Citizen Opinion On Education

by William J. Craig

Education is one of the most important issues facing the people of Minnesota. In a survey of 2,000 adults taken in the spring of 1985, education was mentioned by 23 percent (Table 1) as one of the three most important issues, trailing only taxes (75 percent) and unemployment (32 percent). Given this concern, it is appropriate to report citizen opinions on public education and numerous existing and proposed educational policies. Three broad policy areas are covered: increasing spending, improving equity, and improving accountability.

Prior to this survey, in his January 1985 address to the legislature, Governor Perpich had also called education a priority. He called for increased expenditures and for new policies that would provide what he called “Access to Excellence” in education. Included in these proposals was “open enrollment,” which would allow parents of eleventh and twelfth graders the choice of which public school their sons or daughters would attend. Coupled with this would be the reporting of scores on yearly standardized tests, which would aid parents in selecting schools. By the time of this survey, much of the publicity and debate surrounding these proposals had subsided. The governor’s programmatic proposals had been tabled or modified. Yet the debate seems to have had positive effects on raising concerns about and understanding of educational issues. The 23 percent mentioning education as an important issue, for example, represent a significant increase over the 17 percent who mentioned education one year earlier in a similar survey.

Despite the high concern for education, Minnesotans seem pleased with their public school system (Table 2). Eighty-three percent rated Minnesota public schools
“good” or “excellent” in the survey.
At the same time, many Minnesotans agreed with the reformers. Minnesotans were willing to strongly endorse four policies for improving the school system (Table 3):
1. Provide more state support to poorer districts. Eighty-five percent approved this policy. Such a policy is already included in the state funding guidelines and it appears popular.
2. Provide aid to private schools through tuition tax credits and other programs. Sixty-four percent approve this existing policy.
3. Forego tax cuts with the money going to improve public education. Seventy-eight percent approved such a policy. The 1985 legislature did, in fact, increase funding to elementary and secondary education by 21 percent even while it was cutting the overall state budget by a billion dollars.
4. Require schools to test students on a standardized test and publish the results. Ninety percent approved the testing and 77 percent of those who approved it also favored publishing the scores. No such comprehensive policy now exists.

Other proposed policies were met with a more lukewarm reception or rejected. The governor had proposed open enrollment; this was rejected by over two-thirds of the survey respondents. Subsequently, it was rejected by the 1985 legislature, which did ultimately pass legislation allowing eleventh and twelfth graders to take classes in post-secondary institutions with the state paying expenses. Proposals to increase teacher salaries significantly or restrict the spending of wealthier districts were favored and opposed by roughly equal numbers of people.

Responses to the fourteen questions asked in the survey were broken down by various subgroups to show a distribution of responses according to a number of different variables. In all, twelve variables were examined: age, income, education, religion, occupation, sex, household composition, children in school, residents of the Twin Cities, regions of the state, size of home city, and political affiliation. Some highlights from this more detailed analysis of the survey sample are presented here as they relate to attitudes about public education and opinions on various education policies. In some instances, the survey results are compared with a similar survey conducted in 1984.

Attitudes Toward Public Education
The overwhelming majority of Minnesotans (83 percent) thought that their public schools are good or excellent (Table 2).

This positive response was even higher than the 79 percent rating of the earlier survey in 1984. Nevertheless, education was ranked third, as an important problem facing the citizens of the state (Table 1); 23 percent mentioned education, up 6 percent from the previous year. The problems of schools are not, however, seen as internal problems. When asked what was the main source of the problems encountered by public schools (Table 4), over half said “general problems of society” and only 20 percent placed responsibility within the schools themselves (teachers, administrations, or school boards).

The 83 percent favorable rating of the schools was not uniform throughout the population, though no subgroup fell below a 73 percent rating of good or excellent. Highest ratings came from those with a college or graduate degree, those with children in the public schools, people aged 50 to 59, and those living in northeast or northwest Minnesota; 90 percent or more of all these groups gave good/excellent ratings. Lowest ratings came from the least educated (still 79 percent good/excellent), the poorest (78 percent), those with children in private schools (74 percent), Minneapolis residents (73 percent), and political independents (76 percent). Within these lower ratings, two significant improvements were witnessed compared to 1984: private school parents increased their favorable
Table 1. IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE TWO OR THREE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING PEOPLE IN MINNESOTA TODAY?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Percent of the 1,909 Responding to this Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taxes</td>
<td>1425</td>
<td>74.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>18.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>16.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 21.5 percent mentioned education at least once; 1 percent mentioned education more than once, mentioning different aspects (for example, quality and financing).

Table 2. IN GENERAL, HOW WOULD YOU RATE MINNESOTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS... EXCELLENT, GOOD, FAIR, OR POOR?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>Valid Percent*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>1101</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Valid percent* refers to percents based on those who gave valid responses, that is, those who did not answer "no answer." No answer includes those for whom it was not appropriate to answer, those who refused to answer, and those who had no answer.

Table 3. OPINIONS ON EDUCATIONAL POLICIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percent Favoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase Spending:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Raise teacher salaries</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Forego a tax cut if the money goes to improving public schools</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Equity:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· More state aid to poorer school districts</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Restrict spending of wealthier school districts</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Private school tuition tax credit</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve Accountability:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Annual standardized tests of students' skills</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Publish school averages from these standardized tests</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Open enrollment for 11th and 12th grades in any public school</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Open enrollment for 9th through 12th grades in any public school</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Open enrollment for all grades in any public school</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>· Open enrollment to include non-public schools as well as public schools</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percent of those favoring annual standardized tests.

Table 4. WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MAIN SOURCE OF PROBLEMS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS... STUDENTS, PARENTS, TEACHERS, SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIONS, SCHOOL BOARDS, OR THE GENERAL PROBLEMS OF SOCIETY?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Absolute Number</th>
<th>Valid Percent*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General problems of society</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>51.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School administrations</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School boards</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mix (or other)</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Valid percent* refers to percents based on those who gave valid responses, that is, those who did not answer "no answer." No answer includes those for whom it was not appropriate to answer, those who refused to answer, and those who had no answer.
Opinions on Education Policies

Given the concern for education, it is appropriate to ask citizens their opinions on existing and proposed policies aimed at improving the system. All of the policies presented on the survey dealt with the public school system itself even though most Minnesotans identified the main source of problems as being outside the schools. One set of questions focused on spending more money to improve education. A second set focused on the equity issue; trying to provide equal educational opportunities to all children in the state. A third group looked at making the schools more accountable through statewide testing and open enrollments. Results are shown in Table 3.

- Increase Spending

Minnesotans overwhelmingly favored foregoing a portion of their promised tax cut if the money would go for improving the public schools (78 percent approved). When asked whether they approved a significant increase in teacher salaries, however, citizens were more divided with only 55 percent approving. This figure, however, was a significant 6 percent increase over the approval rate in 1984.

Strongest approval, well above the 78 percent average, for the idea of foregoing a portion of a tax cut and using that money to improve education came from the following groups: those under age 40 (82 percent), those with some college education (82 percent), those earning $30,000-$40,000 (83 percent), single parents (83 percent), those living in the northeast or southeast (83 percent), and strong Democrats (87 percent). Lowest approval came from the elderly (69 percent), those with the least education (69 percent), those in farm-forest occupations (67 percent), those with children in private schools (56 percent), and strong Republicans (62 percent).

Differences by population subgroup were also seen in the question of significantly raising teacher salaries. Average approval was 55 percent, substantially higher approval came from people in their 20s (65 percent), people with higher incomes (63 percent for those over $30,000), people with more education (73 percent for those with a graduate degree), and people who were managers-professionals (69 percent). Those who approved also tended to live in larger cities (64 percent approval for those in cities of 10,000 or more), in the metropolitan area (64 percent approval), and especially St. Paul (72 percent approval). Lowest rates of approval came from people who were the most opposite to those approving: those over age 50 (46 percent approval), those without a high school degree (45 percent), those in farm-forest occupations (25 percent approval), outstate residents (47 percent), and those living in the southwest (42 percent).

- Improve Equity

Minnesota was among the first states attempting to improve equal educational opportunities for children regardless of community resources. The explicit policy of providing more state aid to school districts with less ability to fund their own educational programs began in 1971 and has been called the “Minnesota Miracle.” It has continued to have enormous support from the public (though, in fact, the policy has been significantly modified*). In this survey 85 percent favor such a policy. They were much less certain about limiting the spending of wealthier districts; this policy was favored by only 51 percent. On a different aspect of equity, Minnesotans are willing to support the education of students who are not in the public schools. When asked about supporting private schools through tuition tax credits** and other programs, 64 percent favored the policy. On this policy too, Minnesota has been a leader in sharing tax

*See Minnesota K-12 Education: The Current Debate, The Present Condition (CURA 1985) for a detailed discussion of this policy.

**Technically, the state offers a tax deduction, not a credit. Common usage dictated the use of “tax credit” in the wording of this question.
dolars with private schools and with the children and families in those schools. No state provides a wider range of support.

Only a few subgroups of the population were notably different in their views towards state support of less wealthy school districts. Those favoring this policy substantially above the 85 percent average were: single parents (93 percent) and Democrats (90 percent). A few groups were considerably below the 85 percent average, but still had substantial majorities: those without a high school degree (80 percent), those in crafts and repair (72 percent) or farm-forest occupations (76 percent), those with children in private schools (73 percent), and strong Republicans (69 percent).

Wider variation was seen on the issue of restricting the spending level of wealthier school districts so their programs remain similar to those in poorer school districts. The average was 51 percent approval. Substantially greater support for such a policy came from people over age 60 (65 percent), those with incomes under $10,000 (65 percent), those without high school diploma (72 percent), those in farm-forest occupations (72 percent), outstate residents (58 percent) and residents of the northeast (68 percent), and strong Democrats (62 percent). Opposing this policy most were people in their 30s (41 percent approval), those with incomes over $50,000 (27 percent), those with a college or graduate degree (23 percent), those with no religious affiliations (38 percent), managers-professionals (32 percent), metropolitan residents (43 percent) and particularly Minneapolis residents (40 percent), and Republicans (39 percent).

Of all subgroups of the population, only one fell below majority endorsement of the policy to give aid to private schools: those individuals without a religious affiliation (45 percent agreed with the policy). The average level of agreement was 64 percent. The strongest supporters were Catholics (90 percent) and those with children in private schools (94 percent). Others less supportive of this policy included people with a graduate degree (56 percent) and residents of the northwest and northeast (56 percent).

- Improve Accountability

Minnesotans were presented with two different options for improving accountability. In one set of questions, they said "yes" to policies of standardization tests with published results. In another set, they said "no" to open enrollment. Proponents of these two approaches start with different assumptions about what makes for good schools. Proponents of testing argue that common performance measures are key to knowing whether schools are doing their jobs. Open enrollment proponents argue that diversity is the key to quality education and that each family should be able to choose the kind of education it deems best. Governor Perpich combined these two contrasting approaches in his "Access to Excellence" proposals, taking a competitive market approach where people use all available information (including test results) in making their choice of schools. This approach has been important in the 1980s as policy makers attempt to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of public services.

The public divided their responses on these approaches. They clearly chose the testing approach. Ninety percent of those interviewed favored a requirement that schools annually test students across the state using a standardized test. Seventy-seven percent of those people further favored publishing the results of these tests.

On the other hand, on the question of open enrollment, allowing parents to select the school their children will attend, Minnesotans were overwhelmingly opposed. Over two-thirds (69 percent) were opposed to the proposal on open enrollment for eleventh and twelfth graders; and even if it had been accepted, people further opposed extending open enrollments to ninth and tenth graders (76 percent), all grades in the public schools (82 percent), or all grades in non-public schools (72 percent).

Support for statewide testing was universal. Of all the population subgroups, only one group varied from the 90 percent support by more than 5 percent; 84 percent of those with a graduate degree supported the proposal. Variation was only somewhat wider on the issue of publishing the results, but the lowest rate of support was 70 percent (those living in the northeast). Highest support for publishing the results came from those with advance degrees (90 percent), those with children in private school (84 percent), St. Paul residents (84 percent), and those in their 40s (83 percent).

Similarly, the variation in opposition to all open enrollment proposals was fairly narrow. On the proposal for eleventh and twelfth graders, 69 percent supported and 27 percent opposed the proposal. Strongest opposition came from those in farm-forest occupations (82 percent) and people living in the northwest region (81 percent); strongest support was found among single parents (still 56 percent opposed), residents of Minneapolis (51 percent opposed), and those whose religious affiliation was neither Protestant nor Catholic (57 percent opposed). Expanding open enrollment to ninth and tenth graders, with 76 percent average opposition, was opposed most by those in farm-forest occupations (89 percent) and least by residents of Minneapolis (56 percent). Expanding to all grades in the public schools (82 percent average opposition) was opposed most by those in the $30,000-$40,000 income range (89 percent) and least, again, by residents of Minneapolis (70 percent). Opposition to expanding open enrollments to all grades in non-public schools, 72 percent average opposition, was highest (80 percent) among those in farm-forest occupations and those living in the northwest region; lowest opposition (60 percent) was found among residents of Minneapolis and St. Paul.

In Conclusion

Minnesotans, the 1985 survey shows, are concerned about maintaining the quality of primary and secondary education and they are willing to spend money to improve education, particularly in poorer districts. They are especially concerned about equal access to quality education. In exchange for increased dollars, Minnesotans want the schools to be accountable through published results of standardized tests. They reject open enrollment as a measure to increase accountability or improve quality of education. CURA will ask these questions about education and educational policy again in 1986 to see whether attitudes have shifted.

William J. Craig is the assistant director of CURA. This article is taken from his recent publication 1985 Minnesota Citizen Opinions on Public Education and Educational Policies, William J. Craig and Kumarasiri Samaranayaka (Minneapolis: CURA, 1985). Copies of the complete publication are available from CURA free-of-charge (phone 612/373-7833 or order on the CURA Publications Order Form included in this Reporter).

Analysis of the questions on public education was done by Craig and Samaranayaka from results of a larger telephone survey conducted by the University's Minnesota Center for Social Research in April and May, 1985. With a sample size of 2,000, results will be correct within a range of ± 2 percent. Respondents were selected by random digit dialing, but 72 percent of the 1985 respondents were selected from the people who had participated in a similar survey one year earlier.

The Craig-Samaranayaka publication is the fourth in a series of publications growing out of the Project on the Future of K-12 Public Education in Minnesota, sponsored jointly by CURA and the College of Education at the University of Minnesota.

Photos by Nancy Conroy taken at Tuttle Contemporary School and Marcy Open School in Minneapolis.
Owners of Private Forest Lands in Minnesota

by Karen Harrington

The forest industry is an important part of Minnesota’s economy. Over half of the timber harvests in Minnesota come from land owned by nonindustrial, private landowners, yet until recently we have had no comprehensive information about this group. How many are they? How big are their holdings? What are their goals? What management practices do they follow? It would benefit Minnesota to develop programs that boost the growth of this part of the economy, but it is very difficult to develop such programs without knowing more about the people at whom they would be directed. What kind of extension programs, for example, might interest financially strapped farmers in managing their woodlots and hillside for timber production? What financial incentives might other private, nonindustrial forest landowners need to improve management practices (such as thinning or replanting) of their forest lands? A first step toward the development of such programs seemed to be surveying the owners of private forest lands across the state to discover who they are and what their relationship is with the forest land they own.

In 1982, the North Central Forest Experiment Station (a branch of the United States Forest Service), with assistance from CURA and the University’s Department of Forest Resources, questioned approximately 2,400 private forest owners in Minnesota. The information obtained through this survey* will provide the foundation for designing public and private programs to encourage the development of a larger forest products industry in Minnesota, based on sound forest management principles.

Over five million acres (37 percent) of Minnesota’s commercially-viable forest land is owned by private, nonindustrial landowners who each hold less than 5,000 acres. An additional half million acres is owned in larger parcels, more than 5,000 acres, by private, nonindustrial landholders. Together, these private owners of large and small parcels of forest land contribute to slightly more than a third of the state’s net annual softwood timber harvests and nearly two-thirds of the hardwood harvests (including one-third of the pulpwood, one-half of the sawlogs, and over four-fifths of the fuelwood). The vast majority of the small landowners are individuals, not companies or other organizations.

**Who Are They?**

Over 130,000 individuals and companies can be identified as owning commercially viable forest lands as part of their small (under 5,000 acres) land holdings. In northern Minnesota, these individuals support the paper product and water-board panel industries with their contributions of spruce, fir, pine, and aspen. In the southeast, they send oak and other hardwoods to sawmills and furniture manufacturers. On a statewide basis, their forests are important recreational and aesthetic resources.

A relatively few owners hold most of the forested land: fewer than 20 percent hold over half of the land. Over 60 percent own less than thirty forested acres each; about a third hold less than ten forested acres each.

Individuals, not companies, clubs, or other formal groups, own the vast majority of the forest acreage. Of these individuals, professionals, business executives, and white collar workers together hold about 1.4 million acres; farmers hold 1.1 million acres; and retired persons hold 0.9 million acres (Table 1).

An individual owner is likely to be middle-aged (between the ages of forty-five and sixty-four), have no college education, and earn less than $25,000 per year (Table 2).

Early life backgrounds of the individual owners vary greatly. For example, almost three-fourths of the owners in western and southwestern Minnesota (the Prairie Survey Unit) were raised on farms, but less than half of the owners in northeastern Minnesota (the Aspen-Birch Survey Unit) came from rural agricultural backgrounds.

**Where Are Their Holdings?**

About a third of all owners have land in the northern and central portion of Minnesota, in the Northern Pine Survey Unit (Figure 1). The average size of holdings varies from twenty-five acres in the Prairie Survey Unit to forty-six acres in the Central Hardwood

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*Table 1. OCCUPATIONS AND HOLDINGS OF INDIVIDUAL FOREST OWNERS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Percent of Individual Owners</th>
<th>Acreage Held (in Millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Collar</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled Labor</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Trade</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homemaker</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logger</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.64</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Companies and other formal groups are excluded.

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*Table 2. AGE, EDUCATION, AND INCOME OF INDIVIDUAL FOREST OWNERS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Percent of Owners</th>
<th>Years of School</th>
<th>Percent of Owners</th>
<th>Dollar Amount</th>
<th>Percent of Owners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>under $10,000</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10,000-14,999</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4-6 yrs. college</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>15,000-19,999</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>over 4 yrs. college</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20,000-24,999</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25,000-29,999</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30,000-39,999</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>40,000 and above</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Companies and other formal groups are excluded.

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*The complete study (The Private Forest Landowners of Minnesota—1982 by Eugene M. Carpenter, Mark H. Hansen, and Dennis M. St. John) is available from the North Central Forest Experiment Station in St. Paul. It is their Resource Bulletin-NCS56. Phone 612/642-5207 to obtain a free copy. Additional information about the survey is available from Mark Hansen, North Central Forest Experiment Station, 1992 Folwell Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108, 612/642-5297.*
Survey Unit. About 40 percent of the acreage is a part of an active farm. Most owners have only one parcel of wooded land; less than a quarter report holding two or more non-contiguous tracts.

Most people live within twenty-five miles of their forest land. However, those living at least fifty miles away hold over one million acres of forest. People with land in the northern and northeastern part of the state tend, slightly more than other owners, to live at least fifty miles away. This suggests that the owners may be Twin Citians who own land "up north."

What Do They Want from Their Land?

Large-scale timber production per se does not appear to be a major management concern for most owners. Only 2 percent cite firewood sales or timber product sales as their primary reasons for owning forest land. Sixteen percent own forest lands primarily as a source of firewood or forest products for themselves.

Even though many of the owners say that recreation, aesthetic enjoyment, or a second home site is their most important reason for owning land, most appear to have harvested some of their timber in the past. About a third of the forest owners have been major harvesters (cutting more than thirty cords of firewood or significant amounts of wood for other purposes in a given year); about an equal number have been minor harvesters (Figure 2). Roughly a third of the major harvesters, and two-thirds of the minor, do so to obtain firewood or products for their own use.

Only about a third of the owners (representing slightly less than half the total acreage) definitely plan to harvest within the next ten years. The percentage of owners who never plan to harvest decreases as the size of the parcel held increases. Some of the reasons people gave for not wanting to harvest are: fear of ruining the aesthetic aspects of the property, immature timber, low volume or poor quality timber, and too small a parcel.

Almost all of the landholders said that they, their family, close friends, or the general public use their forest for some type of recreation. About a third cited recreation, second home use, or aesthetic enjoyment as their most important reason for owning the land, and a like number cited those as their second most important reason. A third of the owners formally restrict public use by posting their land.

How Are Their Management Decisions Made?

Only 12 percent of the owners have ever requested forestry assistance. Most requests came from people owning less than fifty acres of land. However, people who owned 100 to 499 acres also held half of the acreage involved in requests. The owners who requested assistance often asked for a forest management plan for their property. Timber sale and valuation assistance were also sought.

Over 80 percent of the assisted owners were involved in timber harvesting. However, major harvesters decided for themselves which trees to cut about half of the time. Foresters helped only about 6 percent of the major harvesters make decisions on what to cut; timber buyers influenced decisions for only 10 percent of the major harvesters.

The potential for public and private organizations to provide timber harvesting assistance appears to be high. Nearly half of the owners (holding about 60 percent of the land) said they would be interested in selling timber harvested by a whole-tree harvesting system. This method harvests only some trees and removes the cut tree tops and limbs from the site along with the harvested tree trunks. Nonresident owners and owners of larger parcels appeared more interested in this method than other forest holders.

Almost half of the forest land owners surveyed did not know where to go for timber management assistance. This may not be surprising since most owners do not hold their land primarily for its timber resource value. The fact that many owners showed interest in a timber management technique (whole-tree harvesting) when it was suggested to them, however, indicates that providing owners with information about their forestry management options could alter their management decisions.

Figure 1. LOCATIONS OF FOREST OWNERS AND THEIR ACREAGE

Note: Acreage and numbers of owners include companies and other formal groups.
Conclusions

Minnesota's nonindustrial, private forest owners comprise a diverse group that controls a significant portion (over a third) of Minnesota's commercially-viable forest lands. Retired persons, farmers, professionals, business executives, and white collar workers own the majority of the forested lands. Owners often cite aesthetic, second home sites, and recreation benefits as their reasons for holding forested lands. Harvest potential is seldom their primary reason for holding land, but they do frequently harvest trees for their own use or for sale. Few currently engage a forester or timber buyer when they decide which trees to harvest, or whether to harvest. Education about forest management options could alter the owners' management decisions.

Karen Harrington is working as an intern with the CURA Reporter. She holds a masters degree in geography from the University of Minnesota and is on the staff of the Metropolitan Council, working in research and long range planning.

Nursing Home Beds In Minnesota:
An Unsung Shortage?

by Ruth Stryker-Gordon

Federal spending for the elderly is second only to spending for national defense. Expenditures for the elderly have risen, over a twenty year period, from $18.9 billion in 1965 to $256 billion in 1985.

The rising costs of care for the elderly are of particular concern in Minnesota. Between 1970 and 1980, the number of Minnesotans over the age of eighty-five grew 56.5 percent, and the number sixty-five to seventy-four years grew 14 percent. On a national scale, the state ranks fourth in the percentage of its elderly who are over age eighty-five, fifth in its overall rate of institutionalization of people over age sixty-five, and seventh in the number of nursing home beds per 1,000 persons over age sixty-five.

The United States and Minnesota governments have both attempted to curb the rising cost of publicly financed health care, particularly the costs associated with the elderly. One way they have addressed the problem is by enacting cost-controlling legislation. Within the last five years, the state legislature has:

- prohibited addition of new Medicaid nursing home beds,
- prohibited addition of new skilled nursing home beds,
- begun requiring pre-admission screening of nursing home applicants who would be eligible for Medicaid within 180 days of initial nursing home care,
- established an alternative care program of home care for elderly persons who might otherwise be admitted to a nursing home.

In addition, the federal government has begun implementing the federal Prospective Payment System, for hospitalized Medicare patients. This system pays a set amount from Medicare for particular illnesses.

The intent of these changes was to slow the growth in costs associated with the elderly, especially the costs associated with nursing home care. Have they also unduly restricted access to such care? This study was a first attempt to answer that question.

It looked at Minnesota's nursing home occupancy rates, the prevalence of nursing home waiting lists, and the length of waiting times as indicators of nursing home demand and availability.

In the spring of 1984 questionnaires (430) were sent to all but thirteen Minnesota nursing homes; 75 percent (321) were returned usable. The responses were representative of all ownership types and geographic locations.

Waiting, and Waiting, and Waiting

Minnesota has nearly 450 nursing homes. Only about a third of the homes, and less than half the beds are under private ownership. The median occupancy rate for Minnesota nursing homes in 1983 was 98 percent; the average, 96 percent. Most nursing home residents enter at the skilled, rather than the intermediate, level of care. The differences between the two levels are many, but a major difference is that intermediate care requires licensed nursing staff for forty hours a week, while skilled care requires licensed nursing staff round the clock and seven days a week.

Nearly three-fourths of the surveyed homes (237) had waiting lists: almost eight out of ten homes with skilled nursing beds had waiting lists. Although waiting times for homes with skilled beds were short in some cases (less than two months for 6 percent of the homes), long waiting times (up to and exceeding two years) were more common. Seventeen percent had waiting times of over two years.

Long waits for both intermediate care and skilled care beds were especially common in the metropolitan area. County by county comparisons were not made except for Ramsey and Hennepin counties where differences in bed availability had been reported. Seventy-five percent of Ramsey County homes had waiting lists, compared to 56 percent of Hennepin County homes. The average number of empty intermediate care and skilled care beds was the same in both counties, but in Hennepin County the median number of empty intermediate care beds was four times higher and the median number of empty skilled care beds was two times higher than in Ramsey County. This translates into longer average waiting times in Ramsey: 6.1 months for a skilled care bed (as opposed to 4.7 months in Hennepin), and 18 months for an intermediate care bed (as opposed to 6 months in Hennepin). Thus the reported differences between the two counties were confirmed by this study.

Many of the homes with waiting lists provide some type of interim services. Over half arrange referrals to community home service agencies. Other services provided

Hmong Bibliography Reprinted

A second printing of the Southeast Asian Refugee Studies Project's popular A Bibliography of the Hmong (Miao) is now available. Compiled by Douglas P. Oiney in 1981 and updated and enlarged for a second edition in 1983, the bibliography comprises eleven subject sections: general works on Southeast Asia; general works on Hmong culture and history in Asia and the United States; works on specific aspects of the Hmong culture such as kinship, religion, and economics; works on Hmong linguistics; works on resettlement issues; works on physical and mental health of the Hmong; articles which have appeared in popular journals and newspapers; Hmong language books; other bibliographies related to the Hmong; films and videotapes about the Hmong; and a listing of introductory readings about the Hmong.

The bibliography is available for $3.00 from CURA (phone 612/373-7833).
are meals on wheels (fifty-seven homes),
home health aid (twenty-seven homes),
homemaker (sixteen homes), telephone re-
assurance (fifty-four homes), and day care
(thirty homes).

Who Gets in When an Opening Occurs?

Generally, residents are entering nursing
homes at older ages than in previous years,
and they usually have multiple, complex
problems. Over half of the homes' new
client admissions now come from hospitals
and require post acute, convalescent, or re-
habiliative care (Table 1).

There is no guarantee that a home with
a waiting list will actually use it as an admis-
sions priority list; 75 percent do use their list,
while the rest may not. About 40 percent of
the people on waiting lists enter when a
home calls them, 24 percent have already
gone to another home, and 11 percent have
died. Twenty-five percent are not yet ready
to be admitted, indicating that roughly 75
percent of the persons on waiting lists are in
need of immediate care.

Homes with waiting lists were analyzed
in more detail to identify what characteris-
tics they had. Nursing homes attached to
hospitals had a greater number of skilled
level beds than all other ownership groups.
Nonprofit homes, particularly church-sponsored homes, were more likely to have wait-
ing lists than privately-owned homes.
Furthermore, homes with associated hous-
ing units were more likely to fill vacancies by
moving people from their associated apart-
ments or by transferring them from a lower
level of care.

Table 1. NEW CLIENT SOURCES FOR NURSING HOMES IN MINNESOTA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Client Source</th>
<th>Percent of Client Admissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person's own home</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another nursing home</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower care level at same nursing home</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusions

Have the cost-controlling measures taken
by state and federal governments created a
shortage of nursing home beds in Minnes-
ota? Comparisons of before and after are
not possible because no previous studies
have been conducted. But this study exam-
ined waiting lists as an indicator of difficulty
in entering a nursing home in Minnesota.
It was found that nearly three-fourths of all
Minnesota nursing homes have waiting
lists, frustrating consumer choice in nursing
home care. The high number of waiting lists
limits both the overall availability of care, as
well as personal choice of specific nursing
homes. This is of particular concern given
that over half of nursing home admissions
come directly from hospitals and these peo-
ple must make an immediate choice of a
home; they do not have the luxury of waiting
for the home of their preference if it is not im-
mediately available. Homes with a large
number of associated apartments rarely
admit outsiders; rather, the empty beds are
filled by residents from the lower levels of
care.

The number of "old old" (persons eighty-
five years or older) will increase four-fold
during the next five decades. On a national
basis, about 25 percent of this group is cur-
cently institutionalized, and this proportion
is unlikely to decrease unless there are
breakthroughs in maladies such as
Alzheimer's disease.

Cost containment is important, but
given the current demand for nursing home
care and the expected increased need for
such care in the future, we must be scrupu-
losous in our efforts to ensure that it does not
cause unwarranted support for mediocre
homes, encourage lower standards for
Medicaid clients, or cause the demise of
quality homes. Additional research is
needed to understand better the ramifica-
tions of cost-controlling policies and legisla-
tion, and the nature of elderly care needs.

Resident Mina Kelsven and volunteer Bernyce Anderson share a bran muffin snack
during a break in the nutrition lecture at Martin Luther Manor, a nursing home in
Bloomington.
What Needs to be Done?

Although this study provided useful insights, additional work should be undertaken to understand more fully the effects of the recent cost-controlling policies and legislation, and the nature of the demand for nursing home beds. The following work would build upon the base established by the current study of existing conditions:

- Further study of variables influencing the different rates of institutionalization among states to identify more appropriate indicators as a basis for comparing states.
- Continued monitoring of the health needs of nursing home residents by the Minnesota Department of Health to determine changes in clientele and to identify changing requirements for appropriate care.
- Longitudinal study of nursing home residents to identify variables distinguishing those who are discharged and those who remain in a home until death.
- Study of residents who change nursing homes to determine the reasons for transfers.
- Monitoring of area and county needs by health systems agencies to determine bed needs and level of care needs throughout the state.

Minnesota's provisions for the elderly will be better managed if certain areas of research are undertaken as soon as possible. For instance, non-governmental financing mechanisms (such as long-term care insurance for pre-retirees and retirees, and community self-insuring systems) need exploration. Improvement and maintenance of the health and functioning of the elderly is also a key research area. This topic encompasses improved education of health professionals, research into Alzheimer's disease and other major causes of catastrophic illness in the elderly, greater use of nurse practitioners, and prevention and/or retardation of deterioration through exercise, appropriate drug use, and other measures.

We are a nation of contradictions. We insist upon intervening in death, but cannot afford to care for the lives, often tragic, that we save. We insist on humane standards of care for those with minimal quality to their lives, but find it difficult to finance those standards. Minnesotans would do well to examine the policy implications implicit in this dilemma.

Ruth Styker-Gordon is an associate professor in the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota and assistant coordinator of the Center for Long Term Care Administration in the Division of Hospital and Health Care Administration. She has written many articles and books in the areas of nursing and nursing home care. The study reported here was supported in part by a grant from the All-University Council on Aging at the University.

Photos by Robert Friedman
1985 CURA Publications and Order Form

BUSINESS, INDUSTRY, AND EMPLOYMENT

☐ Community-Based Economic Development in Minnesota: An Update. Thomas Lussenhop. 1985. CURA 85-1. 27 pp. OUT OF PRINT. Photocopy available for $2.70.


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"The Baby Boomers are Coming Home," John Fraser Hart. pp. 7-10.

"Dispelling Over-Thereeness," Kathryn Jones. pp. 11-12.


"New Jobs From Community-Based Economic Development," Thomas Lussenhop and Candace Campbell. pp. 7-11.


"New Firms in Minnesota: Explorations in Economic Change," Paul D. Reynolds and Steven West. pp. 1-5.


"What is the Population of St. Cloud?" John Fraser Hart. pp. 6-9.


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CURA-Related Publications

CURA’s assistant director, Will Craig, gave the keynote address at the thirteenth annual conference of the Australasian Urban and Regional Information Systems Association in Adelaide, Australia at the end of November 1985. Copies of his presentation “The Minnesota Land Management Information System Ten Years Later” are available from CURA.

Rebecca Smith, a research assistant with CURA while she was completing her Ph.D. in geography at the University of Minnesota, has published “Activism and Social Status as Determinants of Neighborhood Identity,” in Professional Geographer 37 (4), 1985, pp. 421-432. CURA provided support for the neighborhood survey she conducted and writes about in this article. Smith is an assistant professor of geography at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.


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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
Financing Education Beyond High School: Is the Minnesota Experiment Working?

by James C. Hearn

In the early 1980s, the state of Minnesota initiated an experiment in educational financing. It began to raise tuition levels in state postsecondary education institutions while simultaneously raising student aid funding for those students with proven financial need. From the start, this policy experiment was criticized by some observers on the grounds that lower-income youth would be discouraged from enrolling by the substantially higher tuition levels planned. With support from one of the first CURA interactive faculty research grants, my colleagues and I investigated the extent to which the fears of the policy's critics have been realized in the years since the policy began.

The Old Policy of Financing

For many years, Minnesota subsidized student attendance in its public colleges and vocational-technical schools by maintaining tuition at levels well below the actual state costs for providing a postsecondary
education. Although this policy resembled that of most other states, some analysts believed it raised serious problems of equity and efficiency. The policy subsidized all students, regardless of income or wealth, while state tax systems were drawing funds from people at all income levels in a somewhat regressive fashion. Youth from lower-income backgrounds were attending colleges and vo-tech schools at rates significantly lower than other youth, however. This meant that not only was the state money having little effect on the attendance of many that the state wished to support, but the money was also coming disproportionately from the portion of the population least likely to take advantage of it. This observation led Minnesota to adopt subsidies much more closely tied to the individual financial needs of postsecondary students (targeted subsidization).

The New Policy

Between 1980 and 1986, state tuition rates rose to their current level of about one-third of the educational costs per student. While this level still involves a substantial "blanket subsidy" of students’ attendance, regardless of their income levels, it is less costly to the state than previous approaches and provides additional support for the targeting of state funds to students who are in greatest need of financial assistance.

What We Asked About the New Policy

Our study examined the effects of this new policy on postsecondary attendance in the state. Specifically, we were interested in several questions relating to students from lower-income backgrounds: Have their expectations of attending school after high school decreased? Have their attendance rates in colleges and vo-tech schools decreased? Have they begun to avoid higher-cost schools? Have their financial aid needs been adequately met?

To address these questions, we relied on several sources of data. First, we used 1978-79, 1980-81, and 1982-83 survey data from the Minnesota Post-High School Planning Program (PSPP). The PSPP data are gathered yearly from most of the high school juniors in the state by Minnesota’s Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), an agency of the state government. These data contain students’ answers to a wide variety of questions on their backgrounds, their educational experiences, and their plans for the future. Each year, HECB supplements this data base with additional data on the students’ high school rank and tested ability scores. Juniors in the three PSPP survey years we targeted became the high school classes of 1980, 1982, and 1984, respectively.

A second source of data for the study was a special survey we conducted of PSPP respondents from the three graduating classes. This special survey examined the youths’ post-high school behaviors and attitudes. Data from this survey were merged with the same individuals’ data from the PSPP surveys.

A final source of data related to state financial aid “packages,” the combination of grants, loans, and work-study jobs provided to postsecondary students attending various schools across the state. Financial aid data for 1980-81, 1982-83, and 1984-85 were analyzed. On the basis of these data sources, we report here on some of the answers we found to our questions regarding Minnesota students from lower-income backgrounds.

What We Found

- Have lower-income students’ expectations of attending school after high school decreased?

The data point to no as the answer to this question. The results of our analysis suggest that the relationship between high school juniors’ educational expectations and their parents’ income and education levels has not changed significantly over the years since the new policy began. In fact, the statistical procedures we employed in assessing the influences of various factors on educational plans and expectations, revealed that the role of parents’ financial circumstances in shaping
youths' college expectations not only continued to be negligible over the years we examined but may even have declined slightly. Apparently, far more critical in the process are such factors as basic academic aptitude and high school grades.

A further encouraging note is found in Minnesota juniors' reported levels of educational expectations: they rose somewhat over the period we studied. Figure 1 shows some of our data on this issue. The proportion of students expecting to earn some postsecondary degree or certificate rose from 86 percent in 1978-79 to 91 percent in 1982-83, and the proportion expecting to earn at least a two-year college degree rose from 54 percent in 1978-79 to 61 percent in 1982-83. These gains in educational expectations were paralleled by a rise from 73 percent to 76 percent in the proportion of juniors reporting they planned to attend a postsecondary institution within a year of high school graduation.

- **Have lower-income students' attendance rates in colleges and vo-tech schools decreased?**

As before, the data point to no as the answer. The relationship between high school juniors' postsecondary attendance and their parents' income and education levels has not changed significantly over the years since the new policy began. It appears that the influence of financial background on attendance was minimal throughout the study period. Contrary to the fears of the subsidization policy's critics, there was no sign of an increasing role for financial factors as tuition rose rapidly in Minnesota's public postsecondary education system. As in previous years, the primary influences on school attendance beyond high school continued to be factors relating to student ability and achievement.

One way to look at the issue of attendance is to assess whether those juniors who planned to attend a postsecondary institution soon after high school graduation actually went on to do so. Figure 2 provides actual overall rates of postsecondary attendance among our three cohorts of former high school juniors; these rates stayed in the mid-80 percent range for the entire period of study.

More to the point of this analysis, however, are the breakdowns of these rate data for two groups: those who had planned to attend a postsecondary school soon after high school graduation, and those who had not. Opponents of targeted subsidization often argue that the hopeful aspirations and plans of students will be thwarted by increasing tuition rates. The data of Figure 2 suggest otherwise. Among those originally planning attendance soon after graduation, the actual subsequent rate of attendance stayed in the 85 to 90 percent range over the period of study. There was no sign that students' plans were going unfulfilled to any new degree. In fact, interestingly, attendance rates among those not originally planning to attend school after high school graduation actually rose somewhat over the period.

- **Have lower-income students begun to avoid higher-cost schools?**

The three groups of college attenders in our sample differed very little in their institutional choices. Rates of attendance at state-supported institutions of all kinds, as well as private institutions of all kinds, were essentially stable over the period studied. We found no evidence that lower-income students were avoiding higher-cost schools as tuition rose and state subsidies became more targeted. Therefore, the answer to this question must be no.

When the many possible influences on students' choice of schools were all considered simultaneously in our statistical models, financial factors emerged as a significant force in each of the cohorts, but financial factors remained relatively unimportant compared to students' education-related characteristics. It should be noted that financial factors did play a more important role in choice of schools than they did in students' educational expectations, plans, and attendance rates. This finding, however, is consistent with many other studies of the issue, and should not detract from the overall picture of limited and stable financial influence on student's choices of schools beyond high school.
• Have lower-income students’ financial aid packages adequately offset rising postsecondary costs?

Our findings on this question, unlike our findings for the previous questions, did indeed reflect dramatic changes over the period of the study. For postsecondary students who were dependent on their parents or guardians for financial support, the adequacy of aid packages (the total of federal and state grant aid) declined somewhat between 1980-81 and 1982-83. This decline was to some extent ameliorated in 1984-85, as new state policies worked to offset increasing education costs (Figure 3). For students who were not dependent on their parents or guardians, however, the adequacy of aid packages continued to decline over the four-year period we examined. Therefore, dependent students neither gained nor lost much overall, while independent students did lose, on the whole. Deterioration in aid packages for independent students seems to stem from both federal aid cutbacks and changing state grant policies.

Is the Experiment Working?

The study has significant policy implications. Two stand out as particularly important. First, academic factors such as student ability and achievement have continued to remain the primary forces influencing Minnesota students’ postsecondary education expectations, plans, access, and destinations. Financial factors are clearly less influential than academic factors. Even in the rapidly changing environment of postsecondary education finance, there is no evidence that monetary concerns are becoming a more critical influence on student attitudes and behaviors. Second, however, it should be stressed that there are trouble spots in the system. The recent cuts in federal financial aid have been felt by many students in the state. Unfortunately, rises in state aid levels have not fully offset these cuts. For independent students, in particular, educational opportunities may be threatened by continuation of these developing financial pressures. Our analysis found, as of 1984-85, no evidence of behavioral changes among Minnesota’s financially stressed students. Future replications might tell a different story.

**Figure 3.** GRANT AID (COMBINED STATE AWARD AND FEDERAL PELL GRANT) AS A PERCENT OF PARENTAL OR INDEPENDENT STUDENT CONTRIBUTION*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOR DEPENDENT STUDENTS</th>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Parental contribution is:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
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<td>■</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
<td>$1400-$2700</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>$2700 and Up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOR INDEPENDENT STUDENTS</th>
<th>Key</th>
<th>Student contribution is:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>●</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□</td>
<td>$1400-$2700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▲</td>
<td>$2700 and Up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Parental contribution is the amount a family is estimated to be able to contribute to the students’ educational and living expenses in college. It is determined by need analysis formulas. Lower income students tend to fall into the $0 and $0-$700 contribution categories.
James C. Hearn is an associate professor in the Higher Education Program of the Department of Educational Policy and Administration in the University's College of Education. His primary research interests are higher education policy and organization. This article highlights some of the findings of a study he recently completed with Hideki Sano and Susan Uhrn, both doctoral students in education. The complete findings of their large and rather complex study have also been published by CURA. Copies of the complete study (Targeted Subsidization of Postsecondary Education Enrollment in Minnesota: A Policy Evaluation, CURA 85-9) are available free-of-charge from CURA.

This study was supported by an interactive research grant from CURA and the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, University of Minnesota.

Interactive research grants have been created by CURA and Academic Affairs to encourage University faculty to carry out research projects that involve significant issues of public policy for the state and that include interaction with community groups, agencies, or organizations in Minnesota. These grants are available to regular faculty members at the University of Minnesota and are awarded annually on a competitive basis.

Faculty members interested in applying for an interactive research grant should contact Thomas M. Scott, Director of CURA, or John Wallace, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Photos courtesy of Student Support Services, Publications Center, University of Minnesota.
A Lost Lake Reconsidered

by Hans Olaf Pfannkuch

The economics and politics of the situation in Columbia Park may be more critical, in the long run, than the hydrology and geology of the proposed lake site. Whether or not this lost lake will be restored is up to the community and the various public agencies involved to decide. What the University is able to offer, through Pfannkuch’s study, is some expert knowledge on the feasibility of the project and, if a second phase of the feasibility study is carried out as recommended, an idea of what the cost of restoring this lake would be and how it could be done.

For readers who are interested in more detail about the Lake Sandy project, a copy of Pfannkuch’s complete study is available in the CURA library. Phone Peggy Wolfe (625-1551) to arrange for a time to see it.

At the turn of this century a small lake, Lake Sandy, was situated in Columbia Park in northeast Minneapolis. Exact information about the lake’s parameters, such as depth and volume, is unavailable for the time of its existence. Lake Sandy ceased to exist in the early part of the century, certainly by 1919, for a number of not-well-documented reasons. Subsequently the area of the former lake has been a wetland, off and on, and more recently it has been graded, drained and maintained as part of a municipal golf course.

Ever since the demise of Lake Sandy, deliberation about its restoration has been strong. In the past few years the “Lake Sandy Restoration Committee” and the Northeast Planning Council with various citizen advisory committees have been successful in regenerating interest and in initiating feasibility studies to rehabilitate the lake.

Lake Sandy as it appeared on a U.S. Geological Survey Map (surveyed in 1899 and published in 1916)
Could Lake Sandy be restored? This study investigates the hydrologic feasibility of reconstituting the lake in what is left of the old lake basin. It does not address the limnologic or economic feasibility of a newly restored lake.

Disappearance of the Lake

Several theories have been advanced about the drying up of Lake Sandy. These include drainage, change and diversion of surface runoff due to urbanization, lake bed destruction, and infilling.

A small collection of documents pertaining to Columbia Park and Sandy Lake has been compiled by the Minneapolis Board of Parks and Recreation.* The impression one gets from these excerpts is that park officials in the late nineteenth century were mainly interested in draining the lake and installing athletic fields or enlarging the golf course, which was considered more beneficial than a shallow lake. Soon after acquisition of Columbia Park, drain tiles were laid (in 1893) and connections to existing sewer systems were sought to accelerate drainage. This is partly documented by purchase orders for drain tile and its emplacement (1893-94) and different attempts to connect the park to the existing or a new sewer line (the 31st Street sewer).

As early as 1914-15 problems of athletic field use are connected with drainage of "the meadow" (no lake then). In 1918 the park drainage system was connected with the Soo Line drainage system and the meadow was considered dry enough for athletic activities. Not until 1925 are problems of wetness mentioned again in the park board’s annual reports. Then, the problem of surface water disposal reappears.

From 1928 on, citizens requested the regeneration of Lake Sandy or the installation of swimming facilities. The meadow was plowed and seeded in 1937 and fairsways installed in 1940.

Perusal of old maps or plates showing Sandy Lake has resulted in Figure 1. The size of the lake as recorded in eight documents is plotted by year. The oldest document is a map by the Surveyor General’s Office in which an unnamed lake is situated between the east half of section 2 and the west half of section 1 (T29, R24). It is assumed that it depicts Sandy Lake but is somewhat inaccurate with respect to its location. Later maps correctly show it entirely located in section 2. One document (1892) seems to diverge from the rest. Measurements from reliable topographic surveys around this time contradict the forty acres reported by Wirth and point to the existence of a much larger lake area during this period. If there had been a problem of distinguishing between marshy areas and open lake this would surely have been indicated, at least on the U.S. Geological Survey’s topographic map of 1889.

The lake area seems to have declined slowly between 1870 and 1900, about five acres per decade. This could be due to changes in the natural runoff system supporting the lake as urbanization progressed. Such changes indicate that the lake in its quasi-natural state was dependent on surface runoff. The second portion of the graph, 1900 to 1920, marks a much more rapid decline in lake area, about forty-five acres per decade. This may coincide with the intensified efforts to artificially drain the lake and surrounding area.

No documentation that the lake level had been filled in by the dredgings of Lake of the Isles could be found. Some filling obviously was carried out at the southeastern end of the lake to increase the switch yard of the Soo Railroad Line. Other filling occurred during the construction of St. Anthony Parkway, the construction of the golf course, and in additional, small unspecified locations in the park. The latter concerned about 2,000 cubic yards at most, a tiny fraction of the entire lake volume. The main reason for the disappearance of the lake must have been, therefore, drainage and modification of surface runoff patterns.

Is Restoration Feasible?

Prospects for restoration depend on a number of factors. The geologic situation, the configurations of the earth and the kind of materials in the earth, determines how suit-

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* "Columbia Sandy Lake," not dated, 45 pages.
able a site is for a lake. The hydrologic situation, how much water is available under local climatic conditions, determines whether or not a lake will be created and remain as a lake. And morphometric considerations, the lake’s surface area, depth, and volume, determine how the lake will behave from year to year in relation to its environment.

- **The Geologic Situation**

Bedrock and looser, surficial deposits form the container for lake basins. The hydrological characteristics of these materials determine the stability of a lake.

Bedrock geologic maps of the Lake Sandy area indicate a buried bedrock valley similar to that undergirding the Cedar-Isles-Calhoun-Harriet lake system. Surficial deposits are basically glacial drift to a depth of 100 to 200 feet. They consist of sandy till, sandy materials, clay, and organics. The geology of Columbia Park favors the creation of lake and wetlands.

Groundwater seepage is most probably into the Lake Sandy basin. Early reports and oral records speak of springs in the lake basin. It is, however, very difficult to judge the accuracy of those accounts. More definite assessment of groundwater flow needs to be made. To do this, test wells would need to be drilled to the water table. Information about seepage and outseepage would then be available to replace the assumptions made in this report.

- **The Hydrologic Situation**

Whether a depression in the earth, even with a low permeability bottom, will actually become and remain a lake depends largely on climatic conditions and the net water balance. The elements of the hydrologic cycle which constitute this balance are precipitation, evapotranspiration, and runoff.

Precipitation data recorded at the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport were analyzed. The normal rainfall, over a thirty-year period, is approximately 27 inches. Rainfall can vary significantly from location to location. This report was based on the assumption that the situation in Columbia Park would be similar to that at the airport. A series of measurements at the Lake Sandy site is recommended.

Evapotranspiration is the transformation of water into vapor. It causes a direct loss of water from lakes. Evaporation takes place directly from open water surfaces, whereas transpiration is mediated by plants. Both, however, affect lake levels and are dependent on climatic conditions. Using mean monthly temperatures, an annual heat index, latitude, and available sunshine hours, evapotranspiration can be estimated. Over a thirty-year period annual evapotranspiration is about 25.3 inches in this region.

Precipitation and evapotranspiration are, therefore, more or less balanced in the Lake Sandy area. For different years, however, there would be moisture deficits and surpluses. The thirty-year norms are a good basis for long-term planning.

Runoff is the portion of precipitation that is available for surface runoff and collection or for subsurface movement of water. The total amount of runoff generated from a watershed depends on the amount of precipitation, the area of the watershed, and other parameters such as evapotranspiration. A map of contributing watershed areas in Columbia Park was prepared, but the situation is complex because much of the runoff goes into storm sewers. To obtain information about runoff and the efficiency of the artificial drainage system a series of controlled seepage experiments needs to be performed.

- **Morphometric Considerations**

Besides considering a new lake in its general hydrogeologic environment, it is important to establish lake morphometric characteristics that will give some indication about the lake’s hydrology and expected behavior under different climatic conditions. These will also influence the limnologic behavior of the lake system.

Lake surface area, depth, and volume are the fundamental parameters. Figure 2 shows the topographic contour lines of the old lake basin. The construction of St. Anthony Parkway has split the basin in two. Assuming that the basin can be filled, each one of these contours would indicate a lake level stage with an associated lake surface area. The cumulative lake volume was calculated for the basin north of St. Anthony Parkway and for the basin south of it. Mean lake depth would be eight feet in the north basin and six feet in the south basin, if they were filled to the 840 foot contour line. Any higher filling would cause flooding and damage to the parkway. Both basins are relatively shallow, approximately the same mean depth as Lake of the Isles.

Calculations were made of the ease or difficulty of keeping the lake level roughly constant. These were based on the thirty-years normal climatic conditions and on specific dry and wet years. Under the assumed conditions of groundwater seepage, the small lake basin south of St. Anthony Parkway could easily be filled and maintained with runoff from its own watershed and collected runoff from the golf course which is currently drained and pumped into the 31st Street sewer line on a regular basis. This would produce a small lake of roughly six acres.*

*Based on filling the lake to the 838 foot contour line.
The larger basin, north of the parkway, would also sustain a lake once the lake basin was filled. Here the lake would be relatively shallow, its average depth about 6.6 feet, and its area roughly forty acres. Further investigation is needed to determine the actual groundwater flow conditions and the degree of artificial drainage in the old lake bed. Data from such a study would clarify whether the lake level would need to be maintained by the addition of small amounts of water over time or by the subtraction of small amounts of water. Water could be added from the Prairie du Chien-Jordan aquifer which could be tapped with a well, or surface water could be pumped off if larger pumping equipment were used than is now available in the park.

Conclusions
Is it physically and hydrologically possible to restore Lake Sandy? Yes. But this answer is based partly on the assumptions about natural conditions. A second phase of the lake restoration study is needed to investigate the actual groundwater flow conditions and the degree of artificial drainage in the old lake bed. During this phase the economics of the project need to be examined in a more detailed fashion. Besides the physical, hydrologic, and limnologic feasibility, examination of sociological, recreational, and political tradeoffs must be carried out by appropriate government agencies. And the cost of the project must be weighed against the benefits.

Hans Olaf Pfannkuch is a professor of geology and geophysics, specializing in groundwater geology and hydrology. His main research interests are studying groundwater pollution problems in shallow aquifers, especially those created by oil and hydrocarbon spills, and the detailed analysis of lake watershed hydrologic balances with emphasis on groundwater-lake interaction. Pfannkuch and his students have worked with the Minneapolis Park Board on the Minneapolis chain of lakes, with the city of Maple Grove on the feasibility of maintaining lakes in gravel mining areas, and on a long-term cooperative study with the U.S. Geological Survey on an experimental lake in central Minnesota.

Student Papers in the Public Administration Library

Research papers prepared by masters degree candidates in the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs are housed in the Public Administration Library after they have been approved by the institute’s faculty. Because many of these papers are of interest to our readers, we periodically list recently acquired papers (Plan B papers, as they are called). The Public Administration Library is located in room 50, Humphrey Center, West Bank Campus of the University of Minnesota (612/625-3038). The faculty advisor for each study is indicated at the end of the entry.

Blewett, Linn A. An analysis: Older Americans Act Title IIIC: senior nutrition program. 1985. 70 pp. + appendices. Eustis and Patten.


Down To The Bone:
Community-Based Facilities in a Time of Retrenchment

by Esther Wattenberg

The fiscal crisis that Minnesota faced in 1981 and 1982, a combination of a budget crunch resulting from cuts mandated in the federal Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1981 and the state’s recession, may be repeated in 1986. That period of retrenchment offered a survival test for a new way of delivering social services—services provided through community-based facilities. Did retrenchment decisions endanger this new network of service providers? Did shrinking public dollars affect the contracts that support these private programs and the services that they offer to various vulnerable populations within the state? This study, initiated in 1982 and recently updated, attempted to capture what impacts the fiscal crunch of 1981-82 had on community-based facilities in Hennepin and Ramsey counties. The lessons learned from this earlier period may be of use as federal, state, and county budgets tighten once again in 1986.

Community-Based What?

Think of the social service delivery system as a structure having three tiers. At the bottom is the largest, the public social service tier. Administered at the county level and supervised by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, it is supported by a variety of funding sources which combine to form a block grant. These include federal Title XX Social Security Act dollars, state funding from appropriations to the Community Social Services Act, and local support from county tax dollars.

The top tier consists of traditional nonprofit private agencies. These are supported primarily by a mix of United Way, sectarian, and public dollars. The public dollars come via contracts in a mechanism known as a "purchase-of-service agreement."

Sandwiched between these two layers is the third tier. Here we find the community-based facilities, a recent addition to the social service delivery system. Developed to serve special-needs populations, they are supported chiefly by purchase-of-service contracts paid for by public dollars.*

How the Third Tier Evolved

Community-based facilities had their origins in two movements that began during the late 1960s and early 1970s. One was a surge toward so-called "alternative" agencies, which began with demonstration projects that were part of the War on Poverty. It was hoped that these would prod existing social service agencies and bureaucracies into responding more sensitively and effectively to the needs of poverty populations and other underserved groups.

The other movement was known as the "deinstitutionalization" effort. Also funded by public dollars, it was designed to create locally-based day programs and residential facilities nested in "the community" to provide for a variety of vulnerable groups that had previously been cared for in large state institutions.

These two initiatives shared some common characteristics. Their facilities were small in size and locally controlled. They sprang up in informal neighborhood settings—in storefronts, rehabilitated vintage houses, and church basements. Their staffing patterns reflected the paraprofessional movement that simultaneously grew out of the 1960s.

This period also witnessed several new "inventions": hot lines, neighborhood health clinics, runaway houses, feminist agencies, rape crisis centers, gay and lesbian services, group homes, and halfway houses.

The ideology was clear, at least in the beginning. These agencies and services would compete directly with old-line agencies, but they would serve their constituencies in a purposefully informal and flexible way. Moreover, they would shake up the traditional institutions which, as was asserted in the rationale for the War on Poverty, were suffering from hardening of their aging arteries.

They operated in ways that were distinctly different from the traditional agencies. Community-based facilities set out to bridge the gulf between workers and clients. Staff members were encouraged to speak, dress, and behave in a manner that would put people at ease. Some—especially in agencies dealing with drug and alcohol abuse—were (and still are) hired because of their personal experience with...
the condition that was to be treated; in fact, this was often considered the most important qualification an individual could bring to the job.

Such agencies also stressed the immediate availability of services, eliminating such bureaucratic barriers as waiting lists and rigid interpretations of eligibility requirements. Drop-in centers, weekend and evening clinics, and twenty-four hour crisis response were characteristic.

Extensive outreach further reflected their distinctive styles of operation. Bringing services "to the people"—in neighborhood settings, parks, and on street corners—was not uncommon.

Moreover, these agencies had a strong advocacy presence for their client groups; they stressed self-help. Support groups were formed to address specific needs and issues; meetings were held at the facilities themselves or elsewhere within their communities, with staff members serving as leaders or facilitators.

Becoming Part of the System

In time, community-based agencies and enterprises become permanent fixtures in the system, profoundly affecting the way in which many social services were delivered. Eventually counties began purchasing their services.

From the counties' point of view, it was assumed that this arrangement would give counties a degree of versatility and flexibility otherwise unavailable within their own bureaucratic environment. In particular, it was believed that market demands could best be met, and budget variations best adjusted to, if counties contracted with community-based providers on a new basis. They would then be able to buy the services they wanted when they wanted them, and either renew or not renew their contracts as each new fiscal year rolled around.

Community-based facilities were perceived from the outset as independent and free from personnel and program restrictions of large, formal, complex organizations. Administered by appointed or self-selected directors and loosely governed by advisory committees or boards, they typically operated with a great deal of autonomy.

But, from the facilities' point of view, this freedom was not won cheaply; nor was it absolute. Even in the beginning, funding was a problem. A constant search for dollars among federal, state, and local governments, as well as private sources, characterized this third tier. Increasingly, the search shifted in the direction of annual purchase-of-service contracts with county agencies, and presently, community-based facilities became almost totally dependent on these contracts. Significantly, the purchase-of-service agreements came with strings attached. First, the unfettered style of operation was curbed by licensing requirements and guidelines that were backed by detailed rules and regulations. Secondly, the reliance on county dollars meant that these programs were accountable to the counties, although often in vague and unsystematic ways.

In short, community-based facilities became, to a large extent, fiscal creatures of the bureaucracies. The search for funding was still a top priority because contracts were of brief duration and subject to the vagaries of county budgets. Staff members were forced to devote large portions of their energy to administering current contracts and soliciting new ones.

Perhaps reflecting this fiscal uncertainty, hiring tended to be confined to entry-level positions. These were usually paraprofessional in nature, low-paying, and unstable. Employees were given few opportunities for advancement. As a result, turnover was (and remains) high.

Despite these and other problems, community-based facilities performed (and continue to perform) certain essential functions. For example, they offer a variety of social services focused on improving the capacity of vulnerable populations to live in the world. In many cases, day treatment, out-of-home treatment, and neighborhood facilities take the place of institutionalization. Not only has this shifted some of the burden from state and county agencies; it also reflects a major change in thinking about how to care for these populations.

"Normalization" has become the core concept and community-based facilities, the vehicle.

Thus the agencies that began as experiments in the 1960s and 1970s have become integral parts of the social services system. People count on them and the services they provide. Counties count on them and the services they offer for sale. The new tier they occupy has become as necessary to the overall structure of social services as the old-line public and nonprofit tiers.

What Difference Does a Budget Crunch Make?

Many expected the 1981-82 cuts in federal, state, and county budgets to jeopardize the stability of community-based facilities. This study examines what the effects were of budget reductions, how budget cuts were absorbed, and what programmatic changes were attempted as facilities adapted to the fiscal exigencies.

The study focused on three levels of analysis. One was a survey of sixty-five community-based facilities: neighborhood health centers, chemical dependency facilities, adolescent group homes and treatment centers, and facilities for the developmentally disabled and the chronically mentally ill. Interviews with facility directors were conducted primarily by undergraduate students in a community development class at the University of Minnesota's School of Social Work. The second level was an examination of county budget allocations for 1981 through 1985. Interviews with state and county administrators amplified both the policies and procedures that were followed in responding to the new
fiscal circumstances. And finally, in a third level of analysis, two vulnerable populations were examined in detail as case studies of what actually happened in response to the budget cuts. The study was limited to community-based facilities in Hennepin and Ramsey counties. Highlights from the first and third levels of analysis will be presented here. Readers interested in more details are referred to the full report.

Changes in the Community-Based Facilities

The interviews with directors of community-based facilities focused on learning how a sampling of facilities had been affected by the 1981-82 budget cuts. Sixty-five of the seventy-three facilities identified in Hennepin and Ramsey counties provided useful data. Here it is important to note that at the time of the interviews, spring of 1982, intense anxiety pervaded the environment of community-based facilities. It was a time of anticipated budget slashing and uncertainty, with little hard information at hand. However, there was a general perception that counties would balance their budgets “on the backs” of community-based programs and that program directors would have a minimal role as consultants in solving the problems of how retrenchment should occur. These directors told us over and over again that community-based facilities operate at a margin, and a sudden withdrawal of funding would bring them “down to the bone” and perhaps to extinction.

At the time that the budget cuts came, a drop in referrals was already expected from two other sources. First, a demographic shift was occurring. The number of fourteen to sixteen year olds, a prime constituency for community-based facilities, was falling dramatically. Second, a philosophic change was occurring in that there was a statewide effort to reduce out-of-home care for all constituencies.

How did the directors we interviewed plan to absorb the budget crunch? Forty-five percent planned to reduce and 11 percent to eliminate staff training—a significant action since the interaction between staff, frequently untrained, and client is intimate but not always supervised. Seventy-seven percent intended to increase use of volunteers, although a substantial number of directors recounted the limitations that volunteers would have when working with seriously dysfunctional client groups. Other sources of funding were being considered by all facilities: fund drives, foundations, fees-for-service, and United Way. Eliminating services was viewed as a viable option by half of the directors. Eliminating staff was mentioned by 60 percent and freezing salaries by 35 percent.

How were these budget cuts going to affect clients? Seventy percent of the directors reported that clients were not being referred unless they were in a crisis situation. The use of community-based facilities as a preventive measure to offset more serious problems down the road was virtually eliminated. A significant proportion of the directors also indicated that their dwindling staffs were spending more time on increased requirements for evaluation and reporting and less time on direct service to clients. Many noted that the tightened eligibility requirements were excluding the “working poor” from access to community-based facilities. These people, unlikely to be covered by health insurance, had incomes that were often just above the level that would make them eligible for services paid for by the county. It appeared at the time of these interviews that a return to institutionalization in state hospitals was an inevitable outcome for many family members of this marginal group. Transportation, utilities, housing, fee payments, and child care were all mentioned as increased issues for the client groups using day treatment. For residential clients, the briefer periods allowed for treatment resulted in inappropriately timed discharges into unstable situations.

Therapist Lois Jonet counsels with an adolescent at St. Joseph’s Home for Children, Minneapolis. St. Joseph’s, a division of Catholic Charities, is a comprehensive residential treatment center providing community-based services to emotionally disturbed adolescents.

Case Studies of Two Vulnerable Populations

To grasp the complex array of factors that shape and reshape decisions in purchase-of-service agreements with community-based facilities, a close examination was made of what happened to two vulnerable populations during the period of fiscal crisis: the developmentally disabled (those who are mentally retarded or suffer from cerebral palsy) and emotionally disturbed adolescents. The study revealed wide disparities in how the facilities serving these two groups fared.

- The Developmentally Disabled

Services for the developmentally disabled operate within an elaborate and politically sophisticated network of organizations. A lull and well-understood assessment process is in place for them. It is based on the degree of disability (borderline, mild, moderate, severe, or profoundly retarded). An array of responses is available for these varying degrees, providing an understandable rationale to the whole system.
The community-based facilities that serve the developmentally disabled are known as DACs (Developmental Achievement Centers). These centers provide care and training for small groups of the disabled during the day. Because of fiscal constraints in 1981, directors of DACs were, by the spring of 1982, painting a bleak picture of the outlook for the developmentally disabled:

Because of the block grants, each county is now choosing to fund at different levels—some are not funding at all. We are trying to serve the same number of clients with less money but the waiting lists are growing. Counties refuse to pay under certain conditions. Clients are being denied their rights. Eventually, many of them will have to return to state hospitals because they will have nowhere to go. This is defeating all of the action during the 70s to deinstitutionalize these patients. We are moving backwards!

The case of a mentally retarded woman with behavioral problems is illustrative. She would be best served in a behavioral achievement center for six months to one year, and eventually would become employed. Her county refused to pay for special programs. Request for funds for five days per week. County will only pay two days per week. It will take her much longer to attain an employable level, actually costing more in the long run because treatment time would be decreased if she could be in a concentrated program.

Counties are a “battleground for human service funds”—different agencies having to fight for limited funds. If these children have to be institutionalized, it would increase costs, not cut them.

A series of legal decisions, however, turned this situation around. A 1980 consent decree had mandated the deinstitutionalization of the developmentally disabled. This stimulated an increase in the number of community-based facilities serving this population. A 1983 Minnesota Supreme Court decision, on a suit brought against Kittson County, declared that counties must provide DAC services consistent with the needs of the disabled despite fiscal constraints. In addition, in 1983 the “Home and Community-Based Care” waiver to the medicaid bill passed the Minnesota legislature. This allows medicaid money to be applied to care in DACs and other day care programs.

These actions provided high priority claims on budget allocations for the developmentally disabled. This population of vulnerable people was favored because of a strong advocacy force behind them—from organizations, service providers, and parents. Yet the stability that seemed available to DACs in 1984 was severely threatened again in 1985. A change in treatment (shifting toward emphasis on vocational and on-the-job training) and a challenge of the medicaid reimbursement came at the same time that the state legislature voted to eliminate mandated services. Continuing budget constraints at the county level present a continuing challenge to directors of DACs.

- Emotionally Disturbed Adolescents

The situation for emotionally disturbed adolescents is quite different. Facilities and programs for adolescents reflect the variety of circumstances and behaviors that bring them in touch with either the child welfare system or the juvenile justice system. They range from Big Brother and Big Sister organizations to locked wards in state institutions. Assessment of the problem varies depending on how an adolescent enters the system. The child welfare system assumes the adolescent is in need of social services while the juvenile justice system assumes the adolescent has violated a law and must suffer the consequences. The lack of a coherent and consistent diagnostic approach has resulted in large numbers of adolescents moving randomly through various programs and facilities at the discretion of front-line caseworkers, judges, and mental health professionals.

The community-based facilities that serve these troubled adolescents are residential facilities governed either by state Rule 5 or Rule 8. Rule 5 facilities are children's institutions for emotionally disturbed children and adolescents. They provide a treatment plan that includes psychological and psychiatric consultation. Rule 8 facilities are small group homes that provide shelter for abused or neglected children and adolescents or those who have committed "status offenses," such as truancy or running away from home. They are supervised by house parents.

A turbulent period resulted for adolescent facilities in response to the fiscal constraints of 1981. Residential treatment facilities are among the most expensive responses in the range of options available to troubled adolescents. While they are not as costly as hospital psychiatric inpatient units or some specialized facilities that exist in the private psychiatric realm, they nevertheless take a big hit out of county budgets. The average cost per child in 1981 ranged from $30,000 to $40,000 per year and adolescent services absorbed 13 percent of the total county social services expenditures for the state of Minnesota. This figure has not changed substantially in the years since then.

During the period in question, substantial cuts were made in purchase-of-service agreements for adolescent facilities. Out of thirty Rule 5 and Rule 8 facilities in Hennepin and Ramsey counties, two were converted to emergency shelters and nine were forced to close (though one subsequently reopened). Referrals to facilities were substantially cut, personnel costs in the homes had to be reduced, residents' length of stay were shortened, income eligibility was more closely monitored, and clients with insurance coverage were favored.

Directors noted that their facilities were moving from a preventive orientation to a crisis orientation. Those placed with them were more seriously disturbed than ever. There was an increase in the number of young people whose families could not deal with their psychotic behavior. Sexual assault victims seeking help tripled in number. Requests for placement of disturbed adolescents levelled off but the requests that came were for acute dysfunctional behaviors. Everything seemed to have dropped a notch: Rule 8 facilities were handling seriously disturbed youth and Rule 5 facilities had become a "dumping ground" for the

Outside St. Joseph's a group of adolescents clean up a car with Kelly Rader, child care worker.
failure of all previous placements.

The administrative mandates for reduced time for adolescents in these facilities meant that seriously disturbed youth were being discharged to unstable and often unsafe home environments. Directors predicted that other parts of the system would "bulge": corrections, state hospitals, and private psychiatric facilities. They also predicted that the long-term effects would be reinstitutionalization and "warehousing" of clients resulting in a "maintenance without treatment" philosophy.

Overall, the response of adolescent facilities to the budget crunch was to shift emphasis away from residential facilities to other parts of the system. Shelter use was expanded and private psychiatric facilities and chemical dependency facilities began to expand. Long-term treatment was supplanted by short-term care. A change appeared to be taking place in how residential treatment facilities were perceived: they were becoming the final stop after all other means had been tried. By the end of 1984 the number of beds available for adolescents in community-based facilities had been reduced by 13 percent, but use of emergency shelters had swelled.

Conspicuously absent from the troubled adolescents' scene is a strong advocacy group. There is nothing that corresponds to the efforts made on behalf of the developmentally disabled over the past few years. This is particularly significant in times of financial crisis when all of the vulnerable populations are scrambling to get a piece of the much smaller fiscal pie. The strong voice of families and the adolescents themselves is infrequently heard at budget meetings at the county level and in the legislature.

Conclusions

- The test of flexibility for the county is a strong advocacy group. There is nothing that corresponds to the efforts made on behalf of the developmentally disabled over the past few years. This is particularly significant in times of financial crisis when all of the vulnerable populations are scrambling to get a piece of the much smaller fiscal pie. The strong voice of families and the adolescents themselves is infrequently heard at budget meetings at the county level and in the legislature.

- Client groups are not treated uniformly in an era of retreatment. At a time of shrinking resources, competition intensifies among providers of services for vulnerable populations. The absence of advocacy for any group may lead to benign neglect for them within the politicized atmosphere that characterizes times of dwindling resources.

- Community-based facilities buffered the budget slashes of retreatment in a variety of ways. Among them:
  - Eliminating staff, reducing staff hours, training, and services such as transportation; reducing the quality and quantity of services to clients.
  - Changing the goals of programs in order to search for new clients who might have coverage from insurance or independent sources.
  - Diversifying funding sources. Foundations, the United Way, patient fees, and insurance benefits were all approached as part of the search for substitute funding. In some cases families were asked to pick up transportation costs; in others referrals were made to other facilities. The elimination of services to the "working poor," not included within group health organizations or insurance plans but with incomes too high for the new eligibility guidelines, was persistently noted. This group was described as the genuine victim of fiscal austerity in the community-based facilities system.

- Changing client admissions to adapt to the increased demands for accountability. A common observation during this period: "When dollars go down, accountability goes up." In fact, it was asserted that in order to document "effectiveness," only "easy" clients would be accepted in order to provide positive evaluations. Illustratively, troublesome youngsters with complex histories could be rejected, whereas clients who could respond to treatment on a short-term basis would be accepted.

- In the final analysis, community-based facilities exist within a dynamic system that is continually redefining its needs and responses. It is fair to say that at times of financial crisis, the county is absorbed in an "accountant-driven" mode, searching for ways to maximize reimbursement for services that will relieve the need for local dollars. The effect is to cast a sharp scrutiny on the purchase-of-service agreements, eliminating some, shifting budgets on others, shifting allocations from one group to another. In this highly unstable environment, an intense preoccupation with survival absorbs the directors of community-based facilities. The effect on clients cannot be quantified with precision, but anecdotal reports are disquieting.

Community-based facilities, as a new tier in the social service system, did weather the financial storm of 1981-82. The casualties were few in number. As one examines the budgets from 1982 through 1985, a roller coaster effect is seen. To survive the shocks of budget cutting, community-based facilities are, generally, attempting to shift away from a dependency on public dollars. This raises a disquieting question, Will these facilities then be available for the county's clients, who are typically poor, and often in extreme distress?

Esther Wattenberg is a professor in the University's School of Social Work and coordinator for CURA's programs in community and social services. This article presents highlights from a full report just published by CURA (Down to the Bone: Community-Based Facilities in a Time of Retreatment, CURA 86-4). Copies of the full report are available free of charge from CURA (612/625-1551 or use the publications order form in this Reporter).

Photos on pages 10 and 11 by Phil Swanson courtesy of Midway Training Service.

Photos on pages 12 and 13 courtesy of St. Joseph's Home for Children.
New CURA Publications


Highlights from this work are presented in this CURA Reporter.


Many education reform proposals have been issued by Minnesota organizations over the past two years. Here the major proposals are presented in summary form by subject area. Thus one can compare what various reform proposals say about curriculum or student testing or teacher recruitment. In all, eleven subject areas are presented. For each proposal there is a brief description, a statement of basic premises, and a note about the cost implications. The catalogue also includes an overview of the proposals, a legislative update on educational reform in Minnesota, a bibliography, and information about the eighteen Minnesota organizations that proposed these reforms.


A shortened version of the full catalogue, this work presents the overview statement about the proposals, the legislative update, bibliography, and listing of the eighteen Minnesota organizations that prepared these education reforms.


CURA developed MLMIS some years ago and the system is now expanding and available to the entire state through the Minnesota Department of Energy, Planning and Development, which has taken over its operations. MLMIS is a computerized database of the state's natural resources—one of the world's premier systems for supporting natural resource planning and decision making. Craig describes the system and its work. This publication is a reprint of Craig's keynote address at the thirteenth annual conference of the Australasian Urban and Regional Information Systems Association in Adelaide, Australia in November 1985.


Research on aging is an expanding field at the University of Minnesota. In this first-of-its-kind inventory, AUCA has put together summary descriptions of 134 research projects conducted here during the first half of this decade. The projects are grouped by their University departments and are also indexed by principal investigator and by keywords.

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