

BIG/PIE Expansion Discussed; Some Foresee Science Center

by Molly McCarthy

Administrators discussed expanding the BIG/PIE (Biology Interaction Group/Partnership in Education) seminar-workshop series into the BIG/PIE Science Center of Western New York at the Nov. 17 meeting of the Academic Council.

Dr. Edward C. Kisailus, associate professor of biology and creator of the BIG/PIE program, presented a report on the Science Center proposal at the Nov. 17 meeting.

According to Rev. Edmund J. Ryan, S.J., vice president for academic affairs and chairman of the Academic Council, discussion focused on space and cost concerns that would arise if a Science Center were instituted at the College.

Regarding cost, Fr. Ryan said that federal and state funds are available for the development of a Science Center. Up to seven million dollars in grant money per institution could be acquired from the federal government. This money could be used to renovate structures and facilities such as the 1908 building or the Health Science Center, Fr. Ryan said.

Another concern voiced at the meeting was the impact the Science Center would have on Canisius students and faculty.

"This meeting was a forum through which faculty and students could express opinions regarding the new ventures that involve our future," Fr. Ryan said.

The issue of the Science Center was sent to the Academic Planning Committee, chaired by Dean of the Business School Richard Schick, for further consideration. Fr. Ryan said the issue of the Science Center should return to the Academic Council agenda by February or March.

The Science Center would incorporate the programs under the current BIG/PIE series and allow for expansion of all the programs.

Kisailus, three Canisius biology professors, and five area high school science teachers first gathered under the BIG/PIE umbrella in 1983 to discuss problems raised in a report, published by the National Commission on Excellence in Education entitled, "A Nation at Risk."

In 1986, the BIG/PIE program was extended to high school biology teachers in Western New York as a continuing education program. Funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation, the series of monthly seminars and summer workshops attracted 72 participants to Canisius' program.

The 72 participants of the workshop include teachers from 28 area high schools, according to Kisailus' report.

Apart from the seminar-workshop series, the present BIG/PIE program, which has been funded by the NSF until 1990, includes the Laboratory Equipment Assistance Program (LEAP) and the Science Education Eight to Kindergarten (SEEK).

LEAP, developed by Chemistry Department Chairman Dr. Joseph Bieron and funded by the NSF and the OxyChem Corporation, instructs teachers how to design experiments. Equipment for the experiments can be borrowed from LEAP.

A pre-secondary school activity, SEEK, directed by Dr. Robert Blasdell, associate pro-

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fessor of biology, offers field trips, lecture-demonstrations, and laboratory experiments, for kindergarten through eighth grade teachers.

Another project, entitled "Biotechnology Workshop, Theory and Practice," is a joint venture among Canisius College, Georgetown University, Seattle University, and the University of San Francisco. Initiated in the summer of 1988, the program began a nationwide network of biotechnology workshops for high school teachers.

"The growth and national expansion of BIG/PIE has opened the opportunity for it to

explore the possibility to consolidate its programs and to develop a facility to continue into the 1990s and the 21st century," the report stated.

"This is a well thought out project . . . It aids our own facility in allowing them to remain current and share their expertise," Fr. Ryan added.