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ABSTRACT

This report presents background on community college development and discusses four areas of concern. The first area is maintaining access for all students. Trends are toward tightening criteria for attendance. Colleges in some states will be forced to make clearer distinctions among the student groups they serve and for whom they expect to receive public funds. Minimal criteria will be established and placement will be mandated. The second issue is effecting student flow. Colleges will probably become more vigorous in separating students, courses, and programs into more defensible categories for purposes of funding. Current classifications such as college credit, occupational, remedial, adult, and community services are inadequate. The third concern is preserving a comprehensive curriculum. College internal organization will move toward alignment on the basis of curricular content as modified by students' intent and goals. The fourth issue is maintaining an appropriate teaching staff. Faculty employment and evaluation criteria will remain essentially unchanged. The university graduate divisions and the occupational and business communities will continue as the primary source of new instructors. Pay scales will continue to reflect college credits earned and years of experience. Teaching will move slowly toward becoming a cooperative endeavor. A list of references is included. (PS)

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Contemporary Issues in Community Colleges:

A Synopsis

By
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Erwin Flaxman
General Editor

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CONTEMPORARY ISSUES IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES: A SYNOPSIS

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The community colleges are recent arrivals in American education. Although some of them were formed as early as the beginning of the 20th century, in most states they did not become prominent until after World War II. Accordingly, the public view of community colleges is still indistinct. In states such as Florida where the colleges were designed primarily as feeders to the universities, they are seen as viable options for students who wish to take their first two years of college in their home community. In states such as North Carolina, the community colleges are more likely to be viewed as occupational training centers because they were designed originally as technical institutes. And in California and elsewhere, where the community colleges evolved as comprehensive institutions, they have a varied mission combining the first two years of college, occupational preparation, remedial studies for students leaving high school with inadequate academic preparation, community service, and continuing education.

In common with other educational structures, the community colleges (henceforth in this chapter mostly called "colleges") face numerous issues affecting their programs, funding, and service dimensions. Four sets of issues are of particular concern: maintaining access for all students; effecting student flow through the colleges; preserving a comprehensive curriculum; and maintaining an appropriate teaching staff. Within each of these perennial concerns is a set of contemporary problems that will be discussed in this chapter. However, it is important to say at the outset that community colleges differ so much between states that the issues and resolutions will not appear of equal weight to people concerned with the institutions in any one state. The first section of the chapter presents a background of community college development, with subsequent sections dealing with each of the four issues. The chapter concludes with a summary statement indicating the way that the issues are likely to be resolved over the coming years.

Background

Community colleges began early in the century as junior colleges. Those newly formed institutions were small, supported in the main by private agencies, offering a curriculum restricted to high school postgraduate courses, courses paralleling the liberal arts offered in the freshman and sophomore years at universities, and preparation for middle-level occupations. There were 20 junior colleges in operation in 1909 and 170 in 1919. By 1922 there were 207 colleges and they had spread to 37 to of the 48 states. However, their total enrollment was only around 20,000 students. By 1930 there were 450 junior colleges with a total enrollment of around 70,000, found in all but five states. In 1940 there were 610 colleges, averaging about 400 students each. That year was the midpoint for junior college development since by 1980 the total number of colleges had almost exactly doubled. However the enrollments had increased at a much higher rate; the 1,231 colleges enrolled an average of 4,000 students each. These nearly 5 million students represented over one-third of all higher education enrollments. Around 40% of the people beginning college in America were doing so in community colleges.

The governance system had changed as well. Although there were still nearly 200 privately controlled junior colleges in the early 1980s, they had become a distinct minority. The median private college had fewer than 500 students enrolled. The publicly supported junior colleges had evolved into community colleges, a name suggesting not only their ties to their local districts but also their broader curricular involvements. In addition to the collegiate and occupational studies, they had taken on adult education and a variety of activities bringing them into direct service to other community agencies and groups. And they had grown large; 44 of them had more than 15,000 students each. They were governed by locally elected boards of trustees, state boards of regents, state university systems, state state departments of education, and various combinations thereof. In Kentucky and Hawaii, the community colleges were under the state university; Pennsylvania and South Carolina had both branch campuses of the state university and independently controlled community colleges; California and Illinois had separate community college districts, each managed by a locally elected board of trustees but all coordinated through a state community college board.

The increase in enrollments resulted from several forces. Prime among these was the steady growth in the percentage of the college-age population that participated in post-secondary study; from under 2% in 1900 to 42% in 1980. The community colleges received their share of this increase, and in fact made the increase possible by putting a college within commuting distance of nearly everyone. In addition, the colleges made special efforts to attract students who otherwise would not be in college; older students, part-timers, those who would ordinarily be barred because of low academic ability or finances. The colleges adapted themselves particularly to part-time students who, by 1972, had become a majority of the population enrolled. These students tended also to be older than typical college-age; the median student enrolled in freshman or sophomore level classes was nearly 22 years of age.

Access

The community college grew large by opening its doors to all who wanted to attend. In its pattern of student enrollment it became the nearest thing to an extension of the lower school. The only major difference was that attendance was not compulsory. Students who had completed high school and who were seeking a ready point of easy entry to higher education, those who had done poorly in high school but who wanted a second chance, students seeking skills that would enable them to enter a new occupation, those who wanted to learn new skills and upgrade themselves in an occupation they already had, adults wanting cultural enrichment or avocational or recreational activities, these and more swelled the roll books. Few were turned away. A course in which they might enroll could always be found, and the colleges made certain that the courses were offered at times and places best suited to the enrollees.

Relatively few of the matriculants sought degrees. During the 1970s the colleges awarded associate degrees and occupational certificates to only around nine percent of their total student enrollment. Those who deplore these figures often point with alarm to the apparently high dropout rate without realizing that at least half the students dropped in with no intention of completing a program. They wanted but one or a few courses for their own benefit. The fact that the courses they took were listed as credit courses leading to a degree was of little concern to the students who were using the institution as a ready resource. Institutional policies were permissive and forgiving, typically allowing the students to take classes with little regard for their progress toward completing a degree program.

But state-level policy-makers took note. Using criteria similar to those employed in assessing the lower schools and the universities, they questioned the ratio of degree attainment to credit course enrollment. More directly, they suggested that there should be limits on the number of courses that a person might take and for which the state would be expected to foot the bill. The universities had dealt with the problem of serving students who were not degree bound by erecting extension divisions and putting them on a self-supporting basis. But the community colleges had not so separated their student groups.

Responding to issues of student progress toward completing degrees, the community colleges in several states adopted policies requiring students to matriculate in a degree or certificate program. Typical of these policies were the ones brought forth in several community colleges in Florida where an entering student would be allowed to take not more than four courses and then would be required to take a placement test and enter a degree track. Restrictions were also placed on the length of time that a student might stay enrolled without making steady progress toward completing a degree. Within the first three years of acting under such policies, Miami-Dade Community College purged its roll books of 13,000 students' names (McCabe, 1983).

During the 1980s the issues of the limitations of service remain open. First among these issues is the question of when the public's obligation to an individual stops. Can a student continue taking courses indefinitely without making progress toward completing a program and while the state continues to pay for that person's studies? Superficially the question seems to have a ready answer, but what of the people who need job retraining successively throughout their lifetime? Much depends on the priorities as determined by institutional policy. Does the community college have a greater obligation to the young person just out of high school, the unemployed adult, or the taxpaying citizens who want classes for their personal interest? Any institution has limits to its resources. The policy of having states pay full tariff only for students enrolled in transfer-credit and occupational education classes is well established but it does not answer all the questions because student intent does not necessarily match the curriculum designations.

The community colleges have been prime among institutions in matriculating students of lesser ability. Historically all colleges have had to be concerned with students not as well prepared as the professors would have hoped. But the early-century expansion of a secondary school system focused on preparing people for college entrance had mitigated the problem. Beginning in the mid 1960s the level of student preparation declined. Because the community colleges maintained policies of open access they took larger proportions of poorly prepared students than did other higher education institutions. As example, 40% of the students entering all institutions as freshmen in 1984 were in the top one-fifth of their high school class and 20% of them had an A average; comparable figures for two-year colleges were 25% in the top one-fifth of their class and 10% with an A average. Composite scores on the American College Testing Program measures showed two-year college freshmen declining from 18.0 in 1964 to 15.8 in 1979.

When faced with students of weaker academic abilities, colleges have several choices; allow all to enter any program and fail them or give them no grade when they cannot perform; set up strict admissions standards and turn away those who cannot meet them; allow all to enter but maintain selectivity in certain courses and programs within the institution; or allow all to enter and provide as much supplemental instructional help as the students need to complete their courses satisfactorily. The first of these options, allowing all to enter and then failing those who could not progress, was popular during the 1960s and early 1970s when students challenged the institution's authority to prescribe programs. Barring the students at entry has never been popular among community colleges since it runs counter to their philosophy; hardly any of the colleges were requiring students to present minimum high school grade point averages or entrance test scores during the 1970s. Allowing all students to enter but restricting admission to certain programs has long been popular; the allied health and high level technologies, for example, have been selective and in most colleges, especially prior to the 1960s, internal selection measures were applied to those who would enter the freshman and sophomore level classes. The fourth option, supplemental instruction, has been tried with a fair amount of success but, because it is the most expensive of college resources, it has never enjoyed more than limited application.

Overriding all the options is the question of limits. Should the community colleges allow students who are reading at a third-grade level to matriculate? The cost of educating the functionally illiterate is exceedingly high and chances of bringing members of that group to the ability to do college-level work are minimal. However, an institution with the charge to serve its entire community finds it difficult to rationalize denying access to anyone. Most institutions have recently begun more vigorous screening measures so that the marginally literate are prohibited from taking classes for college credit and placed in remedial reading, writing, and arithmetic sections. The issue in many states is whether the community colleges should be subsidized for providing that service to people who have already been through the lower schools without learning to read and write, an issue complicated by the illiterate adults who have attended the lower schools years earlier, perhaps in another state. Various compromises have been made, most of them centering on different funding for remedial classes.

Placing students in courses and programs consonant with their abilities and aspirations is a continuing source of concern for educators in all types of institutions but especially for those in community colleges taking pride in their policies of open access. There seems little problem in restricting admission to programs that use expensive laboratories and equipment because people can be readily convinced that there are only so many study stations. Setting prerequisites for certain advanced level collegiate courses similarly is readily rationalized. The problem arises when students seeking college-level studies find that they have been shunted to remedial classes on the assumption that they cannot satisfactorily complete college introductory courses. Because the institutions for many years allowed nearly all students to enter the introductory classes, the instructors developed a tendency of requiring less reading and writing and students passed pro forma. But by the early 1980s they seemed to have reached an irreducible minimum in expectations and the clamor for placing students in remedial classes coming from within the colleges matched that which had been set up by the state officials who were questioning the costs of repeated failure (Farland, 1985).

Students and their families tend to complain little if restrictions on admission are based on clearly defined, uniformly applied criteria and are not discriminatory on politically sensitive bases. Intellective ability as a criterion has certainly been popular except when it appears to discriminate against certain groups. Age as a barrier has never been popular. Family income has not been applied as a screen because the community colleges are relatively low-cost institutions. The ability to read the texts, understand the language, and write the papers remains the most widely applied screening measure.

Testing

An issue in the screening and placement of students involves the tests that shall be employed. Any measure must be relative because it is designed to select some students for entry while keeping others out. Yet all tests that are used must tread a careful line so that they do not discriminate on the basis of certain characteristics that might be irrelevant to the student's ability to achieve in the courses. And since the courses have shifting criteria for success, the search for the proper test is an endless quest.

In order to placate those who argue that published tests are culturally biased, some colleges have opted for teacher-made measures. This tends to satisfy the instructors and it tends also to increase test validity since the same people who have prepared and administered the selection devices prepare and administer the classroom tests. However, although published tests have lower correlations with grades awarded by instructors, they tend also to be popular because they have the advantage of having been validated for the concepts they are measuring and because they are more reliable.

Shall testing at entry be made mandatory with the results of the test used for placement in certain classes? Shall testing be voluntary and the results used only to advise students regarding matriculation? Shall testing be applied only to English and mathematics skills? Although the trend is in the direction of mandatory testing and mandatory placement, the variability among states is notable: In 1982, only 20% of California's colleges were requiring their students to take entrance tests (Rounds & Andersen, 1984) whereas in New Jersey, all college entrants took proficiency examinations (Morante, 1982).

Student Flow

Education is time-bound. Courses and curriculums are built on the assumption that a student enters at one level of learning and progresses to another within some period of time. Ideally, students would find their own path, but one of the schools' major functions is to structure the students' environment in a manner such that learning is effected. Time is a factor.

The community colleges are built on the principle of open access but open access can be maintained only as long as some number of the students completes the programs within some reasonable time. When that number falls below a certain level, questions of institutional utility are raised. What is that level? Program completion in the universities ranges from around 25% completing a baccalaureate degree within five years of entry to around 80% with the difference depending on institutional selectivity, cost, and residential character. Around 10 to 30% of community college students complete an associate degree or receive an occupational certificate within three and one-half years of entry. Clearly the community colleges are less linear, less time-bound.

Community college leaders justify the relatively low completion rates by arguing that they welcome students who take only what they want when they want, students who already have degrees or for whom a degree has little value. These institutions are less selective and less costly than the universities. Few community colleges have residence halls. Five of eight students attend part-time, hence would take longer completing degrees even if all other characteristics were equal. The nature of the community college and its student body have effected a lateral curriculum pattern with students dropping in, taking classes of their choice, and dropping out again. The more recent efforts to select and place students at entry and monitor their progress toward completing degrees have yet to have a marked effect although certainly by the end of the decade the program completion rates will have gone up.

The public has tended to use community colleges as a resource much as they use the parks and libraries. They stop in when they want a class just as they stop in the library when they want a book. No one monitors the parks, asking how many times the person has picnicked or played ball that year; the library puts few restrictions on materials circulation. The problem with this conception of the colleges is that the institution looks like a hybrid of adult school, university extension division, business college or technical institute, and university lower division. This makes it difficult for legislators and the public to understand the institution since it does not fit their image of the way a college should be organized and operated. State-level funding patterns do not fit an institution that has so many disparate elements.

Funding

The issue centers on institutional funding formulas. To the legislators who must appropriate funds for the colleges, no funding pattern fits all functions equally well. Program classifications such as college-credit, occupational, remedial, adult, and community services do not adequately describe the educative activities within those curricula. Nor do they describe the course-taking patterns of students attending. The mature woman with a bachelor's degree, taking an art class at a time of day that is convenient for her is obviously in school for her personal interest. Yet she is counted as a transfer student if the course is offered and funded as a college credit class. Under a policy of charging people full fare for classes that they take for their personal or avocational interest, the institution should not receive state reimbursement for that person's attendance. However, it is difficult to segregate such people for funding purposes.

The line between college credit for transfer to a baccalaureate program and community service is blurred. Students may take college credit photography classes so that they can gain access to the darkroom; auto mechanics courses so that they can learn to repair their own vehicles; secretarial classes to operate new equipment so that they may upgrade themselves within jobs they already hold; foreign language classes for their personal interest in traveling abroad. Which classes deserve reimbursement at the level reserved for baccalaureate credit? Which at the level of occupational credit? Which are distinctly community service courses, deserving to be fully funded by their participants?

Funds are allocated according to four general patterns. In Ohio and Texas, the colleges are reimbursed for courses depending on the cost of instruction. In Illinois distinctions are made among courses depending on their presumed utility as remedial, baccalaureate, technical, and so forth, with health technology courses receiving three times the finds allocated to general studies (Illinois Community College Board, 1985). Arizona and

California reimburse the colleges for students enrolled in credit classes based on an average daily attendance or full-time student equivalent formula. Several other states negotiate college budgets annually (Wattenbarger & Bibby, 1981). No pattern has proved sufficiently persuasive to warrant universal adoption. Each raises issues of equity and institutional priorities regarding categories of students being served.

Related to issues of funding, the colleges face questions of student attainment. We know how many students receive degrees and that figure is low when compared with other types of colleges. But how many gain what they were seeking regardless of whether they complete programs? Studies in which students who have left the institution are polled asking whether they had received anything of value typically yield results favorable to the colleges' policies of open access. Students are exceptionally well pleased with the instruction they received; complaints are usually reserved for such ancillary services as the cafeteria or the job placement office. Students who are prepared to work in particular occupations usually are employed in those occupations. Those who transfer to universities tend to do as well as students of comparable ability who entered the universities as freshmen; see, for example, studies done in Illinois (Illinois Community College Board, 1984), Florida (Florida State Department of Education, 1984), and California (California State Postsecondary Education Commission, 1984).

However many legislators remain unconvinced. They point to the minuscule percentage of transfers as compared to total community college enrollments. The educators argue that most matriculants had not intended to transfer. The state officials contend that, even so, state funds supported those students' enrollment in transfer-credit classes. In all states there is a severe disjunction between the reimbursement formulas and the students' intentions and the institutions' outcomes.

Sources of Students

Issues of institutional outcome have led to calls for sophomore-level tests, better course articulation between secondary schools and community colleges and between community colleges and universities, and related measures that would heighten student flow. All higher education structures depend on a steady supply of high school graduates to fill their classes but the number of graduates has declined every year since 1977. In that year, more than 3.1 million students graduated from high school but expectations are that only 2.3 million will graduate in 1992. Many community college leaders realize that the universities have first claim on the 18-year-olds seeking baccalaureate degrees, especially if financial aids are available to pay the higher tuition and living costs. Hence they feel they must depend on marginal students: working adults; people seeking occupational preparation for which degrees are not needed; socially or academically immature recent high school graduates; and others whom the universities typically do not serve. Using student flow through the institution as a measure of institutional success seems to inhibit service to those types of students, hence to penalize the community colleges. They want their hybrid educational structures to be recognized and supported for what they are and do.

However, some community college planners are increasing their efforts to recruit students directly from high schools. Numerous strategems have been employed to link the institutions: advanced placement; credit by examination for college courses; offers of courses on the high school campus; use of community college instructors as visiting faculty in high school classes; colloquiums for high school students; math, science, or humanities fairs; and special orientation for students from single high schools. College students who are alumni of a high school have been sent to the school along with college counselors to recruit new students. A college in Iowa developed a set of occupational programs to be offered jointly with the local secondary schools (Poort & Williamson, 1984). A Florida college produced a computer-assisted guidance program for use in its area's high schools (Lockett, 1981). A college in New York has taken responsibility for the education of students from grades 11 to 14 in its district (Lieberman, 1985).

The issue centers on allocation of effort. The colleges have not sufficient resources to develop intense programs for recent high school graduates, local industries, adults, and all the other clients they purport to serve. They cannot do all with equal vigor. How shall they establish priorities regarding particular student groups?

Maintaining the Comprehensive Curriculum

From their beginnings, community colleges have offered freshman- and sophomore-level courses, general education, occupational studies, adult education, and remedial studies. There is overlap among these curricula but distinctive portions of each may be seen in nearly all community college catalogues. All the curricula grew originally with a minimum of state-level coordination; they were organized to fit the peculiarities of each local district and the finding available to it. The freshman and sophomore studies grew largest in colleges where high proportions of the students were intending to transfer to universities. General education in the form of high school postgraduate studies was prominent in districts where few students would be transferring. Occupational programs gained strength as funding became available and as local industries sought trained workers. Adult education became part of the community college curriculum to the extent that local adult school efforts were relinquished by the lower schools. Remedial education, cutting across all programs, grew large as the students seeking enrollment proved less able to participate in the regular college-level curricula and as adult basic education became prominent in areas with a high proportion of immigrants or otherwise marginally literate people.

The five curricular functions have always shifted in emphasis among institutions and from time to time. Around one-fifth of the community colleges in America are predominantly technical institutes. Hence occupational studies occupy the major portion of their curricula. Where the colleges are organized as two-year branch campuses of a university or where they act as major feeders to a local university, college parallel studies dominate. These two primary functions have shifted position; 50 years ago, freshman and sophomore studies centering on the liberal arts accounted for nearly three-fourths of the curriculum. The situtation is now reversed and studies leading to direct employment or to employment-related bachelor's degrees account for around that much of the offerings. The proportion of remedial studies varies with the quality of high school preparation, the proportion of students attending college in a local area, the immigration into the district, and the space available for qualified students to enter universities. All have an effect; overall, remedial study accounts for more than one-third the enrollment in English and mathematics courses. Figures on adult education are elusive because many community service activities taking the form of spectator events or short courses find their way into the count, but students taking courses for credit probably outnumber the noncredit students by more than two to one.

As long as the colleges enjoyed high growth rates, while state budgets for postsecondary education were increasing, and while local funding was available, the various curricular functions waxed and waned within the broadest of guidelines. But as increasing proportions of funding came from the state level and when growth leveled off in the late 1970s, calls for curricular standards, criteria, and accountability became more prominent.

Issues in curriculum emphasis are not new, however. Bogue's 1950 book on community colleges determined that one of the primary concerns for the institutions was in effecting a merger of general education with occupational studies. Blocker's 1965 book considered a major issue to be the maintenance of comprehensive curricular programs. Community college traditions hold that courses useful to anyone who applies should be offered. Accordingly, most college managers strive for curricular balance and comprehensiveness. Questions of imbalance and limitations arise only when funding is reduced or when challenges are brought by external auditors.

The question of which curricula are most valuable, hence deserving of the most support, is merely an extension of the question of which knowledge is of most worth. But political and fiscal considerations are more dominant than philosophical concerns in curriculum formation. A strong faculty group with an interest in the liberal arts, a large local employer with need for especially prepared workers, a state legislator with a mission to improve students' success when they transfer to the universities, or a politically active local senior citizens group can exert a marked influence on curriculum.

Certain philosophically related criteria are often applied whether or not the curriculum managers are aware of them. One of the most forceful criteria is that courses and programs should be more useful to the broader society than valuable to the individual. Hence occupational studies that promise to contribute to the economy win out over avocational or recreational course offerings. This has led to a reduction in much of adult education and an increase in vocational offerings. The issue then becomes, how far in the direction of occupational education can the community college go before it loses its comprehensiveness? Avocational activities are an authorized function of community colleges but they have become increasingly difficult to fund. In most areas they have become self-supporting although not many community colleges have adopted the university model of a completely separate extension division as the agency through which the individually beneficial courses are offered.

A second criterion that is being applied increasingly is that the program should be verifiably educative. Few colleges have taken the initiatiave in providing evidence of student learning obtained, relying instead on the criterion of resources expended as a measure of institutional worth. The assumption has been that as long as a qualified faculty was available to teach, the education was being accommodated. More recently the state agencies have taken an interest; in the past 10 years demands for statewide testing and other measures of program outcomes have spread. Several states now either already have or are considering mandating tests at the sophomore level before a student may receive a degree and/or transfer to a senior institution. Florida has taken the lead with its College Level Academic Skills Test (Losak, 1944).

The idea of testing is not new; numerous programs have been designed to lead students to the ability to pass state licensure examinations. What is new in the 1980s is the notion of testing for the outcomes of all programs. These types of tests move quickly to the lowest common denominator, the three R's. Other statewide outcomes measures include information on the number of students gaining employment in the field for which they had been prepared; Ohio, for example, collects such data annually (Ohio State Board of Regents, 1985). And Maryland typically conducts studies of transfers to the state's universities (Maryland State Board for Community Colleges, 1985).

The verification of education attained typically has several results. One is that courses that have no place in a designated curriculum suffer, thus reducing exploration on the part of the students. This shrinkage in volitional courses affects the liberal arts negatively and it gives a further boost to remedial studies. Since college-outcome examinations primarily measure the students' abilities to read, write, and compute at the most elementary levels, the courses in composition and arithmetic gain enrollments regardless of whether students are planning on transfer or on direct occupational entry. How can the specialized courses, those that have no place in a designated curriculum, those that appeal to students merely for their own interest, be maintained?

The third criterion applied to curriculum formation is the test of whether the courses are readily available elsewhere to the clients that the institution serves. Here the community colleges have a strong case for the comprehensive curriculum since many of the students they serve have no option in college attendance. These students have low prior grades or low entrance test scores and are barred from the selective colleges. They must work and attend college part-time. They must stay in their home community because of family responsibilities. They cannot afford the higher tuition at other institutions. For any or all of these reasons, the community colleges serve a clientele that finds alternative colleges closed. Since college-level offerings are not available to them elsewhere, they find them at their local community college or not at all.

Maintaining each of the separate curricula has its own persistent problems. Are the freshman and sophomore classes comparable in content and rigor to those presented in universities? Do university restrictions on the types and level of courses they will accept for transfer credit limit the colleges' offering of a comprehensive curriculum?

Occupational education has its own set of curricular imperatives. One pernnial issue is matching the curriculum to local employment opportunities. Few community colleges are able to adjust program offerings sufficiently rapidly to accommodate the local job market. Staff must be employed, facilities built, students recruited. The opportunities for employment perforce change more rapidly than the curricula.

A second issue in occupational education is in preparation for baccalaureate-level occupations. Many of the courses that community college students take are occupationally oriented but the student must transfer to a senior institution and complete a program there before job entry is available. Several of the health-related programs and so-called high-level technologies fall into that category. This tends to distort the figures on occupational and college parallel curricula because the same set of courses serves both.

A further issue in occupational education is its articulation with high school programs. Occupational studies are not confined to the community colleges alone; many of the secondary schools from which they draw their students are heavily involved. Cooperation and joint program coordination are continuing issues (Parnell, 1985).

Remedial studies present their own set of issues. A curriculum cannot reasonably outdistance its client's abilities; the students either drop out or fail. Or the institution passes through the students who have not learned nearly what the program purported to teach them. The institution thus shunts the problem to the next level of education. One of the most important benefits of education is access to another year of schooling but if the lower schools maintain a practice of social promotion, their credibility suffers. Furthermore, certificates and degrees given pro forma for student attendance rapidly lose value; witness the high school diploma over the past generation. Since remedial studies are a community college imperative, should they be organized as a separate division of the institution? Would the poorly prepared students fare better if they were allowed to take the regular college credit courses with a mandate that they engage in supplemental remedial work?

The limits of adult education and community service are of increasing concern and these two functions are scrutinized by funding agents who feel they should be on a self-supporting basis. The community colleges strive to serve all possible clients and build programs for children as well as for senior citizens. Are there any limits to what they can offer? Most college leaders would answer that there are none but at the same time they recognize the futility of attempting to get public funds for all purposes. And yet the counter argument that senior citizens have paid their taxes and deserve to have courses directed at their interests has been raised. There is an uneasy balance between charging them for the courses they want and using college funds to pay some of the costs.

The major substantive issue in curriculum is whether the colleges can maintain educational programs that serve social cohesion. Most students want courses that lead to direct employment, and the liberal arts survive because of tradition and the expectations of the universities to which many of the students transfer. Most students feel the pressure for early specialization or the desire for courses that serve their personal interest even when they are not seeking a diploma. Who speaks for an education that leads students to a sense of their nation's heritage, shared understandings, community values, a common language?

Funding

The major procedural issue concerns the relationship between funding and student and course classifications. State reimbursements currently are based on instructional costs, credit hours awarded, average daily attendance, full-time student equivalent enrollments, or combinations of these, with further differentiation often made according to whether a course is categorized as occupational, transfer, remedial, business, health professions related, technical, continuing education, or noncredit. An amalgam of course content, student attendance patterns, institutional costs, and student intentions pervades the funding formulas.

The varied funding formulas can be traced to the history of community colleges in a state. Where the colleges grew out of the lower schools, reimbursement on the basis of student attendance is often included. Where the colleges were organized as technical institutes, different reimbursements based on curriculum classifications prevail. And where they are considered integral with the state's public universities, credit and noncredit course distinctions loom large. But in nearly all states these categories overlap. Studies of the relationships among these variables are clearly suggested because the formulas that are applied in any state affect the types of curricula offered or emphasized and the types of students attracted to the colleges.

The Question of Access

Overriding all is the question of balance between institutional credibility and student access. If the colleges are being held accountable for their students' performance on the statewide examinations, there is always the fear that the colleges will begin to deny access to the less qualified students. Testing and placement at entry has the effect of denying access unless sufficiently rigorous programs are available to lead students to the ability to pass the college's courses and, eventually, the externally administered outcomes tests. If the colleges are to be judged primarily on the percentage of their students who pass the exit examinations, they will suffer the temptation of denying access to the poorly prepared.

Faculty Concerns

An institution dedicated to a variety of services must constantly seek instructors who understand its mission and are qualified to participate. In 1950 Bogue noted a major problem in finding the right kind of teachers to work in the community colleges. His concerns have been echoed throughout the years.

For the first 50 years of community college existence most of its teachers moved in from secondary school positions. More recently the university graduate schools have been supplying sizable numbers of instructors and in the occupational areas people with experience in the field are a main source of supply. There are 250,000 people teaching in community colleges nationwide. Their highest degree typically is the master's but around 25% of the instructors in academic subjects hold the doctorate. Their workload is from 12 to 15 hours per week or from 300 to 450 weekly student contact hours in four or five classes. Since 1974 more than half the instructors have been part-timers. Their median age is between 45 and 55 (Cohen & Brawer, 1982).

Issues surrounding the faculty include instructor effectiveness, assistance, benefits, professionalism, and age. Measures of instructional effectiveness are quite rare. Productivity is typically measured by the number of students one meets. Competence is defined as number of graduate hours or years of experience in the field taught. Salaries are based on these latter qualifications. Comparative measures of instructional effectiveness are rarely undertaken. Can measures relating student learning to instructor activities be developed? Educators in the lower schools and universities alike have had difficulty in isolating the criteria of instructor effect. The community colleges are no closer.

The assistance available to instructors represents an additional concern. Teachers in the lower schools frequently have aides available to them; in the university the teaching assistant is well known. But few teaching assistants ever appear in community colleges because there is no pool of graduate students working on degrees who can be employed to teach at low rates. Some colleges have managed to create situations in which teaching aides or paraprofessionals are employed but these are usually in learning laboratory or tutorial sections. The classroom instructor typically operates in isolation. Less than one in ten of them have readers or paraprofessional aides available and, when asked, not many more than that felt that the availability of such assistance would help their teaching (Cohen & Brawer, 1982).

Unionization has made greater inroads among community college faculty than in any other type of higher education structure. Around one-third of the community college instructors are working under contracts derived through collective bargaining. The intangible benefits and drawbacks of community college instruction are about like those seen in other levels of higher education with the exception that the community college teachers chafe at the large classes and poor academic preparation exhibited by their students.

The instructors are relatively highly professionalized in comparison with secondary school teachers but their level of professionalization suffers in comparison with university professors. The community college instructors are less likely to apply for or receive research grants, publish books or articles, associate with their counterparts in other institutions, or belong to academic associations. They are teachers first, members of an academic profession second. The longer they stay in community colleges, the less their affiliation with their academic disciplines. They use their collective bargaining power for self-interest in obtaining higher salaries and fringe benefits and to a lesser extent to expand their power over the curriculum. But the individual instructors must leave the classroom and become program heads or coordinators before they gain true curricular control.

Aging Faculty

In recent years few new instructors have been employed full-time, hence the average age has increased. For example, whereas one-third of the instructors teaching the humanities in 1975 were aged 35 or younger, that cohort had dropped to 15% by 1983. At the other end of the scale, 24% of the instructors in 1975 were aged 51 or older but 32% were in that category in 1983. In the older, large-city community college districts such as Los Angeles, 20% of the instructors were aged 61 or older.

The aging of faculty has two major implications: cost and responsibilities. Because the salary schedules are typically arrayed so that instructors receive pay increments based on graduate degrees earned and years of service, the costs of instruction increase markedly as the instructors age. The same instructor doing the same job receives salary increases each year (although some pay schedules have ceilings at 15 or 20 years' service) and that person's fringe benefits cost more. Many community college instructors work on additional academic degrees while they are teaching full-time. Hence the longer they are employed the more likely they are to have graduate credits that move them higher on the salary schedule. When new instructors are not employed at lower rates to offset these increases, costs go up rapidly.

Part-Time Instructors

In most community colleges the costs of an aging faculty have been offset by employing part-time instructors at an hourly rate for considerably less money (Boggs, 1984). This accounts in large measure for the figures showing 57% of the instructors as part-timers (American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1985). But an institution needs some minimum number of full-timers to manage the instructional program and, in order to maintain its status as part of higher education, it needs instructors who are available to advise students and perform ancillary chores. Typically the part-timers meet their classes and leave the campuses. There are no rules or precedents for the ratio of full-timers that must be maintained for the college to keep its credibility and the students not to suffer from instructor unavailability, but certainly some colleges have approached a minimum point.

Finding New Teachers

If the colleges are to maintain a minimum cadre of full-time instructors, some intensive hiring will have to take place during the next decade. The laws of demography mandate that nearly half the full-timers will be retiring by the end of the century. This will reduce the pressure on the teaching budgets because the new people who are employed to replace them will come in at lower rates. But university-based preservice programs designed especially to prepare community college instructors are few and inservice preparation at the colleges themselves is not well structured. The community colleges are similar to the universities in their insouciant approach to faculty preparation, typically taking the position that anyone with an academic degree or some experience in an occupation can teach that subject or trade.

The major problems in finding new teachers center on the dearth of particularized preservice and inservice instructor preparation programs, and on the inconsistent or archaic criteria on which instructors are employed and retained. People to staff the classrooms can always be found as long as the salaries remain competitive. In recent years instructor salaries in most teaching areas have become comparable with those offered to people with similar training in other fields. But in some fields, industry offers much more. Furthermore, the college as an academic enterprise demands more than staff who will go through the routines of meeting classes. It needs a cohort of professional practitioners working together to advance the enterprise. Outside nonacademic institutional managers cannot do it.

Criteria for Hiring

On what criteria shall the faculty be replaced? Most institutions now use the historical criteria of a master's degree in the academic subject to be taught or a number of years of experience in the occupational field. Teaching credentials certifying that type of preparation are required in many states (Burks, 1984). But those criteria do not evidence teaching ability, a quality assumed, not measured.

Faculty Development

The faculty evaluation and salary schedules reflect advancement for additional course work. Instructors with earned doctorates receive higher pay. Should the colleges maintain such a criterion even though the teaching ability of people with doctorates is not demonstrably different from those without? The colleges do not expect or reward research in an academic field; their giving higher pay to doctoral degree holders may be misguided (Cohen & Brawer, 1977).

Within the institutions, faculty development programs are poorly formed and the concept of instructional aides or assistants is not well known. The faculty take a dim view of workshops on teaching procedures unless they are conducted by other instructors from within the discipline. The faculty welcome travel money and sabbatical leaves along with reduced teaching loads and released time to work on course preparation. However, all of these benefits do more to build morale than they do to enhance teaching effectiveness. The faculty who retire can be replaced with others who, because they are younger, can be paid a lower rate. But that does nothing to enhance the quality of the institution unless changes are made in faculty preparation and inservice evaluation and development.

Curriculum Planning

Historically the management of curriculum and instruction in the community college has been the province of administrators. Because the community college in many states evolved out of the secondary school systems, the tradition of management by an administrator, the school principal, prevailed. Community colleges typically have a dean or vice president of instruction whose function has been to coordinate curriculum, course planning, and instructional activities. The advent of collective bargaining in community colleges has done little to move that type of planning over to the faculty. However, in many of the larger institutions the dean of instruction has become more a dean of personnel management than a person with responsibility for managing instruction. Furthermore, as in the lower schools, there is much state-level review of programs and course offerings.

These characteristics pointing to the community colleges' similarity to the lower schools are mirrored in faculty responsibilities. There is a continuing struggle between faculty who would take more command of curriculum and instruction and the requirements of state agencies and the traditions of administrative management which put most of the essential elements of instruction beyond faculty control.

Future Roles of Faculty

Few indications of change in faculty role are apparent. As a group, the faculty has not taken steps to professionalize itself by seeking funds to employ instructional aides. Preservice preparation and credentialing continues as course work or experience in the subject area to be taught. Inservice training is accorded lower priority than fringe benefits for the staff. Faculty replacement will occur, but the issue of the effect of the sizable turnover remains open.

Summary

The four sets of issues may be summarized as follows.

1. Access:

   A. How long does the public's obligation to provide educational opportunity to every applicant continue? Can any student take courses indefinitely at public expense?

B. To whom does the community college have primary obligation? Students just out of high school? Adults seeking career change? Senior citizens?

C. Must college applicants display some minimum level of intelligence or prior educational attainment?

D. Should the college mandate entrance tests and, based on the results, place students in certain classes or programs?

Trends are toward tightening criteria for attendance. The colleges in some states will be forced to make clearer distinctions among the student groups they would serve and for whom they expect to receive public funds. Minimal criteria will be established. Placement will be mandated.

2. Student Flow

A. On what criteria of student achievement should the colleges be appraised? Degrees attained? Exit test scores?

B. Should colleges be funded on the basis of costs, number of students attending, number of students completing programs?

C. Should different types of programs or courses be funded under different formulas?

D. Can the colleges be supported as community education centers not accountable for the students' obtaining jobs or further schooling?

Funding formulas that take into account the variation in student intent seem to be emerging. Differential funding or programmatic funding bodes to become more prominent than the prior pattern of reimbursement based on student attendance. As a quid pro quo the colleges will probably become more vigorous in separating students, courses, and programs into more defensible categories.

3. Maintaining the Comprehensive Curriculum

A. On what basis should curricular priorities be assigned?

B. What balance among liberal arts, occupational skills, recreational activities, and basic skills courses should be the colleges strive to maintain?

C. Should remedial studies, occupational programs, liberal arts, and recreational studies be organized separately?

D. How can the colleges attend more directly to curriculum that is concerned with fostering a sense of social responsibility?

Except in states where the colleges are directed especially toward occupational studies, they will maintain a comprehensive curriculum. College internal organization will move away from the indistinct categories of "transfer," "occupational," etc. and toward alignment on the basis of curricular content as modified by student intent. The students' own individualistic goals will remain paramount.

4. Faculty Concerns

   A. Can measures relating student learning to instructor activities be developed?

   B. On what criteria should instructors be evaluated? For what purposes?

   C. What sources of new instructors should be primary for replacing the faculty members who leave?

   D. Should the faculty strive toward a higher level of professionalization? If so, on what criteria?

Faculty employment and evaluation criteria will remain essentially unchanged. The university graduate divisions and the occupational and business communities will continue as the primary source of new instructors. Pay scales will continue to reflect college credits earned and years of experience. Teaching will move but slowly toward becoming a cooperative endeavor.

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