

REMARKS BY DR. D. GLENBURN ASKINS, JR.  
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Frank Newman, in his book, "Choosing Quality" writes of the delicate and ambiguous nature of the relationship between the state and its public colleges and universities. Certainly the role of the legislature is much more than that of the disbursement of funds. It has the right to demand accountability, both in the planning process and in the assessment process. It also has the responsibility to create a climate that nurtures aspiration. It falls upon the shoulders of the members of this body to make certain that we never get so involved with accountability or planning that we interfere with that responsibility.

Between the state and its public educational institutions lies a no-mans land occupied by the Commission on Higher Education. It is our responsibility to set appropriate public policy; that is, to set goals, allocate resources, hold accountable, and encourage those who govern our state colleges and universities. Dr. Newman also warns that we must avoid inappropriate intrusion. He characterizes this by attempts to interfere with the operation of the universities and colleges either to serve ends that are questionable in themselves or to serve ends that may or may not be appropriate through means that are questionable. Three such forms of intrusion are bureaucratic, political and ideological. It is the former that we should be concerned with; i.e. bureaucratic. He defines this as the accumulated weight of unnecessary or counter productive regulations. This is certainly the most common form of inappropriate intrusion.

I would like to quote from Dr. Newman, "The state role is essential. Not only is the state an essential force for accountability and for the assurance that the university will meet the public interest, but it is clear from the history of American higher education that external forces are essential to encourage change within the university. Often the most important changes have come about because of state or federal action. We need, therefore, a strong, but appropriate state role."

This is also our responsibility.

I think this Commission needs to be constantly aware that bureaucracy costs money, may stifle creativity and diversity, defeats effective administration, and at its extreme, intrudes upon academic freedoms. We also need to be aware that administrative spending per student is rising much more rapidly than instructional spending. From 1974 to 1986 administrative spending rose from \$1,204.00 per student to \$1,506.00 per student, an increase of about 25%. At the same time the instructional spending per student increased only by 5%.

The methods of planning and assessment that we are to discuss today will surely add to the administrative cost per student in the short run. But if done effectively, properly and efficiently they will not only improve the quality of Higher Education, but ultimately will reduce administrative spending. This is certainly our goal. It is therefore our responsibility, with the help of the representatives of the institutions to ensure that the policies that we make regarding planning and assessment are not only wise, but appropriate.

Measurement of accountability and assessment to the extent that we will be embarking upon is relatively new and unexplored territory in the field of higher education. We want South Carolina to be a national leader in this endeavor. Therefore we want the most effective assessment program, not necessarily the most extensive. We want an appropriate assessment policy, not an inappropriate intrusion. We want not maximal data with minimal effort, but meaningful data with minimal effort. Above all we want and need the cooperation and support of the institutions, administrations and faculties.