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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at Brookdale Community College to determine which staff members were conducting research, under what conditions they would continue to do so, and the types of assistance the college's Center for Educational Research could provide to the staff. Questionnaires were sent to all college faculty, staff, and administrators, requesting information on the type and focus of research being conducted, and the respondents' willingness to share methods and findings with colleagues, attend a research workshop, or consider conducting research. Study findings, based on responses from 51 faculty members, 25 staff members, and 13 administrators, revealed the following: (1) 63% of the respondents (75% of the faculty, 69% of the administrators, and 37% of the staff) had conducted research; (2) the major types of investigations conducted were descriptive or historical studies and surveys; (3) 34 of the respondents conducted their research for course work, 29 for curriculum development, and 29 for personal growth; (4) 60% of the respondents indicated a willingness to share their research with colleagues; (5) about 60% of the respondents felt that increased financial reward and release time would encourage them to conduct research; and (6) respondents evidenced greatest interest in workshops on research techniques. The study report includes a review of the literature and the survey instrument. (HB)

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A Partial Study of Research Needs

at

Brookdale Community College

by

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JC 840 199

A Partial Study of Research Needs at Brookdale Community College

Statement of Purpose

The study was undertaken to determine who was conducting research and under what conditions would they continue to do research. A secondary reason for the study was to ascertain what types of assistance the Center for Educational Research (C.E.R.) could be to the researcher.

A final reason for the study, although much more difficult to verify, was to see how Brookdale community at large views themselves as researchers. That is, do they see research only conducted by a research specialist as research, or do they perceive their own efforts as also research.

Procedures

The approach used in this study was a survey of the Brookdale community. The research survey was sent to the College community at large through the mailing room at the beginning of the Winter semester, January 18, 1984. No verification was ascertained as to who actually received the mailing, but it was assumed that all units of the College did receive it.

The data was compiled and simple arithmetic measures were used in analysis of the data.

Review of the Literature

There have been several studies conducted on research at the junior or community college level in the past twenty years. The studies cited in this review will summarize the trends in research at two-year institutions.

John Roeche and John Boggs monography, Junior College Institutional Research: the State of the Art, 1968, makes the distinction between institutional research and the practitioners need. Institutional research is "that which is directed toward providing data useful or necessary in making intelligent administrative decisions and/or for the successful maintenance, operation, and/or improvement of a given collegiate institution." The practitioner is primarily concerned with action, not with data collection for operational decisions.

The authors, (Rouche & Boggs), conducted a nationwide survey to ascertain commitment and involvement of junior colleges to institutional research. The study involved a stratified sample of eighty-three schools with eighty-four percent (70) responding.

The survey found the average school completed one institutional research study per year and that number of studies had increased in recent years. Studies on students received the largest amount of attention, 42 percent, while the least attention was given to category of instruction 1.3 percent. Curriculum and programs accounted for 21 percent of the research studies.

Twenty-three percent of the institutions had personnel employed to coordinate the research and in 39 percent of the institutions no regular staff member had the task of coordinating institutional studies.

No relationship was found between the amount of research and variables of age and/or type of institutional control.

Alan G. Gross in his study entitled, "Community College Institutional Research Today, 1977," indicates there is a rise in the number of studies being conducted at the community college level. He cites Rouche and Boggs, 1968 study of 1.1 studies per year; Gill and Bleil, 1969-1973 of Montgomery Community College, Maryland of 4.5 per year, and Kelly and Jackson, 1974, Virginia Community College of 5.4 studies per year as evidence to the rise.

Gross, in addition, cites the increase of institutional research programs from 1965 - under 20%, 1969 - 33 1/3%, and 1977 an increase to 39%.

The number of institutional research has grown also since 1965. The data indicates that in 1965 only 2% of community colleges had full-time researchers while in 1974 28% of the colleges had full-time institutional researchers.

In the article "A Growing Role for Institutional Research," by Alfred, Fremer, and Lightfield, indicated that institutional research is becoming "a pivotal role" in the management of the community college.

In 1976 a survey of 900 community colleges, with 27 percent or 240 responses was taken to examine the role of institutional research in the community colleges.

Fifty-five percent of the respondents reported having research offices and of those without separate offices, 85 percent assigned the function to someone within the college. The role that the researcher played at the institution was at best confusing as indicated by the following data.

The feedback from the institutional presidents and actual duties performed by the research directors indicated a dichotomy between what should be done and what was accomplished.

The following tasks were reported by presidents as most often being the functions performed by the research office:

| <u>Functions Performed</u> | <u>Percentage of Presidents Identifying Function</u> |
|--|--|
| Answering and routing questionnaires | 43% |
| Information coordination with state/federal agencies | 40% |
| HEGIS and other external reporting | 40% |
| Data collection & interpretation | 38% |

The presidents had other ideas regarding the functions they thought researchers should be performing. The tasks below were most often ranked by them as the functions that should occupy the time of research staff:

| <u>Functions That Should Be Performed</u> | <u>Percentage of Presidents Identifying Function</u> |
|---|--|
| Institutional Planning | 40% |
| Follow-up Studies | 38% |
| Program Evaluation | 28% |
| Developing Management Information Systems | 25% |
| Data Collection and Interpretation | 24% |

Presidents show a concern for planning, data systems, and evaluation, while researchers spend much of their time on routine data collection and provision activities that have little bearing on the critical issues facing the institutions.

Summary

The literature indicates that research at the two-year institutions has been growing during the last ten to fifteen years from the study in 1968 to about 5 per year in 1974.

As of 1974, 20% of the junior colleges had full-time research officers and the tasks they performed were varied and often in conflict with institutional president's desires.

Analysis of the Data

Respondents:

Faculty 51 Staff 25 Administration 13

Number of Years at Brookdale Community College:

| | <u>Years (1-3)</u> | <u>(4-6)</u> | <u>(7-10)</u> | <u>(10 +)</u> | <u>N.R.</u> |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| Faculty | 12 (5) | 6 (4) | 5 (5) | 24 (3) | 4 (1) |
| Staff | 7 (2) | 5 (3) | 10 (3) | 3 (1) | - |
| Administration | 5 (2) | 1 (1) | 2 (2) | 5 (4) | - |

(#) indicates those who have done research

The number of persons replying to the survey was small compared to the total numbers of the Brookdale community. (

Therefore caution should be taken in interpretation or generalization of the data. However, the lack of response can also be an indicator of attitude toward research.

Possible hypothesis: (other than time to fill out survey)

1. Consider research as a separate function and responsibility of college.
2. That research implies a mystical or highly sophisticated process.
3. What I have done is unimportant or not significant enough to be recognized as research.
4. My position (staff) doesn't include that as part of my responsibilities nor is it encouraged.

Question 1. Have you conducted research since your employment at Brookdale?

| | <u>Yes</u> | <u>%</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>%</u> |
|----------------|------------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| Faculty | 39 | (75) | 13 | (25) |
| Staff | 9 | (37) | 16 | (63) |
| Administration | <u>9</u> | <u>(69)</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>(31)</u> |
| Total | 57 | (63) | 33 | (37) |

Out of total of 90 respondents 63% or 57 indicated that they had conducted research. As expected the faculty and administration led with 75% and 69% respectively. However, 37% of the staff stated that they had conducted research, which is a relatively high percentage considering the staff role at the institution.

Question 2. If, yes, was research for:

| <u>Purpose</u> | <u>Faculty (39)</u> | <u>Staff (9)</u> | <u>Admin. (9)</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Course Work | 25 (64%) | 6 (66%) | 3 (33%) | 34 |
| Curriculum | 25 (64%) | 3 (33%) | 1 (11%) | 29 |
| Personal Growth | 23 (59%) | 4 (44%) | 2 (22%) | 29 |
| Grants | <u>7 (18%)</u> | <u>2 (22%)</u> | <u>3 (33%)</u> | <u>12</u> |
| Total | 80 | 15 | 9 | 104 |

What type of research?

| <u>Type</u> | <u>Faculty</u> | <u>Staff</u> | <u>Administration</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Historical | 18 | 0 | 3 | 21 |
| Experimental | 10 | 4 | 2 | 16 |
| Case Study | 8 | 1 | 2 | 11 |
| Surveys | 18 | 2 | 5 | 25 |
| Descriptive | <u>17</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>25</u> |
| Total | 71 | 10 | 17 | 98 |

Of the reasons for doing research it is significant to note that with all three groups that personal growth was indicated as a force for research (Faculty 59%, Staff 44%, Administration 22%):

Except for the administration the lowest % of reasons for doing research was for grants.

The research conducted by the faculty was well balanced between coursework 64% curriculum 64%, and personal growth 59%.

The type of research conducted was fairly evenly distributed among three categories, Historical (21), Surveys (25), Descriptive (25), for all of the respondents. The least used form of research by all was the case study (11). The experimental method or more classical type of research was conducted by sixteen persons.

Question 3. Would you be willing to share research with your colleagues?

| | <u>Yes</u> | <u>No</u> | <u>No Response</u> |
|----------------|------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Faculty | 34 | 6 | 9 |
| Staff | 10 | 3 | 12 |
| Administration | <u>9</u> | <u>0</u> | <u>4</u> |
| Total | 53 | 9 | 25 |

A total of 53 or 60% of the respondents indicated a willingness to share their research while 29% gave no response.

Question 4. Under what conditions would you consider conducting research?
(Check all that apply)

| <u>Condition</u> | <u>Faculty (51)</u> | <u>Staff (25)</u> | <u>Admin. (13)</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|------------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Released Time | 32 (64%) | 14 (57%) | 4 (30%) | 50 |
| Assistance | 18 (35%) | 7 (28%) | 6 (46%) | 31 |
| Financial Reward | 31 (64%) | 14 (57%) | 8 (61%) | 53 |
| Recognition | 18 (35%) | 10 (40%) | 2 (16%) | 19 |
| No Response | <u>12</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>19</u> |
| Total | 111 | 49 | 23 | 183 |

The two conditions that seemed most important as a catalyst to conduct research were financial reward and released time. The percentage of respondents by groups for the two categories averaged around the 60% level.

Recognition and assistance although less in % they still represented a condition that should be addressed. Approximately 30-35% of the respondents indicated a need for recognition and or assistance for conducting research.

Question 5. Would you be willing to attend a research workshop for any of the following? (Check all that apply)

| <u>Workshop</u> | <u>Faculty</u> | <u>Staff</u> | <u>Administration</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Research Statistics | 15 | 8 | 4 | 27 |
| Grant Writing | 26 | 8 | 4 | 38 |
| Research Techniques | 21 | 17 | 6 | 44 |
| No Response | <u>16</u> | <u>6</u> | <u>5</u> | <u>27</u> |
| Total | 78 | 39 | 19 | 136 |

The most requested type of research workshop was on research techniques (44) followed closely by grant writing (38) and research statistics with 27.

There seems to be a strong need for assistance in grant writing in comparison to the amount of research conducted by the BCC community (about 11% indicated grant writing as research).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Due to the limited amount of returns, especially from staff and administration, generalizations must be made with caution.

Conclusions

1. That a high majority of faculty and administration, as well as high minority of the staff have some experience in conducting research.
2. That a significant amount of research was conducted for the purpose of personal growth by all three groups.
3. The areas of expertise of all three groups seemed to be well balanced between the types of research conducted.
4. A high majority indicate a willingness to share research and participate in research workshops.
5. All four conditions for doing research had a significant influence as motivating factors.

Recommendations

1. That mini grants, released time, be available for faculty, staff, and administration as part of the staff development program.
2. That a series of planned workshops on grants and research techniques be available to the Brookdale Community.
3. That a forum (informal/formal) be available to the Brookdale community to share research.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Faculty, Staff, Administrators

FROM: Frank Paoni
Coordinator of Center for Educational Research

SUBJECT RESEARCH NEEDS

DATE: Winter Term 1984

"Research" involves gathering necessary information from a wide variety of sources and combining them in a meaningful way so that information is provided to decision makers responsible for making decisions.

Start the semester off right, complete your first survey! I only need about four minutes of your time to complete this survey. Please, ...

Name _____ (optional)
Faculty _____ Staff _____ Administrative _____
Numbers of years at BCC _____

1. Have you conducted research since your employment at Brookdale? Yes _____ No _____
2. If yes, was research for: (indicate number of research projects)
Course work _____
Curriculum _____
Personal Growth _____
Grants _____
What type of research? Historical _____
Experimental _____
Case study _____
Surveys _____
Descriptive _____

Over

3. Would you be willing to share research with your colleagues?
 Yes _____ No _____
4. Under what conditions would you consider conducting research?
 (check all that apply)
- | | |
|------------------|-------|
| Released time | _____ |
| Assistance | _____ |
| Financial reward | _____ |
| Recognition | _____ |
5. Would you be willing to attend a research workshop for any of the following: (check all that apply)
- | | |
|---|-------|
| Research statistics | _____ |
| Grant writing | _____ |
| Research techniques (i.e. how to organize) | _____ |

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM IN INTER-OFFICE TO: Frank Paoni
 ISSB

Thank You for your time .

Resources

"A Growing Role for Institutional Research," pages 32-34, Community and Junior College Journal

"Community College Research Today," Alan G. Gross, Topical Paper No. 62, July 1977, ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges

Junior College Institutional Research: The State of the Art, John E. Roueche
John R. Boggs, ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges

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