 Brown, Rock, Grant, Hooker, Thomas, Blaine, Loup, Arthur, McPherson, Logan, Custer,
 oln, Dawson, Chase, Hayes, Frontier, Gosper, Dundy, Hitchcock, Red Willow, and Furnas.
 , Colfax, Butler, Valley, Greeley, Sherman, Howard, Merrick, Polk, Buffalo, Hall,
 ders, Phelps, Kearney, Adams, Clay, Fillmore, Harlan, Franklin, Webster, and Nuckolls
 e, Gage, Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee, Richardson, Seward, Saline, Thayer, and Jefferson.
 ouglas, and Sarpy (excluding Omaha School District).
 dar, Dixon, Dakota, Garfield, Wheeler, Antelope, Pierce, Wayne, Thurston, Madison,
 Burt.
 t.

Districts Approved Under Legislative Bill 979 (LB 979) 1969



buildings.

Governor Tiemann then vetoed LB 979. He had three objections. First, the districts developed were "inconsistent with the planning and development region boundaries established earlier. . . ." ²²¹ As provided in LB 536 (1969), the Central State Planning Agency divided the state into a voluntary system of twenty-six regions to increase efficiency and effectiveness. ²²² The purpose of the regions was to encourage standardization of administration, development, and planning in each region. Second, based on the attorney general's opinion, Tiemann believed the legislation was unconstitutional. And third, the cost of funding the program as contained in the legislation was too high. The legislature did not override the veto. Thus, the attempt to create comprehensive community colleges in Nebraska in 1969 failed.

An analysis of the vote on LB 979 revealed several patterns. First, nine of the twelve Omaha senators and four of the five from Lincoln supported the bill. Second, no senator from an area in the western half of the state supported the legislation, with the exception of Senator Carpenter from Scottsbluff who sponsored the bill. The

²²¹Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 22 September 1969, p. 4255.

²²²Nebraska Department of Economic Development (Division of Community Affairs), "Nebraska Districts/Regions," 1981.

senator from McCook did not participate in the final vote. Senators from the western part of Nebraska failed to see how a system of community colleges would provide more educational opportunity when the distances were so great in western Nebraska. Areas I, II, IV covered over half of the entire state. However, the Unicameral with the approval of the governor did create a system of community colleges in Nebraska in 1971

Legislative Bill 759 (1971)

The 1969 legislature also approved Legislative Resolution 95 (LR 95) which called for a committee to study vocational technical education in Nebraska "with particular emphasis on the question of whether all vocational technical schools should be state operated and supported or whether they should all be area schools supported by local levies."²²² The LR 95 Study Committee concluded that a consensus did not exist as to what would be best. Therefore, it recommended that the state continue to provide vocational technical education in its current manner, that is, continue both area and state supported schools. However, the 1971 Unicameral approved Legislative Bill 759 (LB 759), a proposal patterned after LB

²²²Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report of the Nebraska Legislative Council Committee on Education. Report No. 183. Lincoln: Author, November 1970.

979. Senators Ziebarth of Wilcox, Carpenter of Scottsbluff, and Marvel of Hastings co-sponsored LB 759. They proposed the establishment of a statewide system of technical community colleges.²³⁴ J. J. Exon, elected governor in 1970, signed the bill into law. The proposal divided the state into eight technical community districts and became effective January 1, 1973.²³⁵

The Committee on Education heard testimony on LB 759 on March 8, 1971.²³⁶ Senator Elrod of Grand Island chaired the committee which consisted of Senators Barnett of Lincoln, Swanson of Lincoln, Keyes of Papillion, Syas of Omaha, Snyder of Omaha, Craft of North Platte, and Stomer of Kearney. In opening remarks, Senator Ziebarth noted that LB 759 had the support of the junior colleges and vocational schools, and that the concept contained in the proposal had been discussed for some three years. Numerous people testified in support of LB 759, including representatives of the area vocational technical schools, the junior colleges, and businessmen.

Verne Moseman, board member of Central Nebraska Technical

²³⁴Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, February 1971, p. 370-371.

²³⁵"Community Colleges System Proposed," Lincoln Star, 9 February 1971, p. 8.

²³⁶Nebraska Legislature, "Hearing of the Committee on Education," 8 March 1971.

College in Hastings and past chairman of the Nebraska Association of Technical Colleges, testified that LB 759 was a great improvement over LB 979 (1969).²³⁷ First, LB 759 contained a number of features similar to LB 581 (1965) which established the area vocational technical schools. It gave the people the power of self-determination. The voters decided which district to join, but if they chose not to join any, in 1973 the Unicameral would make that determination for them. Second, the proposal included the state technical schools at Milford and Sidney in the system. Thus it eliminated a dual system of state-run and financed trade schools and locally-run and financed area schools. And third, local boards were provided in LB 759. This created more responsiveness to local needs, the needs of the student and of local businesses.

Jim Lightbody, representing the Lincoln Nebraska Technical College, also supported LB 759. He liked LB 759 because it included existing institutions and provided guidance for the development of education in Nebraska. The bill was supported by both the existing area vocational technical schools and the junior colleges.

Frank Kleager, representative of the boards of education

²³⁷Nebraska Legislature, "Hearing of the Committee on Education," 8 March 1971, p. 4.

of junior colleges in Nebraska, and Ivan Simpson, appearing on behalf of the Association of Junior Colleges, advocated the adoption of LB 759. According to Kleager the system approach provided better efficiency. It cost less to operate, provided a curricula fitted to the needs of the students in the areas, and opened educational opportunity for more students. Simpson believed that a statewide system was beneficial for four reasons. First, it permitted the area colleges to develop new educational programs for the future as need arose, thereby decreasing the need for new colleges. Second, it merged the junior colleges and vocational schools, eliminating duplication and giving students more educational opportunity. Third, it was in Simpson's opinion the system Nebraska needed. And fourth, a statewide system provided the services needed by citizens in each area. The schools were locally operated and programs locally developed to meet local needs. Thus, LB 759 created an efficient system, expanded educational opportunity, maintained control at the local level, and protected existing institutions.

Three businessmen appeared before the Education Committee to testify in support of LB 759. Ray Judds, in addition to being an advisor at Milford, was Vice Chairman of the Economic Development Committee of the Chamber of Commerce in Lincoln. The Chamber of Commerce supported LB 759 because, first, the

area concept provided adequate financial support which made future growth possible. Second, the proposal encouraged local initiative yet provided "strong state control to guard against costly duplications of some technology programs while others go unmet."²³³ And third, the system provided more vocational technical training in the future while de-emphasizing academic courses. "Under the present dual system of state operated and locally operated post secondary vocational programs, growth in state operated programs have been stifled to mere continuation or only minimal growth."²³⁴ Thus the area community college would provide adequate funding, a sufficient number of potential students, and logical geographic and economic areas.

In addition to Judd's testimony, two Lancaster County businessmen, one from Lincoln and the other from Waverly, supported LB 759 in testimony before the Education Committee. Fred Sikyla, owner of Bryant Air Conditioning, endorsed LB 759 because it

establishes a sorely needed statewide system of occupational education on the post-secondary level, whose major thrust shall be on occupational training. Well over three-quarters of the jobs in Nebraska do not require the academic preparation of a four-year baccalaureate program. This bill establishes community technical colleges an

²³³Nebraska Legislature, "Hearing of the Committee on Education," 8 March 1971, p. 8.

²³⁴Nebraska Legislature, "Hearing of the Committee on Education," 8 March 1971, p. 8.

independent, unique and vital segment of the state educational system. Further, that this system will provide equal opportunity for occupational training to all citizens across the state of Nebraska. Finally, all counties within the state will carry their fair share of the cost of this program; local control under the state guidelines assures that the manpower needs of this state will be adequately provided for since local boards will be more aware of the needs within their area.²⁴⁰

Businessmen emphasized the advantages of a statewide system in providing trained workers. The aspect of local control contained in the bill also meant that the needs of local areas as well as statewide needs would be met.

According to Marlo Burg, an employer of Milford graduates, LB 759 would continue to provide quality workers, and more of them. The coordination provided in the legislation prevented the training of students for jobs which do not exist.

Today we've had more jobs for people from technical schools than we've had candidates. We are constantly unable to fill our forces with properly trained people and want to do everything we can to further vocational technical training in this state.²⁴¹

The development of a statewide coordinated system of vocational technical and junior college education provided a means of training men and women for jobs which went unfilled.

²⁴⁰Nebraska Legislature, "Hearing of the Committee on Education," 8 March 1971, p. 9.

²⁴¹Nebraska Legislature, "Hearing of the Committee on Education," 8 March 1971, p. 9.

Two representatives from Omaha testified in favor of LB 759. Edwin Parrish, assistant superintendent of schools in Omaha, represented the Omaha Board of Education. He supported LB 759 for four reasons. First, it created a statewide system of community technical colleges. Second, it used existing facilities as a base for future development. Third, the proposal provided control by the local and area levels. And fourth, the organization provided linkage with other federal programs. The Omaha school district viewed LB 759 favorably, then, because it provided a statewide system based on existing facilities locally controlled and linked to federal programs.

The last person to testify in favor of LB 759 represented the Omaha Suburban Area Council of Schools. That organization supported the legislation because the system would provide educational opportunity for the entire state and would involve people statewide. Futhermore, it had a local appeal:

we think that we have a substantial amount of population and a large number of children and our particular (area) is in need of vocational technical colleges, community colleges and therefore (we) support strongly the principals with these two bills that are before you today.²⁴²

The suburban areas near Omaha liked the bill because such a statewide system provided educational opportunity for the

²⁴²Nebraska Legislature, "Hearing of the Committee on Education," 8 March 1971, p. 11.

large number of students in the suburbs who did not have access a community college.

Two people, both from McCook, testified in opposition to LB 759. W. D. Benton, representing the McCook Chamber of Commerce, objected to LB 759 for two reasons. First, it created a another state board. He suggested that instead the legislature consider a super board to coordinate all higher education in the state. Second, LB 759 placed McCook in a district that included another junior college and one or two vocational technical schools. As proposed, the major allocation of funds went for vocational technical education, and McCook Junior College would not be able to maintain its tradition as Nebraska's oldest junior college. He asked that if the Legislature passed LB 759 McCook be in a district by itself.

Senator Harsh of McCook also testified against LB 759. First, he wanted a state agency to coordinate services and programs of the community colleges. Second, the state should move away from property tax as a means of financial support for the community colleges. And third, the state had an obligation to provide vocational technical programs just as it did for many professional people, such as lawyers and teachers. Senator Harsh expressed concern though about the coordination and financing of the community college system.

He believed that McCook would better be served if the state rather than the large proposed area district took responsibility for coordination and finance.

One other senator testified before the Education Committee on March 8, 1971. Senator Lewis of Sidney did not oppose the area concept, but asked for more time to study whether duplication of programs and administration actually existed. Despite the opposition by McCook representatives and the request for more time by Senator Lewis, the Education Committee voted approval of LB 759.

In presenting LB 759 before the Unicameral for floor debate, Senator Ziebarth emphasized that LB 759 had been discussed for over two years. Although it was similar to the bill passed in 1969 (LB 979), LB 759 eliminated many of the problems contained in the 1969 proposal. Nebraska needed this legislation. The bill was supported by the Nebraska Association of Technical Colleges, Nebraska Association of Junior Colleges, businesses, and industry as well as numerous school officials and administrators.

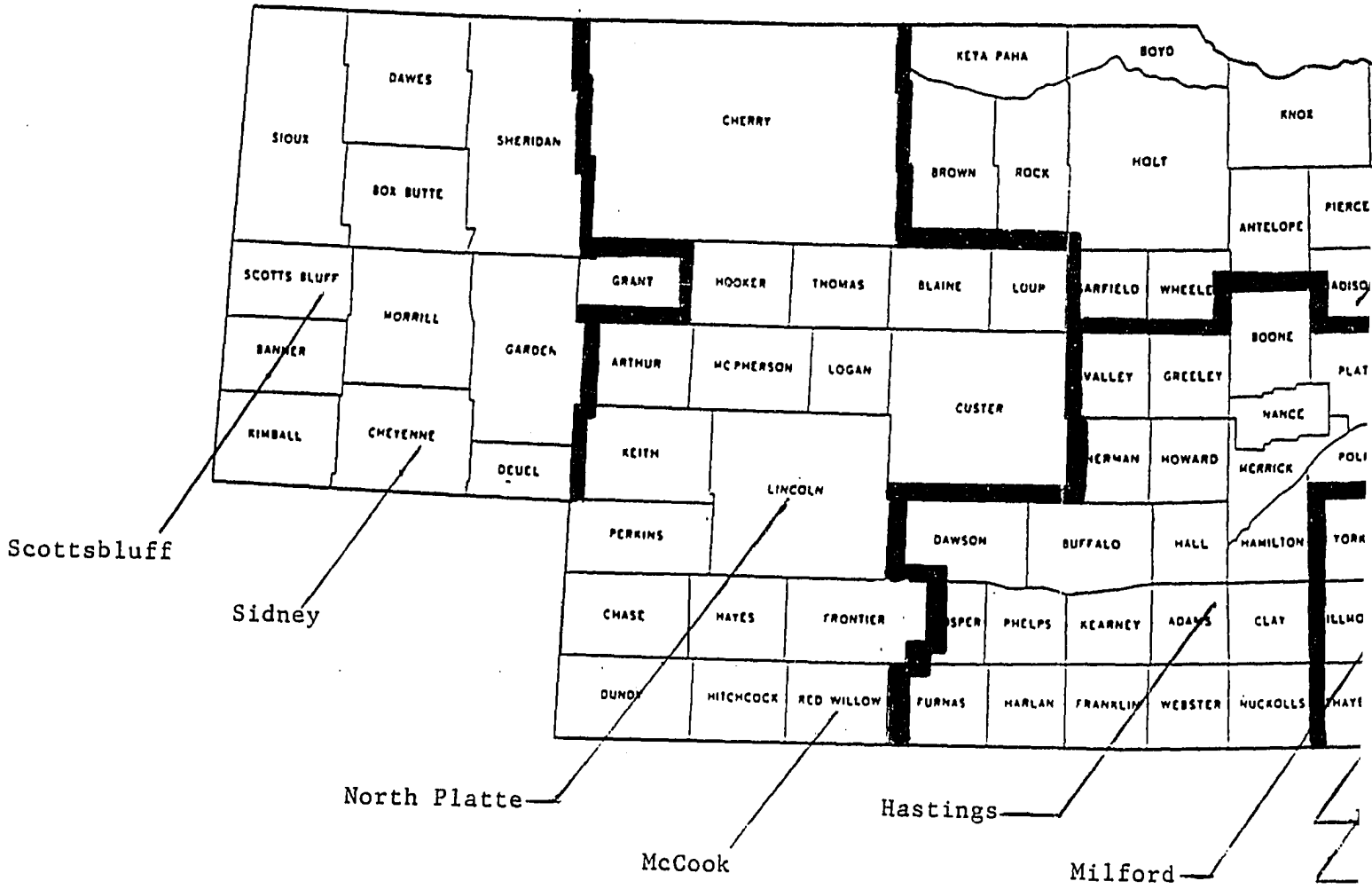
LB 759 combined the two state trade schools (Milford and Sidney), the five area vocational schools (Hastings, North Platte, Norfolk, Omaha, and Lincoln), and the six junior colleges (Scottsbluff, North Platte, McCook, Fairbury, Columbus, and Norfolk) into eight area community college

districts (see Figure 6). The bill provided that every Nebraska community would be a part of one of the eight districts by 1973. The designated districts were: Western Nebraska, Mid-plains, Central Nebraska, Northeast Nebraska, Eastern Nebraska, Omaha, Lincoln, and Southeast Nebraska.²⁴³ These colleges would provide programs in college transfer and vocational technical education. The state provided 75 percent of the financial support with the remaining 25 percent and capital construction costs financed by a local property tax not to exceed one mill. In addition to these provisions, LB 759 established area boards to govern each school, created a state Board of Technical Community Colleges, and permitted a student to attend any technical community college regardless of residence or educational background or ability, an open door.²⁴⁴

Questions about LB 759 were raised as to cost and whether the system would be state funded, if there would be local control but some state uniformity, and how available the legislation would make vocational technical education? On May 18, 1971, the Unicameral approved LB 759 by a vote of thirty-

²⁴³"Community Technical College Bill Approved," Omaha World Herald, 19 May 1971, p. 8.

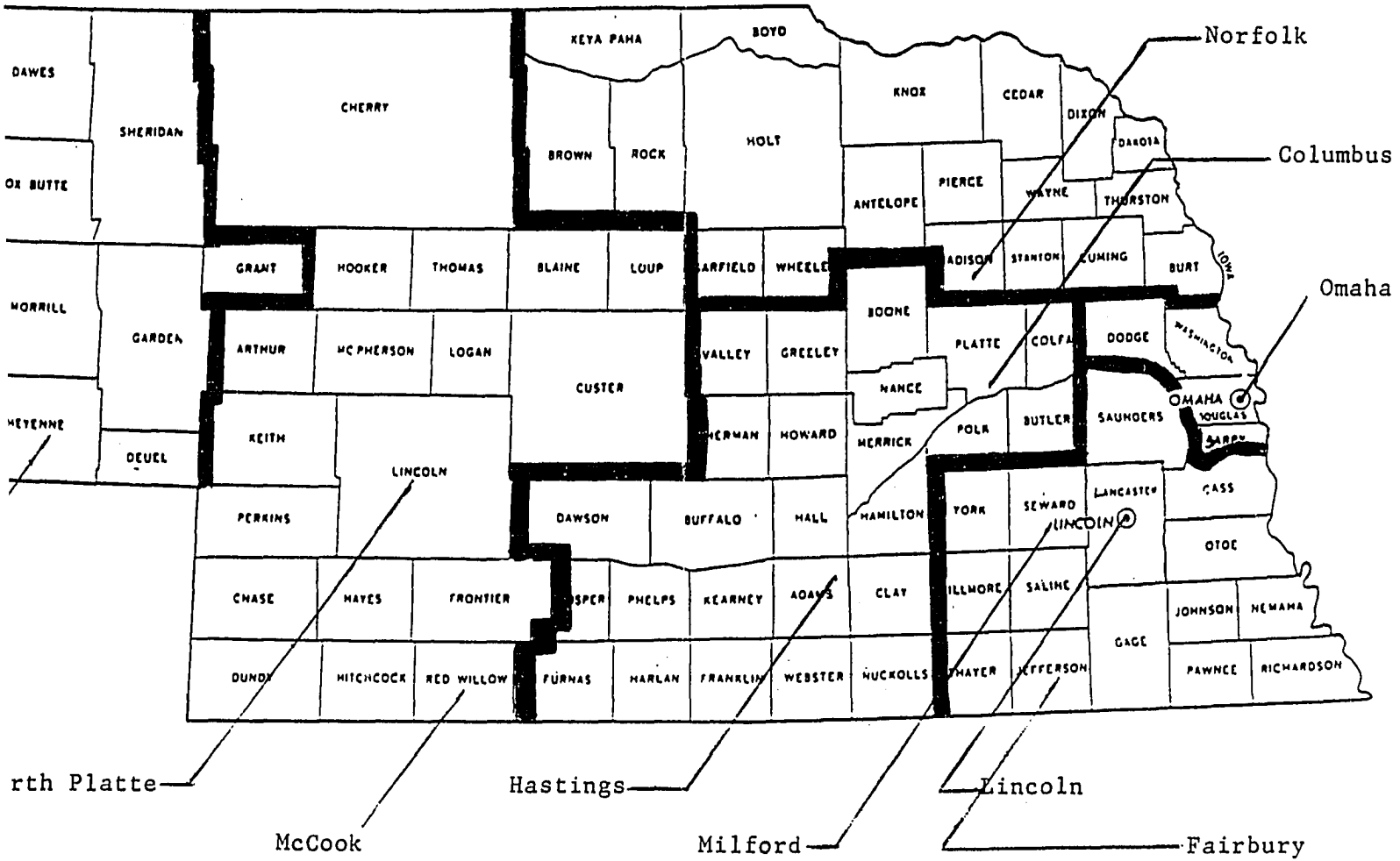
²⁴⁴"Community Technical College Bill Approved."



(Omaha and Lincoln School Districts Are Separate Technical Commu

Figure 6. The Eight Technical Community College Districts Provided in Legislative





(Omaha and Lincoln School Districts Are Separate Technical Community College Districts)

Eight Technical Community College Districts Provided in Legislative Bill 759 (LB 759) 1971



one to thirteen.²⁴⁵

Governor Exon supported the concept and signed it. He believed that LB 759 was necessary to coordinate technical colleges within the state but expressed concern about the budget process contained in the bill.²⁴⁶ Under LB 759, local boards submitted their budgets to the legislature. Exon believed that the governor was responsible for the budgets of all state agencies.

Thus by 1973, the Technical Community College System, consisting of junior colleges, area vocational technical schools, and state trade schools became a single system whose control and financing were shared between the local boards and the state. Additional legislation in 1973, 1974, 1975, and 1978 remedied oversights and added dimensions to LB 759, completing the process of establishing the system. No major changes have occurred from 1978 to 1986.

Legislative Bill 533 (1973)

Legislative Bill 533 (LB 533) was introduced by the Education Committee in 1973 to place all counties in an area

²⁴⁵Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 18 May 1971, pp. 2012-2013.

²⁴⁶"Education Bills Get Exon's Signature, Omaha World Herald," 25 May 1971, p. 6.

community college, as provided by LB 759 in 1971.²⁴⁷ As of 1973, twenty-five counties had not joined a district.²⁴⁸ In addition, LB 533 proposed the reduction in the total number of technical community college districts from eight to five, by eliminating separate Omaha and Lincoln districts and combining the western and mid-plains areas.²⁴⁹ After committee hearings and floor debate, LB 533 was approved thirty-eight to zero. However, the final version reduced the number of districts by only one, to seven, by merging the Lincoln Technical Community College district with the Southeastern one. The changes in the Omaha and western districts originally proposed were not approved.

At the Education Committee hearing on LB 533, Senator Warner suggested that it was intended

to meet the requirement of the legislation enacted in 1971 setting up the community technical colleges in which counties have an option of indicating a preference as to one of eight districts, and there were some twenty-five counties which had not had an election as to a preference area; and under the provisions of the act in the Legislature was required to place those counties in a particular

²⁴⁷Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 13 March 1973, pp. 786-787.

²⁴⁸"College Area System Overhauled," Omaha World Herald, 26 May 1973, p. 18.

²⁴⁹"Reorganization Is Proposed Of Community College Areas," Lincoln Star, 15 March 1973, p. 14.

district as of July 1, 1973.²⁵⁰

Warner also noted that the bill divided the state into five vocational technical community colleges districts.²⁵¹ The bill was drawn to meet the statutory requirement but boundaries were changed in order to insure an appropriate amount of assessed valuation and to reduce administrative costs. The bill placed all ninety-three counties into a district and changed slightly the funding formula, in that the state was obligated "to pay the bill for costs above the financing provided by the local property tax, tuition and fees and federal funds and other direct grants."²⁵² In summary, LB 533 placed all counties into a technical community college district, reduced the number of districts from seven to five, and changed the funding formula.

At the March 20, 1973 hearing, several people testified for and against the proposed legislation. Those supporting the legislation included representatives from the Nebraska Association of Technical Community Colleges, the board of Nebraska Western College at Scottsbluff, the president of

²⁵⁰Nebraska Legislature, "Hearing of the Committee on Education," 20 March 1973, p. 1.

²⁵¹Nebraska Legislature, "Hearing of the Committee on Education, Statment [sic] of Intent," 20 March 20 1973.

²⁵²"Technical College Areas Will Include All Counties," Lincoln Star, 26 May 1973, p. 6.

McCook College, the president of the Mid-Plains Vocational Technical College, the president of the Mid-Plains Community College Area, and a legislative representative of the Omaha School Board. They generally supported the legislation. They were concerned, however, about the size of the western district under the proposal. Representatives from the City of Omaha also disapproved of merging the Omaha school with the Eastern Nebraska Technical College.

Testifying in opposition to the legislation were two members from Eastern Nebraska Technical College who opposed the merger with the Omaha school. The executive director of Nebraska State School Boards opposed it for the same reason as ~~did a representative~~ of eight panhandle counties who objected to the legislation passed in 1971. The Panhandle representative argued for the elimination of the property tax to support the schools and argued that the legislation did not give sufficient local control to the schools.

Almost all of the floor debate on LB 533 concerned which counties would be in which district and whether there would be eight or seven or six districts. As finally approved thirty-eight to zero, all counties were included in a district, and the eight districts were reduced to seven by merging Lincoln with fifteen counties in southeastern Nebraska.

Challenges to the System: 1974 to 1978

In 1974, the Unicameral merged the Omaha Technical School with Eastern Nebraska Technical Community College into the Metropolitan Technical Community College. Legislative Bill 813 (LB 813) was passed to avoid overlap and duplication, and to provide financial strength to the area vocational technical school in Omaha.²⁵³ LB 813 was approved by a vote of forty-one to zero. As a result, the number of technical community colleges in the state of Nebraska was reduced from seven to six.

The sponsor of the bill to merge the Omaha Technical School with Eastern Nebraska Technical Community College (LB 813), Senator Simpson, read a summary from an Omaha Chamber of Commerce publication concerning urban affairs and community development to the Education Committee.²⁵⁴ The report recommended that the Omaha Technical Community College should be separated from the Omaha public school system to improve vocational training, and that Omaha Technical Community College should be merged with the Eastern Nebraska Technical Community College into one unified school. This merger would improve vocational training by increasing the financial base

²⁵³Nebraska Legislature, "Hearing of the Committee on Education," 4 February 1974, p. 33.

²⁵⁴Nebraska Legislature, "Hearing of the Committee on Education," 4 February 1974, p. 23.

and coordination within the Omaha metropolitan region. Although Senator Simpson did not introduce the legislation at the behest of the Omaha Chamber of Commerce, their statement represented his thoughts on the proposal. There was no opposition to the bill either during committee hearings or floor debate.

In June, 1974, the Nebraska Supreme Court ruled that part of LB 759 concerned with finances passed during the 1971 legislative session was unconstitutional. During 1974, several western counties had collected the one mill tax as provided under LB 759 (1971), but had refused to give the funds to Western Technical Community College on grounds that it was unconstitutional.²⁵⁵ According to the Nebraska Supreme Court, there was a provision in the Nebraska Constitution which prohibited the state from levying a property tax for state purposes.²⁵⁶

The court stated that:

Under the act with which we are concerned here, the State has assumed the direct control of major policy decisions which effect the operation of each of the seven community college areas, and the statute reflects a purpose to control the operation of all seven areas for the benefit of the residents of the state as a whole. The provisions requiring

²⁵⁵"Area College Financing Arguments Presented," Lincoln Star, 7 June 1974, p. 28.

²⁵⁶"Supreme Court of Nebraska," Volume 192, Gant Publishing Company, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1975.

that the tuition in any technical community college areas for any resident of the particular area is a strong indication of the legislative purpose to benefit residents of the entire state as contrasted to residents of particular local areas. The direct control by the State over capital expenditures, the right to contract for acquisitions and additions, and to control and direct which facilities and training will be available in which area, together with the complete and direct control of the individual budget of each technical community college areas, demonstrate the dominance of the State as opposed to the local areas in all major matters of control and operation of the statutory system. It is undoubtedly true that such direct control will result in a more efficient and coordinated operation and avoid expensive and uneconomical duplication of facilities and services. Those particular objectives in themselves reflect the dominance of a purpose to benefit the state as a whole. 257

ult the Court declared that portion of LB 759, the Community College Act of 1971, which concerned support and the levying of a local property tax was unconstitutional. Because the ruling prohibited the use of a property tax levy to fund the technical community financing for them had to come from the state. state supreme court's decision regarding LB 759 opened debate on whether the technical community should be state agencies or locally controlled ones. immediate consequence of the Supreme Court decision was that they became state agencies for the balance of 1974. In Unicameral discussed the issue. LB 218 designated

Supreme Court of Nebraska," pp. 211-212.

the technical community colleges as state agencies by merging them with the four state teachers colleges under the direction of the state College Board of Trustees.

Senator Clark of Sidney, who introduced LB 218, feared that local control would permit the technical community colleges to levy high property taxes and set high salaries. He believed that local boards did not know how to budget and that they left all the details to administrators.²⁵⁹ Moreover, Governor Exon did not want the technical community colleges to be state agencies. A proposal representing the governor's view was drafted and introduced by Senator Kremer.²⁶⁰

Legislative Bill 344 (1975)

Kremer's proposal, Legislative Bill 344 (LB 344), established the technical community colleges as locally controlled institutions.²⁶⁰ Under this proposal, local boards could again impose property levies for operating funds and construction. The legislature would provide state aid, but

²⁵⁹Larry Parrott, "State Tech Colleges' Bill Asks Power to Levy Taxes," Lincoln Star, 22 January 1975, p. 33.

²⁶⁰David Wagaman, Budget Analyst for the Technical Community Colleges and State Colleges in 1975, Interview with author, 21 September 1988, Lincoln, Nebraska.

²⁶⁰"Bill Would Return Colleges To Local Base," Lincoln Star, 23 January 1975, p. 6.

the budgets would be controlled by the area boards. It provided three things: local control, state funding, and a coordinating agency to provide guidance to avoid duplication and higher costs.²⁶¹

State Senator Lewis of Bellevue questioned the constitutionality of LB 344. He specifically doubted the constitutionality of the method of funding and the powers granted to the board which LB 344 created. As a consequence an attorney general's opinion was rendered and LB 344 was amended to

provide local control over technical community colleges. It would therefore appear and we are of the opinion that the property tax provided for in section 15 of the proposed committee amendments to LB 344 would be for local purpose and consequently would not violate . . . the Nebraska Constitution.²⁶²

Thus it was determined that LB 344, as amended, was constitutional and did not violate the prohibition against the use of property tax for a state purpose. The debate over the legislation involved two issues: the financing and the governance of the technical community colleges.²⁶³

²⁶¹Nebraska Legislature, "Floor Debate, LB 344," 29 April 1975, p. 3334.

²⁶²Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 24 March 1975, pp. 1005-1006.

²⁶³Nebraska Legislature, "Floor Debate, LB 344," 30 April 1975, p. 3430.

A battle developed in the legislature over the issue of state controlled technical community colleges versus local controlled ones. The chairman and vice-chairman of the Appropriations Committee favored state control while the governor and the Education Committee supported local control.²⁶⁴ Both the chairman and vice-chairman of the Appropriations Committee believed that the technical community colleges should be state controlled. But the proposal favored by them had three problems. First, if the colleges became state agencies then the state funding would have to compensate the college budgets for lost property tax revenues. Thus, the bill would lead to higher state taxes. The governor opposed this. Second, the proposal to make the schools state agencies included virtually no money for capital expenditures. Since Omaha wanted funds for this purpose, Omaha opposed LB 218. And third, several of the old junior colleges had outstanding general obligation bonds. If they became state agencies the state would have to pay them off since the Nebraska Constitution prohibited state indebtedness over \$100,000.

Supporters of local control for technical community colleges favored LB 344. It would not raise state taxes; the State would not have to pay off the general obligation bonds. Local control would mean that the colleges would be more

²⁶⁴Wagaman Interview.

responsive to local business and industry needs. An unstated reason was that if the technical community colleges were state agencies, the communities would vie with one another for construction of college facilities. There was greater potential for duplication.²⁶⁵ Local boards were assumed to be conservative and state senators might not withstand the political pressure for more state expenditures.

Support for state control as provided in LB 218 occurred for several reasons. First, it prevented duplication. Second, it avoided competition with the state colleges. And third, it was seen to be more conservative and would lead to more responsible college budgeting.²⁶⁶ In addition to these reasons, the leaders of the Appropriations Committee favored state control because they feared local control would hurt colleges in their legislative districts.

The chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Senator Marvel of Hastings, was concerned that local control of the technical community college system would lead to the closure of the vocational technical school in Hastings. And the vice-chairman of the committee, Senator Clark, feared the Sidney campus would also be closed. They feared that communities in their areas would be unwilling to continue to support those

²⁶⁵Wagaman Interview.

²⁶⁶Wagaman Interview.

colleges which the state had heretofore supported financially.

LB 344 was approved by the unicameral by a vote of thirty-three to fourteen.²⁶⁷ The bill financed the technical community colleges by permitting the institutions to levy up to two mills for operating expenditures and up to one mill for capital improvements. However, together the total mill levy could not exceed two and a half mills. State aid was based on student enrollment. Five of the six senators from Lancaster County (Lincoln) voted against the proposal. Wagaman believed that the university opposed local control. If the technical community colleges were state agencies, then the university could influence the appropriation and general educational policies of the technical community colleges.²⁶⁸ The Unicameral decided, through the approval of LB 344, to respond to the Nebraska Supreme Court decision declaring parts of LB 759 (1971) unconstitutional and reestablished local control of the technical community colleges, a move opposed by representatives from Lancaster County, the home of the University of Nebraska.

Also during the 1975 legislative session, the Unicameral approved Legislative Resolution 36 (LR 36) "in an effort to

²⁶⁷"Tech Colleges Back In Local Hands," Lincoln Star, 23 May 1975, p. 16.

²⁶⁸Wagaman Interview.

provide an affordable and responsible system of postsecondary education."²⁶⁹ It authorized a study of postsecondary education. The Interim Study Committee reported to the legislature in December of 1976 and recommended that the legislature assume the responsibility for coordinating postsecondary education. Following that recommendation, the Unicameral in 1977 authorized "the creation of the Nebraska Postsecondary Education Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) to institute a process for the redefinition of the roles and missions of Nebraska's public postsecondary systems and institutions."²⁷⁰ This advisory committee studied the institutions of higher education in Nebraska to determine their role and mission within the Nebraska system.

The advisory committee examined current and proposed programs at institutions of higher education, determined which should be phased out or not developed, and assigned responsibilities for education among the state university, state colleges, and technical community colleges. Based on a series of public hearings, the Study Committee drafted legislation defining the role and mission of the various

²⁶⁹Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. A Report of the Nebraska Postsecondary Education Advisory Committee. Report No. 252. Lincoln: Author, April 1978, p. 2.

²⁷⁰Nebraska Legislative Council Committee. Report No. 252, p. 3.

public educational institutions in Nebraska and recommended legislation to establish an information system for the state. Both proposals became law over the governor's veto.

Legislative Bill 756 (1978)

Legislative Bill 756 (LB 756), the role and mission legislation, passed the legislature by a vote of forty to four, but was vetoed by governor Exon. In his veto message, he gave six reasons.²⁷¹ First, although he agreed with the intent of the bill, the governor objected to legislative control over educational programs. He suggested that it was more appropriate for the legislature to use the power of the purse, and besides, legislating the role and mission for higher education diminished the ability of institution to be flexible and respond quickly to change.

Second, he based his veto on an opinion issued by the attorney general concerning the constitutionality of LB 756. The attorney general believed that legislative approval and review of programs was "probably a violation of the doctrine of separation of powers."²⁷² In addition, a court might find some provisions relating to programs supported by local

²⁷¹Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 19 April 1978, p. 2193-2194.

²⁷²Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 19 April 1978, p. 2195.

property tax unconstitutional if they constituted a state purpose.

Third, the governor believed that the non-degree recreational and avocational courses should be self-supporting and should include the indirect costs of overhead and administration. Fourth, the Unicameral defined the role of the state colleges too narrowly. Fifth, although the proposal reduced some duplication, it prevented duplication that led to better utilization of existing facilities. Sixth, he believed that the legislature gave too much power to the university. The state colleges and technical community colleges could offer certain programs in cooperation with the university, but what if the university refused to cooperate? "In essence, the Regents become a statewide coordinating board in many instances and impose their restrictions on the other governing bodies."²⁷³ Despite these objections, the legislature overrode the veto by a vote of thirty-one to eight.

Dave Wagaman, Budget Analyst for Technical Community Colleges and State Colleges, thought Governor Exon vetoed LB 756 for four reasons.²⁷⁴ First, the legislation divided the turf in education to the benefit of the university. Second,

²⁷³Nebraska Legislature, Legislative Journal, 19 April 1978, p. 2194.

²⁷⁴Wagaman Interview.

it did not allow for the development of programs in the agricultural and health areas where the most important manpower needs were. Third, the legislation did not take into account existing excess capacity at Chadron, Peru, and Wayne, and thus decreased the utilization of buildings. And fourth, Exon believed that the best way to avoid duplication of programs was to hold down budgets and force the schools to specialize. Higher education should specialize and the role and mission bill did not do that.

Since the passage of LB 756 in 1978, there have been no significant changes in the structure and functions of the technical community college system. The technical community College was created

to be truly responsible to the people it serves, primary control of such colleges must be placed in the citizens within the local areas so served. It is the intent and purpose . . . to create locally-governed and locally-supported technical community college areas with the major educational emphasis on occupation education. Each technical community college area is intended to be an independent, local, unique, and vital segment of higher education separate from both the established elementary and secondary school system and from other institutions of higher education, and not to be converted into four year baccalaureate degree-granting institutions. 275

The technical community colleges are locally controlled

275 "Profile of The Nebraska Technical Community College System," prepared by The Nebraska Technical Community College Association, Lincoln, Nebraska, April 1985, p. 5.

institutions of higher education emphasizing occupational education. The bill assigned "vocational technical programs and non-degree occupational education, general academic transfer degree programs at those campuses authorized for such programs," avocational and recreational courses, and public service activities to the technical community colleges.²⁷⁶ According to the head of the Nebraska Technical Community College Association, Nebraska has very strong and strict laws as to what institutions of higher education in Nebraska can offer.²⁷⁷

The technical community colleges are locally controlled by an eleven member board of governors. Local control permits flexibility and creates the ability to quickly respond to the needs of local communities, citizens, businesses, and industries.²⁷⁸ As independent political subdivisions, the technical community colleges are directly responsible to the state legislature. However, the college governing boards determine courses, set tuition and fees, grant degrees, and levy property tax for operations. Despite their independent

²⁷⁶"Profile of The Nebraska Technical Community College System," p. 5.

²⁷⁷Thomas Johnston, Interview with author, Lincoln, Nebraska. 11 September 1987.

²⁷⁸"Profile of The Nebraska Technical Community College System," p. 8.

re, coordination between the six technical community colleges is performed through two voluntary organizations, the Nebraska Technical Community College Association and the Nebraska Association of Community College Trustees. In 1959 four junior colleges had 1,827 students. The state trade school at Milford had over 500 students in the early 1960s. In 1980 the six technical community colleges had enrollments which exceeded 21,000 students.²⁷⁹

Chapter Summary

After World War II the junior colleges continued a transition from providing primarily preprofessional and college transfer courses to ones which were more comprehensive and involved both vocational and technical offerings. They became the community colleges. Much of this change was attributable to the adjustments made by the junior colleges during the war and the democratizing impact of the period which created a demand for greater accessibility for more students. In addition, the changes in technology and manpower requirements created the need for trained workers, as the unskilled were unable to obtain employment. The baby boomers entered higher education in the early

²⁷⁹"Profile of the Nebraska Technical Community College System," Figure 8, p. 17C.

sixties and placed additional demands on it. The economy had been strong as both unemployment and inflation remained relatively low during the period. The national government became more involved in higher education and vocational technical education, primarily by providing funds to expand educational opportunities. Consequently, the democratization, population changes, and national legislation influenced and encouraged the passage of legislation designed to meet the demands for skilled workers.

In Nebraska, what began as a study of higher education and excluded the state trade school, evolved into an examination of and the creation of an entirely new system, the technical community college system. The development was the result of pressures within Nebraska to provide greater educational opportunities and to provide training for the unskilled so that they would make a contribution to Nebraskan society and remain within the state. Communities became interested in acquiring a postsecondary institution as a means of enhancing the community and making it more attractive to industry.

Basic questions of location, funding, and control plagued the legislature as it examined the issue of additional vocational technical schools. Initially, communities sought to establish state operated and state supported trade schools

in their areas, patterned after the only public trade school in the state at Milford. However, when the legislature failed to respond, a group from central Nebraska suggested the creation of area vocational technical schools. The Unicameral passed permission legislation for area schools in 1965. These schools started through local initiative and were governed and funded at the local level.

The creation of the area vocational technical schools in 1965 completed the process of developing different types of institutions to provide Nebraskans with the educational opportunities that they desired. Yet, there was no centralized control or coordination between the three different types of institutions, the junior colleges, the area vocational technical schools, and the state technical schools. Passage of legislation in 1971 filled that void and the three types of schools were combined into technical community colleges.

The research identified four factors which influenced the evolution of the technical community college system after World War II. First, various local interest groups campaigned for the legislation enacted in the 1960s and 1970s. Local chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, business and industrial leaders, and civic organizations provided the leadership that resulted in a

community college system for Nebraska. Particularly important were the chambers of commerce. They organized committees, mobilized local citizens, developed brochures, and led delegations to testify before the Unicameral. The support of these interest groups and the infrastructure which they provided were important in the passage of technical community college legislation.

A second factor in the successful creation of a community college system in Nebraska was both individual and collective leadership. Although support for the legislation came from a cross section of people involved in the process, four individuals were particularly important: Senator Rasmussen, Senator Kremer, Ken Wortman, and Governor Tiemann. Rasmussen chaired the Education Committee from 1963 to 1967 and advocated the area concept for vocational technical training as well as supported legislation which provided coordination of the various elements of higher education in Nebraska. Ken Wortman, as chairman and spokesman for the Committee on Area Vocational-Technical Schools for Central Nebraska, lobbied tirelessly to gain approval of the concept within the seven county area of Nebraska near Grand Island-Hastings-Kearney. He effectively presented the case for the area concept to the legislature. And Senator Kremer worked within the Unicameral to gain approval of the area concept for vocational training

and supported the technical community college system. Although Governor Tiemann vetoed legislation which would have created a unified system of junior colleges and area vocational technical schools in 1969, he provided the leadership which changed the role of Nebraska government and altered the taxing system. The adoption of income and sales taxes to replace the reliance on property taxes made the establishment of a statewide system possible. These individuals provided the leadership critical to the establishment of the technical community college system.

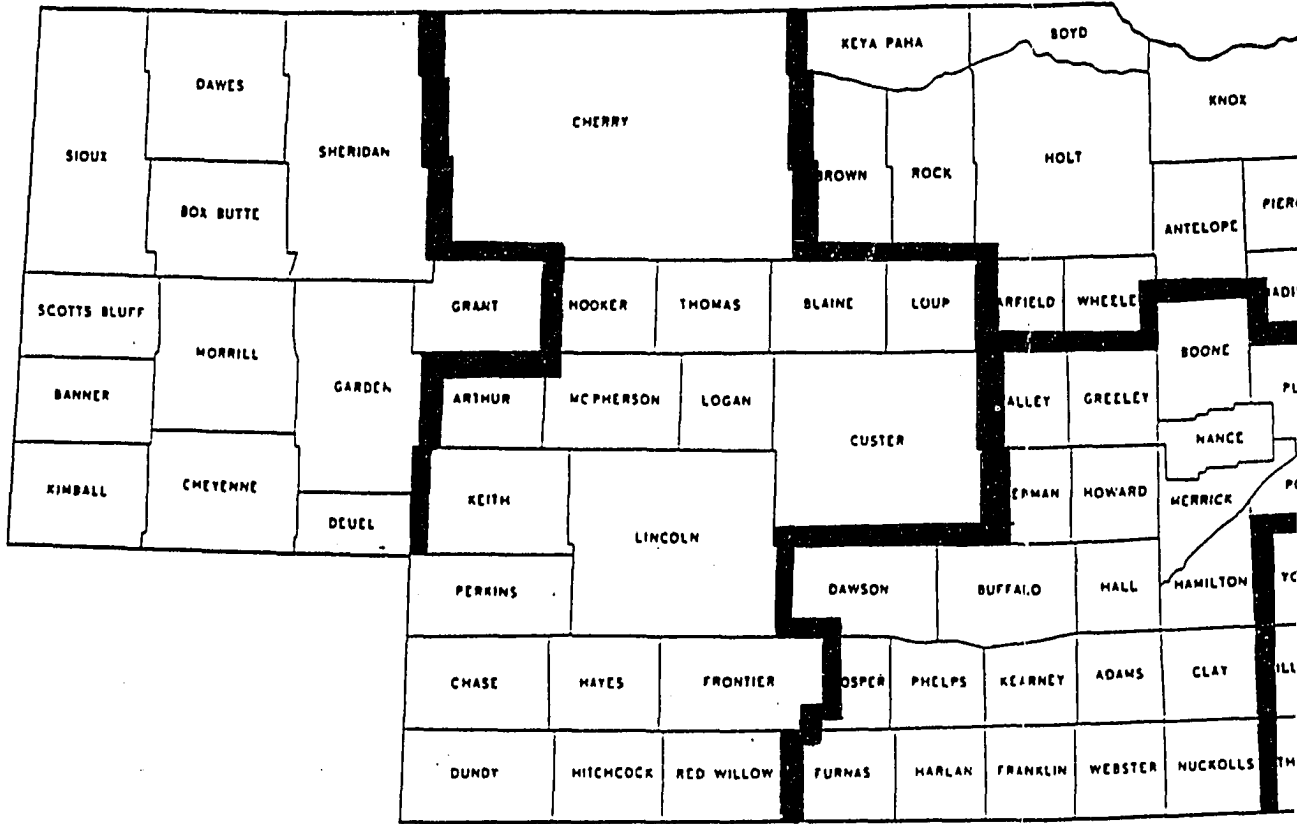
In addition to the role played by Rasmussen, Kremer, Wortman, and Tiemann, the collective leadership of the Education Committee and the reliance on study committees of the Unicameral were important in establishing the technical community college system. In the legislative process, state senators relied on the expertise of the committees and special study committees of the Unicameral. The Nebraska Unicameral used the study committee approach repeatedly to examine and to recommend changes in the system of higher education. The collective leadership of the Education Committee and the various study committees created the environment in which educational change could occur and expanded the role of state government significantly.

Third, change in the educational system was the result of

efforts by local representatives to "boost" their respective communities. This boosterism promoted the addition of postsecondary educational institutions as a means of enhancing efforts to create centers of growth and development economically and culturally, of which the community college was a part. Communities, such as Sidney, Grand Island, Hastings, Kearney, Norfolk, O'Neill, Broken Bow, Ogallala, Lincoln, and Omaha, supported the addition of vocational technical schools and the technical community college system, as part of an effort to develop the entire community.

The fourth factor was the support for educational change from existing educational institutions. In late 1958 postsecondary institutions initiated an examination of the coordination of postsecondary education in Nebraska. This action led to several study committees on postsecondary coordination. In 1969 and 1971 the junior colleges and area vocational technical schools cooperated in developing and supporting a system which combined these schools and the state trade schools. Thus, various interest groups, individuals, the collective leadership of the Education Committee and the study committees, boosterism, and existing educational institutions played vital roles in initiating, advocating, and creating the system of technical community college system that emerged after World War II.

Because the Nebraska State Supreme Court declared part of the 1971 legislation unconstitutional, the technical community colleges became state agencies for a short period in 1974. That decision led the Unicameral to return the technical community colleges to local control, but only after considerable discussion about state or local control and state or local funding. With the passage of role and mission legislation in 1978, the present system was in place: six independent technical community colleges (See Figure 7), locally controlled, but coordinated by voluntary associations and financed by a combination of state and local funds.



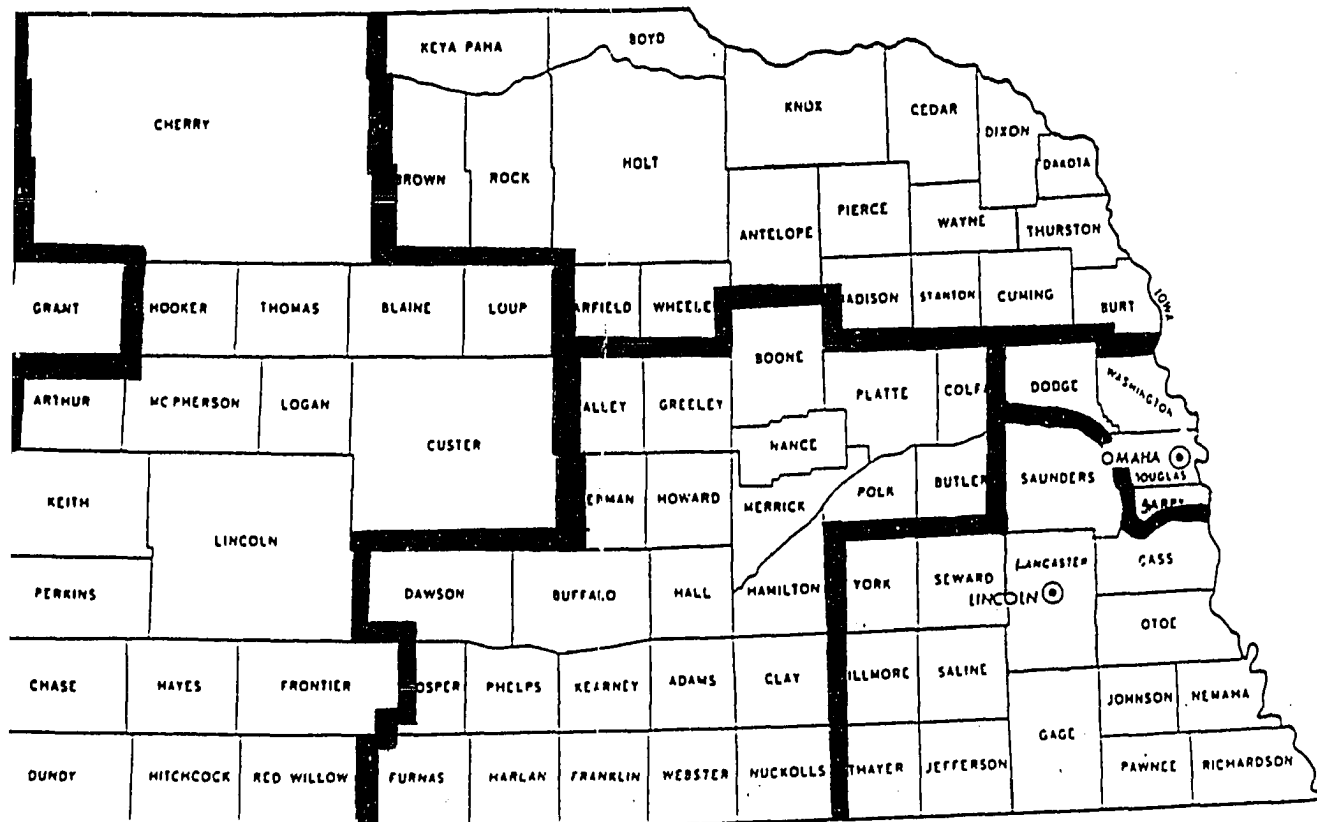
Technical Community Colleges

Counties

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>No. I The Western Technical Community College</p> <p>No. II The Mid-Plains Technical Community College</p> <p>No. III The Northwest Technical Community College</p> <p>No. IV The Central Technical Community College</p> <p>No. V The Southeast Technical Community College</p> <p>No. VI The Metropolitan Technical Community College</p> | <p>Sioux, Dawes, Sheridan, Box Butte, Cheyenne, Garden, Deuel, Grant, and Cherry, Hooker, Thomas, Blaine, Loup, Keith, Lincoln, Perkins, Chase, Hayes, and Red Willow.</p> <p>Keya Paha, Brown, Rock, Boyd, Holt, Pierce, Madison, Wayne, Stanton, and part of Boone.</p> <p>Valley, Greeley, Platte, Colfax, She, Butler, Dawson, Buffalo, Hall, Hami.</p> <p>Clay, Furnas, Harlan, Frankoin, Webs; Saunders, Cass, York, Seward, Lancas; Jefferson, Gage, Johnson, Nemaha, Pa.</p> <p>Dodge, Washisngton, Douglas, and Sai.</p> |
|--|---|

Figure 7. The Technical Community Colleges of Nebraska and Their Constituent Co





Counties

- y College Sioux, Dawes, Sheridan, Box Butte, Scotts Bluff, Banner, Kimball, Morrill, Cheyenne, Garden, Deuel, Grant, and part of Cherry.
- unity College Cherry, Hooker, Thomas, Blaine, Loup, Arthur, McPherson, Logan, Custer, Keith, Lincoln, Perkins, Chase, Hayes, Frontier, Dundy, Hitchcock, and Red Willow.
- ity College Keya Paha, Brown, Rock, Boyd, Holt, Garfield, Wheeler, Knox, Cedar, Antelope, Pierce, Madison, Wayne, Stanton, Dixon, Dakota, Thurston, Burt, Coming, and part of Boone.
- y College Valley, Greeley, Platte, Colfax, Sherman, Howard, Nance, Merrick, Polk, Butler, Dawson, Buffalo, Hall, Hamilton, Gosper, Phelps, Kearney, Adams, Clay, Furnas, Harlan, Frankoin, Webster, Nuckolls, and Boone.
- ity College Saunders, Cass, York, Seward, Lancaster, Otoe, Fillmore, Saline, Thayer, Jefferson, Gage, Johnson, Nemaha, Pawnee, and Richardson.
- munity College Dodge, Washisngton, Douglas, and Sarpy.

munity Colleges of Nebraska and Their Constituent Counties



CHAPTER VI.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The legislation which resulted in the technical community college system in Nebraska evolved over a sixty year period. The development of the system paralleled the changing social, economic, and political environment. The six decades of technical community college legislation established the basis for legalized public junior colleges, created two state trade schools, and authorized the establishment of area vocational technical schools. Then, after much study and debate, the Legislature merged these different institutions into a single system.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the legislative development of the technical community college system in Nebraska. The literature review examined articles, theses, and dissertations to identify factors which influenced junior/community college legislation, to study methodologies, and to discover source materials pertinent to this purpose. The evolution of the Nebraska system was described in the context of the national development of community colleges, emphasizing changes in curriculum, growth, and legalization. Through historical inquiry this study examined the legislative development of Nebraska's Technical Community College system during two distinct time periods;

between World War I and World War II, and after World War II. Roald Campbell's conceptual framework, consisting of four elements of policy development (basic forces, antecedent movements, political action, and formal enactment) guided the historical inquiry. Basic forces in Nebraska and the nation which advanced or hindered the creation of the technical community college system were identified. Significant groups and individuals involved in the Nebraska legislative process were noted. The debate issues were discussed and formal enactment identified.

Four bills were found to be fundamental to the creation of the Technical Community College system: Senate File 1 (SF 1), 1931; Legislative Bill 148 (LB 148), 1941; Legislative Bill 581 (LB 581), 1965; and Legislative Bill 759 (LB 759), 1971. SF 1 legalized the junior college. LB 148 created the first trade school in Milford. LB 581 authorized the area vocational technical schools. And LB 759 merged the junior colleges, state trade schools, and the area vocational technical schools into a single system: The Nebraska Technical Community College System.

An examination of the four bills (SF 1, LB 148, LB 581, and LB 759) revealed a variety of basic forces, antecedent movements, and political actions. For example, the drive to establish a cultural, economic and educational center in

southwest Nebraska (basic forces) influenced the business and civic organizations of McCook (antecedent movements) to promote and lobby (political action) for the legalization of junior colleges. It took three sessions, but the legislature passed SF 1 in 1931 (formal enactment).

In the case of the state trade school, the lack of skilled workmen (basic forces) lead the chamber of commerce of Broken Bow (antecedent movements) to draft legislation, which would have created a state trade school in Broken Bow, and to lobby vigorously for its passage (political action). They were successful, but the governor vetoed the bill. Although no action was taken on a similar bill in 1939, the Unicameral voted to establish a trade school in Milford (formal enactment) in response to a need for defense related skilled workmen.

After World War II, the need for educational opportunity and skilled workmen (basic forces) lead community leaders in several Nebraska cities to organize (antecedent movements) to establish trade schools in their respective cities. The failure of Grand Island to obtain a trade school lead a group of business and civic leaders in the Hastings-Kearney-Grand Island region to draft legislation, and lobby for its passage (political action), which permitted the creation of area vocational technical schools. The Unicameral passed the bill,

LB 581, in 1965 (formal enactment).

The desire for coordination of higher education (basic forces) prompted various business and civic leaders (antecedent movement) to support (political action) the merging of the junior colleges, area vocational technical schools, and the state trade schools into a single system. This was accomplished with the passage of LB 759 in 1971. Thus, the four bills which lead to the creation of the technical community college system were examined through Campbell's conceptual model. Formal enactment lead to the creation of the technical community college system, and yet, formal enactment is more complex than just the passage of legislation. Defeated bills interacted with passed bills to modify and shape formal enactment. This chapter provides a summary of the legislative evolution of the Nebraska Technical Community College system, presents conclusions drawn from this research, and recommends areas deserving future inquiry.

Summary

The emergence of the Nebraska Technical Community College system was not unlike the development of the comprehensive community colleges nationally, although some aspects of its development were unique to Nebraska. At the national level the idea of public junior colleges was a result of educators,

such as Tappan, Folwell, Harper, and Jordan, who sought to establish a clearer relationship between secondary and collegiate education. In Nebraska, this was not the case. The community college movement was pragmatic and practical rather than academic and theoretical. Creation of the first public junior college in McCook resulted from interest by local citizens. They saw the establishment of a junior college as one of several ways to help the community grow and prosper.

Two-year postsecondary schools in Nebraska grew from one public junior college in the small town of McCook to a system that encompassed the whole State. They developed in a fashion similar to the community college movement nationally in terms of curriculum, functions, growth in numbers of students and schools, and legislative action. In the 1920s and 1930s the junior colleges provided college transfer and preprofessional training. Their mission expanded in the 1940s and 1950s to include vocational and technical programs, and community services as well. The movement toward a comprehensive school was slower in Nebraska than nationally, however. The junior colleges in Nebraska did not provide many vocational technical courses even by the mid 1960s. After a statewide system was created in 1971, the former junior colleges and the area vocational technical schools continued to function primarily

as college transfer or vocational technical campuses although they were now part of an area Technical Community College.

Nationally, junior/community colleges experienced phenomenal growth in the number of students served and the number of institutions. The junior/community college grew from 207 public and private schools in 1921 to over 1,200 in 1980. During that same period, enrollments expanded from approximately 16,000 students to almost five million. Nebraska also experienced growth in its junior/community colleges beginning with the establishment of the first public junior college in McCook.

The first public junior college in Nebraska began in McCook in 1926 with fewer than fifty students. After legalization in 1931 only two communities, McCook and Scottsbluff, opted for a public junior college until voters in Fairbury and Norfolk approved junior colleges in 1941. In 1941 the Legislature also created a state trade school in Milford. By 1959 the four public junior colleges enrolled 1827 students and the State Trade School in Milford had about 500 in the early 1960s. Between 1941 and 1965 no additional public two-year postsecondary schools were added.

The major growth of postsecondary institutions in Nebraska, in terms of enrollments and numbers of institutions occurred in the mid 1960s and after. In 1965 the State

established a second state trade school in Sidney and authorized the creation of area vocational technical schools. By 1968 five regions established area vocational technical schools: Grand Island/Hastings/Kearney, Norfolk, North Platte, Omaha, and Lincoln. In addition, North Platte and Columbus started junior colleges in 1965 and 1969 respectively. Thus, of the thirteen institutions combined into the Technical Community College system in 1971, eight began operation in the 1960s. And by 1980 enrollments exceeded 21,000 annually in the technical community college system.

Nationally the evolution of the junior/community college followed three trends. First, curriculum became increasingly more comprehensive. Two-year colleges provided transfer and preprofessional courses in the 1920s and 1930s but began to offer a variety of technical courses and community services. Eells¹, Vaughan², and Johnson³ noted this movement toward a more comprehensive curriculum nationally. Second, states

¹Walter C. Eells, Why Junior College Terminal Education? (Washington D.C.: American Association of Junior Colleges, 1941).

²George B. Vaughan, The Community College In America: A Short History Revised (ERIC Document Reproduction Service ED 255 267, 1985).

³Max R. Johnson, "A History of the Public Two-Year College Movement in Iowa: 1918-1965," (Ed.D. dissertation, Colorado State College, 1967).

increased financial support for junior/community colleges and reduced local financial responsibility. Local aid accounted for 94 percent of the public junior college's income in 1918, with no state aid. By 1980, 60 percent of their income was in the form of state aid. Third, states centralized the control of junior/community colleges through the creation of state coordinating councils and/or 1202 commissions. In each of these three areas; curriculum, financial support, and control, the development of the technical community college system in Nebraska generally paralleled that of the nation.

In Nebraska, the curriculum expanded to include college transfer, vocational and technical programs, adult education, and community services in the 1960s. LB 176 created a second trade school in Sidney in 1965. LB 581 permitted the organization of area vocational technical schools. The Nebraska Legislature, in developing the various parts of the technical community college system moved from local control and financing to a system which provides state aid and greater state control.

Social, Economic, and Political Changes Between World War I and World War II

The legislation pertaining to the junior college and state trade school between World War I and World War II

developed in the context of a changing environment.

Nebraska's population grew by approximately 6.3 percent during the 1920s but declined by 4.5 percent in the 1930s as the state experienced out migration. Secondary school enrollments of 14 to 17 year old students increased by 15,000 between 1920 and 1930, and then remained relatively stable in the 1930s. The use of child labor, never as extensive in Nebraska as in the nation as a whole, declined and was virtually nonexistent by 1940. Nebraska became more urban. In 1920, Nebraska was 31.3 percent urban, but by 1940 it was 39.1 percent urban. These changes enhanced the passage of the junior college and trade school legislation. The decline in population lead communities to consider ways to prevent the out migration. The change in secondary school enrollments and the decline of child labor increased the population of prospective students for the trade school and junior colleges. Urbanization increased the number of individuals seeking skills in order to obtain employment. Nebraska became more urban and experienced the economic changes of the Great Depression.

The twenties were perceived as a decade of prosperity nationally, but Nebraska's economy was already in recession. The farm price index was about 35 percent above the pre-World War I index, but wholesale prices averaged 44 percent above prewar levels, property taxes were 184 percent higher than in

1913, and net income for farmers was almost 40 percent less than during 1914-1919. Although the number of manufacturing establishments increased slightly in the twenties the wages paid declined from approximately \$37.3 million to \$36.7 million. The early 1930s were likewise years of economic distress exacerbated by drouth: the drouth was particularly severe in 1934 and 1936. The economic distress combined with the drouth had a negative impact on the state's economy and social welfare.

The economy began to recover from the unemployment and crop failures of the depression and drouth in the late 1930s. Public assistance programs and financial aid to farmers increased incomes and spending in the State. Between 1933 and 1940, the Farm Credit Administration loaned Nebraska farmers \$185 million; by 1940 The Farm Security Administration had loaned over \$12 million to destitute farm families; and between 1936 and 1942 over \$170 million was provided in public assistance in Nebraska. By 1941 the economy was stronger than it had been throughout most of the thirties. The national government began to respond to the worsening international situations in Europe and Asia by encouraging construction of defense related industries, such as the Martin Bomber Plant near Omaha, Nebraska.

The economic distress of the late 1920s and 1930s both

promoted, and at the same time hindered, the effort to legalize public junior colleges and establish a state trade school in Nebraska. On the one hand the junior colleges and the trade school were seen as means of developing skilled workmen to return home and become employed within their communities. However, the economic conditions caused people to be cost conscious and oppose legislation which increased state expenditures or taxes.

The economic conditions influenced the political activity within the state. This staunchly Republican state supported the New Deal and Democratic candidates throughout the early and mid-thirties, but by 1938 returned to electing Republicans. Although voters elected Democratic governors and legislative majorities in the mid-thirties, the governors and legislature both pursued conservative fiscal policies. Partisan politics was not a factor in the passage of legislation which created the state trade school in Milford.

A major Nebraska constitutional change was stimulated by the economic depression; this was the establishment of a one house legislature, The Unicameral. The need for a more efficient and economical system during a period of economic retrenchment made the concept desirable. The one house legislature first convened in January, 1937. This enhanced the passage of the trade school bill for Milford because the

larger urban areas needed skilled workers and the establishment of The Unicameral increased the voting strength of the Omaha and Lincoln areas.

These social, economic, and political changes (basic forces) helped initiate political action (antecedent movements and political action) which ultimately resulted in changed public policy (formal enactment). The effort to legalize junior colleges failed in 1927 and 1929 but was successful in 1931 when Senate File 1 became law. The establishment of a state trade school in Broken Bow failed in 1937 and 1939, but the Unicameral created one at Milford as part of the educational system in 1941. The Nebraska legislature legalized the junior colleges and trade school in 1931 and 1941 respectively. They remained in place virtually unchanged until 1965.

Legislative Action Between World War I and World War II

During the period between World War I and World War II, the Nebraska Legislature passed two bills establishing public postsecondary institutions. The first, Senate File 1, was passed by the Legislature in 1931. It permitted school districts with total average daily attendance of 200 or more and an assessed valuation of \$5,000,000 to establish a junior college as an extension of the secondary school system. The

bill was passed 5 years after the founding of the first public junior colleges in McCook (1926), Scottsbluff (1928), and Norfolk (1928). These junior colleges offered college transfer and preprofessional courses. The second, Legislative Bill 148 (LB 148), passed in 1941, established a state financed and state controlled trade school in Milford housed in an abandoned old sailors and soldiers home. The school was open to men and boys over the age of 17 and provided training in a variety of trades, including, machine tool operation, welding, aircraft sheet metal work, electrical motor maintenance, and auto mechanics.

It took three legislative sessions (1927, 1929, and 1931) before the Nebraska Legislature passed a bill permitting the establishment of public junior colleges. Nevertheless, the issues debated over such a law were similar throughout each session. Supporters argued that existing postsecondary schools and colleges did not provide the opportunity for many Nebraskans to attend college due to distance and expense. There was a recurrent popular belief that citizens of local communities should be able to decide whether or not to establish a junior college. Opposition to this belief was based on the arguments that (1) legalization of junior colleges threatened existing state and private institutions, (2) would eventually require state aid, (3) increased local

property taxes, and (4) lead to a proliferation of junior colleges which would dilute the quality of education. These issues were resolved, however, when Senate File 1 was amended to specifically prohibit state aid, increased the minimum requirements to establish a junior college, and limited the amount of the local tax levy.

Several individuals and groups were involved in the debate over the legalization of junior colleges. C. H. Boyle, a McCook lawyer, initiated the junior college idea. He imported it from California. It quickly became a community development project. The McCook Chamber of Commerce, McCook civic clubs, and the Superintendent of Schools were strong advocates of the legalization of public junior colleges. In addition to the leadership provided by McCook business and civic people, other communities, particularly in Western Nebraska, endorsed the legislation as part of their effort to develop regional commercial centers. Scottsbluff and Norfolk civic and educational leaders wanted to establish a junior college as well. The passage of SF 1 was also facilitated because the Senate Education Committee was chaired by Senator Scott, of McCook, and the Chairman of the House Education Committee, Representative Meyer, lived near McCook.

Opposition to the legalization of public junior colleges came from private and public postsecondary educational

institutions, including the Chambers of Commerce in their communities, at times the University of Nebraska, and rural legislators concerned about increased taxation. Colleges were perceived as revenue generators for local Nebraska communities. The creation of additional colleges created greater competition for students and their expenditures in local businesses. In addition to student spending, the existing institutions feared the potential loss of State funds if State expenditures were spread over more institutions. The communities with existing colleges feared the competition and the loss of revenue.

The creation of the first state trade school took three legislative sessions (1937, 1939, and 1941). Unlike the junior college legislation, the trade school proposals were to establish individual schools in specific communities. In 1937 and 1939 the community was Broken Bow. But the legislation passed in 1941 established the trade school in Milford. The availability of a vacated state facility in Milford and its closeness to the defense related businesses in Omaha and Lincoln made it a desirable location.

In 1937, supporters of a state trade school in Broken Bow argued that there was a need for skilled workers. There were no educational opportunities in Nebraska for the trades, they claimed. The professions were overcrowded while vocational

education was underprovided. With its location in north central Nebraska, Broken Bow could serve the entire state. Those opposed to the legislation believed that an expenditure of \$53,000 was too much, given the depressed state of the economy. They believed that state property taxes would rise to support the school. The proposal did pass the Unicameral, but it was vetoed by the governor because he opposed new expenditures for state construction. The 1939 trade school bill never reached the floor of the Unicameral for debate.

The 1941 measure, LB 148, was a noncontroversial bill. The measure established a school in Milford and passed without opposition. However, two issues were of concern. First, the Unicameral had cut spending for the University and the state normal schools in the 1930s. The expenditures for the trade school might reduce budgets of these institutions even more. Second, substantial debate occurred over an amendment to LB 148 to make the school self-supporting through tuition. Advocates of the amendment argued that the people expected the school to operate with minimum state funds. Those opposed to the amendment noted that there was no such requirement in the other five state schools. The state should encourage attendance, not discourage it with high tuition. The amendment failed and the Unicameral approved LB 148 unanimously. Although LB 148 passed the Unicameral without a

vote in opposition, Legislators were concerned about the cost of the new trade school. Considerable debate occurred over an amendment to make the trade school self-supporting as a means of reducing the state's financial liability.

Arthur Melville, the president of the Broken Bow Chamber of Commerce, initiated the idea for a state trade school in that community in February, 1937. Prime movers of the proposal were Senator Haycock of Broken Bow and the Broken Bow Chamber of Commerce. Virtually no one individual or other group lobbied for the proposal in 1937, except those individuals organized by Melville, Haycock, and the Broken Bow Chamber of Commerce. Broken Bow was very successful in its lobbying, despite their inability to persuade the governor to sign the bill. Senator Haycock was a particularly effective sponsor because of his past leadership experience in the Legislature. Haycock was absent from the legislature in 1939; this removed a valuable ally for the trade school bill and hence it was defeated without a vote.

During the 1941 legislature, Senator Matzke of Milford proposed the establishment of a state trade school in that community. He also was an effective sponsor and leader in the passage of the bill. There were no serious debate issues over the legislation. The legislature approved the proposed trade school because it was to be located on existing state

facilities. In addition, the United States needed tradesmen as international conflict became more probable. The establishment of a State trade school in Milford resulted from Senator Matzke's leadership, the availability of a vacated state facility, and the demand for skilled workmen as the international situation worsened.

The legalization of the junior college (formal enactment) and the creation of the state trade school were not the result of any statewide organization or movement, nor of any one individual. Their roots were found in the local interest and needs of communities (basic forces). These schools filled a void in the educational system. The prime movers of the legalization of the junior college and the creation of a state trade school were the business and civic groups from interested communities (antecedent movements). These groups saw that they would benefit from the establishment of postsecondary institutions locally and/or from the availability of skilled labor. The business and civic groups initiated the legislative debate (political action) which resulted in the passage of Senate File 1 and Legislative Bill 148.

Social, Economic, and Political Changes During and After World War II

The area vocational technical schools and the Nebraska Technical Community College system were created within a context of a changing social, economic and political environment. The junior/community colleges expanded educational opportunity during and after World War II. The Truman Commission in 1947 examined postsecondary educational needs. Technology changed, the need for postwar employment developed, and national legislation provided greater support for higher education.

The concept of a comprehensive community college providing college transfer, vocational technical education, adult education and community service programs in a single institution. This concept supplanted that of a junior college. Junior colleges adjusted to the demands of World War II and opened educational opportunity to more people. These changes continued throughout the 1960s and 1970s, as junior/community colleges established multiple campus institutions, developed new programs and methods of delivery, and offered day, evening, summer and weekend classes. These changes had a positive influence on the legislation designed to expand postsecondary educational opportunity in Nebraska. It generated support among the citizenry.

In Nebraska, the rapid technological change affected the unskilled and farm laborers the most. The demand for unskilled labor declined, while the need for skilled workers increased. Employment of non-farm laborers declined 27.6 percent between 1950 and 1960, and farm related labor employment declined 27.3 percent during the same period. The number of professional/technical employees increased 26.8 percent, while clerical and services employment increased 26.4 percent and 40.5 percent respectively. By industry, employment in agriculture declined from approximately 162,000 in 1940 to just under 78,000 in 1970, or from 37.4 percent of the jobs to 13.2 percent. Manufacturing employment increased from 30,000 to 77,000 jobs, wholesale/retail from 74,000 to 126,000, and service from 31,000 to 148,000. The absence of nonagricultural skills reduced employment opportunities. In addition to increased skill requirements, competition became more intense as the population increased and the baby boomers entered school and the job market. The demand for skilled workers created a strong impetus for vocational technical education in the state. Communities and employers needed those workers but were unable or unwilling to train them. So they turned to the state government for assistance.

In response to the need for more skilled workers nationally, the federal government increased its support of

postsecondary education in a significant way by providing financial support for students and schools. The G. I. Bill in 1944 provided aid for World War II veterans. It was later extended to include Korean and Vietnam veterans as well as all men and women honorably discharged after six months service in the Armed Forces. Beginning with the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) in 1958, Congress passed a series of laws which provided increasing amounts of direct aid to higher education, including community colleges.

The NDEA provided funds to improve science and math curriculum, supported low interest student loans, and helped train skilled technicians. Some of the financial support went to junior colleges and area vocational technical schools. In 1963, the Higher Education Facilities Act allocated funds for undergraduate facilities, 22 percent of which was set aside for public community colleges and technical schools. And the Higher Education Act of 1965 funded expanded educational programs and allocated 22 percent to two-year colleges. In addition to these laws which provided financial support to students and institutions of higher education, the Congress appropriated funds for vocational technical education

In 1962, Congress passed the Manpower Development and Training Act which created programs for the unemployed and the underemployed. The Vocational Education Act of 1963

authorized grants to develop new programs and assist students who needed income to pursue vocational and technical education. The Higher Education Act of 1972 provided for the establishment of commissions within the states to coordinate higher education. In addition other legislation provided funds for vocational guidance and counseling and more training programs. The federal laws influenced the legislative evolution of the community colleges primarily through the availability of more funds to meet the needs of Nebraska's changing population, particularly vocational technical needs.

Nebraska's population increased each decade after 1940. The largest increase was 6.5 percent in the 1950s. Nebraska became more urban. The urban population of 46.9 percent in 1950 increased to 62.9 percent in 1980. The change in population and urbanization was not equally distributed throughout the state. Counties along Interstate 80 (which bisects the State east to west) and the Platte River, which included cities such as Omaha, Lincoln, Kearney, Grand Island, Ogallala, and North Platte reached their population peaks in the 1980s. As a result of the increased population and urbanization, secondary enrollments in Nebraska increased over 50 percent during the 1950s and 1960s.

Nebraska's economy after World War II was relatively prosperous. The state received near normal rainfall

throughout most of the post World War II period, expanded cultivated land through irrigation and increased livestock and grain production. The number of employees and total wages paid in manufacturing also rose. A major political as well as economic change in Nebraska occurred in 1967. The Unicameral eliminated the state property tax and established the sales and income taxes. This shift away from property tax as the basis for financing state programs allowed the state to expand its responsibilities for postsecondary education while relieving local tax burden. All of these factors were favorable to the passage of legislation which created the Nebraska Technical Community College system. With the exception of depression or recession, none of the basic forces identified in this study negatively impacted the legislation. In general, the evolution of support for the system came from local areas, areas concerned about educational opportunity and the availability of trained workers. Opposition emphasized the questions of finances, taxation, and spending.

Post World War II was a period of substantial change in Nebraska. The state became more populous and more urban. New technologies became available and reduced the demand for unskilled workers. New farm machinery and improved pesticides, insecticides, and hybrids reduced the need for farm workers. Computerization required certain technical

skills. But Nebraska's economy remained strong throughout most of the post World War II period. Within this context, the Unicameral completed the process of creating a state technical community college system. It added area vocational technical schools and an additional state trade school to the two-year college system. The new single system offered vocational and technical programs; academic transfer courses and degrees; avocational, recreational and public service activities.

The creation of the system engaged the legislature in debate regarding equal opportunity for education, how such colleges should be financed, state versus local control, and the need for skilled workers in the State. The creation of the system did not involve one person or group but truly represented a grass roots approach by those people and individuals interested in promoting their local communities by making postsecondary educational opportunity more accessible. The education provided by the Technical Community Colleges met a need for the training of individuals with marketable skills, promoted local and state economic development, and continued the college transfer programs.

Legislative Action After World War II

During the period between World War I and World War II

the Nebraska legislature established two elements of what was to become the technical community college system. However, it was not until 1965 that the legislature added to the two-year postsecondary institutions. In that year, it added a second state trade school in Sidney and permitted the establishment of area vocational technical schools. Then in 1971, the legislature combined the junior colleges, state trade schools, and the area vocational technical schools into a single system.

The 1965 Nebraska Unicameral passed Legislative Bills 176 and 581. LB 176 established a second state trade school in Sidney. It was modeled after the one at Milford and offered a variety of vocational technical programs. LB 581 authorized the establishment of the area vocational technical schools. Within a year and a half the first area vocational technical school was established in Hastings. By 1968 there were five such schools in operation. Thus by 1965 the legislature had established legal precedent for the establishment of three types of postsecondary educational institutions. Although each provided some standardized curriculum, each operated independently of the others.

Five communities (Sidney, Ogallala, North Platte, Grand Island, and O'Neill) tried to persuade the Nebraska Legislature to establish a state trade school in their

community in 1963. Many of the same communities returned in 1965 with similar proposals. The Legislature decided in 1965 to establish a second state trade school in Sidney (LB 176). The debate issue relative to LB 176 was in which community the proposed school was to be located. There was a need for an additional vocational technical training facility in the western part of the State. A Legislative study committee, however, recommended that a second state trade school be located in North Platte, not Sidney. But the town of Sidney offered something in 1965 that neither it nor any other community offered in 1963, a deactivated army depot facility available at no cost to the state. During the 1963 and 1965 legislative sessions, several communities sought a State trade school. But after much discussion and debate, the Unicameral selected Sidney in 1965.

One of the communities which failed to obtain a state trade school in 1963 was Grand Island. But Grand Island worked with Hastings and Kearney and proposed the area vocational technical school concept contained in LB 581 in 1965. The business and commercial interests in the Grand Island-Hastings-Kearney locale recognized that their best chance of obtaining a vocational technical school was through legislation which permitted local communities to initiate such schools, rather than have the Unicameral pass bills creating

individual schools in specific communities. The legislative debate on LB 581 involved several issues. Supporters argued that the area vocational technical school concept would bring education to small communities who needed workers in the trades and electronics. Area vocational technical schools provided an educational opportunity for unemployed agricultural workers to learn marketable skills. By training and retraining workers, the area vocational technical schools would promote local economic development. The area vocational technical schools provided for local initiative and kept the area schools informed about local needs. In addition, area vocational technical schools would lessen the disparity between public spending on vocational technical education and on academic programs.

Another focal point of the legislative debate was what part of the state would be eligible for such area schools. Some argued that only three regions in Nebraska could support such a school. They were Grand Island-Hastings-Kearney, Omaha, and Lincoln. But neither Omaha nor Lincoln needed such schools because of their extensive vocational technical programs in the high school systems. Also, LB 581 circumvented the study committees recommendations by placing the financial burden for such schools at the local level, not at the state level. It was merely permissive legislation.

Consequently no school would be established through local resources alone. Therefore, it was argued the need for vocational technical training in Nebraska would go unmet. The size of the districts under the area vocational technical concept would be too large and too difficult to organize.

The supporters of LB 581 included the Chambers of Commerce and development corporations from Grand Island/Hastings/Kearney and their civic leaders. The legislative study committee and its recommendations were also influential, particularly in its urging that the State become more involved in higher education in Nebraska. That increased involvement was evident in 1978 when the Nebraska Legislature passed the role and mission bill for postsecondary education in the state. It was also evident in its increased interest in the coordination of higher education.

Seeing a need for coordination between postsecondary educational institutions, the Unicameral undertook several studies during the post World War II period and examined coordination in higher education in Nebraska. Responding to these studies, the Unicameral approved Legislative Bill 979 in 1969. It combined the area vocational technical schools with the junior colleges. It did not include, however, the two state trade schools. The Governor vetoed the bill because he believed it was too costly and did not conform with his plans

for the economic development of Nebraska. His veto was sustained.

Then in 1971, the Unicameral passed Legislative Bill 759. It established the technical community college system. It combined the junior colleges, state trade schools, and the area vocational technical school into a statewide system. It permitted people to decide which district to join, provided for local governance, and financed the system through local property tax. Since that time the number of technical community colleges has been reduced and the legislature has enacted legislation assigning the role and mission of all parts of Nebraska's higher educational system, including the technical community colleges. However, the basic system of community and technical colleges was first established under LB 759.

The basic debate issues involved with LB 759 were the location or boundaries of the technical community colleges, state versus local control, state versus local financing, and the coordination of postsecondary education. Supporters argued that the creation of a system would reduce costs, increase efficiency, provide equal educational opportunity, and reduce duplication. The opposition to LB 759, as expressed by representatives from McCook, argued that LB 759 created yet another educational board, forced existing

postsecondary institutions into districts with other existing postsecondary institutions that were incompatible, and forced the state to assume financial support of the system rather than use a local property tax. McCook Junior College feared the loss of autonomy while Milford objected to the potential loss of state funding.

The creation of the Nebraska Technical Community College system occurred during major social, economic, political, and technological change; it was a period of time during which the United States experienced the worst economic depression in its history, became involved in an international conflict, and emerged as a world leader. The post World War II period was characterized by general economic prosperity and international challenges. Several factors identified in this study affected the legislation which created the Technical Community College System in a positive and/or negative fashion.

Conclusions and Discussion

The evolution of the technical community college legislation in Nebraska began with the development of the first public junior college in McCook and culminated in the Legislature's assignment of role and mission to the Technical Community College system in 1978. An analysis of the data collected leads to the following conclusions.

1. The legislation which legalized the junior college,

the State trade schools, the area vocational technical schools, and merged them into a single system arose from local interest and need. It was not the result of any one person or organization but reflected local interest, politics, and support. This study affirms Ratcliff's conclusion that in order to succeed public two-year schools need to marshall local support.*

2. The technical community college system in Nebraska evolved in response to the need for geographical and financial accessibility to postsecondary education. In her dissertation on special education legislation in Pennsylvania Thomas concluded that the state of Pennsylvania expanded the accessibility to schools for the handicapped and increased state financial support for them.⁵ Likewise, the Nebraska Legislature responded to the need for postsecondary educational opportunity by creating a system which placed schools throughout the State and provided

*James L. Ratcliff, "'First' Public Junior Colleges in an Age of Reform," The Journal of Higher Education 58 (March/April 1987): 151-180.

⁵Katherine R. Thomas, "Historical Study of Pennsylvania Legislation for Special Education with Emphasis on State Financial Provisions: 1821-1981," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1984).

financial support for it. In that sense, Thomas' dissertation and this study affirms a concern for educational opportunity and indicates how each state responded by expanding accessibility to education and providing financial support.

3. Nebraska educators did not provide the leadership which resulted in the creation of the community colleges in Nebraska. Sosne concluded in his study in North Carolina that educators were not active in the legislative process or partisan politics and did not reach the centers of political power in trying to influence the legislative process.⁶ This study affirms that conclusion for Nebraska in developing the technical community college system.
4. The legislative effort to legalize public junior colleges, the state trade schools, the area vocational technical schools, and merge them came from business, community and civic leaders. Through the chambers of commerce and civic clubs they promoted the college as a community asset; as a means of developing those communities into cultural and economic regional centers. This affirms

⁶Marc J. Sosne, "State Politics and Education Legislation" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1979).

Ratcliff's conclusions.

5. A variety of social forces influenced the development of the technical community colleges in Nebraska: the Great Depression, World War II, the baby boomers, urbanization, mechanization of agriculture, the economic prosperity after World War II, and an expanded role of state and national government. This study affirms the conclusions of Pernal⁷ and Gilbride⁸ who identified similar social forces affecting the development of education in Connecticut and Ohio, respectively.
6. The legislative development of the technical community colleges in Nebraska paralleled that of other states. The findings of this study suggest that the initial junior college legislation in Nebraska generally followed that which was identified by Clement and Smith⁹, and Nix¹⁰. The evolution of

⁷Michael E. Pernal, "A Study of State Legislation in the Development of Public Higher Education in Connecticut From 1849 to 1970" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1975).

⁸Sister M. James Francis Gilbride, O.S.U., "The Coming of the Community College to Ohio: The Enabling Legislation and the Founding of Cuyahoga Community College, 1946-1963" (Ph.D. dissertation, Kent State University, 1979).

⁹J. A. Clement and Vivian T. Smith, "Public Junior College Legislation in the United States," Bureau of Educational Research Bulletin, no. 61, 1932.

the junior/community college in Nebraska was enhanced by laws which included many of the characteristics described as desirable by Young¹¹. It confirms Easton's conclusion that the development was not unlike that in other states after World War II.¹²

7. The technical community college system of Nebraska began as an extension of the secondary school system with local responsibility for establishment, control, and finance, but developed into a comprehensive community college system separate from the secondary system. There was increased state responsibility in establishment, control, and finance. This affirms the conclusions by Struther that junior colleges which began as local institutions were extensions of the secondary system.¹³ Those with greater state involvement became comprehensive community colleges.

¹⁰E. H. Nix, "Present Legal Status of the Junior College," Junior College Journal 8 (October 1937): 10-21.

¹¹Raymond Young, "An Analysis and Evaluation of General Legislation Pertaining to Public Junior Colleges" (Ed.D thesis, University of Colorado, 1951).

¹²Theodore A. Easton, "The Development of Community Colleges in Nebraska" (Ed.D. thesis, University of Colorado, 1973).

¹³Frederick R. Struther, "The Development of Community Junior College Legislation in the United States to 1961" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1963).

8. Opposition to the development of the community colleges in Nebraska came from two primary sources: the existing educational institutions, both private and public, and from rural forces. This affirms Gilbride's conclusions that existing colleges and universities feared the competition for students and state funds, while rural groups opposed the two-year schools because they were funded through local property tax.¹⁴
9. The State Legislature played a dominant role in the creation of the system. Not only did they pass the legislation, but created numerous study committees to study higher education, vocational technical education, and the coordination of postsecondary education. This is consistent with Trani's conclusion that the Nebraska Legislature played an important role in higher education, particularly with regard to coordination.¹⁵

This study examined the legislative evolution of the community college system in Nebraska. It illustrated a strong

¹⁴Gilbride.

¹⁵Eugene P. Trani, Higher Education in Nebraska: A Report Prepared for the Sloan Commission on Government and Higher Education (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 184 449, 1978).

relationship between postsecondary legislation and the social forces within that state. Campbell's conceptual framework provided a basis for organizing and analyzing historical information in order to better understand that relationship and to explain the events which resulted in the technical community college system. Basic economic, political and social forces generated antecedent movements. These antecedent movements lead to political activity. That activity resulted in a series of legislative enactments which created the system.

Recommendations for Further Inquiry

The historical inquiry of the legislative evolution of the Technical Community College system in Nebraska emphasized the specific pieces of legislation which created the parts that ultimately made up the system. The basic forces, antecedent movements, political action, and formal enactment of that legislation was analyzed. Based on the results of the data collected and analyzed in this study, and the literature reviewed, the following are suggested as areas of additional research.

This study examined the evolution of the legislation at the state level. A more complete understanding of the nuances involved in the evolution of the technical community college

Nebraska would be obtained through an historical study of each of the junior colleges and vocational colleges that existed before the system came into being in 1971. The composite from such studies would provide insight into the evolution of a postsecondary system, emphasizing the local aspect of that development.

A review of the literature did not reveal legislative action for the states surrounding Nebraska. Legislation which included the basic forces, antecedent political action, and formal enactment in those states would further help to put the evolution of the community college in the United States in perspective.

A study of a nonmonetary education bill in North Carolina concluded that educators were not very active in the legislative process and did not reach the centers of power by trying to influence legislation. In general, the study did not discover active political involvement by education groups within the state of Nebraska either. Further into the political activity of various education groups in Nebraska and their involvement in the policy process would be valuable for use in future efforts to enact policies that reflect educational groups and interests.

The study did not discover significant involvement in

the legislative process by the Governor of the state of Nebraska, yet Sosne identified the Governor of North Carolina as the prime mover in the passage of House Bill 205 in the North Carolina legislature. And Gilbride attributed the success of the establishment of a community college in Ohio in part to people in the governor's office. The Nebraska governor did, however, have an important role through the veto power. Consequently, the role was not minimal, but it tended to be negative, reactive not proactive. Therefore, a study of the role of Nebraska's governor in educational issues, and particularly as it related to community college legislation, would further complete the picture of the evolution of the Nebraska Technical Community College system.

There is a need for more study of the antecedent movements which generate the political action. Future studies should examine the specific antecedent movements identified in this study and analyze their evolution and involvement in educational issues. The involvement of Chambers of Commerce and other business interests in higher education would be particularly valuable at a time when the community colleges have been asked to be a principal actor in economic development of local areas and the state.

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