

CITIZENS LEAGUE REPORT

No. 232

**Statement to the Mn Higher
Education Coordinating Commission**

February 1970

Citizens League
 545 Syndicate Building
 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402

February 27, 1970

Statement by John W. Windhorst, Chairman, Post-High School Education Committee, Citizens League, to Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Commission

The separation of the first two years of post-secondary education in Minnesota between two different types of institutions, area vocational schools and junior colleges, has produced several major problems:

- Attracting students--A student may be attracted to one type of institution because it carries either the name "college" or "vocational school." He may be best suited, in fact, for courses offered in the other type of institution, but he is denied the opportunity to take them. Consequently, he loses the full benefit he should receive from post-secondary education.
- Duplication of effort--Competing programs offered in both institutions may result in under-enrollment in one or both types rather than adequate enrollment in either.
- Admissions policy differences--One type of institution has open door policy, admitting all students who meet minimum requirements. The other requires students to apply for admission to specific programs.
- Tuition differences--One type of institution is able to offer tuition-free education to students under 21, while the other must charge tuition.
- Planning not coordinated--Both types of institutions are competing with each other for new locations rather than cooperating.

After a year-long inquiry we concluded that Minnesota cannot afford to continue the dual system. It fails to provide adequate opportunities for youth and it represents an inefficient use of the tax dollars for post-secondary education.

We recommend that the State Junior College Board be abolished and be replaced by a new Community College Board, representative of both vocational and academic interests. All junior colleges should become community colleges. Existing area vocational schools should have the opportunity to come under the jurisdiction of the new board if they desire. New institutions would be combined community colleges, offering programs now carried out separately by the junior colleges and area vocational schools.

We are aware of a movement--most prominent in the Twin Cities area--for school districts to provide jointly for urgently needed vocational training at the high school level. They also are planning post-secondary vocational training in the same institutions, the extent of which is not clear. The experience in the Minneapolis Area Vocational School, which has a relatively low post-high school enrollment, seems to indicate that the post-secondary program is unable to develop its full potential in a combined high-school, post-high school situation. In any event we see no substantial advantages to a joint high school-post-high school vocational program sufficient to offset the advantages of combining the post-high school vocational and junior college programs. High schools can still, if they wish, provide joint facilities for high school vocational programs.