

University Computer-Network Plan Called Inadequate For Toledo Region

3 State Centers Are Not Enough, Educators Say

By MARY ELLEN WOLFE
Blade Staff Writer

Regional computer centers proposed in the Warren King study of Ohio institutions of higher education conflict with existing plans and have aroused apprehension among Toledo area educators.

In addition, Dr. John D. Millett, chancellor of the state board of regents, expressed doubt about the Chicago consultants' recommendations regarding regional computer centers.

The management study of the state's universities and colleges was made for the General Assembly's education review committee and the department of finance.

The study proposed three computer centers for the state: one serving northern Ohio, one central Ohio, and one southern Ohio.

Narrow Belt

The plan assigns the University of Toledo, the Medical College of Ohio, Bowling Green State University, and Penta County Technical Institute to a narrow belt which cuts across the top of Ohio.

The same computer center also would serve Kent State University, University of Akron, Youngstown State University, Cleveland State University, Cuyahoga Community College, Lorain County Community College, Lakeland Community College, and Jefferson County Technical Institute.

The central region computer center would be based upon the existing complex of computers at Ohio State University. Lines of the central division are so drawn, however, that they extend far into northwestern Ohio.

The southern region computer center would form a network to accommodate the bottom half of the state — from Ohio University on the east to Miami University on the west.

What Size Computer

"The northern Ohio computer complex would go from here to there. I would hate to think of the size of the computer which would be required," Dr. B. D. Owens, vice president for research and financial affairs at Bowling Green, said.

Dr. Owens said the proposal of the management survey consultants is not realistic.

"The way the regions have been divided doesn't follow any population lines. The division wasn't made demographically. It would do northwestern Ohio little if any good," he said.

Dr. William S. Carlson, president of the University of Toledo, expressed doubt that one center can take care of all the institutions of higher education in northern Ohio.

"I have a feeling northwest Ohio ought to go through with its planning," Dr. Carlson said.

\$2 Million Appropriated

The General Assembly last year appropriated \$2 million for a research and computer center to be built and operated by Bowling Green and TU. The two are working jointly with the Medical College of Ohio in locating and developing the center.

Planning is now at a phase in which subcommittees are being formed to take a look at the hardware which will be needed.

Dr. Carlson said the King survey findings might be interpreted as proposing a computer center for management services, whereas the BGSU-TU center would be for research and instruction.

"Our interests are quite different," Dr. Carlson said.

Dr. Millett said the map planned by King and Associates is quite different from the regional computer plan the regents have drawn.

Regents' Allocation

The regents, in 1966, allocated \$25,000 each to Ohio State University, University of Cincinnati, and Kent State University (acting jointly with University of Akron and Cleveland State University) to plan research centers.

The regents also voted \$25,000 to BGSU-TU for planning a research center as soon as funds were available.

Originally, a fifth center was planned in southeastern Ohio, but no request for its development was received from Ohio University.

"The King study simply ignores the fact that most computer time for institutions of higher education is not for administrative purposes but is for research and instruction," Dr. Millett said.

"If all universities used a computer was for administrative purposes, that is something else, but when so much time goes into instruction and research, the plan doesn't make sense."

In Agreement

Dr. Millett added that he is in agreement with many other recommendations of the management consultants on bringing business methods to campus management.

"Management improvement is a major challenge to all institutions of higher education at the present time," Ohio's chancellor said.

"Whether this survey provides a real basis for management improvement is something else."

"The problem is there. Our institutions don't give enough attention to management improvement on their own."

Dr. Owens said that of five centers that Governor Rhodes originally proposed, only northwestern and southwestern Ohio have continued to push for regional computer centers.

Five Considered

"I hate to see our program scrapped . . . the things we are working toward," Dr. Owens said.

The King report states the consultants originally had considered five computer centers for the state, but decided that three centers would be preferable.

The average annual cost of each regional computer center is estimated to be \$2.5 million — \$2 million for hardware and

\$500,000 for staff, space, and consumables.

The consultants contend that their plan will result in savings of \$3.5 million to the state, as every state university in Ohio is planning a substantial increase in expenditures for computers.

Adjust Time

"By establishing regional computer centers, each univer-

sity can tailor the amount of computer time used to its funds," the King report states.

"The institution is also relieved of the task of adminis-

tering a large-scale computer facility.

"Every institution of higher learning in Ohio will have access to the most sophisticated

software systems and interactive terminal devices available. This could not be achieved on an individual institutional basis."

