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SASKATCHEWAN COMMUNITY COLLEGES:
A SHATTERED DREAM
(1971-1981)

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ABSTRACT

In Saskatchewan, the community colleges, as introduced in 1973, were heralded as being unique. Politicians, government civil servants and others stressed the unique philosophy and principles upon which these new institutions were to be based. This dream of something new, yet readily applicable to Saskatchewan, caught the imagination of many Saskatchewanians along with a good number of people outside Saskatchewan.

Lifelong learning, access to educational opportunities and the worthiness of learning were to become the pillars for enhancing peoples' personal growth and development. These colleges would facilitate the decentralization of learning opportunities to rural Saskatchewan. The learner would determine the location, the type of services and programs offered through community colleges. These colleges would be autonomous within the designed system in order to accommodate the particular demands of individuals, organizations and communities. The college would be the community and the community would be the college. Government and its agencies would work in support of this idea.
Colleges have operated for nearly ten years. In these years there has come to be a certain emptiness about colleges, their philosophy and how this philosophy has been implemented. This unique system was to have accomplished so much, but by the end of the first decade, there even appeared to be confusion over what the original philosophy was, what it meant and how it was to be carried out.

The original architects of the Saskatchewan community college system were interviewed to determine their vision and thinking related to community colleges for Saskatchewan. Other people linked to this ideal were subjected to the same process. An extensive literature search supplemented the interviews and provided further background and explanation for the development of community colleges.

Based on the findings from this research, the thesis argues that the original intent of Saskatchewan community colleges was altered by a change in government priorities and by the accompanying growth of the bureaucracy in the Department of Continuing Education.
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A special thanks is due to my wife and children for their encouragement, support and co-operation. This study would not be a reality today if not for their belief and inspiration.

I would like to thank the Natonum Community College Board for providing the educational leave used to conduct this study. Appreciation is also extended to the staff of Natonum and other community colleges who continue the struggle to attain the initial objectives of Saskatchewan community colleges.
FOREWORD

This study grew out of a personal interest in the concept of the community college as it developed in and related to rural Saskatchewan. I was a product of rural Saskatchewan and of the province's elementary, secondary and university education system. My feeling was that this system was very much a bureaucratic teacher-centered system. The community college concept, as it was explained by its advocates, was to encourage the participation of rural communities and the learners in the planning, implementing and evaluating of the entire learning process. The appeal of this dynamic concept drew me from my work as an adult education consultant with government into a position with the Prince Albert Regional Community College.

From this vantage point, I watched the Saskatchewan community college system take shape. From the earliest days of the effort to create the new system, I found myself in sympathy with the views expressed toward it by the people of Saskatchewan. These views reflected a faith and trust in people and their abilities. People coming together would exhibit co-operative, initiative and innovative approaches in dealing with their interests, issues and problems. I shared
this excitement. I looked forward to the growth of a system of education which would meet people on an equal footing, encourage the community aspect of life and prevent professionals from seizing centralized control of decision-making.

Skepticism, however, was soon apparent among college board members, employees and others familiar with community colleges. They began to see the emergence of efforts toward centralized control by the provincial government.

A confusion resulted as to the purposes and role of the community colleges. The original intent of those who created the colleges became clouded by the conflicting rhetoric and the recrimination.

This thesis is intended to clarify the original thinking that created the Saskatchewan community college system and to trace the evolution of that system. Those involved in establishing the system will be interviewed to determine their thinking. Documents and records related to their work and to the activities of government, colleges and relevant government agencies will be reviewed. This is to be a history of the Saskatchewan community college system.
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CHAPTER ONE
THE BASIS FOR A DREAM

The Community Colleges Act of April 27, 1973, formally operationalized a dream. A new system of education for Saskatchewan adults became a reality. Atypically, it was not an addendum to an already existing educational institution. It was the creation of a new entity: one which could assist Saskatchewan adults to cope with the world of change.

People were excited by this idea. It was an idea that, when mixed with reality, had uncertainty and risk. If carried out as conceptualized by its proponents, it would bring tremendous benefits to Saskatchewan life and in particular to rural Saskatchewan life. It would be a dream come true!

Saskatchewan did not lead in the development of the community college in Canada. Other provinces preceded Saskatchewan in this development. Each province organized a community college system unique to its own social, economic and political situation. Saskatchewan had the opportunity to review and learn from the experiences of these other provinces and to assess its own particular social, economic and political climate. The ideas, philosophy and principles of Saskatchewan's colleges were very much a part of the thinking current in Canadian adult education circles in the 1960s and early 1970s. The uniqueness of Saskatchewan's system was the effort to implement adult education ideals.
in their entirety.

The Saskatchewan community college has an extensive heritage. Adult education in Canada first manifested itself primarily through the work of voluntary groups associated with the churches, farmers' movements, women's organizations, co-operatives and the like. These early years in Canadian adult education witnessed amateurs at work—people who were trained for something else or self-taught. The Antigonish Movement, Wheat Pools, Caisse Populaire (Quebec), Farm Radio Forum, the Canadian National Council of Education and the Canadian Association for Adult Education (C.A.A.E.) are but a few of the examples. Edward A. Corbett, a former C.A.A.E. president, who had trained for the ministry, was one of these adult educators. He said that he had "started off on the road to Damascus but had fallen amongst educators".¹ There was phenomenal activity but little order and rigidity.

During this time, adult educators started to view learning as an opportunity for everyone. These educators saw learning as a lifelong process. They accepted the existence of individual differences in peoples' abilities and believed all had the right to learning.

The notion of the community college found fertile ground in this environment. But it had its genesis elsewhere. Community colleges started in California in the

early 1900s. Initially, they were best described as Junior Colleges or two year university transfer institutions. By the early 1920s, such colleges in the United States had developed to include general education, adult education, technical and vocational courses and recreational and occupational courses. They did not reach their full stature as community colleges until the late 1940s when the community services concept was added to their offering. By the early 1960s, colleges throughout the United States were organized according to the needs of individual states and were recognized federally as institutions of higher learning.²

The idea of community colleges soon spread to Canada. The early colleges had been almost exclusively religious in orientation. They existed to offer university transfer programs along with certain high school programs. In 1957, Lethbridge Community College became the first institution in Canada that could be described as a public community college.

The main thrust for college development in Canada came after 1960. British Columbia and Alberta developed college systems based on the California Junior Colleges model and emphasized university credit programs. Both provinces utilized school boards in the establishment and operation of their community colleges. A significant difference was that

²Edmund J. Gleazer, Jr., This Is the Community College, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968, p. 15.
British Columbia colleges exercised a geographic jurisdiction while Alberta colleges exercised a program jurisdiction. The Colleges d'Enseignement General et Professionels (C.E.G.E.P.s) in Quebec were similar to the British Columbia and Alberta systems. These three systems tended to evolve when there was a need to reduce student enrollment pressures on universities. Manitoba and Ontario opted for college systems where the primary focus was technical and vocational training. These two systems shared, with the previous three institutions, a centralized institutional campus structure. Community colleges have committed themselves, then, to five major purposes in Canada: preparation for advanced study (transfer credit programs), occupational education, general education, guidance and counselling and community services.3

It was against this backdrop that community colleges developed in Saskatchewan. Adult education played an integral role in Saskatchewan's history. The majority of settlement in Saskatchewan took place in a relatively short time. Between 1900 and 1913, a half million settlers came to Saskatchewan. This short time span, along with the vast settlement area, made Western Canada's settlement pattern unique to pioneer history.4

3Raymond E. Harvey, Middle Range Education in Canada, Toronto: Gage Educational Publishing Limited, 1973, pp. 48-49.

The settlers were by no means a homogeneous group. Americans, Eastern Canadians, British, Germans, Ukrainians and Scandinavians formed the nucleus of immigrants. Adversity and isolation forced people to work together; farmer worked with farmer, and neighbour worked with neighbour. The Territorial and later the Saskatchewan government was pressured to become involved with settlement and the settlers' search for security.

Adult education took hold in this environment, influenced by geography, demography, social environment and the need to survive. Adult education flourished as these various ethnic groups promoted and fostered their own cultures. It was linked with agriculture, as well. It also became an extension of practical programs used to keep the membership of various agencies informed. For example, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, the Co-operatives and Farmers' Union very quickly developed community service capabilities. The provincial government, through its agencies of health, education and agriculture, developed this capability. Public lectures, institutes, workshops and the distribution of printed materials were the basic techniques employed to decentralize and deliver information to the settlers.

Adult education was a decentralized, rural and informal learner oriented extension of other programs of government, universities, school boards and libraries. Learners requested programs, and these were provided at the
institutions' convenience, but the learners had little input into the content of the programs. Adult education had to compete for resources and interest with other established institutional priorities. As years passed, adult education, delivered from a central source and as an extension of other agency thrusts, met with indifference, standoffishness and suspicion. People involved in adult education wanted a direct input into their own learning activities. They wanted adult education activities to reflect their interests.

Federal activity in the field of adult education was delineated by a Royal Commission which reported to the federal cabinet in 1913. The recommendations of the Robertson Report are still in effect today:

- there would be local-provincial-federal sharing of responsibilities and costs of manpower training;
- there would be participatory planning with all levels of government;
- industry would have responsibility for training and retraining;
- workers had lifelong upgrading and retraining needs;
- education would continue being a provincial jurisdiction as outlined in the B. N. A. Act of 1867.

It was during these early 1900s that people began referring to the changing state of the Canadian economy.

5Ibid., p. 6.

Canada's economy began shifting from an agricultural to an industrial base. People began to migrate from rural to urban areas. With this shift in the population distribution and the economic base, Canada experienced the need for a more technically trained work force.

Technical and vocational education costs escalated with the increased demand for training. These increased costs and demands led to a centralization of training. A number of agreements, and in particular the Vocational Training Agreements (1945-61), established the guidelines for federal funding. This federal funding supported specific adult training programs and capital projects for technical/vocational education in the various provinces of Canada. Saskatchewan was party to these agreements.

Adult education began to take on more of a formal institutional training appearance. Under these federal agreements, the Saskatchewan Technical Institute at Moose Jaw was built and began offering programs for adults. The Technical and Vocational Assistance Act of 1961 helped to establish Kelsey Institute (Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Arts and Science) and to develop comprehensive high schools in the province (Yorkton, Melville, Prince Albert, North Battleford, Nipawin, Estevan, Swift Current, Melfort, Weyburn and Lloydminster). These urban centers would serve as the nucleus for the later development of community colleges in Saskatchewan. The existence and underutilization of the
technical education facilities in these Saskatchewan communities later influenced the thinking of community college planners.

In October, 1944, the newly elected New Democratic Party provincial government had assumed responsibility for adult education in Saskatchewan by establishing an adult education unit within the Department of Education. It was the first Canadian provincial government to do so. The report of the unit, contained within the Department of Education's 1945 annual report, indicated it would seek the human and social development of Saskatchewan society through a decentralized approach that catered to the practical learning needs of citizens.7

Between 1945 and 1963, the Department encouraged a number of adult education programs in Saskatchewan. The Lighted School Program urged the use of local school facilities for adult study in the evenings. Farm bookkeeping, drama and ceramics were popular areas of study. The Basic English and Citizenship program encouraged immigrants to learn the English language and the Canadian way of life. Field personnel and regional co-ordinating councils worked to expand program offerings into public affairs, human relations and art.8

Adult education activities continued to expand and flourish in Saskatchewan. These activities led the 1952 Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life to recommend the establishment of a Citizens' Council for Continuing Education. The commission saw the council being responsible for the co-ordination, clarification and stimulation of programs for adults. It wanted the council to act in a policy making capacity for government.9

There was concern for the co-ordination of services. The Extension Division of the University of Saskatchewan was providing non-credit adult programs. The libraries were programming in the non-credit area. There were also those who felt that the non-defined role of the government's adult education unit should be a concern. Their observations were that as directors changed, so did division priorities and direction—a situation which left people confused.

The Hawkins Report in 1959, prepared by Gordon Hawkins, the executive director of the Canadian Association for Adult Education, suggested ways to co-ordinate adult education in Saskatchewan.10 The report supported a clearer role for the University Extension Division in adult education programs. It called for two divisions of extension to be established at the University. One division would concentrate solely on


agricultural extension while the other would have a more general adult education mandate. The report called on the government to state clearly in legislation the roles and responsibilities of public agencies involved in adult education. The report also endorsed the concept of a citizens advisory council recommended by the Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life three years earlier. While the Hawkins Report maintained that control of adult education should remain in the voluntary sector, it foresaw expanded government assistance and a need for public accountability. A citizens council would allow for balance, the report argued, between local organizational freedom and public accountability.

Within three years of the Hawkins Report, Ole Turnbull, Saskatchewan minister of education, commissioned John Archer, provincial archivist, to examine a possible adult education program for Saskatchewan. Archer's report was issued on February 6, 1963. The major recommendations of his report were:

- the establishment of a Saskatchewan Council for Continuing Education to advise the province on policies, legislation and budgetary requests for adult education;

- a clearer definition of roles of organizations involved in adult education without disturbing the pattern of adult education;

- agricultural influence on adult education should be modified because Saskatchewan was moving towards urbanization;
-the purpose of adult education should be to help people earn a living and live fuller lives in a technological age.\textsuperscript{11}

The government was defeated in 1964, and both the Archer Report and the Hawkins Report were left to gather dust.

The Saskatchewan Association for Adult Education (SAAE), founded in 1935 by Saskatchewan people working in the field of adult education, continued to meet and express ideas and concerns related to adult education. At its September 19, 1962, conference, the S.A.A.E. president, Per Stensland, said that roles between agencies and organizations in adult education in Saskatchewan must be clarified.\textsuperscript{12} At the same conference, Stensland reiterated his view that education must be a lifelong concern.

Similar discussion was going on at the national level. The Canadian Association for Adult Education published a "White Paper on Adult Education" in 1964 for presentation to Prime Minister Lester Pearson.\textsuperscript{13} This paper outlined the need for individuals to learn throughout their lives. It indicated that gaps and duplication of services existed in Canadian adult education. The paper stated that a society committed to change must insure that people have access to learning opportunities. It proposed a system of adult

\textsuperscript{12} Regina Leader Post, September 19, 1962, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{13} Canadian Association for Adult Education, "White Paper on Adult Education", 1964.
education based on needs and abilities of students. It suggested that school boards accept the responsibility for the education of the entire community; that they should be willing to work co-operatively with other community agencies to provide this system. It proposed the re-examination and rationalizing of financial and planning systems, making local motivation and involvement the priorities.

This paper called on all levels of government to recognize and support the continuing education of adults in Canada. It called on the federal government to establish an "Office of Education" to improve contacts between provincial governments and Ottawa. It claimed that adult education was a patchwork of courses, schools, programs and systems--"a confusing jumble of opportunities upon which too many adults stumble--if they discover it at all."14

The Pearson government, in 1966, established a new Department of Manpower and Immigration. One of its aims was to promote occupational training. In 1967, the federal government passed the Adult Occupational Training Act which gave direct control to Canada Manpower Centers to select trainees for programs, purchase spaces in programs and counsel potential students. The federal government assumed the full cost of educating the people selected and provided living allowances for the adult students.

14Ibid., p. 1.
With the influx of federal dollars for the training of adults, technical and vocational training became a priority in Saskatchewan. In 1966, the provincial government discontinued the adult education unit of the Department of Education and transferred its duties to the new Provincial Youth Agency. The move came as government continued to attempt to bring some co-ordination to the adult education scene, and it signalled a switch in emphasis to formal learning. The Department of Education appointed an adult education consultant to work with school superintendents. His main responsibility was to promote school board sponsored adult education programs. An expansion of program staff took place in the Technical/Vocational Branch, later known as the Applied Arts and Sciences Branch, of the Department of Education.

Discussion of adult education escalated at the national level in the mid-1960s, and the community college became an important focus of this discussion. In June, 1965, and May, 1966, the Canadian Association for Adult Education sponsored national conferences to discuss the concept of community colleges in Canada. It was clear from these conferences that adult educators agreed that as much thought and emphasis should be placed on the word community as on the word college. Delegates saw community colleges as an opportunity to create a new institution to suit society's needs rather
than adapting existing institutions to new problems.15

These people heralded community colleges as an opportunity to serve Canadian communities in a unique and exciting way. They were to be new in combining traditional and liberal systems, including technical and vocational as well as formal and informal learning. They were to form a system which could offer the opportunity to unite regular, organized and disciplined programs with irregular, diffused and spontaneous activities. The conferences emphasized that college planners and organizers should not be looking at a single utopian concept of community colleges. If colleges were to be community oriented, each province and each college would have its own special features. Delegates were concerned that the ambiguity of the institution might worry governments and planners. Still, the consensus of speakers at the conferences was that if a pattern were established, then there would not truly be community colleges; there would be another traditional education institution.16

Discussions at these conferences centered on community colleges not being more of the same but more of something different. Delegates saw colleges as a way to increase the capacity of the total education system. Colleges were to be an opportunity for study and an accommodation of students who

16 ibid., p. 106.
had experienced difficulty deciding on careers, courses or programs suited to their individual needs and aspirations. Learning would be available to all adults within a community regardless of background, interests, experience or abilities. Colleges would provide low cost education close to where potential students lived. They would compensate for the inadequate distribution of educational institutions, the restricted program offerings and insufficient educational facilities within communities.

Conference participants expressed their view that formal education institutions had been the most conservative organizations in society. Formal education, they said, had become a process of passing on values, traditions and customs. They believed there was a large degree of irrelevance to this education system since people were now more future oriented.

Conference delegates agreed that, to be effective, community colleges would have to react quickly to immediate changes and problems. Community colleges and their staffs would have to sense the changes required or taking place. Participants at the conferences foresaw the need for regional or district based institutions. Community colleges would have to be locally based. They would have to be close enough to potential students to guarantee access and be in constant touch with their community yet large enough to function effectively. All adults, including the students, would have
to play a role in the planning, in the administration and in
the decision-making as it related to the operation of
community colleges.

Speakers at these conferences were quick to indicate
that government would not dispense funding without demanding
public accountability and some administrative control over
development. There would be a need to charge tuition fees to
participants. The rationale was that education conferred
direct benefits to adults. Delegates felt that many
municipalities were already overburdened. They foresaw
problems if funding were based on a municipal taxation
system.

In 1966 the Saskatoon Collegiate Board commissioned
Collegiate Superintendent Edward D. Gillespie to prepare a
report on community colleges for the board. He produced an
interim report in July of that year and a final report the
following January.17 Gillespie called for the immediate
establishment of two year Saskatchewan community colleges by
the provincial government. He saw college programs as
including university transfer courses, non-university
academic courses, technical and vocational courses, general
interest courses, adult basic education and other non-credit
courses. He foresaw the need for each college to be unique
according to the needs of industry, the needs and aspirations

of its citizens, work opportunities and the recreational and cultural aspirations of its community. Gillespie indicated that colleges should attempt to equalize educational opportunity at the post high school level by low cost fees and by non-selective admission policies. Their main concern would be with the student who did not want to proceed to university or a technical institute but who wanted to learn beyond high school. The concern of these new institutions should also be with the further education of adults and the provision of a quality continuing education program.

Gillespie recommended college financing be drawn from a broad provincial tax base. He felt that this switch of funding sources would provide more than "lip service" to a philosophy of lifelong learning "from cradle to grave", and it would ensure that education was readily and easily available to those who wanted to profit from it. These programs should develop from local conditions, needs and interests. He warned Saskatchewan college planners not to adapt or pattern the institutions after what already existed elsewhere in Canada.

Late in 1966, just before Gillespie submitted the final report of his study in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, a Regina Committee on Community Colleges began its work. In May of 1967, the Regina group made a plea for more centrally located
facilities. Members felt that the use of high schools and church basements was unacceptable for adult students. They recommended that community colleges play a major role in planning and co-ordinating adult education programs in their respective regions. Community colleges, they said, should provide the opportunity for self-directed and spontaneous learning. Funding of the operating costs of any community college system, the committee argued, should come from government grants and student tuition fees.

By the middle of 1967 the community college campaign in Saskatchewan was in high gear. A Joint Committee on Higher Education, established by the provincial Liberal government in 1965, recommended the establishment of "middle range" institutions in Saskatchewan. The committee identified "middle range" to be the gap in educational services between the public school system and the university. It further recommended that these institutional services be developed under the jurisdiction of a Commission of Middle Range Education. This commission would have representatives from regions of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation, the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association and the University. The report indicated the need for government

18 Regina Committee on Community Colleges, "A Brief to the Joint Committee on Higher Education", May 15, 1967, p. 8.

to establish a Provisional Committee of Middle Range Education to establish and create the necessary legislation to enact such permanent institutions.

The second interim report of this committee dealt with the procedures for studying educational needs in the regions of Saskatchewan. It asked for the establishment of a provincial post high school policy, an appropriate middle range Education Commission and government appointed Regional Education Boards. This volume dealt with the need for adequately structured regional boards to establish regional educational targets consistent with the needs of each region and its residents. The committee saw education, including informal education, as playing a vital role in enhancing the economic and cultural life of Saskatchewan. Informal education programs would be the lure. This type of program would be very popular and would serve to get the formal programs off the ground very quickly. The committee expected that other programs in formal education, as they were offered, would obtain the same response as informal programs from communities, regions and their people.

Other groups were also interested in the idea of community colleges. The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour was one such group. It saw community colleges as Junior Colleges with programs which would emphasize university

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transfer courses based upon community needs. Technical/
vocational and adult education would also be a part of the
system envisioned by the S.F.L.21

In late 1969, a conference was called to deal with the
establishment of community colleges in Saskatchewan. Alan
Thomas, director of the Canadian Association for Adult
Education (C.A.A.E.), challenged the use of "middle range"
terminology to describe the gap that existed for adult
education services in Saskatchewan. Thomas felt that, after
secondary schooling, each institution does a different job.
Some of these jobs were not more important than others but
were of equal value. As director of the C.A.A.E., he called
on people in Saskatchewan to introduce a unique yet distinct
task oriented system. Thomas indicated that although the
system had been branded as community colleges in other
provinces, nowhere did the term exist in legislation. He
concluded that the community aspect must be introduced and
maintained in the concept if Saskatchewan hoped to attract a
new set of students and bring about changes in the entire
education system.22

Thomas stressed the need to retain community interest
and development beyond the initial stages of establishment of
the system. He warned: "There is a tendency for the

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21Saskatoon Star Phoenix, December 14, 1967, Star
Phoenix clipping file containing articles up to 1973.

22"Proceedings of Regina Conference on Community
Colleges", October 17 & 18, 1969, p. 4.
communities to relax and let the insiders within the college carry the ball." 23 He felt that such relaxation would destroy the unique role community colleges could play in the life of Saskatchewan.

Lewis A. Riederer, then the director of the Program Development Branch of the Department of Education, told the conference that Saskatchewan was blessed with an abundance of comprehensive schools built with federal aid which could go a long way towards launching a community college program. The director stated that if colleges were to be successful, then the work would have to be accomplished in communities. Riederer promoted the development of a self help attitude in Saskatchewan communities. Emanating from this conference was the observation that "Colleges must be concerned with the life of rural Saskatchewan people as well as their way of making a living." 24

Riederer intimated that the minister of education would be making an announcement relative to community colleges in the very near future. The recommendations of the Joint Committee on Higher Education had yet to be acted on--in particular, the recommendation calling for the establishment of a provisional committee to draft legislation to establish middle range institutions in Saskatchewan.

23 Ibid., p. 8.

24 "Proceedings of Regina Conference on Community Colleges", a statement made by a conference participant, October 17 & 18, 1969, p. 41.
A special Order-in-Council on October 29, 1969, just eleven days after this conference, created such a committee.25 This Special Provisional Committee on Higher Education was responsible for investigating and recommending ways and means of implementing certain recommendations of the earlier joint committee.26

The new group formally laid to rest the term "middle range", hoping to avoid any negative connotations which might be associated with the use of such a term. Initially, the term used was "post high school education". This advisory committee recommended that government establish a system of community colleges in Saskatchewan headed by a Community Colleges Commission. The report envisaged the creation of mini-institutes catering to formal learning. It called for the construction of facilities in Regina while Saskatoon, Moose Jaw and Prince Albert were viewed as having adequate interim facilities. In 1969, the cost for the operation of this system was estimated at from six million to eighteen million dollars.27

25 Province of Saskatchewan, Order-In-Council No. 1652/69, October 29, 1969.


27 Ibid., p. 50. In 1981, the system that was implemented in 1973 cost the provincial coffers in the neighbourhood of six million dollars. (From Province of Saskatchewan, 1981-82 Budget Estimates.)
In drafting the proposed legislation, the Special Provincial Committee included what it believed was a balance of "enough centralization of control to insure efficient and orderly development of the college system with enough decentralization of program development to assure that each college program grew out of an attempt to meet the emerging needs of the community."\textsuperscript{28} This report was never made public. Premier Ross Thatcher, in speaking to a group of university students during the 1971 election campaign, promised a college system providing young people with the opportunity to take university credit courses leading to a Bachelor's Degree while at home.\textsuperscript{29} On June 11, 1971, Thatcher's Liberal government was defeated in a Saskatchewan provincial election. Another chapter closed in the development of adult education services and community colleges in Saskatchewan.

In the midst of the discussions regarding establishment of community colleges in Saskatchewan, the Prince Albert Public School Board initiated its own community college system in 1964.\textsuperscript{30} Three agriculture community education classes were offered through the auspices and co-operation of the Technical High School (now Carlton Comprehensive High School).

\textsuperscript{28}Department of Education, Special Provisional Committee on Higher Education, Op. Cit., p. 32.

\textsuperscript{29}Saskatoon Star Phoenix, May 17, 1971, p. 3.

School). The board appointed a group of educators and lay people in the community as unofficial advisors on adult education.

In 1967, the Prince Albert Public School Board entered into an agreement with the Department of Education to offer Adult Basic Education and pre-employment training programs for adults. The offering of adult interest classes continued to expand. This was a co-operative effort by local volunteers, the provincial government and the federal government. In 1969, the Prince Albert Public School Board entrusted the operation of these programs to a citizens advisory group which then organized itself as the Prince Albert Regional Community College, an association incorporated under the Societies Act in December of 1969.

In June of 1970, a separate administration and permanent staff were hired by the community college. The Prince Albert Public School Board continued its co-operation and remained an "at-arms-length" banker or provider of funds for the community college. Members of the community college board were elected from groups in the city which used the services of the college.31

Despite the agitation in Saskatchewan and throughout Canada on behalf of community-based colleges, there were signs that the concept would encounter difficulties. At a

31 The college would continue to operate in this fashion until September of 1974 when it was placed under the jurisdiction of the Colleges Act.
national conference of the Association for Canadian Community Colleges, the president of the British Columbia Community Colleges Association soon expressed his fear that there would be a difficulty in keeping the community in community colleges in British Columbia. He expressed concern over the threat of centralized control through formula funding and government control over program development funds. He asked: "How could local input be retained at the same time allowing for greater provincial participation in the financing of Community Colleges?" Such questions were soon to confront Saskatchewan, too, as a new provincial government would move to expand the community college concept throughout the province.

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CHAPTER TWO

BIRTH OF A DREAM

In 1971, Saskatchewan faced many challenges. A rail strike threatened to disrupt grain exports. Saskatchewan's economic base, the rural farm economy, was already depressed. And there was a deep concern for the survival of rural Saskatchewan which was experiencing a population shift to the two provincial metropolitan centers of Saskatoon and Regina and to other provinces.

On June 23, 1971, the New Democratic Party (N.D.P.), under the leadership of Allan Blakeney, came to power. A major plank in the N.D.P. platform was to implement a comprehensive plan to revitalize many rural Saskatchewan communities. As part of this plan, the N.D.P. promised to assist communities to develop a system of regional education centers to make university and technical education more readily available to people.¹ It would be an attempt to bring educational opportunities closer to the people of Saskatchewan.

This plan coincided with a growing concern amongst people, particularly educators, with the gap in educational services between the established public school and university systems. Many people wanted programs of interest to them; programs not available at that time. One Radville resident

commented, "We have nothing in the winter months except curling, parties and beer. If you want a change, it's beer, parties and curling. I want the opportunity to learn certain crafts in Radville." People who did not have the opportunity to complete school or learn a trade were experiencing difficulty getting back on the "education ladder". Other provinces in Canada had established community college systems, and the publicity surrounding them had overflowed into Saskatchewan. These educational and political interests were accentuated by the existence of a draft piece of legislation proposing creation of a Saskatchewan community college system, the recommendation prepared in 1970 and presented to the previous government.3

In September, 1971, the new minister of education, Gordon MacMurchy, sent invitations to selected people. The invitations were to attend a conference in Regina to consider the community college legislation drawn up by the Special Provisional Committee on Higher Education under the previous government. MacMurchy selected these people to attend the conference because of their background and interest in adult education, both in the formal and the informal areas.4 Many of the invitees had contacted MacMurchy and had indicated

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2Eldon Owens Interview, June 15, 1982, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.

3Cf. Chapter One, p. 22.

4Gordon MacMurchy Interview, June 17, 1982, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.
a willingness to assist if he decided to proceed with community colleges. Others were simply people known to him and his Department to be interested in adult education affairs. The remaining people asked to attend the conference were from the Department of Education and agencies associated with education. In total, twenty-four people were invited and attended the First Invitational Conference held on October 7, 8 and 9, 1971.5

Participants at the conference considered the earlier draft legislation and the concept of community colleges as put forth by the Special Provisional Committee. They agreed that this concept was not new and really was not structured for community input.6 They viewed it as a centralized structure with permanent staff. MacMurchy indicated other concerns about the concept. He said, "It looked like high cost stuff, and we had lots to do in education at that time."7

In addition to considering the earlier draft legislation and reflecting on the community college concept, the conference participants asked that Departmental people draft


6William Brock Whale Interview, June 23, 1982, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

a position paper which might cite alternative avenues for community college development in Saskatchewan. They requested that a Second Invitational Conference be called. At this second conference, the role of colleges and the administration required to operate a college system would be discussed.8

The Second Invitational Conference was set for December 1, 1971. The position paper was drafted by Departmental officials and then mailed on November 19, 1971, to the participants of the first conference. Prior to the Second Invitational Conference, MacMurchy and his legislative assistant, Elwood Cowley, held a meeting with Departmental officials. The purpose of the meeting was to review the Departmental position paper. At this meeting, a decision was reached that the paper did not represent the views of the government. The paper still adhered to the old concept of centralization.9

At the Second Invitational Conference, MacMurchy and his legislative assistant abandoned the Departmental position paper and decided to gauge the reactions of people to government's own ideas. These ideas included the re-organization of the Department of Education into two branches: one for general education (K-12) and one for


9Marjorie Benson Interview, June 29, 1982, Regina, Saskatchewan.
continuing education. The minister expressed his view and bias in favour of rural Saskatchewan.

It was, the desire of the government to introduce a regional vocational program, the concern over funding, the existence of adaptable but yet not totally adaptable adult facilities in comprehensive high schools and the search for a middle ground between public, secondary and university systems which led to the idea of community colleges. The idea of community colleges had been around for a long time. It was an idea which had been talked about in Canadian adult education circles but which had yet to be implemented on a province-wide basis in a way that enabled individual communities to retain control over their colleges. Saskatchewan was going to try to achieve what had not yet been achieved elsewhere in Canada. MacMurchy and his legislative assistant went to the second conference looking for reaction to and support for their idea of a rural, learner centered, community based and informal learning system.

The concept was favourably received by the conference group. At the plenary session, the minister announced that a small advisory group would be established to advise him on matters related to policy and operation. On January 10, 1971.

10Saskatoon Star Phoenix, December 7, 1971, p. 3.
12Ibid.
1972, MacMurchy officially announced the appointment of the advisory committee. The announcement stated:

"This ten member Committee will be asked to propose a workable method of establishing community orientated Colleges. To this end, a series of public hearings throughout the province will be held to receive briefs on the topic."

MacMurchy saw three options for selecting people to his advisory committee. One option was to have working associates provide a list of names from various organizations and then make a selection. Another option was to approach selected organizations and request them to recommend a person to represent them. A third option was to request specific organizations to provide a list of three or four names and then have a selection made. In what was to become traditional MacMurchy fashion, the minister opted for having associates provide a list of names from which he made the selection.

MacMurchy selected people to the advisory committee based on their background and their interest in the community college idea. He sought people who he felt could sell the idea to the people of Saskatchewan. Representatives of labour, agriculture and teachers had traditionally shown interest through their attendance and participation in various past conferences, conventions and organizations.

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14Saskatoon Star Phoenix, January 10, 1972, p. 3.
related to adult education and community colleges but were by-passed in the selections to the committee. MacMurchy indicated that these groups were not purposely avoided. He stated that the final selection was based more on a question of committee size and the desire to maintain a rural flavour and bias in the advisory committee.\(^\text{16}\)

The members of the advisory committee came from different backgrounds and experience. At their inaugural meeting at Lumsden on February 1, 1972, committee members were told that they were there as representatives of certain organizations but also as individuals.\(^\text{17}\) They were to carry out their responsibilities to this advisory committee, keeping both aspects in mind.

Ronald Faris, professor at the University of Regina, was one person selected to serve on this committee. Faris had been an outspoken critic of the past adult education scene in Saskatchewan.\(^\text{18}\) He was seconded to the Department of Education on a three-fifths basis to serve on this committee. He acted as chairman of the advisory committee, and the report it produced was named after him.\(^\text{19}\) Faris and all the other members of this advisory committee had been in

\(^\text{16}\)Ibid.

\(^\text{17}\)Owens, Op. Cit.

\(^\text{18}\)Regina Leader Post, January 6, 1972, p. 3.

\(^\text{19}\)Ronald L. Faris, response to a questionnaire prepared by the author, July, 1982.
attendance at both of the previous invitational conferences on the community college.

Marjorie Benson, a research officer with the Department of Education in Regina, was another person selected to this committee. Benson was a school teacher who was going to pursue graduate work but who changed her mind when a career opportunity arose in the Department of Education. She was the research arm of the committee, acted as its secretary and wrote the report.20

A third person named to the committee by the minister was the Reverend Andrew Britz, the principal at St. Peter's College in Muenster, Saskatchewan. Britz, through his work at this Junior College, had exposure to the mosaic of adult education in Saskatchewan.21

Another committee member was Jacob Fehr, a director of the Co-operative College in Saskatoon. Fehr was an active member of the Saskatchewan Association for Adult Education and later of the Saskatchewan Association for Lifelong Learning (SALL).22 He had attended other conferences


21Andrew Britz Interview, August 30, 1982, Muenster, Saskatchewan.

22Saskatchewan Association for Lifelong Learning was an organization of adult educators organized in 1971. It was formerly known as S.A.A.E. (Saskatchewan Association for Adult Education). S.A.L.L. held its inaugural meeting October 20, 1971.
dealing with community colleges.23

The Reverend Roland (Bud) Harper, a director of the United Church's Lay Training Center at Fort Qu'Appelle, was also named to the committee. Like Fehr, he was an active member of the Saskatchewan Association for Adult Education and later the Saskatchewan Association for Lifelong Learning.24

A native person was appointed to the committee. He was Peter Dubois, first vice-president of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indians. Dubois was a farmer and resident of Fort Qu'Appelle. He was particularly active in many Indian education concerns of the day.25

Another member was Eldon Owens, a farmer and a school trustee from Moose Jaw. As a school trustee, he had an interest in adult education. Owens was concerned with the gap in educational services which existed between rural Saskatchewan and urban Saskatchewan.26

Also named to this committee by the minister was Elizabeth Pepper, a housewife and student of the Continuing Education Master's Degree program of the University of Regina.

23 Jacob Fehr Interview, June 28, 1982, Regina, Saskatchewan.

24 Roland (Bud) Harper Interview, June 28, 1982, Regina, Saskatchewan.

25 Peter Dubois Interview, June 15, 1982, Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan.

Saskatchewan. Pepper had been an active member of S.A.A.E. and later S.A.L.L. She played a leadership role with the Saskatoon Council for Continuing Education, an advisory group to the Saskatoon Collegiate Board.27

Lewis A. Riederer, director of the Applied Arts and Sciences Branch of the Department of Education in Regina, was another member. Riederer was a former separate school superintendent who had established Regina's first separate high school program. He had been chairman of the Special Provisional Committee for Higher Education which had prepared the draft legislation for a community college system under the previous government. The director had represented the Department at the earlier invitational conferences.28

The final member was William Brock Whale, a professor with the Extension Division, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon. Whale was an active member of S.A.A.E. and later of S.A.L.L. He had served as a volunteer on the Saskatoon Council for Continuing Education.29

The committee's terms of reference were spelled out in a ministerial letter to the committee. Committee members were to advise the minister:

27Elizabeth F. (Betty) Pepper Interview, June 10, 1982, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

28Lewis A. Riederer Interview, June 17, 1982, Regina, Saskatchewan.

(i) On a policy-making level with respect to community colleges and their possible relationship with the Saskatchewan education and adult education scene;

(ii) On administrative procedures which would facilitate the initiation of community colleges in Saskatchewan and the manner in which these new educational institutions might be operationalized.30

A major responsibility of the committee was not cited in the terms of reference. The committee would promote, at least for discussion purposes, the ideas and principles of college development as put forth by the government and the two working invitational conferences. Members were to gauge Saskatchewan's reaction and response to this unique system based on community development and community service.31

They did this through a series of community meetings around the province. The ideas of college development were stated in a brochure which was usually distributed prior to each community meeting. The brochure, "What Will the Community College Mean To Me and My Community", promoted the idea of people initiating and controlling their own learning. Full-time, permanently employed experts would not be required. Local people with experience and knowledge would be the temporary teaching resources in each program. Once a local need was satisfied, another resource person could be

30 Department of Continuing Education, "Minister's Advisory Committee Report", August, 1972, p. IV.

hired and another local facility could be utilized. Local facilities were to be flexible and also temporary. Permanence of staff and structure was to be avoided in order to prevent rigidity and institutionalization.

During the community meetings, a discussion guide was available and distributed to the participants. The guide provided the background information on the development of the community college ideas and the basis for these ideas. It then stated seven principles which would govern college operations in the province.32

The majority of committee members agreed that the meetings could not be a purely community oriented process. They had to go to the communities with something that people could react to rather than leave agendas wide open for discussion without structure. They had a fear that any other approach would have resulted in variations of what already existed elsewhere.33

32Advisory Committee people, when interviewed in the summer of 1982, varied in their recollections as to how the seven principles were derived. These principles would appear to be a distillation of the government's thinking, the invitational conferences and the Department's refined view of college development in Saskatchewan. Some participants felt that the principles resulted from the committee "tour" of Saskatchewan. Others felt that they were a combination of a few principles from the conference and the committee work in Saskatchewan. Others indicated that the advisory committee went to the people of Saskatchewan with the seven principles as set out by the minister of education.

The seven principles, outlined in a speech by Faris on February 16, 1972, and in the discussion guide prepared for the advisory committee's work in Saskatchewan were:

1. The major responsibility of community colleges is to promote formal and informal adult learning in their regional communities.

2. Programs are to be developed in response to the expressed concerns of a community.

3. Individual and group counselling shall be provided.

4. Community colleges shall assist in community development by offering programs of community education and service.

5. Community colleges shall not duplicate existing educational services or facilities for adults; they shall co-ordinate the delivery of all adult education services and facilities in a community.

6. Community colleges shall be governed by a council representative of the region.

7. The operation of the colleges shall be under the purview of the minister of education.34

The advisory committee held meetings throughout the province from March 29 to April 21, 1972. Not all committee members travelled to each meeting. The province was divided into various geographic regions, and school superintendents were responsible for setting up the meetings. Groups of two to four committee members volunteered to attend the designated meetings in each of these regions.

Regional meetings followed a particular structure. The

34Ronald L. Faris, "Community College Saga in Saskatchewan", speech delivered to Saskatchewan School Trustees on February 16, 1972 in Regina, Saskatchewan.
format included one committee person acting as chairperson and another outlining the seven principles. A discussion would take place regarding the validity of the principles for the particular community. Then the community members were divided into groups to discuss what might constitute a college region, the issue of the accessibility of students to these programs and the type of council structure necessary to implement such a concept. A summary was compiled of the plenary session discussions, and general audience discussions were once again invited. At the conclusion of the meeting, people were asked to present additional comments or briefs to Faris by May 15, 1972.35

There was a genuine attempt by the committee to solicit the co-operation and support of the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association (S.S.T.A.), the University and the various other agencies which had an adult education function in the province. There were also attempts to legitimize the existence and value of the advisory committee. Faris, chairman of the advisory committee, spoke to the S.S.T.A. membership on two occasions and to the University on two occasions. On March 13, 1972, the advisory committee held a day long conference specifically for the adult education agencies to react to the seven principles.

Numerous briefs were presented and letters received by

35Department of Continuing Education, Minutes from the April 18, 1972, Meeting at Shellbrook, Saskatchewan, filed under College Development--1972.
the advisory committee in its meetings in forty-nine Saskatchewan communities. The briefs and letters, both organizational and individual, supported the efforts of government to initiate a new education system and supported the seven principles. The briefs also voiced uncertainties or concerns with the concept and its possible implementation. There was a tendency for these concerns to reappear in community meetings.

The topic of college financing was a major concern. Typically, the Moose Jaw Committee for a Community College brief stated that rural people would not support the concept if it meant financing of this new institution through direct taxation. The consensus was that community colleges should be provincially funded and supported by minimal student fees.

The question of funding usually led to a discussion of autonomy for this concept within the education system. People stated if community colleges were to be unique, preserve the community aspect and not be extensions of the current system, then something like "unconditional" grants would have to be instituted. There was a fear that conditional government grants would simply lead to government control. In fact, one brief suggested that in order to

36 Committee For a Community College For Moose Jaw Area, "Moose Jaw Committee For a Community College Brief", May, 1967, filed under Submissions To Committee, Department of Continuing Education.
maintain flexibility, no single system or pattern of financing should apply to all community colleges. These concerns over government grants and their implication for community colleges were not mentioned in the final advisory committee document.

Another priority or concern of people and agencies in the province was that colleges not duplicate services and facilities already in existence in communities. They saw the need for colleges to support and co-ordinate these services, i.e., provide a leadership role. People mentioned the comprehensive high school and the manner in which this institution had been implemented. People saw the pressure to conform to its philosophy, its administration, its programs and its structure. Some saw this centralization of education services as an erosion of rural communities. People did not want Saskatchewan community colleges to be a repeat of the approach used with the comprehensive high schools. As stated in the Saskatoon Collegiate Board brief in referring to the comprehensive high schools in Saskatchewan, "We can ill-afford to put the cart before the horse once again." 38

37 Donald J. Phillipon, "A Financial Framework For Community Colleges in Saskatchewan", April 18, 1972, filed under Submissions To Committee, Department of Continuing Education.

38 Board of Education, Saskatoon School District #13, "Brief To The Minister of Education on Community Colleges", p. 7, filed under Submissions To Committee, Department of Continuing Education.
The brief of the Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture (S.F.A.) best stated the concern that the core staff, as hired by these colleges, would have to be "change oriented" people. The staff would have to possess skills in problem solving, goal setting, program co-ordination, community development and administration. The S.F.A. feared that there were few of these people in Saskatchewan and that a support training mechanism would have to be put in place to insure the availability of such individuals.

Depending on the manner in which it was presented, the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association and the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation joint brief may have been the closest to a dissenting voice. The brief supported the concept but noted that many services for adults were already being provided. Their findings indicated a lack of interest in the concept. They felt as much could be accomplished if the funds were channelled through the regular school system.

Finally, they questioned the government's priorities and saw shortcomings if community colleges were to receive priority over kindergartens and school gymnasiums.

39 Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture, a memorandum to the Minister's Committee, April 24, 1972, p. 3, filed under Submissions To Committee, Department of Continuing Education.

40 S.S.T.A. and S.T.F., "Presentation To The Minister's Committee on Community Colleges", April 21, 1972, filed under Submissions To Committee, Department of Continuing Education.
The advisory committee was overwhelmed by the response. The people of Saskatchewan were excited by the idea. But the committee also became aware that communities were in competition with one another and that they were split along religious, language and political lines. In some cases, people were not even talking to one another. Community colleges, the committee believed, could provide an avenue for people to meet and develop local communication networks.\(^41\)

The advisory committee met on ten separate occasions between January 27 and June 30, 1972, to consider the findings from the community meetings and to decide how these ideas might be implemented in Saskatchewan.\(^42\) The committee was positive that the principles could work, based on the popular response to them. Position papers submitted by committee members themselves provided the basis for discussion of certain aspects or concerns. These aspects were the organizational structure of colleges, election versus appointment of boards, review of provincial statutes, inter-agency co-operation, the learning community, off-campus credit programs, training and recruitment of staff and human resource development. An attempt was made to reach consensus on each of these issues. The advisory committee also spent time discussing the issue of boundaries, the criteria for

\(^41\)Riederer, Op. Cit.

\(^42\)Department of Continuing Education--Departmental records on Community Colleges from development until July 3, 1972.
implementing community colleges, publicity and the format for the final report.

On February 24, 1972, MacMurchy made a public statement indicating that legislation would be passed at the upcoming sitting of the legislature, creating a new Department of Continuing Education. This Department would oversee the development of a community college system in Saskatchewan.43

The legislative debates regarding the throne speech, the budget speech and the Department of Continuing Education Act all provided insight into the government's thinking on community colleges. Government would be seeking to implement a learner centered, community centered, informal, rural learning system.

The Department of Continuing Education Act was proclaimed on July 1, 1972. It called for the development, operation and rationalizing of all post high school activities under one government department, a Department of Continuing Education.44 MacMurchy was to add this portfolio to the one he already held, the Department of Education. The Act dispelled any doubts people may have had about the government's intention to introduce a new system of education

and the priority for this system. 45

The advisory committee presented its final report to MacMurchy on August 18, 1972, and made it public on August 22, 1972. 46  Although the committee report would not be formally recognized in the Community Colleges Act which would be passed in 1973, politicians and senior Departmental officials quoted from the report on numerous occasions and, therefore, people deduced that it had provided the conceptual basis for the implementation of community colleges in Saskatchewan.

The Colleges Act would endorse two recommendations of the advisory committee related to the roles of community colleges. The Act would provide for each college to be governed by a board that had program responsibilities within the college. It would confirm that colleges would operate on a system of provincial government grants.

The advisory committee report also prompted the hiring of four community college developers by the Department of Continuing Education. These developers were to examine and analyze the four regions and to assist communities in identifying their communities' interests. They organized contact committees to give colleges local visibility and an

45 Gordon MacMurchy, Departmental Memo to Allan Blakeney and his Cabinet, July 31, 1972, filed with the Department of Continuing Education under Memos of the Colleges Branch to July 31, 1972.

operational aspect. As developers, they gathered names of people for possible board appointments. They developed a high profile in the communities as they spoke out about the idea of community colleges and prepared their areas for the passage of the legislation.
CHAPTER THREE

THE DREAM: ITS PHILOSOPHY

"The College is the community . . . and the community is the College"¹ was not only a catchy phrase of the day, it was the core idea for the Saskatchewan community college. The government's 10-member advisory committee had urged development of an open and informal system of adult education. Its recommendations encouraged formation of a decentralized and accessible adult learning system for rural Saskatchewan.

Community colleges were to be a simple yet sensible and "natural" system. They were to be built on the inter-relationship of learner, community and community college. Varied learning opportunities would become a reality in rural Saskatchewan. This core idea carried with it certain assumptions about learning, adults and communities. Its intent was human and social development.

The advisory committee was influenced by the Danish Folk High School movement in Europe and by the work of certain internationally known adult educators in the 1960s.² If the recommendations of the committee report were implemented, the projected Saskatchewan community colleges would not become

¹Department of Continuing Education, "Saskatchewan Community Colleges", 1974, p. 5.

²Ronald L. Faris, response to a questionnaire prepared by the author, July, 1982, and in a telephone interview he indicated that Paulo Freire was one such adult educator.
the centralized and teacher based institutions recommended in 1970 by the Special Provisional Committee Report on Higher Education. They would become, instead, the decentralized learner based adult education system of a rural province, a system that would provide cultural and recreational activities desired and needed by rural people. That was the recommendation. That was the dream.

These colleges would not be a traditional teacher directed and commanded traditional education system. This system would not have a few urban centralized institutions with the same curriculum being administered to everyone. It was to be fashioned on learners, communities, informal learning and rural ideas. Saskatchewan had launched an evangelical educational revival.

The dream blended progressive and humanistic adult education philosophy. There was even a slightly radical flavour. Tradition and authority would be replaced by experience, interests, reason and feelings as means of securing learning. Learning was to be viewed as an internal process. The primary obligation of each community college would be to develop each adult learner to his or her utmost potential. People, through learning, would become more aware of themselves and in turn would contribute to the general well-being of society. Friends would teach friends. They would come to have a better understanding of their world community. The colleges would provide an environment where
learning would take place for learning's sake. Community colleges would also play a role in adjusting people to a changing technological society—a society with increased leisure time.\(^3\)

The advisory committee distinguished between learning and education.\(^4\) The emphasis was to be on learning and the student. Education was to be more than an activity relegated to the classroom; it was to be all encompassing. Education was seen in both a liberal and a practical sense: it was to be a process for preparing for a better life and for obtaining and maintaining employment. Learning was defined as a highly personal activity dictated by one's self-concept and perception. People would learn what they felt was important to their individual situations. The committee did not see learning as an imposed activity. They saw learners best evaluating whether learning had met their individual aspirations and needs. Education and learning were to be a lifelong process. Education, learning and life were to be interrelated and interdependent.

The committee held an optimistic view of people and their society. They placed a high value on a person's self-

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\(^4\)Department of Continuing Education, "Report of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Community Colleges", August, 1972, p. 7.
concept and the freedom of adult learners. The advisory committee believed that a person's self-concept, a subjective evaluation of oneself, has a great deal of influence on an individual's ability to grow and develop. These architects of the community college felt that, given the freedom and the responsive atmosphere, the learner would become open to change and continued learning. This openness to change and continued learning, they believed, would benefit individuals, their communities and society in general.

This new system of colleges would have to value and respond to the uniqueness and individuality of each learner. Because learning was to be a voluntary act, these new institutions of learning would cater to individual needs in order to survive.

A basic tenet of the advisory committee was that adult learners had the potential to be self-directed in learning activities. The committee felt that individuals could make significant choices within the constraints of heredity, experience and their own environment. Committee members believed that people would assume responsibility for setting their own goals and acquiring the knowledge and skills which would be required to obtain a particular goal. Community colleges would provide opportunity for people to realize

5 Ibid., p. 7.

6 Roland (Bud) Harper Interview, June 28, 1982, Regina, Saskatchewan.
their unique potential, to achieve self-actualization. Through community colleges, people in Saskatchewan could have control over the determination and realization of their educational goals.

The advisory committee believed that certain segments of the society would have to be nurtured and supported if they were to gain confidence and a feeling of self-worth.7 There were people who required support in developing their own learning goals. Rural people, as pointed out in the Wapella presentation to the committee, felt removed from knowledge about educational opportunities.8 The presentation pointed out that people were confused as to the steps to take to gain access to these opportunities or which ones suited them.

Even the self-directed learner, at certain stages in life, would require support to life's problems and challenges. People would require assistance to plan and make meaningful decisions. These decisions would only be meaningful if made in relationship to particular circumstances and an individual's uniqueness. If such notions as lifelong learning and access to educational resources were to work, community colleges would have to provide counselling


8Wapella Study Group, no title, n.d., see Department of Continuing Education file, Presentations to Advisory Committee.
services on an individual and group basis. If these services were not provided, then there would be an obvious gap in college services and ability to respond to individual and community needs.9

The Saskatchewan community college dream, if it became a reality, would signal profound social, economic and political changes in society. The learner and the community were to be interrelated. The community aspect of community colleges was to be important.10 At a basic level, it meant that colleges would respond to educational requests by communities and would attempt to become the hub of community life. They would support the work of volunteer groups, encourage use of facilities and allow public access to the special skills and talents of college personnel. Individual Saskatchewanians were to maintain real control over their own education, and education was to become an integral part of Saskatchewan life.

Education would play a major role in the development of this life. Communities would become classrooms. Community colleges were "to serve as a mechanism in the maintenance and development of a viable way of life."11

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9 Department of Continuing Education, "Report of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Community Colleges", p. 46.

10 Ibid., p. 18.

11 Ronald L. Faris, "Community College Saga in Saskatchewan", Speech delivered to Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, February 16, 1972, Regina, Saskatchewan.
Continuing Education Gordon MacMurchy outlined the need to support and foster value laden education. He indicated that colleges would have to face social problems and issues being confronted by their communities. They would have the responsibility to provide the educational input and bring understanding to these pressing issues and concerns. Colleges would have a supportive role, helping individuals and communities discover their own solutions to their own problems. How communities decided to utilize this newly found knowledge rested with each community. MacMurchy warned that if colleges failed to provide relevant education, then they would quickly isolate themselves from the real world.

Education in this context was unquestionably political. Learner directed problem solving, coupled with community based education, would be a potentially powerful force. Accumulated information and knowledge linked with community experience would provide people with a power base and with a feeling of self-worth and direction. Education would link ideas with action.

As with other aspects of community college programming, college involvement in community concerns, projects and problems would have to be requested by community representatives. The college would have the right to participate or

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12 Gordon MacMurchy, Speech to College Board Members, Swift Current, Saskatchewan, 1975.

13 Ibid.
withdraw from these activities. If a college were to participate, then the intent would not be to provide the direction or to impose a value system. Rather, a college would provide communities with possible alternatives, bring in the competencies as requested and required and assist the communities in decision-making. The community college would be a catalyst rather than a decision-maker.

Open discussions, seminars, forums, public meetings and other group activities would be visible signs that the college was involved in this aspect of community programming. This type of activity could assist communities in considering their future and result in co-operation and co-ordination of regional development. The resulting social and economic development could be significant. MacMurchy predicted that "the essence of Community Colleges would not be found in the mere delivery of courses but the condensation of these courses into a community development package." MacMurchy and the advisory committee foresaw that if colleges became institutionalized and isolated from their communities, even though they offered new courses designed for people, the intent would be lost.

The advisory committee's recommendation and the minister's stand made this aspect of the new system a radical departure from the traditional community college mold. At

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14 Gordon MacMurchy, Address to Community College Boards, Humboldt, Saskatchewan, November 2, 1973, filed under Speeches, Department of Continuing Education.
the very time the Paris-based Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development was reporting that the Canadian education system was without any significant political commitment, Saskatchewan colleges had the opportunity to be the exceptions.\textsuperscript{15} Education in these community colleges was to be a creator of alternatives and not simply a maintainer of the \textit{status quo}. Colleges would decide what their own unique characters would be.

Related to this vision was the advisory committee's desire to make rural life more attractive. Committee members saw this new system restoring the balance between rural and urban populations. There was a feeling amongst the advisory people that rural Saskatchewan, almost like Third World countries, was underdeveloped.\textsuperscript{16} As a result of this underdevelopment, rural Saskatchewan required access to technical, personal, cultural and other types of learning opportunities. Community colleges would be an attempt to redistribute educational opportunities and financial resources.\textsuperscript{17}

The development and the maintenance of these local bases of activity was to be an ongoing, never-ending process.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{15}Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, "Educational Policy in Canada", December, 1975, p. 3.


\textsuperscript{17}Eldon Owens Interview, June 15, 1982, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan.

\textsuperscript{18}MacMurchy, Op. Cit.
The decentralization of learning opportunities to the local level was to insure people access to lifelong personal growth. Colleges were to be a beginning and not an end. They were to be a place where people would come back several times. These institutions would be a system focusing and expending energy on learning.

In theory, it was to be a system based on and sharing a common self-directed, learner oriented and community based philosophy. In order to be effective, each college would be forced to develop its own unique structure according to the needs of the people in its region. The advisory committee was promoting a subtle state of controlled anarchy for Saskatchewan's adult education system. If left unchecked, this approach could result in a range of differently operating yet philosophically similar community colleges. It could become a difficult system for province, union or professional association to control. But the dream remained: a central concern for the learners and their personal direction, participation and autonomy. Saskatchewan people were to regain a measure of control over their education in an ever-increasing bureaucratic and institutionalized society.

In order to accomplish these goals, the committee put forth other ideas. These ideas dealt with programming, service co-ordination, facilities, technology and the governing of colleges.
The programming aspect dealt with formal and informal learning. Informal learning activities were to be legitimate activities and a priority for community colleges.¹⁹ Examples of such activities were recreational, personal development, home, family, cultural and community related interests. These activities would be based on an individual's desire to learn and would be satisfied by non-credit, non-certificate programs, workshops, forums and discussion groups. The learner would be made to feel relaxed in this learning atmosphere. The teacher would not only start with the interests of people but would take into account their preference for learning style, their past experiences and their reason for taking the program. The teacher would not only be a provider of facts and information but would be a person supporting the learners in exploring and analyzing each situation. The learning situation would be proliferated with trust and respect between teacher and learner. This situation would not be founded on paper certificates, grades, interpersonal competition and examinations.

The elitism, the status and the traditions surrounding teaching were to be altered.²⁰ Teaching would now be a process of people developing their own style and approach. The teacher would be a learner, and the learner would be a teacher. Both would participate in the development of the

learning plan and would learn from each other. Learning
would become a mutually agreed upon course of action hinging
on a problem solving approach.

School drop-outs, illiterates, rural people, unemployed,
people with renewed interests and people just wanting to do
something different were being stifled. These people had
few, if any, educational alternatives.

This new and more open alternative, it was argued, was
needed to counterbalance the existing formal educational
institutions and their offerings.21 The formal learning
needs of adults would continue to be met by the institutions
already established to do so. The colleges would become the
"brokers" or the middlemen in this aspect of community
programming. They would assist communities and individuals
in identifying these formal learning needs and in providing
people with the necessary information related to these
programs. Counselling services, wherever necessary, would be
provided by a community college. The college would have the
responsibility to locate the specific formal educational
institution which could deliver the locally requested
program. These formal programs, it was anticipated, would be
certified, accredited, expensive and initially, at least,
limited in demand. A community based decision would prioritize

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21William Brock Whale Interview, June 23, 1982,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.
these formal learning needs.22

Through its provincial meetings, the advisory committee identified many formal organizations, institutions and agencies performing adult education functions in Saskatchewan.23 These groups had adult education as an extension service emanating from and promoting their main thrust in Saskatchewan society. The committee recognized the work of informal associations, such as friends, neighbours, family, churches and voluntary groups. The committee agreed that learning in all these situations occurred both on an incidental and intentional basis.

But, the advisory committee was also cognisant of the educational service gaps in this mosaic of institutions, agencies and informal associations. The committee saw, in certain instances, a duplication of services, i.e., competition for the same client. Community colleges were not intended to undermine local activities and structures. Colleges were to co-ordinate these activities in each community. Gaps and duplication in adult education were to be removed by this new institution whose sole purpose for existing was adult education. Once on the scene, colleges were to foster information sharing and local co-operative

22Jacob Fehr Interview, June 28, 1982, Regina, Saskatchewan.

planning. This co-operative and co-ordinated activity would maximize the use of local human and physical resources.24

At this time, Saskatchewan, with its large geographic area, sparse population and dependency on agriculture, faced a real limit on the funds that could be invested in facilities and instructional resources.25 This economic realism coupled with existence of institutions with suitable facilities for adult education led to a recommendation by the advisory committee that facilities not be constructed for the community colleges.26

Saskatchewan community colleges would not be a maze of permanent buildings, curriculum and staff, but were to be fluid and ever-changing institutions. They would have to be flexible and responsive to the demands which would be placed on them. Colleges were to have a core of permanent staff geared to and sensitive to the changing times and expectations of people within a college region. A system promoting change could not be built on permanence. The advisory committee did not want to see buildings, curriculum and staff blocking learner motivation.

Technology was to play a role in adult education to overcome the problem of remoteness, limited resources and

interests confined to a certain area. Media were seen as playing a vital role in facilitating learning on an individual or special interest basis. Educational technology would play a role in assisting people to adjust to other technology and the changing times.

To further insure college responsiveness to individual aspirations, the new system would be governed by bodies representative of the regions. These representatives were to see to it that programs were initiated and based on individual and community concerns, ideas and needs. They would authorize programs based on their personal knowledge, experience, sensitivity and familiarity with their college region and its people. Program requests would be handled on an individual basis and on individual merits. College boards would keep the public informed about the nature and the direction of each institution. The programs offered in each college region were not to be a top-down process with outsiders from the provincial government bureaucracy in Regina deciding what was most beneficial to area residents and their communities.

This was to be a co-operative system involving the provincial government and community college boards. Colleges were to be a symbol of this working partnership

27 Ibid., p. 30.
29 Ibid., p. 24.
built on trust and confidence, on a reciprocal experience and process. Central government would act in a consultative capacity; it would not exercise authoritative control. The community college developers would invest their energies into keeping communities active. The community college's staff would insure that programs were developed and delivered as requested by people. The college boards would oversee the operation and guarantee that the colleges were community based. Central government staff would act in a supportive and consultative capacity to this entire system.

As recommended by the advisory committee, the legislation creating the community colleges put into the hands of the newly created Department of Continuing Education final responsibility for insuring that the system operated on the founding philosophy and principles.30 If there was to be any dissatisfaction with the development of community colleges, then the responsibility rested with the minister to interpret and realign according to the reaction of Saskatchewan people.31

The die was cast! What would transpire? Could this partnership endure the risks and benefits? On what basis would this partnership be struck? Would colleges remain responsible to and representative of their communities?

Could the dream survive the desire of politicians and educational administrators to build mausoleums and monuments? What would be the impact as the government bureaucracy introduced systems for administrative ease and convenience? It would be an interesting blend when the dream was mixed with reality.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE DREAM SHATTERED

It did not take long for the dream of community control to come under challenge from the central bureaucracy in the new Department of Continuing Education. From the earliest days of its creation in July of 1972, the Department sought to modify the dream the advisory committee on community colleges was seeking to have implemented. The Department succeeded in getting revisions included in the advisory committee's final report, exerted influence on the wording of the Community Colleges Act that failed to entrench local community control, and often pressed the bureaucratic interests of Regina on community colleges at the expense of the local communities. As a result of the Department's activity, the traditional orientation of a bureaucratically and centrally controlled system was in place to contend from within the system against what had become, at least rhetorically, the Saskatchewan ideal.

The Community Colleges Act of April 27, 1973 was a compromise between the two orientations. The Department of Continuing Education had succeeded in getting the advisory committee to make adjustments in its final report.1 The

1Gordon MacMurchy, minister of continuing education, memo to Allan Blakeney, premier of Saskatchewan, dated July 31, 1972. The memo summarized the initial observations of the advisory committee and indicated the Department's reaction to these observations. The final published report of the advisory committee adopted certain Departmental recommendations.
final report went along with the Department's desire to have the assistant deputy minister of the Department of Continuing Education responsible for all matters related to community colleges. The advisory committee conceded to the Department's desire to have its own staff in the community college regions. But it held fast to its original concept of small cores of independent community college staff with administrative, community education, counselling and program development capabilities. The Department also demanded responsibility for a central review of community college program plans and budgets. The advisory committee went along with this request but with the proviso that such reviews be carried out on a consultative basis only. That is, the committee wanted the Department involved in budgeting and programming only when colleges sought advice and or endorsement from the Department.

Another crucial compromise was pressed on the advisory committee by the Department. The Department wanted all boards of directors of the colleges to be appointed. The advisory committee favoured the more democratic concept of local elections, but its final report called for the appointment of the boards.

With these compromises made, advisory committee members hoped for permissive legislation from the government. This would be legislation upholding the principles of local
autonomy and budget reviews on a consultative basis only.²

What they got in the spring of 1973 was an Act and accompanying regulations which, if implemented literally, indicated a centrally controlled organization.³ The rhetoric of the dream remained, at least in so far as the Act spoke of providing local people with access to education. Local control, however, would depend upon the interaction and inter-relationship of local boards, government officials, college principals and college employees.

Centralized control would be relatively easy to achieve under the new Act. The community college boards were to be appointed by Order-in-Council. There were to be between four and seven people serving on a board. Despite the advisory committee's recommendation that institutionalization be avoided and no full-time instructional staff be hired, the Act allowed for membership on the board of one instructional person nominated by instructional staff and one student nominated by a student council. Boards were to appoint their own principals.

The Act gave the college boards very little autonomy. Board membership, as previously stated, was at the pleasure of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. The hiring of staff,

²Department of Continuing Education, "Report of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Community Colleges", August, 1972, p. 34.

³Province of Saskatchewan, Colleges Act, Bill #66, April 27, 1973.
the outlining of their duties, the negotiating of their conditions of work and their compensation packages were all subject to Departmental approval. The boards were responsible for preparing reports as requested by the Department. All these activities of board members, as well as their acquiring, leasing, renting and disposing of land and buildings were to be subject to Departmental approval. The Act gave the minister the power to enact any regulations deemed necessary to govern the conduct and operations of community colleges.

The minister's regulations under the Community Colleges Act stated the contract conditions for principals, the job responsibilities of the community college secretary treasurer, accounting procedures and the salary scales for formal program staff. They delineated how boards should handle staff superannuation contracts and per diem payments for attendance at board meetings. The regulations made it mandatory for college boards to pay their formal teaching staff on the Saskatchewan Government Employees' Association salary scale. Superannuation arrangements had to be with the Municipal Employees' Superannuation Commission. The fiscal year of the colleges was established as July 1 to June 30.4

This level of centralized control was apparently not

4Province of Saskatchewan, Minister's Regulations Under the Community Colleges Act, May 1, 1973.
enough for the Department of Continuing Education, for a year later in the spring of 1974, a new set of regulations was promulgated from Regina. The duties of a deputy-chairperson were defined and the duties of a chairperson further outlined. The Department required boards to submit their contracts to the Department for approval. It specified that such approval would encompass the principal's duties, benefits, tenure and salary. Staff approvals were also required. College boards were required to obtain Departmental approval for each position and its responsibilities and the wage scale prior to filling the position. Then, they needed Departmental approval after hiring for the specific individual hired and for that person's wage and benefit package. Program levels were to be authorized by the Department as well. This authorization carried with it the approval for temporary instructional and clerical staff. This regulation also introduced Departmental control over the minimum percentage of annual revenue which colleges would have to receive from student tuition fees. It set formal program fees for community colleges. It required community colleges to prepare their annual reports sixty days after fiscal year end. It outlined the required content of each report. The regulations also allowed boards the option to enrol qualified staff into the Teachers Superannuation Commission Plan.

5Province of Saskatchewan, Minister's Regulations Under the Community Colleges Act, April 26, 1974.
The Department of Continuing Education, also in the spring of 1974, decided unilaterally to create field representative positions in the various college regions. Within a few years, the central bureaucracy cast these representatives in an integral role in college budgeting, financing and various form and report writing. Although this administrative role was contrary to the intentions of the advisory committee and the aspirations of the first minister of continuing education, Gordon MacMurchy, the Department had the controversial field representative position written into legislation in 1976.

Political support which had been crucial in the efforts to implement the dream of local control waned, and bureaucratic influence which had resisted the dream increased in strength. In 1975 and 1978, the New Democratic Party called elections and was re-elected each time to serve as Saskatchewan's government. The 1975 election campaign indicated a change in the priorities of the party. Its prime platform issue became the public control of the province's natural resources. Emphasis increased on the development and investment in these natural resources. This ambitious

6Department of Continuing Education, "Community Colleges Field Staff Minutes", Book 1, August 22, 1978.

7Province of Saskatchewan, Minister's Regulations Under the Colleges Act, August 16, 1976.

8Douglas McArthur's speech to Community Development Conference, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, April 23, 24 & 25, 1980.
development scheme involved megaprojects in heavy oil, potash, uranium and hydro. These elements would create a Saskatchewan Heritage Fund. This was a time in the province which saw the forecasting of uranium mines, uranium refineries, pipe line manufacturing, potash mining, heavy oil refineries and the exporting of electricity. Saskatchewan was on the verge of an economic boom. Ministers, when asked or expected to speak about the policies of their particular departments, emphasized the economic aspects. The government set aside its priority on human resource development and social action. Rural adult education was no longer a priority for the government which began to see technical and vocational training for resource development and industrialization as the need for the present and future. The government's approach was typified by Ted Bowerman, minister of Northern Saskatchewan, when he indicated that the Colleges Branch of his Department would change its focus from social development to employment training.9

The government shift in priorities from human resources to natural resources was a gradual one which had showed up early in the area of education. It reflected in the tendency of the office of the minister of continuing education to function as a revolving door. After MacMurchy left the position on November 5, 1975, four different ministers held the portfolio until 1981. Only one of these, moreover, held

9Saskatoon Star Phoenix, November 21, 1975, p. 5.
just the continuing education portfolio and then only for 15 months. The other ministers also were responsible for the Department of Education.

This revolving door approach left community colleges at the mercy of Department of Continuing Education officials. The colleges lost their glitter. The impending resource developments and required training of manpower saw colleges pushed from the front pages of the Department's annual report. This constant rotating of ministers hampered the examination of concerns and issues related to the community college. The seventh principle of college development, having the minister ultimately responsible for colleges, was considerably weakened under this system. Ministers were not in office long enough to become personally familiar with the workings of the system. By and large, they had to rely on Departmental information and guidance.

In 1975, the Human Resources Development Agency, a government department established to assist the disadvantaged, was disbanded and its responsibility shifted to the Department of Continuing Education. The addition of administrative and operational program responsibilities to the Department for this segment of the population had an effect on community colleges. The Department expected colleges to undertake this responsibility, to provide administrative services and to hire instructional staff on a
full time basis for a large portion of the year.10

This program, offered mainly in response to the demands of Metis people in Saskatchewan, became known as the Non-Status Indian Metis Program (N.S.I.M.) and caused college boards, staff and administrators many difficulties. Metis leaders were anxious to control this program. Government accommodated some of their wishes. Colleges became the linkages between government and Metis people for this program. Difficulties with course proposals, under-funding, misplaced application forms and late cheques all came to roost on college steps. It put colleges at loggerheads with Metis people. Colleges began taking on additional staff to accommodate this program, and, contrary to the visions of the architects of the system, the bureaucracy began to grow within the colleges.11

In 1976, the minister of continuing education announced staff cuts in Technical Institutes and the transfer of the Adult Basic Education (A.B.E.) program to community colleges.12 This move, implemented without consultation with community colleges, further saddled these institutions


12 Saskatoon Star Phoenix, June 3, 1976, p. 6.
with the responsibility of additional full time staff and the need for expanded facilities to hold classes. The Department once more showed its power of control over the community colleges.

This transfer of programs flew in the face of the community college ideal. Here was a program centrally determined in Regina. The program depended on an agency such as Canada Manpower being willing to purchase spaces in a course and negotiating this purchase on a province wide basis with the Department of Continuing Education. Community colleges, rather than responding to a local need and locating existing agencies to deliver the service, were subsuming another institution's responsibility. Colleges were now in the business of developing curriculum, providing facilities, hiring full time staff, preparing budgets and certifying graduates. This was a definite erosion of the dream and an undermining of the Department-College partnership.

Colleges voiced their concern, but to no avail.13 As time went on, centrally determined community college programming consumed many board hours of deliberation. Such programs were delivered by colleges for the Department of Continuing Education. The colleges had little control over

13Harold E. Chapman, chairman, Saskatoon Regional College, a letter circulated amongst community colleges on January 19, 1977 (Natonum Community College files, Board related information).
these programs, acting in a sub-contractual role. 14

On April 21, 1976, the Department announced to college principals its intent to proceed with a Student Information System (S.I.S.). 15 This system required students and college staff to complete various forms for central office analysis and recording. The community colleges called for more study, questioned the process of implementation and asked if other alternatives might exist for securing the same required information in a year of financial restraint. 16 The Department proceeded with the implementation, calling it a necessary tool in the research and evaluation of college activities. In the years to follow, the Department would continue to return to colleges, seeking information already supposedly stored in the computer in Regina. 17

Varying budget cycles and preparatory methods accompanied the imposed systems. The N.S.I.M. program had an April 1 - March 31 budget cycle. The A.B.E. program and other trade related programs offered through the Department

14 Lorne Sparling, executive director, Department of Continuing Education, in a talk to the Natonum Community College Board, April, 1982, filed under Budgets, Natonum Community College.

15 Minutes from Saskatchewan College Principals Committee dated April 21, 1976, filed under Principals, Department of Continuing Education.

16 Ibid.

17 Department of Continuing Education, a letter directed to college principals from Neil Tamlin, planning officer, Planning Branch, Policy and Program Division, October 25, 1982, filed under Board Minutes, Natonum Community College.
had a similar year end. The college budget year with its funding was July 1 - June 30 of each year. These budget systems, each with its inherent differences with regards to capital purchases, rentals, administrative charges and surplus accruals, added problems to board meetings and focused them toward accountability to government rather than toward responsiveness to the local communities. The funding in these Department imposed areas, in some cases, equalled or surpassed the funds available to colleges through their general grants. These externally determined programs became priority items for boards.

The bureaucratic language of budget preparation, annual reviews, semi-annual and quarterly reviews, prioritization, consolidation, global, line by line became familiar words to board members. They became sucked into the bureaucratic style and became pre-occupied with "big" meetings and discussions with Departmental officials, concerned with keeping colleges viable instead of responsive to people. Board energies switched to a government-Departmental-formal focus in many cases and away from a local informal focus.18 This is not to say that informal learning matters were insignificant to boards. They simply could not spend as much time on them.

The budget reviews became more than consultations. In

the formal program area, budgets were prepared and submitted to the Department for approval. In the informal area, the process was in reverse. The Department would notify the college of the global or total dollars for which it qualified under the budget formula for the upcoming year. The college board developed a budget rationalizing the expenditure on a government budget form. At the review, a line by line examination of all revenues and expenditures took place. Departmental representatives at these budget reviews questioned board program decisions and priorities.\(^\text{19}\) The Department reserved the right to approve or disapprove a college's budget pending the annual review. The need for multi-year planning by college boards was emphasized by Departmental officials.\(^\text{20}\) Direction rather than consultation described the process, and the "spirit" suffered another serious setback.

Department of Continuing Education officials recognized that autonomy was the key term that supported the original dream of the community college. It was a word they would

\(^\text{19}\) Jacob Kutarna, director of community colleges, opening remarks at various colleges during the 1979 budget reviews, May 28, 1979, filed under Budgets, Natonum Community College.

eventually have to contend with as they undermined the institution. During the advisory committee meetings, the passage of legislation and the early stages of college development, autonomy cropped up on a frequent basis. MacMurchy, during the second reading of the Community Colleges Act, stressed the role of college autonomy.\footnote{Gordon MacMurchy, speech during Legislative Debates on March 7, 1973, \textit{Hansard}, Vol. II, 1973, p. 1459.} Community colleges were to be autonomous because they would be making program decisions based on local needs, conditions and input. These decisions were not to be imposed by a force external to colleges.

While the Department eroded the autonomy in practice, it tended to respect the rhetoric. As early as 1976, the deputy minister publicly indicated his desire for the Department to strengthen its control over the community colleges.\footnote{Alex Guy, "The Future of Community Colleges", Speech delivered to Parkland Community College Trustees, Yorkton, Saskatchewan, November 19, 1977.} This same deputy minister, Alex Guy, stated in 1977 that the Department has deliberately avoided intervening in some situations where we would have liked to move in--we wanted Colleges to exercise a good deal of autonomy--a chance to develop models unique to their regions."\footnote{Ibid.} But the Department eventually had to mount an offensive against autonomy lest colleges be left with a weapon that could one
day be used effectively against Departmental policy.

In 1977, Peter Glynn, director of the Research and Planning Branch from the Department of Continuing Education, told a meeting of community college trustees from around the province that "the honeymoon, if indeed there was one, is over and rightly so."24 In 1978, Jacob Kutarna, director of colleges for the Department of Continuing Education, attempted, as he put it, to "demythologize" autonomy, partnership and other terms used to describe the community college dream.25 His consistent use of "I" and "me" exploded the possibility of partnerships developing in the system. Each term was defined in a controlled government framework.

In 1979 at the Saskatchewan College Trustees Association Conference in Saskatoon, using the Department's role as spelled out by legislation, Kutarna stated that his was not an egalitarian view of the relationship between the colleges and the Department.26 In 1978, the deputy minister told board chairmen that community colleges were Crown Agencies and were not autonomous as some boards were intimating. He cited each of the relevant sections in the Act which made


boards subject to Departmental scrutiny. He indicated that the power of boards fell to formulation of general policies regarding college operations, responsibility for expenditures, development of instructional programs and the maintenance of accurate operational records.27

By 1981 the Department obtained a new weapon of its own in its fight against autonomy. At the Minister's Invitational Conference for College Trustees and Chief Executive Officers (principals) in February of 1981, the Department presented its perspective on the matter of board autonomy and the partnership of colleges and the Department. This conference was to be significant for colleges. Certain college boards, particularly that of Mistikwa Community College, had pressed their view of board autonomy to make certain program related decisions. The Mistikwa board publicly charged the minister and his Departmental officials with meddling in college affairs.28 At this conference, Lewis Riederer made boards aware of a significant addition to the Community Colleges Act. The minister now had the power to remove a board from office and appoint a trustee to oversee college affairs. The minister along with other Departmental officials outlined to colleges, in edict

27Chairpersons' Meeting on November 22, 1978 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, filed under Field Staff, Department of Continuing Education.

fashion, their powers and authority.\footnote{29}

At this conference, Departmental officials informed college boards that program emphasis would have to shift because of new provincial priorities. These officials suggested that informal community based program costs should be fully recovered from participant fees. Community college boards were told they should reduce their role in these programs and staff should be freed to work "on other provincial priorities". Community self-development was to occur if colleges shifted their priorities. The assumption made was absence of college staff would force communities to develop their own skills. Boards were told that training or formal learning should be the priority to meet the promised economic expansion in Saskatchewan.

This conference was a milestone in college development. It ended any speculation as to the autonomy of boards. The dream was officially dead.

It remained only for the Department to nail the coffin shut. This it did in two ways. One was to make the February

\footnote{29}{Department of Continuing Education, "Minister's Invitational Conference with Community College Trustees", Regina, Saskatchewan, February 26, 1981. The inclusion of the minister's powers to remove an entire board in the Colleges Act of 1981 heightened boards' sensitivity to their accountability to government and their lack of autonomy. On March 6, 1981, the administration and board of Mistikwa Community College discovered just how powerful the minister and his Department were. Five out of the seven board members were replaced by the minister. Two had previously resigned over the controversy surrounding the college and their quest for autonomy.}
conference presentations part of the Department's official Training Manual for Community College Trustees.\textsuperscript{30} The other was for the deputy minister to reiterate his stand on new priorities for community colleges. Colleges were told to readjust their energies. They were told that they now had local visibility and should change priorities to meet formal training needs of their regions.

While the Department subsequently encountered some resistance from community people and staff members of the colleges,\textsuperscript{31} the boards were accountable to the Department and desired financial security. They began to follow Department directives and to favour formal offerings. The dream of rural communities controlling their own education had been shattered. The way was now open for the community college system to become a provincially directed institution for technical and vocational training in support of provincial government policy to industrialize an agrarian province.

\textsuperscript{30}Department of Continuing Education, "Community College Trustees Manual", n.d.

\textsuperscript{31}Cumberland Community College Contact Committee, Summary Minutes, April 4, 1981, p. 14.
CHAPTER FIVE
WHY THE SHATTERED DREAM?

It was not inevitable that the ideal of the community colleges would be lost. While the impetus for bureaucracy from the Department of Continuing Education was powerful, there were countervailing forces that could have been used in support of a decentralized education system run by and for rural people. Community colleges, however, failed to seize the opportunity to marshal these forces.

Four community colleges had been established in 1973. In July of 1974, the government created another five. By 1981, there would be sixteen community colleges in Saskatchewan centered in: Beauval, Biggar, Creighton, Humboldt, La Ronge, Lloydminster, Melville, Moose Jaw, Nipawin, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon (two, including the Indian Community College for all of Saskatchewan), Swift Current and Weyburn. Momentum clearly was on the side of those who sought to create a unique institution.

In the autumn of 1974, the government appointed four members of the original advisory committee to recommend how to strengthen the colleges and preserve the dream.1 The four people were Marjorie Benson, Jacob Fehr, Andrew Britz and Bud Harper, the chairman. The group became known as the

Harper Committee.

The Harper Committee reported to the minister of continuing education on January 3, 1975. The report indicated that the college scheme was valid and could withstand the test of time. This committee recognized certain strains on the system but felt co-operation, flexibility and openness on the part of all concerned would lead to a resounding success. Committee members felt that the system would succeed if there was learning on everyone's part.2

The report was a strong force for the community college ideal. One could discern, however, some problems brewing. For one thing, the committee ignored the recently created urban community colleges in Regina and Saskatoon. It believed that colleges were a rural concept and that the residents of large cities were already receiving effective adult education services.3

The committee noted a tendency of some Saskatchewanians to think of the community college as just another traditional educational institution; to equate colleges with traditional courses of study. Colleges, it argued, should become involved in seminars, workshops and value-laden education. The committee urged that education be viewed as much more than classroom instruction.4

2Ibid., p. 5.
3Ibid., pp. 20-21.
4Ibid., p. 8.
As community colleges set about their task and ventured into the unknown, there was an initial enthusiasm. Newspapers carried items where individual communities had agreed to join this ground swell, e.g., "Kelvington people vote to join the Parkland Community College." Smoat people offered their program under the guise of "Smoat Community College" although in actuality they were in the Natonum Community College region. The premier of the province, Allan Blakeney, stated that locally run "community colleges would bring an improvement in the quality of life into almost every small community and would play their part in improving and strengthening life in towns, villages and farms." Ian Morrison, the executive director of the Canadian Association for Adult Education, was asked at a national workshop in Saskatchewan to explain his association's interest in Saskatchewan community colleges. Other provinces, he explained, had invested huge amounts of dollars into centralized systems requiring permanent staff and facilities. In Saskatchewan, he said, learners were determining their learning needs and how to meet them.

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5Saskatoon Star Phoenix, June 20, 1974, p. 4.
6Letters received from initial Smeaton contact committee people such as Mrs. Arlene Falloon made reference to their Smeaton Community College, filed under Program Requests, Natonum Community College.
7Saskatoon Star Phoenix, August 24, 1974, p. 15.
8Saskatoon Star Phoenix, October 22, 1975, p. 4.
The college dream gained support and momentum. Individuals, organizations and entire communities responded to informal learning events being decentralized, accessible, flexible and locally determined. Politicians constantly alluded to the phenomenal growth in participation rates in adult education activities. These activities, by 1981, would touch ten per cent of Saskatchewan's adult population. Seven thousand learning events were organized in approximately seven hundred different Saskatchewan locations. Programs were wide ranging. Occupation, personal, family, community, fine art and cultural aspects were represented in programs. Grain production, rail abandonment, land policy, rural community survival, alternative energy and energy conservation all found their way into locally organized learning events. Women, senior citizens and people from all walks of life were participating in these college activities.9

Saskatchewan communities benefitted in many ways from this development. Materials, supplies and equipment required for these events were usually purchased locally. Merchants profited from the sale of food, sundry items, hardware and equipment. The use of town halls, church basements, vacant one room school houses and business premises spurred people into renovations and updating. Rural Saskatchewan possessed latent human resources in its communities. People with the

skills and expertise, sometimes shelved or almost forgotten, were energized by the opportunity to share this knowledge with neighbours, friends and surrounding communities. The rekindled flame for learning spurred people on to further learning.10

While rural people seemed pleased with what was happening, the creation of community colleges alienated certain existing adult education agencies.11 School boards, libraries and other existing purveyors of adult education viewed the community colleges as an imposition. Community college programs sometimes resulted in participants seeking materials to the extent of straining library resources. When community colleges failed to inform libraries of upcoming programs, relations also became strained.12 Neither the universities nor the technical institutes seemed flexible enough to provide many of the services rural communities requested of them through the community colleges.13

10Department of Continuing Education, Policy Planning and Management Information Systems, Student Class Listing, December 15, 1982, filed under Student Listing, Natonum Community College.

11William Brock Whale Interview, June 23, 1982, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.


At the same time, the community colleges sometimes provided courses that competed directly with an existing agency's program. The provincial Department of Agriculture was an agency that took umbrage over numerous instances of competition.\textsuperscript{14} School boards, too, responded to the community colleges without enthusiasm.\textsuperscript{15}

The basic problem was the failure of the government to provide financial incentives to existing agencies to support college activities. Budgets were already strapped. Yet, libraries, school boards and the other agencies were expected to support, out of existing funds, additional adult education activities generated by the community colleges.\textsuperscript{16} Something had to be done.

Instead of taking corrective measures, though, politicians pointed with pride to how cheap it was to operate the community college system. A decentralized system utilizing existing classrooms, church basements and community halls took the pressure off capital expenditures for buildings. It also resolved the issue of vacant classrooms in comprehensive high schools. Temporary short-term and informal programs required fewer dollars to implement yet had

\textsuperscript{14}Minutes from Inter-Agency Agriculture Conference, Humboldt, Saskatchewan, November 13, 1980, Agriculture File, Natonum Community College.


high participation rates. This type of program reduced the pressure for long term and substantial funds for permanent staff and maintenance costs. Whenever possible, community colleges were to co-ordinate program delivery and take advantage of agency services already in existence. This really meant that government hoped to increase the efficiency of certain agencies and to have colleges accept the responsibility for the delivery of services which had fallen by the wayside. The community college idea suffered from the low level of financing accorded it by government. People were enthralled with its economy, but more financial commitment was required if the system were to succeed.

When the system was organized and operating, each successive minister and the premier referred to the phenomenal increase in adult enrollments and the minimal expense of this system, relative to other education systems. The premier stated that colleges had cost the provincial government a total of $734,000 from the preliminary planning stages until 1974. In 1975, the then minister of continuing education, Gordon MacMurchy, indicated that community colleges catered to about 15 per cent of the adult population yet received only three million dollars. He compared this to the universities which received 60 million dollars while serving seven per cent of the adult population.

17Saskatoon Star Phoenix, August 24, 1974, p. 15.
18Gordon MacMurchy, speech delivered to College Board Members, Swift Current, Saskatchewan, 1975.
In 1976, Minister of Continuing Education Edward Tchorzewski estimated that community colleges were consuming 1.2 per cent of the total education budget in the Province of Saskatchewan.\(^{19}\) In 1978, community colleges cost tax payers $50.70 per adult per year in Saskatchewan while a Grade XII education cost between $1200 - $1500 per student per year.\(^{20}\)

The situation remained the same in 1981. The budget of the community colleges had increased to six million dollars in a total education budget of 504 million dollars. The percentage remained at 1.2 per cent in spite of the dramatic increases in programs and student enrollments.\(^{21}\)

Colleges expressed their concerns over the years. In 1976, the Annual College Trustees Conference called for more adequate funding.\(^{22}\) In 1980, the board chairman of Natonum Community College wrote to the then Minister of Continuing Education, Douglas McArthur. Colin Belt indicated that boards had become more concerned with survival and consolidation than with responding to local demands and supporting community activities.\(^{23}\) In December of 1981, the

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\(^{19}\)Edward Tchorzewski, address at the official opening ceremonies at Cumberland Community College, June 11, 1976.


\(^{22}\)Herbert Kindred, "Wrap-Up Speech", delivered to Saskatchewan College Trustees, April 4, 1976, filed under Speeches, Department of Continuing Education.

\(^{23}\)Natonum Community College, a letter written by Colin Belt to Douglas McArthur, March 11, 1980.
Saskatoon Regional Community College Board questioned the priorities of the government, considering that eight million dollars was expended on advertising the Crown Corporations of Saskatchewan. The low priority of adult education was accentuated by the reported three million dollars allotted for education by just one of these Crown Corporations of government, Saskatchewan Telecommunications.24

The unwillingness of the government to respond with increased real levels of funding to either the community colleges or the agencies whose support they needed weakened the colleges in their struggle to uphold the ideal that spawned them. Public support for the ideal was outweighed by the economics of the situation, as imposed by the legislature and exploited by the Department of Continuing Education on behalf of centralization and bureaucratization of the colleges.

The colleges, however, proved incapable of capitalizing on their public support and momentum. The situation at the local community college level even promoted centralization and consolidation. Colleges developed closed systems of governing. Although board meetings were open to the public, this was not promoted by college boards. Many boards felt comforted rather than distressed by the absence of public and staff (other than administration) at their meetings. Some

24 Lewis A. Riederer Interview, June 17, 1982, Regina, Saskatchewan.
community colleges moved increasingly towards restrictions and in-camera sessions. 25 Communities were not made to feel part of college operations. 26 The controlled and structured approach to gaining community input prescribed by some college administrators and boards failed.

Gordon MacMurchy had told the college leadership early on that it must offer education on behalf of rural people and rural values or colleges would find themselves isolated as meaningless institutions in their communities. 27 He had predicted that "the essence of Community Colleges would not be found in the mere delivery of courses but the condensation of these courses into a community development package." 28

Everyone associated with community colleges agreed that the providing of programs as requested and determined by individuals or local committees was basic community development. Another level of community development involved colleges providing education regarding vital local issues, concerns and problems.

When government policy shifted from preserving rural

25 Natonum Community College, Board Minutes, March 12, 1981.

26 Natonum Community College, "Public Report to Natonum Community College Board", December 1, 1982, filed under Board Minutes, Natonum Community College.

27 Gordon MacMurchy, in a speech to College Trustee delegates, Swift Current, Saskatchewan, 1975, filed under Speeches, Department of Continuing Education.

28 Cf. Chapter 3, p. 54.
life to exploiting resources and industrializing the province, the government began to fear its own creation. In 1977, then minister of continuing education, Donald Faris, cautioned college trustees to beware of community development. He stated that it "could easily be a personal bandwagon for the fulfillment of personal ego needs that have no relationship whatsoever to adult education."²⁹

An institution oriented to preserving rural life would need overwhelming community support in what was becoming a hostile environment. The tragedy of the Saskatchewan community colleges was its failure to maintain its original support and take the offensive against government and Department in time to maintain the ideal for which it had been created.

It was not until 1981 that colleges took co-ordinated action on behalf of local autonomy. The colleges submitted a number of recommendations in response to a request from the minister of continuing education for reactions to amendments he planned to propose to the Community Colleges Act.³⁰ They revived the original plan of the advisory committee on community colleges by requesting that local boards be elected by local people. They asked for the deletion of the


³⁰Saskatchewan Community College Trustees Association’s Act and Regulations Committee, a working paper directed to College Boards and Principals, November 5, 1981, Board Minutes, Nantonum Community College.
requirement for Departmental approval of staff duties and contracts. They sought these changes to achieve some semblance of equality in the alleged partnership between the colleges and the Department of Continuing Education.  

They sought to change Departmental dictation to consultation.

The minister's response could have been predicted. The amended act and its updated regulations in 1981 maintained and intensified the power of the Department over community college boards. Cap in hand, the colleges had gone to the minister to tell him that the institution had been gutted and to ask him for his help. They had been refused. They had acted too late and from a position of weakness.

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31 Melvin Curniski Interview, August 31, 1982, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan.

32 Province of Saskatchewan, Community Colleges Amendment Act, Bill 13, 1980 and Minister's Regulations, January 28, 1981.
CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION

Originally, community colleges were to be a mechanism of decentralization intended to maintain a vibrant rural Saskatchewan. Government policy gradually changed, however, to favour resource development and the industrialization of an agrarian society. The community colleges suddenly became institutions out of synchronization with government ambitions. Colleges had to be pacified. The government, therefore, allowed its civil service arm, the Department of Continuing Education, to follow its own tendencies to bureaucratize the colleges and strip them of their independence. Instead of serving local people by helping them to preserve their rural way of life, Saskatchewan's more and more centrally controlled community colleges by 1982 were on the way to becoming instruments for use by outside forces to subvert rural Saskatchewan.

Ten years earlier, the government had described community colleges as introducing a new era in the educational history of Saskatchewan. Rural people were to be involved in the process of determining what they would learn. The learning would be meaningful and readily applicable to their own lives, families, communities and society. Colleges would bring a warm, informal, trusting and caring approach to education. In such an atmosphere, experimentation, innovation and risk taking would become the educational norms.
Management would tolerate ambiguity and error. Indeed, error would be an indicator that people were risking to deal with issues; risking to learn. The community colleges were to operate as an open system where all participants would share in the development and utilization of resources in equal partnership.

The idea of a decentralized, accessible, learner centered system using existing facilities in an effort to enhance the rural way of life appealed widely. It was a popular purpose and could be implemented at a relatively low cost.

The architects of the dream, unfortunately, were not the ones asked to operationalize it. Government entrusted the drafting of the legislation to those who believed in more traditional patterns of education. The act implementing the colleges contained the seeds of centralized control which quickly sprouted when the political environment changed.

The Department of Continuing Education, ostensibly established as a new unit in order to be flexible and supportive of the community college dream, quickly evolved into a traditional bureaucracy. It expanded controls over college operations in the name of co-ordination, accountability and efficiency. Colleges found themselves entangled in administrative chores for the Department that left little time for community-based activities. Standardization and control became the sought after ends of the Department and
required the scuttling of college autonomy. With the destruction of autonomy went the destruction of the Saskatchewan community college dream.

The creation of the colleges was a political act on behalf of a specific goal. When other priorities superseded the original end, indeed conflicted with it, the colleges were in trouble. Even though they did not require a great deal of money, incentive was lacking to provide even that level of funding the colleges needed.

The New Democratic Party, contrary to the claims of the OECD about the blandness of Canadian education, had put significant political commitment into education with its introduction of the community colleges into Saskatchewan. This introduction became a potential political embarrassment when party lines changed. Still, the original dream of a decentralized, community-based, learner-controlled learning system continues to exist in the minds of many people in Saskatchewan.

In the colleges themselves the dream has faded, as government and the central bureaucracy have imposed one task after another on the colleges while diminishing local control. If there has been a plan to redirect the colleges toward becoming a centrally controlled, easily administered, standardized system, such a plan has never been stated policy. Rather, influence has been applied "from the top down" from occasion to occasion. Each issue results in
central administrative action contrary to the original aims. A healthy response to this situation could well be a public review of alternative policies. If centralization is an acceptable policy, it could be officially proclaimed after such a review. If the original community-based and decentralization concept is preferred, such a policy might again become paramount. Until there is once again the political will to support such a system, the community colleges will continue to drift from their original aims. And, indeed, there will be those who seek to use them for goals diametrically opposite to their original intent. As with all educational institutions, the decision as to the ultimate use to which the community colleges are put will be a political decision.
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