

1973

George Fox College Kotzebue Center

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GEORGE FOX COLLEGE KOTZEBUE CENTER
Director's Evaluation of
1973-1974 School year.

During the past two years I have made eight trips to Kotzebue, spending a total of 24 weeks teaching and working in the community and the churches of Alaska Yearly Meeting. During these two years we have programmed 25 courses of instruction, offering more than 50 credit hours of college work, which is equivalent to a year of resident study. This paper represents an attempt at honest appraisal and objective evaluation of our college extension program in northwest Alaska.

Some statistics show a measure of growth and indicate some success, if numbers can be used as criterion. The increase in this year's class registration of 50% above the total for a year ago indicates some measure of response. The fact that we were able to carry out a skeleton program of academic courses in a community and ethnic culture that is not educationally oriented means something. The 83% native enrollment is in contrast to some University of Alaska extension courses which have drawn mostly non-native registration.

Unsolicited testimonials of commendation and appreciation for our college extension program and its impact in the area have come from community leaders. Among these are Edwin Robb, the elementary school supervisor; John Schaeffer, director of NANA native corporation; Nellie Ward, editor of the Kotzebue News; and Alex Hills, manager of radio station KOTZ. These seem to be evidences of acceptance in the community and recognition that the program is meeting a need.

On the basis of accepted academic standards for college work, however, analysis of the program presents serious concerns. The overwhelming predominance of audit enrollees (80%) brings the question of collegiate quality in the course offerings. Each teacher has made serious attempt to conduct his classes on a college level, but where reading skills are weak and comprehension levels are low there is a serious problem of being effective without compromising academic quality. How to make the courses challenging and worthwhile for capable college-level students, yet attractive for non-college adults who have a desire to learn, becomes the dilemma of every teacher. The educational level of the community is slowly and surely rising as more young people finish high school and more young adults complete GED programs and take college extension courses. But the problem of quality and effectiveness will be constantly with us.

The "smorgasboard" pattern of course offerings bothers me as an educator. Courses thus far have been programmed to meet the needs and interests of the community. Business courses in accounting, bookkeeping, tax structures, and consumer finance draw people concerned about modern economics. Courses in music and religion draw a following because of interest and appeal. But so far there has been no logical pattern to our course offerings and a total lack in areas of science, mathematics, history, literature, and composition. A more logical basis for course planning needs to be found than mere expediency, or whatever teacher happens to be available.

It is obvious that promotion and motivation constitute a real problem in Kotzebue. Education is not very high in the native's scale of priorities. Some teachers have gone out into the community and personally recruited people in order to have a class. Several courses that were offered and advertised through the media had no enrollees and had to be cancelled. Communication with the public is a frustrating problem. The native people, especially have to be sold on the idea of taking a class. Perhaps a local person, preferably a native, should be hired as liaison in the local community for coordination, communication, and promotion among the native people.

The almost total lack of library and laboratory facilities for college-level work is cause for some concern. Perhaps a learning-study center for adults needs to be set up in the mission school building where materials and facilities conducive to study could be made available and accessible. A beginning has already been made with the installation of two sponder machines and the programmed Bible Literature course for self-study. More courses of this type should be developed and installed at Kotzebue.

With the cultural differences presenting a mild communication barrier, ample use should be made of audio-visual materials and teaching techniques in the Kotzebue program. Traditional class lecture methods are largely ineffective with the Eskimos. The spoken word alone does not communicate adequately. Classes which use films, filmstrips, overhead projection, and project workbooks have made the greatest impact. Future planning should allow ample budget provision for this need.

It is hoped, if the program continues and funding can be found, that a program could be planned each year to offer the equivalent of one year of college work in the community of Kotzebue. This would mean at least 45 hours of course offerings with enough variety to meet a general education pattern. A curriculum schedule should be planned systematically and continuously for six or seven months from October through March or April, and students should be recruited to enroll for full-time study.

It is assumed that the goal of an extension program such as this should be to become established well enough to be viable and self-supporting, with a fee-structure and student body adequate to underwrite the costs. In Kotzebue it appears that this may be wishful thinking. With the natives living at near poverty level, with no industrial or commercial base for the economy of the community, and with little cultural emphasis upon education on the part of the natives, it is seriously doubted if a college program could become viable and self-sustaining in Kotzebue, at least in the foreseeable future. Apparently outside funding will be needed until such time as the educational level of the community can be raised and genuine desire created on the part of the people for serious college education.

Roy P. Clark
Extension Program Director

GEORGE FOX COLLEGE - KOTZEBUE CENTER

Director's financial summary

School year 1973-1974

RESOURCES:
(approximate)

Lilly grant	\$25,000
Interest income	625
Tuition & fees	1,000
California Y. Mtg	500

\$27,125

EXPENDITURES:
(approximate in
round figures)

Director's salary & fringe benefits	\$10,000
Travel costs for personnel	3,000
Per diem personnel maintenance	1,250
Instructional equipment (sponder & Mus)	2,285
Films and audio-visual materials	330
Stipends for Instructional services	2,600
Publicity, Promotion, & mailing	100
Institutional overhead, office, etc	3,000
College Instructional budget	4,560

\$27,125

SCHOLARSHIPS:

The college extension program has followed the policy of the California Yearly Meeting Mission Bible Training School in waiving tuition fees for pastors and ministerial students, including mission staff personnel. On the basis of the fee structure the scholarships thus granted have amounted to a total of \$1,128.