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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to discover the workload policy for full-time counselors at each California community college and to compare them to see what variability existed. The response rate to questionnaires sent to all California community colleges was 79 per cent. Workloads were found to range from 15 to 40 hours per week. It is believed that the load policy of counselors is affected by power politics, as it is much more variable for counselors than for instructors. There is an indication that the present variance will diminish over time. Some pressure toward a more uniform load policy is the result of counselors seeing themselves and their profession as distinct, and seeing value in cooperative efforts designed to preserve and enhance their status. (CA)

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HOW MANY HOURS PER WEEK ARE
FULL-TIME COMMUNITY COLLEGE COUNSELORS
EXPECTED TO WORK?
EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT IN CALIFORNIA
NO UNIFORM LOAD EXISTS.

Submitted

by

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

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CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

How Many Hours Per Week Are Full-Time Community College Counselors
Expected To Work?

Evidence Indicates That In California No Uniform Load Exists.

By Donald L. Kester

Whenever counselors meet at conferences, the following exchange can be heard:

"We work forty hours a week at my college."

"Really, we are expected to work only twenty!"

It was decided that a disparity of this magnitude required more detailed investigation.

A researchable question emerged: "What is the counseling load policy in the various California Community Colleges?"

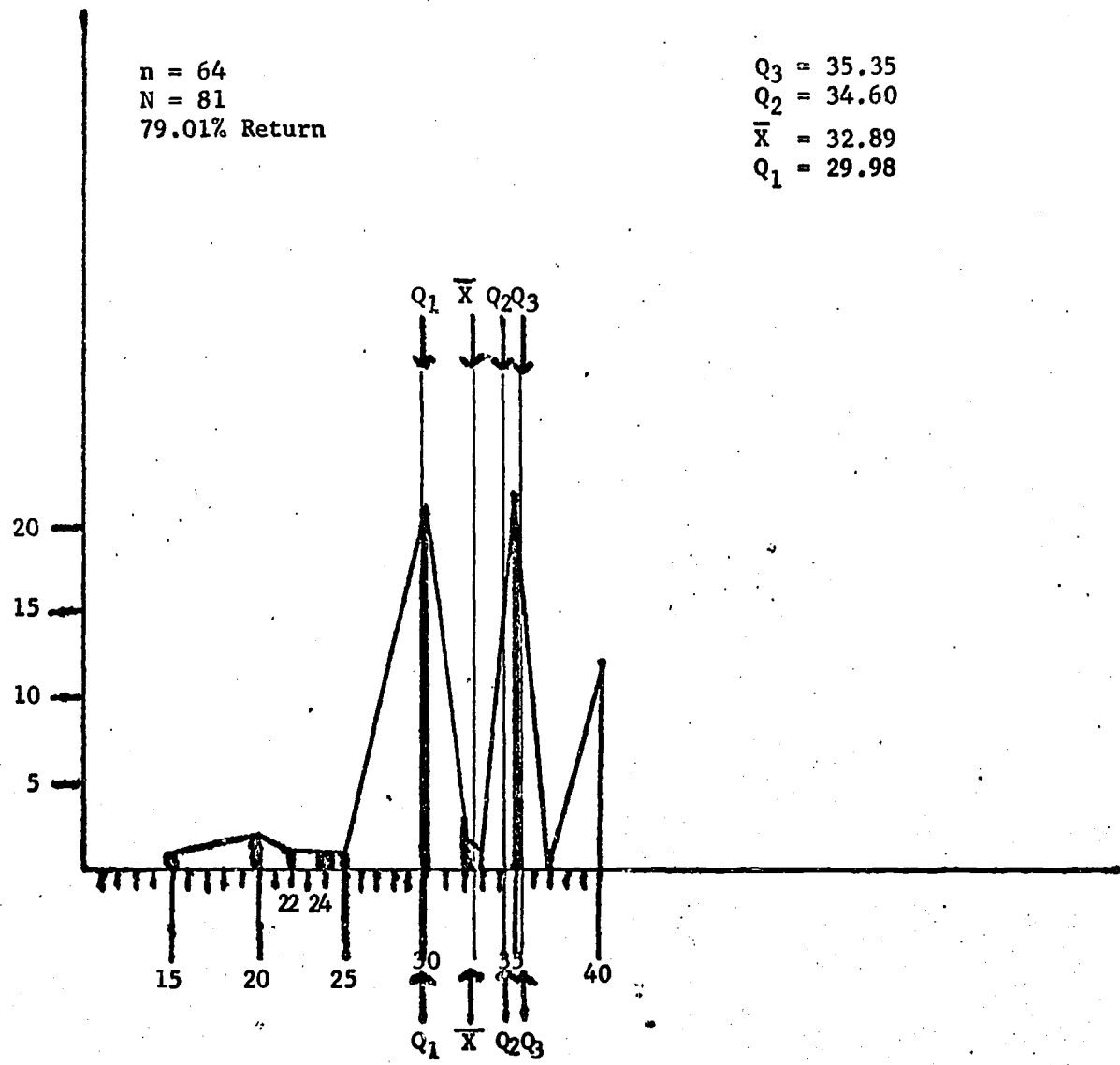
In an effort to find the answer, all of the community colleges in the State of California were asked to respond to a mailed questionnaire. This questionnaire focused on ascertaining the colleges' load policy for their full-time counselors. A few colleges were known to employ counselors on a part-time basis only, so the questionnaire asked the colleges to make explicit their load policy for full-time counseling, whether or not full-time counselors were used. The major quest was to discover the load policy for full-time counseling at each of the California Community Colleges, and then compare these different policies to see what variability did exist. The response rate for the questionnaire was 79%.

A cover letter was of course included with the mailed questionnaire. This letter promised to make the individual colleges' responses and the overall distribution available by placing these results in ERIC. The overall distribution is shown in Table 1,

and the individual college responses are shown in Display 1. As the Table and the Display indicate, the range is from 15 hours per week to 40 hours per week. The mean is 32.89. The first quartile Q_1 is 29.98, Q_2 is 34.60, and Q_3 is 35.35.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution for Full-Time Counseling Load
in California Community Colleges



In Display 1, the individual college's place is shown relative to the frequency distribution.

Display 1

Counseling Load at Responding Community Colleges

<u>Below Q_1</u>		<u>Between Q_1 and The Mean</u>	
<u>College</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>Hours</u>
Napa Junior College	15	Antelope Valley College	30
Chabot College	24	College of the Sequoias	30
Contra Costa College	20	College of the Siskiyous	30
(Contra Costa Junior College District)		Compton College	30
Diablo Valley College	20	College of San Mateo	30
(Contra Costa Junior College District)		Cuesta College	30
Golden West College	22	Cypress Junior College	30
(Orange Coast Junior College District)		(North Orange County Junior College District)	
Bakersfield College	25	Grossmont	30
		Harinell College	30
		Los Angeles Valley College	30
		(Los Angeles City Junior College District)	
		Laney College	30
		Merritt College	30
		Modesto Junior College	30
		Monterey Peninsula College	30
		Orange Coast College	30
		(Orange Coast Junior College District)	
		Palomar College	30
		San Diego City	30
		San Diego Mesa	30
		San Joaquin Delta Junior College	30
		Santa Monica City College	30
		Sierra College	30
		Merced College	32
		Mount San Antonio College	32
<u>Above Q_3</u>			
<u>College</u>	<u>Hours</u>		
Chaffey College	37		
Citrus College	40		
College of the Desert	40		
El Camino College	40		
Fullerton Junior College	40		
(North Orange County Junior College District)			
Long Beach City College	40		
Mira Costa College	40		
Pasadena City College	40		
Rio Hondo Junior College	40		
Riverside Junior College	40		
San Bernardino Valley Junior College	40		
Imperial Valley College	40		
Victor Valley College	40		

Display 1 (continued)

Between The Mean and Q_3

<u>College</u>	<u>Hours</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>Hours</u>
Cerritos College	33	Los Angeles Harbor College	35
Allan Hancock College	35	(Los Angeles City Junior College	
American River College	35	District)	
(Los Rios Junior College		Los Angeles Pierce College	35
District)		(Los Angeles City Junior College	
Barstow College	35	District)	
Cabrillo College	35	Los Angeles South West	35
College of Marin		(Los Angeles City Junior College	
East Los Angeles City College	35	District)	
(Los Angeles Joint Junior		Los Angeles Tech. Trade College	35
College District)		(Los Angeles City Junior College	
Fresno City College	35	District)	
(State Center Junior College		Palos Verde College	35
District)		Reedley College	35
Glendale College	35	(State Center Junior College	
Los Angeles City College	35	District)	
(Los Angeles City Junior		Sacramento City College	35
College District)		(Los Rios Junior College District)	
Santa Barbara City College	35	Santa Rosa Junior College	35
San Jose City College	35	Shasta College	35
Southwestern College	35		

Conclusion

It can be seen that the range is quite great. A counselor at one college is expected to work a minimum of fifteen (15) hours while at other colleges a counselor would be expected to work a minimum of forty (40) hours per week. About six colleges, or nine per cent of the responding colleges, fell below the first quartile, Q_1 , while more than twice that many, thirteen (13) to be exact, fell above the third quartile, Q_3 . Of course, most colleges fell between Q_1 of 29.98 and Q_3 of 35.35 -- a difference of about five and one-half (5-1/2) hours per week or one hour per day.

The fact that one-fourth of the colleges had load policies that were lower (below Q_1)

or higher (above Q_3) than most colleges indicates that load policy for counselors is probably more variable than is the load policy for instructors. Fifteen (15) hours per week is generally considered sacrosanct for instructors in the community colleges. Even if five (5) more hours are added to the instructors time schedule for such things as advising and committees, this brings the instructor to only twenty (20) hours per week. It is clear that fifteen (15) to twenty (20) hours per week for an instructor is less than thirty (30) to thirty-five (35) for a counselor. Such discrepancies in load policy for instructors and counselors indicate what might be termed a pervasive attitude that an hour of classroom instruction is approximately one and one-half ($1\frac{1}{2}$) to two (2) times as valuable as an hour of counseling. This evaluation may or may not agree with the opinions of the students or of those instructor-counselors who have done both.

One of the problems in the State of California may be traced to the "Fifty percent Law", which states that at least fifty (50) percent of the operating budget must be spent for classroom teaching salaries. Given this law, an administrator may be faced with the decision, "Which do we need most, another counselor or another administrator?" It is unfortunate that counselor's salaries are not counted on the same side of the fifty percent line as are instructors. From an economical standpoint, it is clear that given the same number of counselors, a load policy of forty (40) hours per week forces less outflow of funds for counseling than does a load policy of twenty (20) hours per week. Changing load policy is no doubt more difficult than initially instituting one. The load policy for counselors is definitely in the realm of power politics. Whether a college has a load of twenty (20) or forty (40) hours seems to depend primarily on the political climate at the individual colleges. It is not the intention of this presentation to say

that one load policy is better than another.

It is not intended that this presentation should conclude with a value judgment that states "fifteen (15) hours per week is fair", or "forty hours (40) per week is fair". But with the advent of accountability in community college education, especially as this is manifest in PPBS -- a probable outcome is a reduction in the campus-to-campus variability of the counselor's load. On the other hand, another source of pressure toward a more uniform load policy is the growing tendency of counselors not only to see themselves and their profession as distinct, but also to see the value in cooperative efforts designed to preserve and enhance their status.

Several years in the future a load policy for counselors of a specific number of hours per week may appear to be as sacrosanct as fifteen (15) is now for instructors. Indications are that the present variance in load will diminish over time.