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## IOWA ASSIST: OUTREACH FOCI

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Iowa-ASSIST is a statewide program for improving science teaching in Iowa. ASSIST is an acronym for Alternative Strategies and Services for Improving Science Teaching. Iowa-ASSIST developed from several NSF-Supported Academic Year Institute programs for preparing science supervisors which were conducted in Iowa. It was established as a formal program in 1973. The program operated during 1973-76 with support of approximately \$600,000 from the National Science Foundation (NSF).

NSF terminated all support for K-12 in-service teacher activities during 1976-77--because of objections of various groups, Congressional committees, and publishing groups. During this year Iowa-ASSIST has continued because of support from the Legislature to maintain programs and projects essential in the state following termination of continued federal support. With support of \$90,000 from the State, Iowa-ASSIST now exists as a regular feature of the Science Education Center, University of Iowa.

Iowa-ASSIST from the out-set has been a cooperative effort involving personnel from across the State, various agencies, and educational units. Personnel from the State Department of Public Instruction, twenty-six institutions of higher education, the fifteen area schools, the Area Educational Agencies, and the larger school districts with special supervisors and coordinating personnel result in nearly two-hundred persons who are involved as the Iowa-ASSIST "staff." Central staff at the Science Education Center include a director, associate director and field coordinator, director of assessment and evaluation, four research assistants, three general service assistants, secretarial staff and work study assistants.

With the disappearance of direct NSF support, several Iowa-ASSIST foci are now more central and more essential. With NSF support, most attention was directed to assisting schools and teachers with adopting (or adapting) national curriculum programs in Iowa schools. Although this continues as a major activity, other outreach efforts are now receiving more attention.

Awareness conferences for teachers, administrators, and community groups have always been available. However, such conferences are now available for all groups, at all levels, and at all centers in Iowa on an expanded basis. These conferences are available regarding national curriculum programs,

curriculum revision efforts, field centers for teacher education, and special student program opportunities. An interactive curricularium is also available as a feature of the Science Education Center. The curricularium is a place where groups of teachers, administrators, or others can come to interact individually with curriculum materials. Such persons can also become familiar with all aspects of Iowa-ASSIST. Such visits are recommended to substitute for or to expand from experiences and information gained via awareness conferences.

Assistance with curriculum revision in local schools is another important facet of Iowa-ASSIST. Special workshops involving staff teams are organized in local schools (or if financing can be arranged, on campus) where teachers are retained with an extended contract during a portion of the summer months. A curriculum revision workshop usually means a ten day workshop during June, July, or August with intensive group activities followed by individual writing efforts. Follow-up meetings for the following academic year are often arranged when the curriculum revision is a major one. Assistance with implementing such revision with students is often essential to the success of the effort.

A major Iowa-ASSIST effort is now the Materials Center. Basically, this service is one of providing cost effective supplies, equipment, and special materials for science programs. The program provides for volume procurement and free distribution in the state. Although the materials will usually cost as much as if ordered directly from a variety of companies, the profits usually available for the companies are used to support other features of ASSIST, especially awareness activities, communication, and travel. Instead of merely placing orders and waiting for the arrival of materials, in-service help is available in using the materials and planning other improvement activities. The Materials Center is a major feature of the Iowa-ASSIST model which can make it self-supporting while realizing the full potential of its goals.

Another feature of Iowa-ASSIST exists with the various publications. Some of these include descriptive brochures, evaluation and assessment reports, and reports of field service projects completed by leaders across the State. Various catalogues and newsletter are also important means for communication. ECOPAC is one example of a subscription program for providing periodic enrichment materials for schools. Most publications are provided on a cost basis. Such materials will be expanded both in terms of content as well as number as interests and demands dictate.

Special programs, materials, and training opportunities exist in such areas as health, drug, and environmental education. Iowa-ASSIST continues to recognize the applied nature of school science as a future emphasis. The necessity for a more relevant sequence which emphasizes interdisciplinary approaches to schools and societal programs is recognized.

Student programs represent an expanding area as a greater variety of opportunities for talented and interested K-14 students is made available. More trips, excursions, state and regional conferences, and action oriented projects are available. A new Tour-Iowa program provides opportunities for structuring special tours designed to meet a variety of individual, class, and school needs.

Another direction for Iowa-ASSIST is providing opportunities for teachers to structure particular graduate programs to meet their own individual needs. Major portions of these programs can be made available in local settings. Many are cooperative programs involving staff and courses from other colleges offered as a part of a planned program of the University of Iowa. Teachers are encouraged to explore such possibilities on an individual basis. One limitation is caused by the need for ten or more persons at a given setting interested in specific courses. As one might assume, it is not possible to offer courses on a one instructor-one student basis.

Iowa-ASSIST represents a major dimension for science education in Iowa. The program is on a sound base with support from the State-like all other programs that are a part of the public system of higher education in Iowa. As a concept it is an enlarging one. Although further NSF support will be sought as new programs and direction are formulated, the central program exists without reliance on federal funding. Such independence for 1976-77 has enabled new foci to emerge. Others are being planned while others are still to be imagined!

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### CHEM ED 77

CHEM ED 77 is a conference for classroom chemistry teachers to be held 22-25 August, 1977, at the University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. This is the third such biennial conference. The conference concentrates on chemistry in upper elementary, junior high, and high school. Discussion and exchange of information are its most important features. Also featured will be lab workshops on such topics as glass-blowing, instrumentation for high school chemistry, chemistry of solids, making slides and transparencies, chemistry for kids (K to 6), chemistry of plastics, biochemistry, soil chemistry. Also a trading post will allow you to display your favorite experiments, ideas or test questions, and to take home a copy of someone else's. For more information write to Dennis Ray, Chairman, CHEM ED 77, University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, N2L 3G1.

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