



# Universities Without Campuses

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**W**HY should we want a university without a campus, that is, without specific residence requirements? Well, for one reason, if a university had no campus, it would have none of the current problems of campus violence. Yet there are even more important reasons—millions of them.

As the technological complexity of a society increases, the level of education required to escape the social and economic consequences of being considered “uneducated” rises. In the United States, since the beginning of this century, first an eighth grade diploma, then a high school diploma, and finally a college degree have measured the education required for employment or career advancement and hence for status and self-respect.

Consequently, there are millions of persons who recognize themselves as seriously handicapped, educationally disenfranchised, invisibly branded as “uneducated” for lack of a visible college degree but who cannot leave their jobs to study on the campus. There are no statistics which directly identify this population, but some idea of the number can be obtained from government reports<sup>1</sup> of levels of education in the population as a whole.

Some 33 percent of persons 20 years

<sup>1</sup> *Population Characteristics: Educational Attainment*. Series P20 N 0169, March 1967. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, February 6, 1968.

old and over in the United States have achieved a high school education—and no more. Not all of these, to be sure, may be capable of, or interested in, obtaining a college degree; but there are approximately 10 million within the 20- to 45-year-old bracket in which such ambitions are common.<sup>2</sup> Among them are the millions of “reasons” for universities without campuses.

These persons have had enough education to know that they are capable of making further progress. They believe the professors, economic analysts, and governmental officials who say that education is the path to personal and national economic and intellectual salvation; they *want* to continue their academic education; they are intellectually *capable* of continuing their academic education, but they find their path blocked by obstacles of 10 or more hours a day spent in traveling to work and earning a livelihood.

## Minimum Campuses

For these educationally deprived persons, a modicum of assistance is offered

<sup>2</sup> W. C. Johnstone and Ramon J. Rivera. *Volunteers for Learning* (a National Opinion Research Center study). Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1965. p. 72.

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primarily through the "minimum campus" requirements of evening college programs of two-year and four-year colleges. Such programs are generally available, however, only in urban areas. Despite the phenomenal rate of growth of two-year colleges, these still serve only a fraction of the population. Altogether, about a million students attend evening colleges.<sup>3</sup> G. B. Stern noted that "full-time day students are so numerous that they are crowded into evening, preempting space of the evening college. Thus we have the so-called day college conducting its programs in the evening."<sup>4</sup>

A portion of this population numbering in the scant hundreds is served by programs designed by a handful of universities for a small number of relatively elite classes of adults seeking a bachelor of liberal arts degree. For example, in the period 1954-1962, a total of only 300 students entered the Brooklyn College degree program, one of the oldest of these offerings. The overall effect of all of the existing channels in higher education, however, is hardly noticeable. A way to enfranchise the remaining millions and to give them a "second chance" at further education must be found. Establishing colleges without campuses *may* be the way.

## Second-Chance Universities

### *The Soviet Union*

Universities which offer adults a "second chance" have already been explored and established in some of the major countries of the world, for example, France, East and West Germany, Poland, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom.<sup>5</sup> The Soviet Union

<sup>3</sup> Howell McGee, editor. *Annual Report of Programs and Registrations, 1967-68*. Norman, Oklahoma: Association of University Evening Colleges and National University Extension Association. University of Oklahoma, 1968.

<sup>4</sup> G. B. Stern. "Up from Basket Weaving: The Concealed Crisis in Adult Education." *Graduate Comment*, Fall 1967, pp. 152-57. Published by Wayne State University.

<sup>5</sup> Burton Paulus. "Europe's Second Chance Universities." *Educational Broadcasting Review* 3: 3, June 1969.

was probably the first to exploit the use of correspondence courses on a national basis to provide a willing population access to higher education. It is not surprising, therefore, that "over half (the enrollments) in its higher educational institutions are in correspondence or evening programs, the majority in correspondence courses. . . ."<sup>6</sup>

The programs are conducted by special correspondence institutes accredited as higher educational institutions and by correspondence divisions of the regular higher educational institutions. Diplomas received from the correspondence study programs are considered equivalent to those from regular day full-time programs. Since the introduction of direct teaching by television into the U.S.S.R. in 1964, increasing support has been given correspondence and evening students, particularly in Moscow and Leningrad, which have a third channel devoted chiefly to this purpose.

### *The United Kingdom*

The most recent and most comprehensive design for a university without a campus, "open" specifically for adults who for some reason missed "earlier" chances, and are willing to work to get certificates, diplomas, lower degrees, and even higher degrees, is the Open University of the United Kingdom.<sup>7</sup>

The university has its own charter, its own governing bodies, staff, and budget. It will, however, have practically no campus. Study will be achieved:

1. By reading and writing as directed by independent study guides, primarily; but also
2. By viewing and listening to regular broadcasts; and
3. By opportunities of face-to-face instruction, group discussion in local centers, and at a two-week residential summer school.

<sup>6</sup> Seymour M. Rosen. *Part Time Education in the U.S.S.R.* O. E. 14113, Bulletin 1965, No. 17. Washington, D.C.: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1965.

<sup>7</sup> John Robinson. "The BBC and the Open University: Some Questions Answered." BBC, Broadcasting House, London, April 1970.

To prepare students for the systematic habits required for independent study, the university is contracting with an independent home study college (the National Extension College) and with more than a hundred local colleges and centers to develop and assist in the teaching of these special courses in math, social studies, and in literature and history. In general, the program of the Open University will be a partnership between the university and the BBC.

### *The United States*

In a highly restricted sense, the United States also has universities without campuses. It can even be said that we have a *national system* of such universities. The "system" is composed of almost 70 major universities extending across the country, from New York to California and into Alaska. I refer to the universities which are represented in the Independent Study Division of the National University Extension Association.<sup>8</sup> These universities have campuses, but they also have Independent Study Bureaus or other units in which students may enroll for a limited number of courses for credit (15 to 30 hours, usually) without ever coming to campus.

A quarter of a million students are now attending college in this manner. Most of these are momentary dropouts and plan to return to some campus, or are not taking the courses for degree credit. Enrollments by others would be an exercise in futility since no university will permit them to earn a degree in this manner.

What is needed, then, are "only" improvements of the present national system of non-campus universities—improvements which will provide:

1. Broader ("universal") access to such programs;
2. An improved (more interesting, more personal, more socially supported) form of instruction; and

<sup>8</sup> *Guide to Independent Study in Colleges and Universities*. Washington, D.C.: National University Extension Association, Dupont Circle, 1969.

3. A full range of programs leading to the continuing social and economic badges of achievement: certificates, diplomas, and degrees.

### **A Powerful Catalyst**

The basic elements of the improved model of the non-campus university system already exist: university Independent Study Bureaus; statewide educational television systems; and accreditation organizations and devices, such as the College Level Examination Program, College Proficiency Examination Programs, and other forms of credit-by-examination. What is missing is a powerful catalyst to bring about the union of these elements. And lo, we may have the catalyst too—the Corporation for Public Broadcasting!

In 1967 the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 became law, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting became fact. The Act was largely triggered by the report of the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television and was a Congressional confirmation of the thesis that public broadcasting is a *national* concern. As J. Bystrum pointed out, "The Rubicon was crossed when the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television recognized the federal government as the major source for *funding* for a noncommercial broadcasting system."<sup>9</sup> As a consequence, the federal relationship to noncommercial broadcasting is financially bound, whereas it had previously been primarily regulatory, resting on its control of radio and television broadcast frequencies.

Since its establishment, the Corporation has developed and supported a number of programs, but it has not yet met the challenge "with respect to instruction." In speaking on the topic "Toward a Philosophy for Public Television Programming," John W. Macy, Jr., President of the Corporation, preferred specifically to set aside this challenge: "I am sure some in the public broadcasting family say, 'What about the basic philosophy

<sup>9</sup> John W. Bystrum. "Public Broadcasting Systems: Plans and Realizations." *Educational Broadcasting Review* 2 (5): 23, October 1968.

with respect to instruction?' I believe that for the purpose of many discussions on public television programming it is well to set it aside."

However, he is not unaware of the significance of what has been set aside, and in what he says further, there is hope for the eventual role he could play in the development of an "Open University" for the United States:

Let me reassure you that I in no sense downgrade the importance of that phase (instruction) of public broadcasting responsibility. . . . This is an area that should not remain static. It is one that calls for continuing attention, not only in terms of what television projects into the classroom, but the relationship of that projection to other technological devices, which, hopefully, can enrich the learning process.

I believe that all of us now recognize that the learning process occurs in the home, after school hours. *Our basic concept should include the delivery of education on a continuing basis through school and beyond school, through adulthood into retirement. This is clearly one of the purposes of public broadcasting.*<sup>10</sup>

As a matter of fact, the Corporation already has on its desk a commissioned report of both the contemporary scene and future directions for Continuing Public Education Broadcasting.<sup>11</sup> There was no recommendation in the report for a specific program, but the report did include a number

<sup>10</sup> John W. Macy, Jr. "Toward a Philosophy for Public Television Programming." *Educational Broadcasting Review*, October 1969. p. 8. (Emphasis added.)

<sup>11</sup> Edwin G. Cohen. "Continuing Public Education Broadcasting, Today and Tomorrow." *Educational Broadcasting Review*, February 1970. p. 3.

of criteria for establishing national program priorities. The three major criteria were:

1. *Contribution to Equality of Educational Opportunity*: All other factors being equal, that area of Continuing Education which may contribute more to equalizing opportunities for education for millions denied or deprived of them has priority over those areas which contribute less.

2. *Contribution to Social Stability*: All other factors being equal, that area of Continuing Education which is more likely to "defuse" the explosive elements of our population has priority over those which are less likely to do so.

3. *Investment Return*: All other factors being equal, that area of Continuing Education which is more likely to yield the highest "return" per unit dollar of support has priority over those less likely to do so.<sup>12</sup>

Such criteria, I would think, clearly place a program for educationally disenfranchised millions in the top priority bracket. As Macy pointed out, what made public broadcasters different from commercial broadcasters is that they were "the only broadcasters who spent full time in pursuit of the *public interest*."<sup>13</sup> With the public interest in the forefront of its attention, and the above criteria in its hands, it may not be too long (we hope) before the Corporation will indeed activate the elements of an improved national system of universities without campuses. □

<sup>12</sup> *Continuing Public Education Broadcasting, A Report to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting*. Bloomington, Indiana: National Instructional Television Center, September 1969. Appendix I, pp. 7-9.

<sup>13</sup> John W. Macy, Jr. "Unique Opportunity for Public Broadcasting." *Educational Broadcasting Review* 3: 37; Special Issue, 1969.

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