The Consortium for Higher Education in Religious Studies Will Receive Grants Over a Three Year Period

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DAYTON, Ohio, April 1, 1968 --- The Consortium for Higher Education Religion Studies (CHERS) has been granted $278,605 over a three-year period from the Danforth Foundation of St. Louis, the Rev. Matthew Kohmescher, S.M., president of the Consortium, announced today. Father Kohmescher, who received the confirming letter from Mr. Robert Rankin, Vice President of the Danforth Foundation, also is Chairman of the Department of Theological Studies at the University of Dayton.

CHERS represents the religion departments of twelve institutions of higher learning who believe that co-operation in the sharing of resources leads to the development of stronger programs of education in religion and, ultimately, the whole of higher education.

The Consortium is a two-and-a-half year old venture in interinstitutional co-operation by Catholic, Protestant and Jewish seminaries, state-supported, Church-affiliated and private non-sectarian universities and colleges in southwestern Ohio.

Started in the Fall of 1965 with Antioch College, United Theological Seminary, University of Dayton and Wright State University the project now also embraces Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Western College for Women in Oxford, Central State University, Wilberforce University and Payne Theological School in Wilberforce and Wittenberg University and Hamma School of Theology in Springfield.

The Consortium will receive the Danforth money in three installments. The Foundation, created in 1927 by the late Mr. and Mrs. William H. Danforth of St. Louis, will award $81,525 in the 1968-69 school year, $106,930 in 1969-70 and $91,150 in 1970-71.

This is the second award to the Consortium from the Danforth Foundation, which has as its purpose to strengthen education, through its own programs and through grants to schools, colleges, universities and other education agencies.

The Foundation awarded $10,000 last year to help defray the costs of an executive secretary whose offices are currently at Wright State. Mr. David Ruhmkorff has served in that capacity and will continue to administer the growing program.

The Consortium's five major objectives are:

1. to enrich the study and understanding of religion by faculty,
2. to enrich the undergraduate programs of studies in religion in the member institutions,
3. to strengthen graduate programs in religion,
4. to clarify both the distinctive tasks in the study of religion which each institution can best provide and the collaborative contribution that the member institutions can better do in concert or in voluntary formed groupings within the Consortium, and
5. to encourage interdisciplinary cooperation whenever appropriate.

It seeks to implement these objectives through the planning and development of cooperative programs of (1) graduate education, (2) expanded undergraduate studies, (3) faculty development, (4) innovative programs, (5) seminary co-operation, and (6) continuing education.

CHERS itself does not seek to make policy related to the teaching of religion for its participating institutions. It does seek to help strengthen existing programs and enable expansion and development of new programs through cooperation. Participation in specific cooperative projects will be voluntary and in keeping with the philosophies, goals, programs and other considerations of each institution.

Father Kohmescher says that other diversified programs are being developed which will enhance the teaching of religion for all the consortium members.