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ABSTRACT

This study sought to ascertain the scope and nature of postsecondary offerings within the 19 counties of central Alabama, i.e., District Five, in the "Black Belt" region. In addition to profiling the offerings of community, technical, and junior colleges in the area, attitudes relative to the effectiveness and relevance of current opportunities were sought. A battery of strategies for improving educational offerings was also sought. Central Alabama is characterized by inadequate rural agrarian economies; high and increasing unemployment rates; low per capita income; and high illiteracy, infant mortality, teenage pregnancy, and school dropout rates. Four populations were surveyed: 82 community leaders, 421 public school personnel, 74 community college faculty, and 1,211 members of the general public. Data revealed high agreement among perceptions of various populations relative to the insufficiency of educational offerings in the area and the need for an increased presence in central Alabama by colleges and universities. There was a wide disparity of beliefs concerning the appropriateness of the educational services offered in the 19 counties and concerning the level of support for postsecondary education among various populations. The study concludes that the most appropriate entity to respond to these needs is the two-year community college. Five recommendations for change are offered. Appendices contain unemployment statistics, infant mortality rates, and teenage pregnancy rates. (Contains 15 references.) (JDD)

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Postsecondary Education in Central Alabama: Structural and Policy Implications for the Present and Future

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Postsecondary Education in Central Alabama:
Structural and Policy Implications for the Present and Future

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Running Head: Community Colleges in Central Alabama

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Section 1

Introduction

Higher education in Alabama has come under increased scrutiny during the past 15 years, as legislators, educators, community leaders, and the public at large have demanded increased services in spite of fewer appropriations. These constituencies have come to expect, and in fact demand, an educational system which complements both secondary schools and colleges and universities, while simultaneously preparing individuals for the world of work. Additional expectations have been placed on the existing system to offer leisure education courses and programs, as well as services to disadvantaged sections of the State's population.

A particular concern has been related to the 19 counties comprising Alabama's State Board of Education District Five. In an area popularly known as the "Black Belt" due to its rich, dark soil, the counties include: Sumter, Greene, Hale, Marengo, Perry, Dallas, Wilcox, Lowndes, Montgomery, Bullock, Macon, Russell, and Barbour. No comprehensive study addressing the postsecondary delivery system in this district had been attempted, despite growing public attention to the area. Adequate planning, educational delivery systems, and sound state legislative action depend on the accuracy of data which reflect the unique and diverse needs of the area.

In studying the District and offering an analysis of the data associated with it, the severity and desperateness of the social and educational problems becomes strikingly evident. One of the primary interests of this study was the raising of consciousness of all concerned and interested parties. Additionally, the creative involvement of concerned constituents was desired as the study was developed. To adequately serve this area which has seen constant economic and social difficulty since the reconstruction, leadership is called for from a broad cross section of communities, including business, industry, social agencies and institutions, and collaborating educational institutions. A partnership for change, to be successful, must address the "whole" person and the community at large. Only in doing so can the severe, educational, economic, and moral needs of the area be met.

The purpose for conducting this study was to ascertain the scope and nature of postsecondary offerings with the central 19 counties comprising District Five in Alabama. In addition to profiling the offerings of community, technical, and junior colleges in the area, attitudes relative to the effectiveness and relevance of current opportunities were sought. A battery of strategies or techniques to be used in improving educational offerings was also sought.

The specific nature of the research design for the study was determined by:

1. **The direction of the State Board of Education, to encompass several unique factors.** These include:
 - analysis of the current postsecondary opportunities within the District;
 - the role of postsecondary educational institutions in education, community, and economic development;
 - analysis of geographical factors associated with off-campus instruction provided by individual institutions;
 - analysis of the role and scope of educational services provided by the area skills centers.

2. **Additional demographic data gathered from a variety of governmental sources provided base-line and comparative information relative to the current social and economic status of the district.** The preliminary analysis of these data reflected the current state of selected factors relative to the District and illustrate a need for increased investigation:
 - inadequate rural agrarian economies which are unable to meet current and emerging socio-economic depression trends;
 - high and increasing unemployment rates;
 - low per capita income rate throughout the District;
 - high illiteracy, infant mortality, teenage pregnancy, and high school drop-out rates;
 - a growing concern for increases in violent crime, murder, and drug use and abuse;
 - a nationally recognized deteriorated infrastructure.

Given the needs identified by the State Board of Education and the presented demographic information, the task was to generate meaningful data reflective of the nature and scope of current two-year college offerings, and to suggest valid methods for dealing with the situation. During the past decade several unsuccessful efforts have been initiated through local, state,

and federal entities to identify and resolve the situation in the area studied. No effort attempted to review the entire 19 county area, or attempted to involve the diverse, complex populations which have an impact on the role, mission, and function of postsecondary education in the area.

The region encompassed by the "Black Belt" has historically been ignored by traditional colleges and university program offerings and services. This is articulated among communities throughout the state by such factors as the large number of public institutions in the state, including eight four-year universities with multiple campuses and 33 community, junior, and technical colleges.

Recognizing the need for the study of educational offerings in central Alabama was the primary step in developing a more holistic approach to coordinating postsecondary education. This recognition by local, state, and educational leaders has been slow to be realized, and has come about only due to long-term fiscal restraints imposed by the state legislature. More important than public displays of budget-cutting, however, are the real-life social, economic, and educational needs of those living in central Alabama.

Section 2

Background of the Study

The two-year college movement in the United States has been constantly dynamic, changing to meet the individual needs of their respective communities. This responsiveness has taken the form of business and industry training, providing four-year degree transfer programs, adult education program offerings, remedial and basic education programs, and leisure education. In undertaking such a broad spectrum of responsibilities, many colleges have faced a certain degree of difficulty in adequately serving their communities' specific needs. The result at least for administrators has been the need to re-tool or re-educate themselves to the unique role of managing short-cycle higher education programs. This has been increasingly made visible by the providing of community college administration programs in graduate schools of education (Keim, 1994).

The unique nature of community college administration has been studied from many different vantage points, including the presidency (Twombly, 1993), the department chair (Seagren & Miller, 1993), and middle-level managers (Johns & Taylor, 1987). Many of these investigations have concluded that community colleges rely to some extent on external labor markets to fulfill their unique staffing needs (Twombly, 1988; Twombly & Moore, 1987). Despite the apparent growing knowledge base related to

operating a two-year college, there continues to be a great deal of distress associated with the occupation (Cloud, 1992).

Recent efforts, such as those by the newly created National Community College Chair Academy, have been focused increasingly on specific management improvement techniques and strategies in two-year colleges. A major component imbedded in these efforts is that of reliance on team building, group processes, and participatory management (Seagren, Wheeler, Creswell, Miller, & Grassmeyer, 1994; Barwick, 1989; Reyes & Twombly, 1987). Little effort, however, has been directed at incorporating faculty perceptions of the college into decision making and governance (Reyes & Twombly, 1987).

Community Colleges in Local Service

Some have argued that each community college, in order to fulfill the unique needs of their respective communities, must hold different mission or purpose. DiCroce (1989) argued in a review of existing literature that community colleges typically fall into three dimensions. First is the dimension of an extended or collaborative body to secondary schools. The concept of stressing articulation programs and preparing learners for the world of work has been advocated by Parnell (1985) who also stressed the need for life-long learning.

The second dimension contends that community colleges work to serve their local communities. In doing so, they face the challenge of open-access to all learners, seen by some to be a

barrier to quality education offerings (Roueche & Baker, 1987). The third dimension provides for comprehensive community colleges focusing on serving all of the needs of their respective communities, and not necessarily targeting transfer programming, job training, or community service (Cohen & Brawer, 1987). This third dimension also calls for the construction of bridges across traditional departmental lines and greater collaboration between different programs to provide a more comprehensive approach to teaching, learning, service, and job training.

Sullins and Atwell (1986) particularly noted that two-year colleges in rural areas, similar to the area of study, must offer a comprehensive host of learning opportunities, including both remedial and basic education and transfer and job training programs. Due to difficulty in participating in formal learning opportunities at an institution, the rural community college must make efforts to offer non-traditional learning experiences and courses. Offering courses off campus, on weekends and at night, and correspondence or distance education techniques have all been advocated for the rural two-year college.

In Alabama, limited attention has been given to developing consistent mission statements for colleges across the state. Additionally, efforts to down-size the 33 campus system have forced many colleges to merge with larger systems and relinquish programs for the sake of a system-wide mission rather than local college missions.

Demographic Data on Central Alabama

Central Alabama has been the subject of little study, both internally by state universities and agencies, and externally by consulting groups or scholars in the academic communities. While there has been a continued interest in state-wide access and desegregation measures in higher education, little has been undertaken to examine the role, function, and mission of two-year colleges in Alabama.

To develop a base-line of data and fully understand the context of the current study, it was deemed appropriate to examine the general demographic data available on the area of study. Subsequently, presented here are the data for the 19 counties examined in the study, including unemployment rates, infant mortality, teenage pregnancies, illiteracy, and per capita income.

Unemployment: Based on 1988 data, the unemployment rate for the United States was 7% and the State of Alabama was 9%. Only three counties in the area of study reported rates below these averages. All other counties were higher, with Washington and Sumter having unemployment rates twice that of Alabama. The mean unemployment rate for the area was 13.51% (see Appendix 1).

Infant Mortality: The average infant mortality rate for the area of study was 15.58, compared to 12.60 for the State of Alabama, and 10.60 nationally. These data reveal that of the 19 counties, 17 have infant mortality rates above the national level and 13 above the State level. The infant mortality rate in Green

County (39.80) was among the highest in the U. S. (see Appendix 2).

Teenage Pregnancies: Data reflecting 1985 figures indicated that births to unmarried teenagers per 1,000 births among teenagers nationally was 513.90. Figures for Alabama revealed a statewide average of 554.20 per 1,000 births. For the area of study, three counties had birth rates over 900 per 10,000, with five other counties having a rate of more than 800. The average for the area was 730.56, 184.36 above the State average (see Appendix 3).

Illiteracy: Statistics reflecting illiteracy were based on the percentage of individuals in the population 25 years old and above with less than five years of elementary education. While illiteracy rates for the nation were listed as 3.58%, Alabama reported 6.40%. Nine of the counties in the area of study had illiteracy rates approximately twice that of the state, and approximately four to six times higher than the national average. The mean rate for the area was 11.84%, with a range of 4.80 to 18.30%.

Per Capita Income: In 1987, the per capita income for the nation was \$15,482, \$11,947 for Alabama, and \$12,741 for the Southeastern United States. During the same period of time, only one county, Montgomery, reported a per capita income higher than any of the three, and the area had a mean per capita income of \$8,645.

Section 3

Procedures

The purpose for conducting this study was to develop a better and more comprehensive understanding of the postsecondary educational and service offerings in central Alabama. The study was specifically designed to examine those offerings and services in the 19 counties in central Alabama commonly referred to as the "Black Belt." Due to the descriptive and exploratory nature of the study, survey research methods were employed to examine four populations: community leaders, public school personnel, community college faculty, and the general public. Assumed was that a compilation of perceptions from each of these populations would provide an overall 'portrait' of postsecondary education in the area.

Each of the surveys were designed and pilot tested. Assisting in the construction and validation of the instruments were faculty and administrators at Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University, Alabama State University, Auburn University-Auburn, Auburn University-Montgomery, Tuskegee University, Troy State University-Montgomery, and Livingston University. The research and data collection were coordinated through the University of Alabama's College of Education and Institute for Higher Education Research and Service. Additionally validation confirmation for each survey was

completed by the Center for Urban Research at Alabama A & M University.

Community Leader Survey

The survey of community leaders within the 19 counties included nine categorical response items. The items requested that respondents rate their level of agreement on a 1-to-5 Likert-type scale on series of statements about the adequacy and desire for offerings and service from local community colleges.

The sample for this survey was composed of a cross section of professional, political, and lay individuals holding formal and informal leadership positions throughout the area. The sample consisted of 45 civic leaders, 37 county agents, and 8 home economists affiliated with county agent offices. The sample was randomly selected, and the survey mailed.

Public School Personnel Survey

The perceptions and beliefs of secondary school personnel was assumed to be crucial to understanding the effectiveness and nature of postsecondary education in the area. The content and design of the survey paralleled that of the community leader survey.

The survey of administrative personnel included secondary school principals, superintendents, and other administrative personnel. Also included were elementary and secondary school faculty. Random samples were taken from each population in an

attempt to select a similar proportion of each. Subsequently, 50 administrators and 400 elementary and secondary school teachers were selected for study. Both surveys were administered on-site.

Community College Faculty Survey

As the function and purpose of community colleges in the area was the focus of study, the perceptions of community college faculty was assumed to be vital to the study. The survey paralleled the design and content of the community leader survey. The survey was distributed through campus mail procedures to 100 community college faculty in the area, regardless of teaching content. The sample was limited, however, to full-time teaching faculty.

General Public Survey

The final questionnaire was designed to elicit information from the general population in the each of the 19 counties. The survey paralleled the community leader survey, and was administered to one-tenth of one percent of the population of each county in the area. This socio-metric technique was assumed to be accurate, and was noted to be commonly used in opinion polling. The surveys were administered in person by team leaders who were familiar with their respective location. A total of 1,211 surveys were administered and collected.

Data Analysis

Due to the descriptive and exploratory nature of the study, each data collection effort through survey methods was considered "isolated," and was not intended for comparative purposes. Additionally, the disparity of cell sizes between the samples prevented meaningful inferential analysis across populations. Therefore, data analysis was completed through descriptive statistics, including mean responses to each question and percentages where appropriate. Data analysis was completed through the Institute for Higher Education Research and Services and the College of Education at the University of Alabama.

As a word of caution, the unique nature of the area of study prevents wide-spread generalizing across geographic regions. The intent of data collection and analysis was to portray the existing climate and perceptions of community colleges service to this particular region of Alabama. Further inferences to different populations and geographic or socio-economic areas and populations should be made with this caution in mind.

Section 4

Results

Considering the unique design of the study and data collection, data analysis have been provided by survey population. The entire study was inclusive of 1,788 individual survey responses: 82 community leaders, 47 public school administrators, 374 public school teachers, 74 community college faculty, and 1,211 from the general public.

Community Leaders Respond

Community leaders responding to the item related to the sufficiency of educational opportunities was neutral, achieving a group mean rating of 2.96 on the 1-to-5 Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). This rating appeared to be consistent with the other two items related to educational opportunities, including the mean rating of 3.93 on the statement "additional postsecondary education opportunities should be made available to the citizens of the county," and the 1.86 mean rating of the statement "there is no need for additional educational opportunities in this county."

Respondents identified private sources (mean 3.90) as the most likely source of additional funding, followed by state and federal funds (3.60), business and industry (3.57), taxes (2.64), and "other" (3.80). Increased educational opportunities through

the local community, junior, and technical colleges were perceived to be supported by educational leaders (3.36), community lay leaders (3.16), political leaders (3.09), and the general public (2.98).

The limitation of existing programs to remedial and developmental courses achieved moderate agreement (mean 3.82), and limiting programs to "educationally literate individuals" achieved a lower agreement level (mean 3.30). In general terms, the community understanding and agreement with the goals of higher education in the area achieved a group mean agreement level of 3.09.

In perhaps the most telling section of the survey instrument, community leaders rated their perceptions of the appropriate function for postsecondary education in their area. In each of the ten areas identified on the instrument, community leaders agreed that the area should be more of a priority than is currently offered. Of note, respondents identified career and technical education (4.40), adult and continuing education (4.23), and credit adult and continuing education programs as the primary areas that should be a priority for postsecondary education in the area (see Table 1). Alternatively, the same respondents indicated that they perceived GED education programs (3.78) and literacy education programs (3.52) as the current priorities for their local postsecondary education institutions.

Table 1

Community Leaders' Perceptions of the Appropriate Function of Postsecondary Education in the Area Reported by Mean Score (N=82)

Function	Should Be A Priority	Currently Is A Priority
Literacy education	3.80	3.52
GED education	4.10	3.78
General college level work not leading to a degree	3.51	3.07
Transfer education leading to a 4-year degree	4.07	3.20
Career and technical ed.	4.40	3.33
Adult and continuing ed.	4.23	3.38
Credit adult and continuing ed. programs	4.23	3.18
Non-credit adult and continuing ed. programs	3.86	3.21
Health education	4.02	2.86
Recreational education	3.86	2.86

Public School Personnel Respond

The perceptions of those employed by public schools in the area of study were assumed to be vital to any reform or structural considerations for altering postsecondary education in central Alabama. Subsequently, 47 public school administrators and 374 public school teachers were involved in the study. Teachers achieved a higher group mean on their agreement of the sufficiency of current educational opportunities in the area (3.40, administrators 2.63). Conversely, making educational opportunities more available was rated higher by administrators (mean 4.09, teacher's mean 3.91). "There is no need for additional educational opportunities in this county" was rated

higher by teachers (mean 1.94) than by administrators (mean 1.64).

Administrators agreed mostly with the concept of obtaining additional money for expanding educational opportunities from taxes (mean 4.35; teacher's mean 3.14), followed by state and federal funds (mean 4.21; teacher's mean 3.92), while teacher's strongly agreed that business and industry should be responsible for funding additional education programs (mean 4.04; administrator's mean 4.15). Both groups were consistent on the remaining potential funding sources: private sources (administrators 3.76; teachers 3.83) "other" (administrators 3.62; teachers 3.71).

Administrators perceived significant public support for expanding programs coming from educational leaders (3.68), community lay leaders (3.27), political leaders (3.18), and the general public (3.09). Teachers responded by ranking the different constituencies in the same order: educational leaders (3.82), community lay leaders (3.21), political leaders (3.17), and the general public (3.05).

Administrators responded that the postsecondary education offerings in their area should be focused on adult and continuing education (4.44), career and technical education (4.34), and credit adult and continuing education offerings (4.30). These respondents also reported that efforts are currently directed at transfer programs (4.15) and literacy education (4.15; see Table 2).

Public school teachers reported that career and technical education (4.44), adult and continuing education (4.23), and GED education programs (4.11) should be the focus of postsecondary education in their area (see Table 3). These teachers also reported that GED education programs (3.80), adult and continuing education programs (3.72), and credit adult and continuing education programs (3.67) were the current priority of postsecondary education in their area.

Table 2

Public School Administrators' Perceptions of the Appropriate Function for Postsecondary Education in the Area Reported by Mean Score (N=47)

Function	Should Be A Priority	Currently Is A Priority
Literacy education	4.09	4.15
GED education	4.09	3.26
General college level work not leading to a degree	3.94	3.42
Transfer education leading to a 4-year degree	4.17	4.15
Career and technical ed.	4.34	3.47
Adult and continuing ed.	4.44	3.28
Credit adult and continuing ed. programs	4.30	3.39
Non-credit adult and continuing ed. programs	3.60	2.97
Health education	4.00	2.91
Recreational education	3.94	3.22

Table 3

Public School Teachers' Perceptions of the Appropriate Function for Postsecondary Education in the Area Reported by Mean Score (N=374)

Function	Should Be A Priority	Currently Is A Priority
Literacy education	3.80	3.53
GED education	4.11	3.80
General college level work not leading to a degree	3.51	3.07
Transfer education leading to a 4-year degree	4.07	3.48
Career and technical ed.	4.44	3.33
Adult and continuing ed.	4.23	3.72
Credit adult and continuing ed. programs	4.10	3.67
Non-credit adult and continuing ed. programs	3.74	3.56
Health education	4.02	3.13
Recreational education	3.78	2.86

Community College Faculty Respond

The faculty questionnaire was completed by 74 faculty employed by community, junior, and technical college faculty within the area of study. Results of the survey indicate a mean score of 3.53 (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) that the current educational opportunities presented are sufficient for citizens of the county. Similarly, a 3.70 mean score was achieved on the need for making additional postsecondary educational opportunities available. This trend in moderate support for existing postsecondary education offerings was supported by the low rating (mean 2.21) on the survey item "there

is no need for additional educational opportunities in this county."

Community college faculty agreed most strongly that additional funding for program expansion should be the responsibility of state and federal bodies (4.11), followed by private contributions (4.10), business and industry (4.00), taxes (3.29), and "other" sources (4.04). Additionally, these faculty agreed that there was significant support for increased educational opportunities from educational leaders (mean 3.27), the general public (2.97), political leaders (2.90), and community lay leaders (2.81).

There was a very high level of agreement that faculty support the goals of their institution (mean 4.53), and more moderate agreement that other constituencies understand the goals and objectives of their two-year college (students 3.51; community leaders 3.08; local agencies 2.94; governmental bodies 2.90; and the general public 2.87). Faculty also agreed that their institution's current offerings in different disciplines were sufficient: business achieved a mean agreement level of 3.56, followed by developmental studies (3.57), adult education (3.55), technology (3.53), health career programs (3.41), and the liberal arts (3.01).

Faculty reported that the primary priorities of their college should be career and technical education (4.60), adult and continuing education (4.36), and GED education programs (4.32). The faculty also reported that their college's current

priority is GED education programs (4.04) and career and technical education (4.03; see Table 4).

Table 4

Community College Faculty Members' Perceptions of the Appropriate Function for Postsecondary Education in the Area Reported by Mean Score (N=74)

Function	Should Be A Priority	Currently Is A Priority
Literacy education	4.19	3.70
GED education	4.32	4.04
General college level work not leading to a degree	4.08	3.78
Transfer education leading to a 4-year degree	3.94	3.14
Career and technical ed.	4.60	4.03
Adult and continuing ed.	4.36	3.87
Credit adult and continuing ed. programs	4.26	3.65
Non-credit adult and continuing ed. programs	4.10	3.73
Health education	3.93	3.50
Recreational education	3.32	3.06

The General Public Responds

A total of 1,211 responses were obtained from the general public in the 19 counties of study. The sufficiency of current postsecondary educational opportunities achieved a low agreement level (2.58) among respondents, and this was reinforced with the identification of the need for additional postsecondary educational opportunities (mean 4.04).

The general public achieved higher group means on the priorities postsecondary education in the area of study should

have on virtually all statements. In particular, respondents perceived that GED education programs (4.11), career and technical education programs (4.11), adult and continuing education programs (4.10), and health education programs (4.07) should all be priorities of postsecondary education in the area. Respondents also indicated that GED education programs (3.28), recreational education programs (3.24), and adult and continuing education programs (3.24) were currently the priorities of postsecondary education institutions in their area.

Table 5

General Public Perceptions of the Appropriate Function for Postsecondary Education in the Area Reported by Mean Score (N=1,211)

Function	Should Be A Priority	Currently Is A Priority
Literacy education	4.04	2.98
GED education	4.11	3.28
General college level work not leading to a degree	3.79	3.06
Transfer education leading to a 4-year degree	4.04	3.12
Career and technical ed.	4.11	3.22
Adult and continuing ed.	4.10	3.24
Credit adult and continuing ed. programs	3.91	3.22
Non-credit adult and continuing ed. programs	3.52	3.15
Health education	4.07	3.21
Recreational education	3.97	3.24

Section 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

A review of the data analysis revealed high agreement between the perceptions of the various publics surveyed relative to the state of postsecondary education, as well as specific needs for an increased presence by colleges and universities. This agreement is particularly consistent among the perceptions of need for increased funding, educational opportunities, and the necessary presence of opportunities in postsecondary education.

The data further revealed that the existing climate reflects a serious and desperate situation socially, economically, and educationally. Historically, there has been little agreement among college, university, and state educational leaders as to solutions needed to address the issues or to identify the appropriate entity responsible for such coordination. As noted previously, this particular effort has been the only multi-county, district-wide study in the State of Alabama.

As a result of the analysis, several specific observations and conclusions were made:

Conclusions

- 1/ Demographic data indicated that the incidence of socio-economic problems far exceeds those in other areas of the State and nation.

- 2/ Most respondents across all populations indicated that their perception of educational offerings in the area of study were insufficient.
- 3/ Due to the generally consistent observations within the area of study for the need for more thorough offerings by higher education institutions, the perception of both financial and educational program offering neglect was supported.
- 4/ Some contradictions regarding the postsecondary needs within groups, although not statistically proven, may be the result of: insufficient or incomplete information of respondents; or the possibility of suspicious attitudes by respondents.
- 5/ There was a wide disparity, on face value, of the beliefs relative to the appropriateness of the educational services offered within the 19 counties.
- 6/ Future and additional course offerings by community, junior, and technical colleges in the area should be inclusive of those traditionally offered by two-year colleges in other areas.
- 7/ There appeared to be a certain degree of ambivalence as to the degree of understanding the general population possessed concerning the goals of higher education in the area.

- 8/ The perceptions of the level of support from all populations surveyed in the area varied on face value considerably.
- 9/ The majority of respondents, as indicated by the mean scores, perceived a strong need for additional postsecondary educational opportunities in the area.

Recommendations

The severe lack of leadership in identifying the needs and addressing the issues facing the "Black Belt" became apparent from the data analysis. The following recommendations illustrate that all study participant groups perceived that action must be taken. The most appropriate entity to accomplish these is that of the two-year community college. Historically and traditionally, the community college is best suited for understanding, leading, coordinating, and furnishing the various services necessary to begin to address the economic and educational issues in the area of study. The state two-year college leadership accompanied and supported by the state legislators must take the initiative if real solutions to the abject poverty and social issues are to be found.

The following recommendations were developed through an analysis of the data, and were viewed as a departure point for meaningful dialogue and fundamental change in the area:

- 1/ The critical educational, economic, and human needs of the district must be a top priority of higher education within the area.
- 2/ Appropriate entities should investigate ways and means by which additional postsecondary opportunities may be provided to the citizens of these 19 counties.
- 3/ Additional programs and services offered in the area should address developmental needs and supplement existing remedial and basic education program currently offered by public schools.
- 4/ A concerted and unified effort between educational institutions, communities, and business and industry must be initiated to adequately address the severe problems of and issues within the area.
- 5/ A study should be undertaken to investigate alternative delivery systems, technologies, and strategies for an optimal delivery system which will address current and future needs of the area, and the State.

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Appendix 1
Area and National Unemployment Statistics*

County	Unemployed	Employed	Percent Unemployed
Bullock	690	3,280	17.30
Butler	1,100	8,280	11.70
Choctaw	1,120	6,370	14.90
Clark	1,290	10,070	11.40
Conecuh	1,030	5,420	16.00
Dallas	3,650	19,370	17.60
Greene	590	3,140	16.90
Hale	640	5,340	10.70
Lowndes	720	3,810	15.90
Macon	970	9,730	9.00
Marengo	1,120	8,930	11.10
Monroe	1,300	8,350	13.40
Montgomery	7,440	90,250	7.60
Perry	700	4,740	12.90
Pickens	1,110	6,440	14.70
Pike	1,080	11,530	8.60
Sumter	1,320	4,930	21.10
Washington	1,090	4,510	19.40
Wilcox	720	3,680	16.80
MEAN	1,457	11,009	11.69
ALABAMA	185,000	1,698,000	9.80
U. S.	8,237,000	109,597,000	7.00

*According to 1986 data.

Appendix 2

Infant Mortality Rates for Area of Study*

County	Infant Mortality Rate
Bullock	9.3
Butler	17.6
Choctaw	8.2
Clark	20.9
Conecuh	19.0
Dallas	11.1
Greene	37.3
Hale	22.7
Lowndes	15.7
Macon	15.3
Marengo	11.8
Monroe	10.7
Montgomery	12.9
Perry	13.1
Pickens	9.0
Pike	14.3
Sumter	17.3
Washington	14.4
Wilcox	15.5
MEAN	15.58

*According to 1988 data.

Appendix 3

Teenage Pregnancy Rates for Area of Study*

County	Births to Unmarried Teenagers Per 10,000
Bullock	951.20
Butler	676.90
Choctaw	680.00
Clark	525.00
Conecuh	511.10
Dallas	821.40
Greene	888.90
Hale	803.60
Lowndes	938.50
Macon	916.70
Marengo	784.80
Monroe	578.90
Montgomery	759.90
Perry	870.40
Pickens	712.50
Pike	657.10
Sumter	873.20
Washington	434.80
Wilcox	888.90
MEAN	751.25
ALABAMA	554.20
U. S.	513.90

*According to 1985 data.