

Peltason: Near Exciting Period

To Open up Opportunities

By MARCIA KRAMER
Daily Illini Staff Writer

"We are on the verge of a very exciting period of educational reform," Chancellor J. W. Peltason declared while discussing the Martin Luther King memorial fund at his weekly Chancellor's Chats Friday at Florida Avenue Residence Halls.

"Our job is to provide people an education," he continued. "We are trying to seek people who otherwise might not have this opportunity."

Here he spoke of the University's recruitment of 500 underprivileged students whose education here would be financed primarily thru Federal Economic Opportunity grant funds and the University's Special Educational Opportunity program. "Our qualifications are not racial," Peltason insisted. "Probably it will be true that a high percentage of the students who meet the qualifications for grants will be black, but that's a result of society's discrimination."

"We're trying to go to the very limit until we start diminishing the quality of the education."

In approaching that limit, Peltason feels the whole University will benefit. "As we figure out better ways to teach them we will figure out ways to teach all of us," he said.

The chancellor equated admission of underprivileged students to education of students in the rehabilitation center. "This University is worldly famous — and justly so — for its programs for the physically handicapped," Peltason said. He cited ramps and buses as part of the program and added "we did not lower the standards" for the physically handicapped to attend the University.

So it is with persons society has handicapped primarily because of color. "We're trying to build the ramp — to help them get the education they need and deserve," Peltason stressed. "We're not lowering standards any more than having therapists work with the physically handicapped."

"We want to help the people meet the standards."

To this end the University will sponsor a series of preparatory courses this summer for the underprivileged. Under the leadership of Clarence Shelley, assistant dean for educational opportunity and assistant to the chancellor, the program is in the process of being shaped by various faculty members and administrators.

"You don't have to be much of a teacher to teach superbright students," Peltason asserted. "The challenge is to take people as they are, with the assets they have, the strengths they have. . . ."

"It takes a scholar to make a scholar."

Through the King fund, which the chancellor termed a "worthwhile enterprise," efforts are being made to provide educational opportunities to students who might not otherwise have them. "We're appealing to human beings to help other human beings get an education," Peltason said. "I think it's a worthwhile cause."

M. L. King Fund Drive Continues

Contribution envelopes and cards for making pledges redeemable next fall are available in the Graduate Student Association, 299 Illini Union. Information may be obtained there or by calling David Eisenman at 333-0450, day or night. Tables with all materials will be set up in the southwest foyer of the Union and in many residence halls.

To help raise the \$300,000 which is the fund's goal, University artists Billy Morrow Jackson, William Kinser and Jon Shahn are executing a limited number of silk screen portraits of Dr. King which will be signed by the artists and numbered. They will go on sale next week.

King fund money will go to the \$500,000 in financial aid needed by the University for students entering in September under the special educational opportunity program announced by the chancellor.

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