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ABSTRACT

The abstracts in this series provide two-page discussions of issues related to leadership, administration, professional development, technology, and education in community colleges. Volume 9 for 1996 includes the following 12 abstracts: (1) "Tech-Prep + School-To-Work: Working Together To Foster Educational Reform," (Roderick F. Beaumont); (2) "Community College Leadership in the New Century," (Gunder Myran, Tony Zeiss, Linda Howdyshell); (3) "Community College Presidents: The Balancing Act," (Ruth Mercedes Smith); (4) "Improving the Administrative Search Process," (Gena Proulx, John W. Marr, Jr.); (5) "Leading the Multicultural Community College," (Augustine P. Gallego); (6) "The External Diploma Program," (Florence Harvey); (7) "Technology as a Metaphor for Change," (Kenneth C. Green); (8) "Learning Communities, Learning Organizations, and Learning Colleges," (Terry O'Banion); (9) "Statewide Professional Development Networks," (S. Gregory Bowes); (10) "The Challenge of Board Change," (George R. Boggs); (11) "Distance Education in the Community College," (Judy Lever-Duffy, Randal A. Lemke); and (12) "The Peloton: Riding the Winds of Change," (Beverlee McClure, Tony Stanco). (TGI)




# Volume 9, Numbers 1-12, 1996

## League for Innovation in the Community College

Larry Johnson, Editor

leadership abstracts

# TECH-PREP + SCHOOL-TO-WORK WORKING TOGETHER TO FOSTER EDUCATIONAL REFORM

**Roderick F. Beaumont**

In the current climate of uncertainty in Washington regarding workforce training programs, it is time for community colleges to step into the fore and agree upon a common definition of tech-prep that fits well within the school-to-work umbrella and that can be applied in every state. There are too many misconceptions circulating about tech-prep and its relationship to school-to-work.

Tech-prep is not a new name for vocational education; nor is it a new name for cooperative education. Indeed, it is not even a four-year program that includes an associate degree, for tech-prep does not have to involve a community college. The enabling legislation calls for two years of postsecondary education—obtainable through an apprenticeship, a university, or a community college. Simply put, tech-prep is an articulated educational program of two to four years of high school and two years of postsecondary education that includes a common core of math, science, communications, and technology designed to lead to an associate's degree or certificate within a specific career field.

Those experienced with the implementation and planning of tech-prep programs have come to the realization that for students to emerge from four years of high school adequately prepared for the postsecondary component, there must be a very strong foundation program prior to high school. Indeed, it can be argued that applied learning should start at the prekindergarten level and proceed all the way through school—throughout a lifetime, in fact. This broader view is the essence of what school-to-work adds to tech-prep. School-to-work clarifies the critical role of the early years of education in building the foundation necessary for tech-prep and other school-to-work programs to succeed.

As schools and colleges work to define tech-prep, they must keep in mind the vital importance of the perception of students, parents, and the public in general. If, as is often the case, tech-prep is seen as just another dumping ground for students who are not planning to go to college, then tech-prep is doomed and will surely fail. It is essential for every college and every tech-prep program to educate its community about the pervasive nature of technology in today's society and the vital importance of core technical skills in virtually every field. The perception that technical and academic programs are unrelated must not only end; it must be seen to have ended.

## The Traditional Mind-Set Must Change

There was a time when a high school diploma was regarded as an entry-level qualification. That day has long since passed; in many fields, the high school diploma has been superceded by the associate's degree. The average monthly income of a worker with an associate's degree is almost *three* times that of a worker with only a high school diploma. Still, many educators perpetuate the myth that a baccalaureate degree is the only passport to employment opportunity. Willard Wirtz, former U.S. Secretary of Labor, summed it up when he said, "there aren't two worlds—education and work. There is one world—life. Learning by hands-on participation. . . should be at the heart of our educational perspective. [Too many] teachers, consciously or unconsciously, reinforce the idea that education is pointless [unless the end result is a baccalaureate degree or higher]."

The message is that if college is not the goal, the booby prize is a dead-end job where a traditional education is not terribly relevant. And the message is correct to a point. Students that are not bound for college do not need a traditional education, but rather an education that prepares these students to enter the work force as skilled and valued employees. Since these students are by far the majority, schools and colleges must do much better at preparing them for the new realities of the job market. A cultural change must be made across the system that stresses the relationship between core technical skills and good jobs.

Betsy Brand, U.S. Assistant Secretary for Vocational Education, observed, "We need a mind-set change among educators at all levels regarding their role in human resource development." Many teachers still see



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themselves in terms of their disciplines: as math teachers, history teachers, English teachers, and so on. The time has come when every teacher needs to reevaluate his or her role in the development of the nation's vital human capital. Discovery and application must be emphasized across disciplines at all educational levels.

### Restructuring the Curriculum via Integration

To be fair, education has begun to change course. Across the nation, more and more students are being exposed every day to application-based learning and education. More educators are beginning to understand that a vital part of their mission is to prepare all students for further learning and productive employment. More students are embarking on a course that will evolve into a pattern of lifelong learning. Students who develop the ability to get on and off an educational track at different levels—and to change course as necessary—are going to greatly cushion themselves from the occasional harsh realities of a global economy.

What is essential now is to strengthen the connections between programs, institutions, and levels of institutions. School districts need to open their doors to their neighbors. When one school has strength in a given cluster or program, its offerings should be open to neighboring institutions. Magnet-style programs can maximize limited resources and work to the benefit of all organizations within any given tech-prep consortium.

At the same time, standards need to be raised and courses made more challenging for all levels of students. Bridge programs should be implemented to provide the support and encouragement best suited for nontraditional or returning students.

### The Long Term

A concern expressed by many is that, too often, colleges and schools rushed to launch tech-prep programs solely to qualify for funding under the Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act, doing so without having identified the basic constructs or the underlying concept and philosophy upon which tech-prep (and now school-to-work) should be built. In 1991, there were approximately 380 tech-prep programs in the United States. By August 1994, tech-prep was being implemented in every state. Over 2,337,000 students have taken part, but too many of these have attended programs that were too loosely structured and too often hampered by a "soft-money" mentality.

It is essential that school and college districts take a long view when planning for tech-prep. Every tech-prep program should be working earnestly toward self-sufficiency. Beyond budgets, schools and community colleges should resolve to work collaboratively to solidify the educational reformation that is tech-prep within their own communities. Local planning teams should be organized with significant business, industry, and community involvement. Full use should be made of economic development partnerships, small business advisory boards, and key agencies. Community colleges can play a pivotal role in bringing these diverse community elements together.

Without a doubt, federal funding has been the lifeblood for tech-prep programs since their inception. Federal dollars have given schools and colleges the opportunity to implement application-based programs and has allowed the development of site and community-based action plans. A look to Washington, however, will confirm that the likelihood of recent funding levels continuing beyond the current legislation is remote. The programs that will survive a turndown in funding will be those that have maximized their resources and built solid support within their communities.

Key among those resources are the faculty teaching in tech-prep programs. Schools and colleges should provide relevant, meaningful, result-driven professional development on an ongoing basis. Teachers, counselors, administrators, and support staff must examine their own roles and their commitment to a quality product. Each must adopt the view that "a graduating student that can't do—won't do."

Tech-prep can be a beacon to those who have been traditionally considered "non-college-bound." By reaching out to students as early as junior high and high school and outlining the possibilities before them—possibilities that include a range of interrelated technical and academic programs—community colleges can help students to understand tech-prep and its place among the educational pathways that lead to high-paying jobs. In so doing, colleges and schools, working together to enable students to understand the range of choices that lead to good employment opportunities, can be major players in creating a work force that is truly competitive on a global scale.

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# COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP IN THE NEW CENTURY

**Gunder Myran, Tony Zeiss, and Linda Howdyshell**

In the 1960s, community colleges began the transition from campus-based to community-based organizations. To meet the growing demands of the 1990s, a new transition is occurring, and colleges are increasingly becoming learner-based. The interaction of community-based and learner-based education will shape a powerful new definition of the community college.

Already the transition is prompting community colleges to review their fundamental purposes, their organizational structures, how they serve their communities and students, and how to provide the best leadership—all in an attempt to increase the institution's focus on the learner. The assumptions of the old model of leadership may be familiar and comfortable, but they are increasingly dysfunctional. A new set of assumptions is forming around the needs of the learner that is not nearly so clear. Such is the nature of a paradigm shift: an evolutionary point is reached when old familiar concepts are no longer adequate for emerging organizational demands, but there is not yet a solid new set of assumptions to serve as a guidepost for the future. A leap of faith must be made based on a sense of idealism and new imperatives, without clear evidence of the new assumptions' reliability.

## Change is Constant

No social change is driving the transition more than the awareness that economic, social, and technological conditions—from local to international levels—are certain to change rapidly and unpredictably. The traditional leadership model, which rarely takes full advantage of the resources and knowledge of college staff, is too slow in responding to the pace of such change. The future will demand short-term strategic alliances between and among staff and community groups that are tailored to respond to emerging problems and opportunities. The participation of all stakeholders in setting priorities and institutional decision making will be essential.

## The Power of Vision

Developing and implementing a shared vision is one of the key instruments for dealing with rapid change in community colleges. A compelling vision can allow faculty and staff to break through the boundaries of their current thinking and discover future possibilities around which they can rally and to which they can commit inspired performance. Those involved in the process move from seeing themselves as constrained by current conditions to envisioning a fundamentally different future.

Developing a shared vision requires a special set of leadership skills because it is a conceptual and creative process. The leader must provide an environment that enables all people involved to connect their visions of what they want the college to become to the visions of others. For many leaders, this role is dramatically different from the "ivory tower" role of the past. In the complex and rapidly evolving world of the new century, a lone leader cannot reconcile the myriad viewpoints within the institution fast enough to move effectively. When each unit must be able to respond quickly to the changing needs of its customers, all college personnel must have an internalized beacon of institutional vision and values to guide daily decisions.

## Political Positioning

A college's success especially requires visionary leadership among governing board members. Their role in policy development and in driving the mission, vision, and goals of the college is critical to continued strong, customer-based services. Trustees, and the president or chancellor, represent a powerful potential for affecting the institution's future in the political arena. Intervention and strong direction by governing boards to move the college to become achievement-based and customer-driven are essential to a competitive and economically healthy society. The following political activities are often successful:

**Develop allies before you need them.** Trustees and the CEO should continuously identify and develop social relationships with people and organizations who are able to affect their institutions.

**Get involved in public policy development.** It is much better to be involved in the development of state or federal policies than to simply react to them.



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**Become ambassadors for the college.** Trustees, above all else, should be thought of as the primary ambassadors for the institutions they represent.

**Use trustee-focused organizations.** The Association of Governing Boards and the Association of Community College Trustees are two excellent examples of helpful trustee-focused organizations.

### Learning To Improve Learning

Community college leadership in the new century will be learner-based. Everyone involved with the college, including the president and the board of trustees, will be learners and will work continuously to improve learning. College programs, services, processes, and staff skills and knowledge will be constantly under improvement.

During most of community college history, it was assumed that presidents could do the learning for whole organizations. They could sense the changes in external and internal environments and articulate needed changes in their colleges' goals. To some extent, the slow pace of change and the relative predictability of events actually made this possible.

Today, change occurs so rapidly that everyone in the organization must be learning constantly. All staff must continuously increase their capacity to connect what they see in the environment to what they do through both individual learning and participation in organizational learning.

Unfortunately, there are some serious organizational obstacles in the way of creating the learning college, for today's community colleges clearly function as bureaucracies. They have roughly the same specialized subcultures or disciplines and the same divisions between the faculty and administration as universities. Their rigid top-down structure is similar to the traditional public school's, with each function in its appropriate box: the finance box, the personnel box, the instruction and student services boxes, and so on. Staff members are taught to operate within their boxes and report through channels. But community colleges are learning that this approach to organization is inadequate for the processes and management demands of the new century.

The typical community college is organized into strict vertical units, with management presiding over "silos" within the organization devoted to instruction, student services, finance, human resources, community relations, information systems, institutional research, and so on. For each of these silos, there is a leader who is an advocate for the function, seeks its success, and protects its interests. Unit staff report up to the leader, who then interacts with leaders at the top of other silos. Communications with other silos take the form of messages thrown over the wall into the next silo in the work flow. Success is measured by the individual success of each silo.

What is wrong with the vertical organizational design described above? Why is change needed?

**There is too much remanagement.** Each person in the silo passes work up the administrative chain and, to some extent, supervisors redo the work, wasting time and energy and underusing staff talents.

**Communication with other units is stifled.** Staff have more incentive to communicate within their silo than with people in other units. There may even be sanctions within the unit that discourage cross-functional communication. Issues that need quick responses pile up at the top even though they could be resolved through cross-functional communication at lower levels.

**Success of the unit is emphasized over success of the whole.** Institutional processes such as administrative evaluation and salary determination often focus on individual rather than team or institutional achievement.

**Units are not aligned to the vision, mission, and goals of the whole college.** Staff members may not visualize the college as a system, seeing it instead as a collection of units each pursuing its own ends with only a vague sense of common purpose.

Community colleges boast about being needs-based and community-centered, but in reality many have become attracted to the notion that they are academic islands, worthy of admiration and respect just because they exist, modeling university behavior. Well, the gong has sounded, the trumpets are blaring. The call is for a more responsive, learning-focused educational system, and that responsibility rests squarely with community college leaders.

Creating new visions and restructuring processes and organizations to achieve those visions are what leadership in the new century should be about. Fortunately, community college leaders are aware of the need to become more oriented to the needs of customers and the community at large. The organizational changes needed to support the learning college are beginning to appear. By working together in a climate of trust, community college professionals can and will build a learning focus, and with it a deep commitment to customer service.

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# COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS: THE BALANCING ACT

**Ruth Mercedes Smith**

Last summer, a group of community college presidents gathered for the annual retreat sponsored by the Presidents Academy of the American Association of Community Colleges. Community college presidents are a diverse group, and this was clear at the retreat. Participants ranged from a mother of seven with a commuter marriage, to a man whose wife had very recently died, to a woman who had recently married. Also represented were single mothers, several females with husbands who were retired, and a number from the formerly typical American family.

All had come to the Presidents Academy for professional development and renewal. The annual summer experience provides leadership development for approximately 50 CEOs. The participants share ideas, discuss common problems, and develop new friendships. It is a powerful experience which is valued by those who attend.

On the final day, a panel of the participants shared their ideas concerning the pressures, both personal and professional, suffered by community college presidents and strategies for keeping their lives in balance. The themes of the discussions were clear. Each is presented below and provides a clear answer to those who struggle with balancing the roles of president, spouse, parent, child of aging parents, community leader, and more.

## Know Your Strengths

A president must know his or her strengths and not try to do everything at the college. By allowing staff and faculty members to take risks, a CEO can develop a strong team where it is not always necessary to be the leader. The wise president knows when to get out of the way. Having trust in faculty and staff to do things their way frees the president to spend some time visioning and planning for the future. Also, as others flourish and are successful, the president can share the spotlight and glory with them. This is good for morale and shows that the president, too, is a member of the team.

By knowing one's strengths, it is possible to utilize them in a way that gives freedom to staff. Some presidents are good conversationalists and relax by visiting local coffee shops and talking with the patrons. These conversations often provide useful feedback about the college. Others may write well and find it useful to take some time to express thoughts using a computer at home rather than at the office. In other words, the president does not need to be on campus all day, every day, and may be more effective by being away occasionally.

## Know Your Values

It is essential that presidents are clear about their values and have prioritized them. Of course, it is impossible to have a perfect balance between time for self, family, and work. One can, however, examine the appropriate balance from time to time based on events and strive to maintain the best balance for the moment.

One of the presenters noted that "time" is an American value while the "quality of time" is more valued in some other cultures. Certainly a CEO can save evenings for family and self. In some cases, the family time can fit into college events such as plays, concerts, and athletic games. One must also recognize that there are certain periods in the life of a president when work must take precedence. The wise CEO is honest with family members about those times and does not try to do everything for everyone all of the time.

Also, the behavior of the president serves as a model of what is valued. One community college leader holds a Chancellor's Baby Day, when employees bring their young children to campus for everyone to meet and enjoy. When a president has an illness in a family and serves as a caregiver, others realize that this is important and okay for them also. In fact, when illness in families occurs, the support of campus members is very powerful and helps employees to continue to do their work while struggling with the other stressful demands of life.

## Know How to Organize

It is essential to organize each day with the help of a secretary or administrative assistant. Set aside one hour when no phone calls will be taken. Know what time of day is "down time" and avoid meetings and appointments



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during that time when possible. Ask staff to organize mail in colored folders so the most urgent items can be grabbed when busy and the rest left for another day. It may be wise to take the college's time management course if that is an option.

Each CEO has a special way of organizing time and tasks. Some are devotees of a particular system that can be purchased and may include training sessions. Others use the latest in technology by typing in their appointments on a hand-held computer system. Then there are those who develop their own private systems that cannot be understood by anyone else, but work perfectly for them. The key is, of course, to have a system and to use it.

**Know How to Renew Yourself**

Community college presidents must set aside time for renewal. Most agree that vacation time should be used on an annual basis and not saved for the future. It is important to take time to reflect on experiences rather than working furiously without learning from what happens. Some presidents teach a course at least once every two years, both for renewal and to better understand faculty and students. Wise CEOs get up from the desk, even though it is piled high, walk to the cafeteria and chat with students, faculty, and staff. They wander around the campus and feel the excitement of the learning process. Some build walking or other types of exercise into their daily routine.

Renewal is best applied on a daily basis. Learning how to relax is critical to the process. Many presidents believe that taking a nap or watching a video is relaxing when in reality we may still be thinking about our problems. Relaxation does not happen automatically according to Herbert Benson, M.D., who is an associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. He notes in the December 1995 issue of *Prevention Magazine* that when a person relaxes blood pressure lowers and metabolism slows down.

There are two basic steps to relaxation that should be followed according to Dr. Benson. First it is necessary to remove the daily thoughts that cause stress. This can often be done through repetition: saying a phrase or sound over and over again, or listening to a tape of ocean waves or a bubbling brook.

The second step is to disregard other thoughts as they intrude and continually refocus on the repetition. It is not necessary to fight these thoughts but simply to let them pass and gently bring the mind back to the phrase or sound. Experts suggest that this relaxation state be utilized two times a day for 10 to 20 minutes. But even a few minutes a day can make a difference. According to Dr. Benson, after a few weeks the body learns to relax more easily and is less likely to feel the same levels of stress that it did in the past. This certainly suggests that it would be worth a try.

**Know How to Laugh**

The foundation for the balancing act is to keep a strong sense of humor mixed with humility. Presidents cannot afford to be overly impressed with themselves. Save notes from children or grandchildren and put them on the office door. Their words often bring both laughter and wisdom and can be great discussion starters. Look for the ridiculous in what is happening and have a good belly laugh. Keep humorous literature on the desk. One president refers daily to a book of advice on how to let go, which includes a suggestion to "fold a banana."

Actually, a daily stroll around the campus can be filled with laughter. Faculty are often pleased to see the president wander by. At least one or two are usually ready with a story about the day's classes. And one can always be found who likes to laugh at or with the president about some administrative project. Most CEOs know who makes them happy, and they can easily seek them out for a good laugh.

It is important that community college presidents master the fine art of balancing their lives. The CEO can only perform at a high level when the balancing act is successful. Staff strengths must be utilized; the president cannot and should not try to do it all. Key values concerning self, family, and work must be recognized and prioritized. Organizational skills must be fine-tuned. Time for renewal must be planned both on a daily and monthly basis.

We live in a time of high stress and rapid change. The community college CEO knows this better than most. The message of the panel was clear: Learn to be personally responsible for yourself in all aspects of your life and learn to be better at balancing what you do. Eric Hoffer summarized it well: "In a time of drastic change it is the learners who inherit the future. For it is the learners who learn to live in a world that no longer exists."

*Ruth Mercedes Smith is president of Highland Community College in Freeport, Illinois.*

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# IMPROVING THE ADMINISTRATIVE SEARCH PROCESS

**Gena Proulx and John W. Marr, Jr.**

In recent years, the maturing of America's community colleges and the "graying" of their faculty and administrative personnel have garnered much attention in the two-year college literature as well as at professional conferences and workshops. Many institutions are already bracing themselves for the loss of one or more key senior administrators in the near future.

In the rush to fill the vacancies in senior positions expected over the next few years, proper attention to the nuts and bolts of conducting searches may mean the difference between landing the candidate of choice versus having to settle for a first, second, or third runner-up. To be competitive in the emerging market for experienced senior staff, community colleges must take a critical look at their hiring processes.

**Common Problems Encountered by Candidates**

Too often community colleges ignore the most basic tenets of professionalism and courtesy that should be practiced when conducting searches. Applicants expect to be kept apprised of the status of a search, to be treated respectfully during communication with institutional representatives, and, if invited for an interview, to be hosted by the institution in a planned and organized manner. Yet, at a time when "putting one's best foot forward" is critical, too many community colleges are disorganized and unprofessional in handling key aspects of the administrative search process.

Problems regularly encountered by candidates include: having employment references checked before being informed that their references were going to be contacted; being forced to conform to short-notice, limited-choice time frames for scheduling interviews; and being treated rudely by institutional representatives when attempting to follow up by telephone.

Stories abound of mishandled campus visits. In one situation, two candidates reported having met in a hotel lobby prior to leaving for the campus where each was to be interviewed for the same position. While one candidate was being picked up by a member of the search committee, the other was picked up by a taxi. Not surprisingly, both candidates arrived at the campus at the same time—only to find their interviews running forty-five minutes behind schedule.

As a result of such basic missteps on the part of hiring institutions, some candidates, concerned that problems encountered during the search process may be indicative of larger problems in the leadership and management of the institution as a whole, choose to withdraw their applications. These and other difficulties commonly encountered by candidates could be sustained when jobs were few and candidates plentiful; but as the number of openings increases, the continuance of sloppy practices like these will cost institutions top prospects.

Applicants for senior-level positions are often asked to supply information such as a written statement of their "philosophy of education" or responses to a series of questions designed to document the candidate's capacity for leadership, management style, or commitment to the community college mission. When the justification for these items is well articulated and understood by the search committee and candidate alike, the information obtained will probably contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the search. In other cases, similar, but less well-focused requirements may lead top candidates to decide not to apply—or if imposed late in the process—to withdraw, unwilling to invest more time and effort in what they perceive to be an incompetently handled search process.

Many a would-be candidate has forwarded such statements, along with the required cover letters, resumés, letters of reference, transcripts, and lengthy employment applications only to endure unreasonably long waits before being notified as to whether or not he or she is still being considered for the position in question, or even if the application materials have been received. In the most egregious cases, applicants never receive any word from the institution regarding the status of their application.

The increasingly litigious nature of employment searches is often offered as the reason behind many institutions' reticence to communicate with applicants about the status or nature of an ongoing search process. The trend toward more hiring-related lawsuits, however, coupled with the generally accepted notion that the teaching and administrative ranks of our institutions



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should more closely reflect the cultural and ethnic diversity of the students served by community colleges, lays the backdrop for a compelling rationale to make courteous and competent handling of the search process a key priority within community colleges.

This observation is underscored in a study by Kathryn Moore which concluded that a "small, but important, percentage of administrators report the perceived presence of unfair hiring practices such as 'wired searches' or 'insider advantages.'" While Moore concluded that her information depicted a labor market that was "reasonably open and fair," few would doubt that in the current job-search climate, many more job applicants are likely to challenge an unfavorable hiring decision. A discourteous, closed-mouth search runs considerable risk of being perceived not as simply inept, but exclusionary, biased, or unfair.

**Suggestions for Improving the Search Process**

Of course, all searches are different. No single process will serve all institutions equally well in all situations. Nonetheless, there is a core of common practices that should be observed by all institutions. Those that are successful in finding top candidates will be those that have paid careful attention to creating a professional, courteous process—and to the perceptions that process will foster about the institution. Colleges should take advantage of the full range of tools available to identify, screen, and select the best candidate—ads in key publications, nominations, phone interviews, written essays, informal receptions, and other approaches. Each step of the process should provide the college—and the candidate—relevant, useful information that will help lead each to the right decision.

An institution committed to a professionally handled administrative search, should at a minimum:

- develop a timeline to guide the search process;
- respond promptly to all applicants regarding receipt of application materials;
- screen applications promptly and quickly notify applicants who do not meet posted qualifications;
- ensure that all communications to candidates portray a quality, professional image of the institution;
- communicate with candidates by phone or mail at all key points during the search process;
- hone the telephone skills of staff to whom candidates may be speaking;
- carefully plan all aspects of campus visits, especially logistics and scheduling;
- provide candidates with the names of search committee members in advance of the interview;
- allow candidates to share personal histories during the interview; and
- thank all candidates for their interest in the position.

In addition to these basic elements, a professionally handled search will pay careful attention to the composition and role of the selection committee. While representation across groups with a significant stake in the hiring decision is important, the temptation to name large committees should be avoided. *The Search Committee Handbook: A Guide to Recruiting Administrators* (Marchese and Lawrence) recommends that committees be limited to five or six people. Negative perceptions that sometimes accompany the use of smaller selection committees can be reduced through the use of informal meetings, receptions, or presentations that provide campus constituents an opportunity to meet a small group of finalists from which the candidate of choice will be selected.

The role of the committee and the expectations for its performance should be clearly articulated at the outset of the search process. Each committee member (and the candidate) should understand whether or not the committee is responsible for making the final selection decision. Furthermore, the committee should agree at the outset on the attributes of the ideal candidate. Finally, the members of the committee must see their involvement in the process as important to the quality of the outcome and believe that their recommendations will be seriously considered.

Many community colleges already do an exemplary job of conducting administrative searches. Many others have performed this function adequately enough to attract solid administrators and leaders. The unprecedented wave of pending retirements in the latter half of the 1990s, however, will result in a "seller's market" for top administrative talent in community colleges. Colleges with key administrative vacancies can ill afford to lose excellent candidates as a result of poorly conducted searches.

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Larry Johnson, editor

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# LEADING THE MULTICULTURAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**Augustine P. Gallego**

During the past decade, community colleges may have thought they were doing a good job of serving the multicultural community if the ethnic student population was proportional to that of the college's service area. Today, such a barometer is only the first step—access without educational equity and success for students of all backgrounds, races, and ethnic groups is not enough. That fact has been acknowledged in many college mission statements that profess, often in eloquent and impassioned terms, a commitment to equity and success for a multicultural student body.

Wonderful mission and philosophy statements are still not enough, however, unless they are supported with actions to achieve the stated goals. Achieving equity on college campuses requires a demonstrated commitment and desire to change, actions that match words, and measurable results. Maintaining equity requires a continuous process of change as the multicultural community itself changes.

Listed below are the kinds of questions that multicultural community colleges should be seeking answers to—and acting upon whenever inequities are identified:

- Do historically underrepresented students achieve the same levels of success as other student populations?
- Are the levels of student satisfaction about the same across all racial and ethnic groups?
- Does the institution offer special support services to academically underprepared and first-generation college students?
- Do ethnic students transfer to universities at the same rates as the general student population?

Institutional assessment practices reflect the values of an individual institution through the types of information gathered regarding student success, outcomes, and satisfaction. Local indicators, rather than statewide or national assessments, are critically important in determining progress toward educational equity and student success. The problem of grouping all people from one race together to determine their needs for education or other services is that their academic preparedness, learning styles, financial resources, and culture may vary widely by group or geographic locale.

As an example of the differences that can be found within a state, only 37 percent of the 9,100 American Indians living on the Gila River reservation in Arizona have attained a high school education or higher, whereas 63 percent of the 7,100 adults on the Hopi reservation in the same state have at least a high school diploma. According to the 1990 U.S. Census, the Hopis also have a per capita income that is 44 percent higher than that of the Gila River Indians.

The same wide variances can be found among Asian groups. Among Japanese-American adults, for example, 88 percent are high school graduates or higher, whereas only 31 percent of Hmong immigrants from Southeast Asia (and only 19 percent of Hmong women) in the same age group have completed a high school education or higher. Japanese-American adults have seven times the per capita income of Hmong adults who, as a group, have a 64 percent poverty rate compared to 7 percent for Japanese Americans.

## Affirmative Action

Campuses must go beyond affirmative action mandates and goals to achieve true diversity. The University of California, Davis, clearly stated the distinction between affirmative action and diversity in its campus diversity plan:

> Affirmative action is retrospective in that it is designed to rectify the effects of past discrimination. Diversity, on the other hand, is prospective. It looks forward to the creation of an environment that supports the aspirations of all persons.
>
> Diversity views affirmative action efforts to increase the number of women and persons of color as necessary but not sufficient to create the changes in the environment that will enhance the chances of success for those who gained access through affirmative action efforts.

Using a similar philosophical basis, the San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) has developed an affirmative action plan that has been used as a model for other community college districts. The plan establishes positive, anticipatory action to prevent discrimination in



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present educational or employment practices and to remedy the effects of any past practices. It includes specific, results-oriented guidelines requiring positive action by the governing board, management, faculty, staff, and students. The plan also includes programs that place special emphasis on recruitment, employment, promotion, and in-service training.

Two particularly notable elements in SDCCD's action plan are an aggressive staff development program on how to file complaints and the establishment of affirmative action community advisory groups.

The program to train employees in the filing of complaints is actually a preventive affirmative action compliance activity that gives employees access to information about their rights. It has resulted in fewer problems and fewer lawsuits because it corrects problems at an early stage, with employees speaking up immediately when they believe unfair or unlawful activities have occurred.

The affirmative action community advisory groups assist the SDCCD in strengthening its affirmative action policies and programs. Groups have been established for Asian, African American, Latino, and disabled populations. The groups meet at least once monthly to assist the district in activities that include suggesting strategies to recruit new employees from the particular group they represent, reviewing multicultural training programs, suggesting ways to reach more under-represented businesses to provide professional services and products to the district, and recommending ways for the district to improve its relationship with ethnic and minority communities.

**Responding to Challenges**

The governing board and the chancellor jointly communicate the district's support for diversity at faculty and staff development activities, management and supervisory retreats, and in presentations at community forums, conferences, and association meetings. The district leadership has repeatedly stood firm against any charges of reverse discrimination and pandering to special interests. Such commitment requires courage, particularly on the part of elected governing board members whose personal support of diversity may not always coincide with the views of the electorate.

Leadership's commitment to diversity was made clear in a recent case in which an individual offered to bequeath $8 million to the SDCCD for a new building—but with strings attached. The would-be donor stipulated that no "immigrant" courses should be taught in the new building. The SDCCD responded: "We cannot be bought for eight cents or $8 million to compromise our values of equity, diversity, and multiculturalism."

**Guiding Principles**

As a guide to increasing the recruitment, participation, and academic achievement of ethnic students, the American Association of Community Colleges Commission to Improve Minority Education has identified the following key ingredients of successful efforts:

- ***Commitment.*** Persistence and action are the bywords. Leadership has to make—and encourage others to make—diversity values and goals a priority, and find ways to give support to the achievement of these goals. This includes keeping all members of the college community informed of relevant actions, the reasons for the actions, and the goals anticipated.
- ***Policy.*** Written policies, including implementation goals, strategies, and measures must be in place at every level.
- ***Information.*** Access to reliable information must undergird policy formulation and implementation.
- ***Leadership.*** Leaders, whether college trustees, the state governor, academic deans, or directors of professional associations, must make an unflagging commitment to equal opportunity for all persons.
- ***Collaboration.*** In order to remove the financial, logistical, psychological, social, and cultural barriers to minority student achievement, many individuals and organizations must come together around common goals.

**How Far Must We Go?**

As colleges embrace these key ingredients and take actions that begin to show progress, some people may ask: How far must community colleges go to achieve diversity? As America becomes more culturally diverse and it becomes even more important to develop greater understanding, sensitivity, and tolerance toward others, the answer for community colleges has to be this: A community college campus, from its symbols to its structures to its curriculum and character, must represent and demonstrate an appreciation for the diversity in our society.

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# THE EXTERNAL DIPLOMA PROGRAM

**Florence Harvey**

Corporate education and school-to-work programs are much in the news these days, so much so that a reader might think that partnerships between business and higher education are a new development. Community colleges and their business and labor partners know otherwise. For years, these institutions have been meeting the changing needs of business and labor organizations and helping them adjust to new realities in the workplace. Many colleges have a large body of experience in this arena, and the results have been impressive; so impressive, in fact, that community colleges have emerged as a leading source of training for not only new entrants into the work force, but also for existing and transitional workers.

Despite the tremendous achievements of community colleges in workforce development, the demand for programs that focus on the special needs of the existing and transitional worker is as great as ever: an estimated one-third of workers over the age of 25 do not have a high school diploma. These men and women began their careers in a different world of employment than exists today. They were hired in an era when basic academic skills and credentials were less important. While these workers often bring knowledge gleaned from years of work experience to their jobs, large numbers of them do not have the kinds of high school level skills that have become a minimal requirement for job opportunities and advancement. When corporations are forced to downsize, reorganize, or merge with others, these uncredentialed workers are often the first to go. They find themselves in the unemployment pool with 25 more productive years ahead, but few promising prospects. The absence of a high school diploma screens out many from further opportunity before the interview process even begins.

In several states across the country, community colleges are joining with local school districts, businesses, and labor unions to offer a new and innovative program designed especially to address this problem by attracting existing and transitional workers back to school in a way that meets their unique needs. The External Diploma Program (EDP), sponsored by the American Council on Education, gives mature adults the opportunity to earn a high school diploma by demonstrating the knowledge and skills they have acquired through experience at work or at home. The diploma earned through EDP is a portable credential that can open doors to employment and postsecondary education.

Currently, the EDP is offered in 12 states and the District of Columbia, and interest continues to grow. Designed expressly for older adults (the average age of the EDP graduate is 37), the EDP has been embraced by employers, unions, educators, and the participants themselves.

## Why do Business and Labor Support the EDP?

Business support stems from the EDP's measurement of competencies—such as complex decision-making skills, self-directed learning ability, and communication skills—that closely match those needed to succeed in the workplace. Many of the 65 competencies that the EDP assesses are directly matched to SCANS foundation skills. Graduates also demonstrate worker-readiness skills outlined in the U.S. Department of Labor's *Workplace Basics: Skills Employers Want*.

Union support of the EDP stems from the program's focus on "action learning." For example, students may research issues affecting their communities and move to solve them by writing letters to state representatives. The educational program requires participants to calculate budgets, prepare documents, and analyze complex materials. Furthermore, the EDP goes beyond the "3 Rs," rewarding adults for demonstrating competency in citizenship skills, critical analysis, self-direction, responsibility, and self-awareness—skills that promote self-confidence and empowerment.

Businesses and labor unions offering the EDP to their workers have noticed increased productivity in their graduates. But most importantly, the employees' confidence and desire to learn rise immeasurably. As Tom Westrick, education director of the UAW-GM



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skills center in Janesville, Wisconsin, commented, "People who first came in underconfident about their skills have graduated [from the program]. Now their supervisors report that they take more initiative. Many have even begun to take courses at college."

The program allows participants to be seen (and to see themselves) as competent workers, citizens, and parents instead of as "drop outs." The EDP is confidential, and the EDP assessment takes a range of skills into account, including not only work-related skills, but also those honed through years of being successful citizens and parents.

### Why Do Community Colleges Participate?

Community colleges see the EDP as a natural fit with one of their core purposes: to provide educational opportunities to America's often overlooked adult population. Many community colleges already are working with local businesses and labor unions to deliver basic education, GED preparation, or training courses. The EDP is designed as an extension of the options a college already offers to adult learners. Because of the involvement of business and labor partners, an EDP can be not only a worthwhile community service, but also a revenue-builder.

In addition, community colleges find EDP features, such as private appointments and brokering services that arrange instruction with a range of community resources, easily incorporated into the "one-stop" centers that many colleges have developed. Assessment and counseling staff in colleges implementing an External Diploma Program have found that the program is a natural complement to other successful programs. Finally, community colleges are getting involved with the EDP because the long-term benefits to both the college and the student are obvious. Studies show that the EDP graduate of today becomes the community college student of tomorrow—in fact, 40 percent of EDP graduates go on to postsecondary institutions, and 85 percent or more of those attend a community or technical college. Graduates have been shown to possess a high level of competence and the ability to learn from mistakes. Quality-of-skill demonstrations are reinforced by evaluations of each candidate's portfolio conducted by ACE-trained staff against a national performance standard.

### Why Should an External Diploma Program be Established?

An External Diploma Program is a partnership between the American Council on Education (ACE) and three key community groups: a community college or other educational provider; a school board or state department of education; and local business and labor organizations.

The American Council on Education (ACE)'s role is to provide training, monitoring, and evaluation of local assessment systems. ACE's experience in building national programs and standing in the educational community ensure participants a valid, reliable, and portable credential.

Business and labor are key partners because they supply the EDP client population—mature, experienced workers; because they have a need to sharpen the basic skills of their experienced but undereducated workers; and because they can provide facilities and tuition reimbursement for current workers participating in the program. The most obvious benefit to business and labor partners in an External Diploma Program is that they will ensure that existing and transitional workers remain a viable and important part of the work force—and the community at large—and that the dedication and experience of these workers will not be lost. After completing the EDP training, graduates can again be self-confident, self-directed workers and take their place in a better-educated, globally competitive work force.

Community colleges and local schools are vital to any EDP partnership because these institutions provide faculty, assessment staff, counselors, and expertise in educational delivery. EDP's educational partners are assured a program that will augment other literacy programs that are being offered by the community college and local schools.

Community colleges especially are meant to play a vital role in the EDP partnership process. The experience and leadership of these institutions in building community-based partnerships is vital in creating a successful program from the perspective of business and labor, and the attractiveness of attending a community college is a key factor in motivating mature adults to go back to school.

The EDP, which combines community colleges' expertise on the local level with ACE's experience in creating programs with a national scope, can do much to improve the range of options available to prepare U.S. workers for the knowledge-intensive workplace of today and the future.

*Florence Harvey is director of the External Diploma Program for the American Council on Education. For more information about the program, please call (202) 939-9475 and ask for EDP.*

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# TECHNOLOGY AS A METAPHOR FOR CHANGE

**Kenneth C. Green**

Fueled by more than four decades of aspirations and a dozen years of sustained (if often ad hoc) experimentation, information technology has finally emerged as a permanent, respected, and increasingly essential component of the college experience. Indeed, walk any direction on almost any college campus today and it is easy to see hard evidence of the impact of computers and information technology: students and faculty carrying notebook computers across campus into offices, classrooms, libraries; desktop computers in faculty and administrative offices; libraries and computer clusters packed with students and faculty wandering the Internet and the World Wide Web; faculty and administrative committees talking about technology, software standards, and user support; Web sites listed on course syllabi and in campus publications; textbook publishers promoting new CD-ROMs as part of their ever expanding line of curriculum resources; and administrators and faculty wondering where to find the money required to acquire and support the next, necessary wave of new technology resources.

These indicators, and others, suggest that the decades of aspirations for and financial investment in computing and information technology are finally—albeit slowly—moving into the mainstream of the instructional experience in many classes and on most campuses.

Yet have we really witnessed a "computer revolution" or experienced the "technology transformation" of higher education?

It is still premature to talk about a technology-driven transformation of educational institutions. Elementary and secondary schools, community colleges, and even elite research universities are still in the early stages of adopting and incorporating various kinds of information technology into their instructional functions. And it is hyperbole to discuss a technological revolution in education, which implies a sudden and dramatic departure from past practice. Information technology, as a function and as a resource, has in fact entered the pedagogical mainstream. But we need to acknowledge that information technology has not yet radically transformed classrooms, the instructional activities of most faculty, or the learning experience of most students. Indeed, we can and should debate, at length, fundamental questions of application (how we use the technology) and impact (what difference does it make in what and how students learn).

The much discussed Transformation (capital T)—if it occurs—will take time, certainly another decade. Curriculum enhancement and innovation, however, will be a continuing and incremental process, remaining largely dependent on the interaction between individual initiative (the way individual faculty design the syllabus and structure their classes) and institutional infrastructure (the hardware, software, and support services available to students and faculty).

But in the interim, we should also acknowledge that important things are beginning to happen in classrooms, in faculty offices, in libraries, and on campuses across the country. Data from the annual Campus Computing project indicate there was a major leap in the proportion of classes using information technology resources between 1994 and 1995. Some measures of technology use in instruction more than doubled. Equally important, growing numbers of students across all sectors of higher education now expect a technology component in their classes; and growing numbers of faculty in all disciplines are now using technology to enhance the content of their courses and expand the learning opportunities and resources available to their students.

## External Pressures

Still, even as these efforts are applauded, colleges must attend to the external forces that help drive the growing expectations for technology on campuses. One key factor is the rising level of computer ownership among American families: by Christmas 1996, roughly 40 percent of American households (some 40 million families) will own a computer, up from 33 percent as of Christmas 1995. Although affluent families are still far more likely to own computers than others, the real growth in the consumer market over the past two years has been among middle-income consumers—families with annual incomes ranging from $25–50,000.

A second key driver is that computers are now everywhere. In the United States, corporate spending on information technology surpassed expenditures on manufacturing technology several years ago; the Industrial Revolution, begun two centuries ago in British knitting mills, has ended; the much discussed Information Age, fostered by the transistor and computer chip, has really arrived.

The technology experience today is ubiquitous,



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cutting across income categories as well as educational and occupational lines. White-collar office workers, farmers, and small business owners, among others, are as likely to use computers in their daily work tasks as are middle managers and degreed-professionals, perhaps more so.

Demography also fosters expectations about the use of technology in higher education. Demographic data point to a rising demand for postsecondary education that has not been matched by gains in core campus capacity. The possibility and potential of technology in distance education drives rising expectations among state officials that technology can resolve some pressing capacity problems for less money than the costs associated with expanding existing facilities, building new campuses, or hiring more faculty.

## Internal Issues

The expectations for technology among state officials confront some real limitations. First, technology really does cost money—lots of money—for equipment, software, infrastructure, and user support. Moreover, these are recurring, rather than one-time expenses. Additionally, the short useful life of most technology products—perhaps three years or so for computers and maybe only 15 months (often less) for most software—plays havoc with institutional budgets and financial models. The Campus Computing data indicate that almost three-fourths of American colleges and universities do not have a financial plan to "acquire and retire" technology resources; rather, most technology purchasing is largely opportunistic, often done with "budget dust" at the end of the fiscal year.

Second is the issue of productivity and technology. Academe has a hard time talking about productivity because there is little agreement about measures and outcomes. For faculty, the link between technology and productivity is personal and primarily qualitative.

In contrast, provosts, presidents and state policy-makers understandably feel increasing pressure to look at the quantitative side of the technology-productivity relationship. Does technology allow the increase of production and outputs (enrollments and class offerings, for example) with no increase or perhaps even some reduction in costs? This is part of the lure of distance education: increased access, increased "productivity," increased revenue, and seemingly low operating costs.

## Technology as a Metaphor

Information technology offers important lessons about change for academic institutions. Some two decades ago, Gordon Moore, chairman of Intel, observed that the power or capacity of technology would double every 18 to 24 months, while cost would tumble by half during the same period. Moore was initially talking about the processing power and price of computer chips. But Moore's Law has a profound substantive and symbolic effect on our lives today.

Moore's Law helps to explain why computers (and other electronic products) are more powerful and less expensive each year. It explains why the new computers campuses will purchase during summer 1996 will need to be replaced by summer 1999. Newer, faster, better, and less expensive technology is always right around the corner.

But at a symbolic level, Moore's Law also offers a significant statement about the pace of change in a technology-driven economy. Nothing is static, everything is dynamic, and change is the only constant. This applies to information and skills as well as technology products and services.

The dynamic nature of technology reflects, in one sense, the pace of change in the economy—a rate of change that often poses major challenges to colleges. New industries emerge in years, not decades; new technologies can change markets in months, not years. Things continue to move and to evolve, and they do so quickly and unexpectedly.

Despite the pace of change, academic institutions move slowly: it takes months and often years to review and revise curricula; additional months are spent on personnel decisions that corporations routinely handle in weeks. The investments in internal training, retraining, and infrastructure that are common, routine expenditures in both small businesses and large corporations are not being made. To stay current and competitive, academic institutions, programs, and internal processes will have to recognize and accommodate change more quickly and efficiently than has been past practice.

Perhaps the best preparation for a world where change is the only constant is found in the advice that the best teachers, professors, and mentors pass along to their prized students. By word and by deed, they stress the importance of core knowledge, interpersonal and technical skills, and perhaps most important, a capacity for self-renewal.

As individuals and as institutions, higher education must attend to the challenge of self-renewal—for programs and curricula surely, but also for the individual portfolios that faculty and administrators bring to their professional activities. The issue is not that technology will necessarily change everything. The real issue is that technology is a metaphor for change and the pace of change. The challenge is to attend to and respond to the pace of change and to create an institutional and individual capacity for self-renewal that recognizes and accommodates change.

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# LEARNING COMMUNITIES, LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS, AND LEARNING COLLEGES

**Terry O'Banion**

A learning revolution appears to be spreading rapidly across the higher education landscape. Triggered by the 1983 report, *A Nation at Risk*, that warned "the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity," the revolution was energized by a second wave of reform reports that began appearing in the early 1990s. These reports focused the reform efforts on a common theme: to place learning first. A 1993 report, An American Imperative, called for "putting student learning first" and "creating a nation of learners." In 1994 the Education Commission of the States urged a reinvented higher education system that would reflect a new paradigm shift centered on learning. In 1995 the Association of American Colleges and Universities issued a paper titled, "The Direction of Educational Change: Putting Learning at the Center."

Community colleges and their leaders have also joined the revolution. Myran and Zeiss predict "we are entering a period of profound and fundamental change for community colleges . . . .We are becoming learner-based colleges." George Boggs says "The mission is student learning. The most important people in the institution are the learners. Everyone else is there to facilitate and support student learning." The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges in its 1995 *New Basic Agenda* announces "Student learning is essential to the social and economic development of multicultural California."

And a handful of community colleges, soon to number in the hundreds, are busy redrafting statements of values and mission, redesigning organizational structures and processes, developing outcome measures, and applying information technology, all in the name of making their institutions more learner centered. As community colleges embrace the learning revolution, there is some understandable confusion regarding a number of terms that have appropriated the word "learning" as part of their nomenclature. Terms in current use include learning communities, learning organizations, and learning colleges.

## Learning Communities

A curricular intervention designed to enhance collaboration and expand learning, a learning community "purposefully restructures the curriculum to link together courses or course work so that students find greater coherence in what they are learning, as well as increased intellectual interaction with faculty and fellow students." The structures are also referred to as learning clusters, triads, federated learning communities, coordinated studies, and integrated studies; but the term "learning communities" has emerged as the favorite descriptor. When the same 30 students enroll for nine credit hours in a sequence of courses under the rubric of "Reading, Writing, and Rats" they have enrolled in a learning community.

The first learning community was offered in the Experimental College at the University of Wisconsin in 1927. There have been numerous variations on the learning community in higher education for the last 70 years, and the first such experiments in a community college occurred at Santa Fe Community College (Florida) in 1966. More recently, the community colleges in Washington state, Daytona Beach Community College (Florida), and La-Guardia Community College (New York) have been leaders in developing new and expanded forms of learning communities.

Learning communities are powerful curricular innovations and certainly help revolutionize the learning process, but they are not a necessary construct in the learning revolution. Learning communities would have emerged with or without a learning revolution; it is not likely they would have by themselves created a learning revolution. In some colleges in which they exist, the rest of the institution maintains business as usual in which learning is not always first. But since learning communities do exist, it would be wise to incorporate them into the architecture of the current learning revolution.

## Learning Organizations

Garvin suggests that "A learning organization is an organization skilled at creating, acquiring, and transferring knowledge, and at modifying its behavior to reflect new knowledge and insights." The goal is to create a "community of commitment" among the members of an organization so they can function more fully and more openly to achieve the goals of the organization.

Peter Senge chartered the territory of the learning organization in his 1990 book *The Fifth Discipline: The*

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*Art and Practice of the Learning Organization.* Senge describes the learning organization as one in which "people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together." According to Senge, a learning organization depends upon five disciplines: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning. Through these disciplines, a college will flatten its organization, develop models of collaboration for faculty and administrators, develop processes for evaluating and reviewing its goals, and involve all stakeholders in learning better how to do their jobs.

A number of community colleges are attracted to the concept of the learning organization and have begun to apply some of the processes developed by Senge and his colleagues. Because they are familiar with the language of the learning organization, many community college leaders assume they are engaged in creating learning-centered institutions as a result of their interest in and compliance with the processes of the learning organization. It is quite possible, however, for a college to reduce its hierarchy, open the information flow, focus on whole systems, work together in teams, and develop flexible structures designed to enhance the continuing involvement of all stakeholders and still retain models of classrooms, lecturing, and teacher-as-sage as has been true in past practice. In some ways, a learning organization is designed for the staff of the institution, while a learning-centered institution is designed for the students. There is no guarantee that a learning organization will become a learning-centered institution placing learning first for students unless those values are made clearly visible as the primary goal of a learning organization.

The basic concept of the learning organization, however, provides a powerful foundation on which to build a learning-centered institution. The concepts of the learning organization are philosophically compatible with the concepts of a learning-centered institution, and the processes of learning organizations are compatible with the processes of learning-centered institutions.

**Learning Colleges**

A new term has emerged in the last several years, specifically tailored for the community college, that reflects the goals and purposes of the learning revolution in action. The term "learning college" is much more useful in describing the comprehensive nature of a community college committed to placing learning first than are the terms "learning communities" and "learning organizations." The learning college places learning first and provides educational experiences for learners any way, any place, any time. The learning college is based on six key principles:

* The learning college creates substantive change in individual learners.
* The learning college engages learners as full partners in the learning process, assuming primary responsibility for their own choices.
* The learning college creates and offers as many options for learning as possible.
* The learning college assists learners to form and participate in collaborative learning activities.
* The learning college defines the roles of learning facilitators by the needs of the learners.
* The learning college and its learning facilitators succeed only when improved and expanded learning can be documented for its learners.

The key challenge for those who wish to launch learning colleges is to redesign the current learning environment inherited from an earlier agricultural and industrial society-an environment that is time bound, place bound, efficiency bound, and role bound. Roger Moe, Majority Leader for the Minnesota State Senate, has described higher education as "a thousand years of tradition wrapped in a hundred years of bureaucracy." Education today is not very different than education was one hundred years ago.

The learning revolution aims toward creating a new culture and a new architecture of education, a new system in which the learner is placed at the center of everything that occurs in the educational enterprise. The learning community is a curricular innovation that can help achieve that purpose when it is included in an institution-wide plan. The learning organization is a concept that contributes to an institutional culture in which discussions regarding student learning are more likely to take place. The learning college is a comprehensive approach incorporating both learning communities and learning organizations in helping community colleges to fulfill the aims of the learning revolution which is to place learning first.

*Terry O'Banion is executive director of the League for Innovation in the Community College. The principles and examples outlined in this abstract are detailed in his new book, The Learning College, to be published in late 1996 or early 1997.*

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# STATEWIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORKS

**S. Gregory Bowes**

Learning, networking, and having fun. These should be the watchwords for statewide professional development programs designed to bring colleagues together within their states to learn about and discuss the possible impact of emerging statewide issues, programs, and priorities. Professional development has long been a strong and vibrant feature of life in community colleges, but most activities of this sort are institutionally focused and based. While these approaches are certainly very worthwhile, leveraging campus-based activities by involving staff in activities with a clearly statewide focus can maximize learning, collaboration, and understanding. Statewide professional development networks for community college personnel can build upon campus-level programs in ways that bear fruit in unexpected and valuable ways.

Today's community colleges face an environment of shrinking resources and expanding expectations. At a time of accelerated change and emerging new constituent groups, campus leaders are challenged to provide meaningful professional development for all personnel, but with often severe pressure on funding for this key function. Statewide professional development activities offer advantages—both professional and economic—available only when a number of institutions collaborate.

## Organization of Networks

Building a statewide network should be considered an ongoing process. The involvement of key institutions and agencies—community college professional associations within the state, the higher education commission (SHEO), leaders from state public education agencies, and legislative bodies connected with community college policy formulation—can build a base of support that will ensure success over time.

A particularly key ingredient is the inclusion of college leaders charged with the allocation of funds for staff development and those who plan local programs and activities. The insights of these key individuals about program needs and statewide delivery mechanisms are invaluable to both the initial planning and the ongoing process of coordinating statewide activities. This group will prove invaluable in conducting assessments of needs and resources, in building statewide participation and commitment, and in ensuring that the program provides services relevant across the entire state.

A final component to add to this composition is representation from the professorate in community college leadership and higher education administration. The inclusion of professors who can help participants to connect theory and literature with everyday needs, realities, and challenges on community college campuses will not only provide a way for participants to keep abreast of academic perspectives, but will also help the state's colleges of education maintain ongoing access to the perspectives of practitioners at the same time.

## Specific Program Ideas

As the initial planning process unfolds, leaders should aim to build a series of first efforts that will allow the program to build upon success. The actual program focus and delivery method, of course, will vary from state to state, but leaders should strive to build agendas that connect statewide initiatives and policy imperatives with emerging campus needs—a strategy that will ensure that statewide offerings provide different programmatic opportunities than those on campus.

Environmental scanning should incorporate journals, newsletters, and conference agendas from across the nation in the search for relevant topics and issues which the program can target. Program strategies that incorporate cross-functional teams pose obvious advantages in leadership development, but also help to ensure breadth of institutional support. Likewise, programs on advanced technology and improving classroom learning are good areas of focus. An innovative program in New Mexico brought together local ABE program directors with campus chief instructional offices (CIOs) as they implemented curricular change and strategic planning. In Oklahoma, representatives from over 20 technical campuses used a leadership development theme to organize for implementing statewide change. The resounding success of the statewide efforts in New Mexico and Oklahoma is an indication of the unique potential for learning that can arise when colleagues with similar interests, needs, and challenges are brought together. And while learning and skill development were the central focus of these two



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efforts, ancillary outcomes of the process were also apparent—the participants had a good deal of fun and broadened their own professional networks in the process.

## Benefits

The most obvious benefit of participation in a statewide professional development network is the increased understanding and knowledge about statewide concerns, issues, and programs among practicing professionals in the state's community colleges. A less-obvious but equally important benefit is the inherent cost effectiveness of statewide staff development activities. In one recent example, a statewide planning group chose to recruit a national expert for two days instead of sending the 20-plus participants to an out-of-state meeting with the same individual as the headliner.

The networking which occurs during these learning activities—especially those that span several days— pays triple dividends to the participants. Participants often have the opportunity to further explore topics in informal settings that allow them to interact with speakers and other participants as colleagues, to get to know one another as people over meals and in other social settings, and to form study groups across institutional lines that serve to broaden the perspectives of all involved. All of these activities work forcefully to build on new knowledge and skills acquired from the professional development program. Key concepts can be powerfully reinforced in a casual environment that encourages discussions of direct applications and programmatic implications of the program focus.

In the midst of all the learning and networking, one of the strongest benefits of statewide professional development networks from the viewpoint of participants is the opportunity to have fun with new friends. The work-friendly motto employed by the president of one western community college exemplifies this aspect of the most successful programs—"Incorporate specific programmatic activities that are FUN." Social activities, talent shows, educational field trips, and dance lessons are just a few examples of activities that have been used to great effect in stimulating group interaction and socialization. As statewide networks mature, on-going friendships, social activities, and alliances often become the most significant mechanisms sustaining the program.

## Tips for Success

Individuals who have been successful in initiating and developing statewide networks offer suggestions which can aid newcomers in this process. First and foremost, all activities should be high quality and focused on learning. Planners should provide maximum opportunity for reflection, application of theory to practice, and development of action plans.

Those in charge of statewide networks must continually seek to maintain strong and ongoing support by dedicating time to developing active membership on statewide planning committees, seeking full participation of colleges, involving influential community college experts from the national level, and promoting the institutionalization of statewide professional development.

Many say that planning groups need to start small and build successful programs tied to real campus needs—needs that cannot be met on individual campuses. This realistic approach should look toward larger, statewide policy imperatives that link with impending training needs across regions or an entire state. Furthermore, funding sources should be identified that can help meet specific needs and program initiatives.

The most successful programs have identified a small leadership group—individuals who serve a central role and help focus attention on the effort. Additionally, a recognized contact person who can facilitate marketing, recruitment, and evaluation mechanisms for networking is invaluable.

Solid meeting management tools and processes apply: the leadership team should provide follow-up notes to participants, inform supervisors of participants' contributions to conferences and symposia, spread the credit to all involved, and ensure that evaluative data are shared with all constituents.

## Conclusion

Successful statewide networks can do much to build collaboration among leaders at the campus level, agencies central to the community college mission, and related educational institutions. Statewide networks for professional development help colleges deliver quality learning and related services, as well as expand the skills and knowledge base of their instructors, business personnel, administrators, and counselors. Such programs and activities can build upon locally based staff development efforts, and foster a valuable awareness of statewide needs and imperatives.

Along the way, planners should always keep in mind that the key to building and sustaining a vibrant and successful statewide professional development network is to ensure that participants are learning, networking, and having fun.

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Lar[illegible] editor

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leadership abstracts

# THE CHALLENGE OF BOARD CHANGE

George R. Boggs

A governing board is more than the sum of its individual members. Interactions among members and between the CEO and the members make boards dynamic and complex entities. Over time, a board and CEO develop a culture and a way of operating. When the composition of a board changes, new members may bring new ideas and perspectives, but they may also challenge the dominant culture.

While it can be healthy to bring new perspectives to a board, change can also bring difficulties. To be effective in leading a college district, a CEO and board must have a clear idea of the roles they are expected to play, and they must work to make the relationship a productive one. Ideally, the CEO and the board should be viewed as a team of leaders who share common philosophies and objectives.

Those community colleges commonly identified as being among the best have a history of stable CEO leadership. Long-term CEOs attribute their longevity in great degree to the stability of their boards. In these cases, changes in board composition have been gradual enough for new board members to become acculturated and to learn their roles as college trustees. More dramatic changes can challenge a board and CEO to maintain effective leadership.

CEO turnover can often occur after a large-scale change in board composition. This is especially true if the new members have special interests which they place above the interests of the college district or if they have political ambitions beyond the college board. Boards which are split along philosophical or personal lines have a difficult time providing consistent and effective leadership and can create time-consuming problems for their CEOs.

Although some CEOs are faced with untenable situations and eventually leave their positions, others successfully negotiate the challenges of board changes. Some CEOs have been successful in some circumstances but not in others. Strategies for success include trustee orientation and development, effective communication, developing a long-term perspective, evaluation of the CEO and the board, and effective use of the board chair.

## Trustee Orientation and Development

Most CEOs schedule orientations for new board members and feel these sessions are valuable. Orientation sessions provide an opportunity for the CEO and college staff to inform new trustees about the college, its mission, and its operations while providing an opportunity for them to learn more about their role in policy setting and monitoring. Often the board chair or an experienced trustee helps with the orientation. A consultant from a state or national trustee organization can be called in as a facilitator. Written materials about the college and about board responsibilities and ethics are commonly distributed and reviewed.

Other CEOs recommend informal orientation sessions, often given during a campus tour. An informal setting can provide an excellent opportunity for the CEO to explain important issues and to introduce the new board member to dedicated faculty and staff. One-on-one informal meetings enable the new trustee to ask questions which may be difficult to raise in a more formal setting. Even trustees who were elected with a special interest agenda can begin to broaden their perspective as a result of well-organized formal and informal orientation sessions.

Orientation sessions scheduled by state trustee associations can also be very valuable. Experienced CEOs encourage new trustees to attend these sessions, which discuss the policy-making responsibilities of boards, the authority of individual trustees, and legal requirements of open meeting laws.

The education and development of trustees should not stop after an initial orientation. Successful CEOs also support the trustee education programs sponsored by state and national trustee associations and encourage their board members to attend trustee conferences. Today's CEOs believe that a more informed board is a better board.

Successful CEOs also judge board workshops to be very valuable. When there are problems such as a split board or overriding special interests, a workshop with an outside facilitator can help the group become a cohesive team. It is important for the CEO to work on these problems early and not to allow them to linger. No one should expect one workshop, however, to solve serious board problems. What can result is a plan for building a better board. Even in cases where there are no serious problems on a board, occasional workshops, study sessions, or retreats are valuable in maintaining a leadership team focused on the best interests of the college.

## Effective Communication

CEOs who have successfully met the challenges of board changes note that establishing and maintaining



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healthy board relations is a primary responsibility of the CEO, and that regular and ongoing communication is a key factor in their success. These CEOs always keep their trustees informed by sending them information regularly, meeting with them individually over breakfast or lunch, and calling them frequently. These CEOs spend the time necessary to address trustee concerns, to answer their questions, and to move them toward a common mission and direction. CEOs who have spent time with negative trustees were sometimes able to turn them into supporters.

Another strategy used by CEOs is to develop in new trustees a sense of pride in community colleges and their service as a board member and pride in the achievements of their district. Trustees come to their positions for a variety of reasons. CEOs should discover these motivations and find something significant for trustees to do which helps to meet their needs and yet accomplishes the goals of the institution. CEOs can capitalize on the need of the new trustee to make a difference.

### Developing a Long-Term Perspective

Successful CEOs focus their boards on strategic issues. The magnitude of challenges facing colleges requires that boards model and encourage positive institutional response to societal changes. Board agendas and workshops should include discussion of substantive educational and organizational issues, not just business action items. Substantive discussions between board members and college staff on meaningful long-term issues should be encouraged. CEOs can play a major role in structuring agendas so that their boards discuss the larger issues of institutional direction and effectiveness rather than operational details. Ensuring that board members are educated about important issues facing the college elevates their role and expands their perspectives. Involving the board in discussions about future issues and plans is essential.

### Evaluation

Regular evaluations of CEO and board performance provide opportunities for the board and the CEO to clarify expectations and to assess progress toward meeting college or district goals. CEOs who have successfully dealt with board change often use a method of making annual objectives the basis for their evaluations. As new members join a board, it is important that the goals of the district and expectations for the CEO be reviewed.

The CEO should always take the lead in developing a draft of objectives or district goals for board review. These goals and objectives should be related to the long-range plan and vision of the district and should be compatible with the mission. CEOs can also prepare a self-evaluation or an end-of-year report for the board, referring to progress toward meeting goals and objectives as well as to other significant activities and accomplishments. State and national trustee associations have sample evaluation forms for both trustees and CEOs.

### Effective Use of the Board Chair

A strong board chair can be most helpful when there are problems with a board member. A board chair or another influential board member can be very helpful to a CEO by discussing concerns with the particular trustee in private. There may be occasions in which the whole board may have to deal with a disruptive trustee or with one who is not living up to expectations or standards of ethics. Unfortunately, open meeting laws in some states do not permit the board to address these issues in closed or executive sessions.

### Recommendations

It is important for CEOs to establish a relationship with new trustees. Once established, this relationship must be cultivated and maintained. Although these activities take time away from other leadership responsibilities, it is time well spent. Successful CEOs keep an ear to the ground to sense potential problems before they develop and then work to resolve them before they become more serious. Continuous communication between the CEO and individual trustees is also important. Maintaining complete honesty is critical, and CEOs should protect trustees from surprises. Respect for individual differences and tact in dealing with trustees are also keys to good relations.

CEOs who have been confronted with moral or ethical dilemmas in their interactions with trustees advise that a CEO should never compromise his or her principles. A leader's integrity should not yield to pressure. CEOs should know their own values and decide where to draw the limits. They should always have sufficient resources and enough courage to leave a position when staying would cost them their integrity.

Board changes, like CEO changes, bring a new complexion to the leadership of a college district. Change is usually not embraced with open arms, especially when a board and CEO have developed a trusting, effective, and comfortable professional relationship over a period of years. A change in trustees can threaten to disrupt the culture that has been developed. The strategies described here, however, have proven effective in minimizing disruption and making the change a positive one for the college.

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leadership abstracts

# DISTANCE EDUCATION IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

**Judy Lever-Duffy and Randal A. Lemke**

Distance education has recently achieved a level of critical interest that signals a shift from the instructional periphery to mainstream instructional delivery. For years, distance education was considered experimental, even questionable, nontraditional instruction. It was often looked upon as an inferior educational option offered for those who could not participate in "real" classes.

Some of these criticisms were valid. Technologically limited distance delivery programs piloted by the early adopters of distance education often offered flexibility at the expense of sound instructional design. But the experience gained from the early innovators combined with the rampant technological advances of recent years have made it possible to expand the definition of distance education and provide a wide variety of quality educational programs.

Higher education institutions facing reduced resources and increased need for their services are turning to distance delivery in ever increasing numbers. They recognize the massive investment by private corporations in technology-intensive distance training programs and see economic and productivity possibilities for themselves. They perceive new levels of acceptance for technology in instruction and reduced resistance by faculty and students. They are keenly aware of competition ready to use distance delivery to offer courses in their market area.

All of these forces have coalesced to put distance education in the right place, at the right time. Institutional interest is high and still growing. Educators are seeking training in, and an understanding of distance delivery. Many institutions are trying to position themselves quickly so that they will be able to meet their student's demands before being threatened by outside competition. Distance education, once a fringe methodology, is fast becoming a fundamental methodology for the Information Age institution.

Technology has made it possible; societal and economic pressures have made it essential.

## Distance Education in the Community College

The terms distance education and distance learning have been used synonymously to describe a wide variety of nontraditional programs. From correspondence courses to telecourses to courses offered on the Internet, distance education has become an umbrella term to describe courses of study delivered to students in any number of non-classroom formats. Distance education has an evolutionary history that has been influenced both by the sophistication of technology and the demand for flexible access to instruction.

Distance education began as an alternative to traditional classroom instruction in the mid-1800s. These early delivery systems, though limited by that era's technology to correspondence courses, demonstrated the same instruction anytime, anywhere philosophy at the core of today's distance education movement. Americans isolated in rural areas used these distance education opportunities to access education that would not have been available otherwise. Providing access to instructional opportunities has been the goal of every distance education initiative since.

While the goal has remained the same, the structure and composition of distance education has changed significantly over the years. Just as the trends and technologies in society impacted traditional education, they also altered distance education. As radio and television were adopted by the consumers, distance education programs incorporated them as well. Today, new Information Age technologies are available that have made it possible to improve the quality and ensure the variety of distance learning experiences. Many community colleges, seeking new and better ways to serve their students, have embraced distance education as a way to ensure access and promote flexible delivery of quality instruction.

Since their inception, community colleges have been at the forefront of distance education. They have effectively applied the various distance delivery approaches that have evolved throughout the history of the movement. At the same time, they have created new and innovative distance delivery formats that have improved instructional access. In a survey of American community colleges, the League for Innovation in the Community College and Miami-Dade Community College found an array of distance education approaches in place across the continent.

Each of the approaches taken by individual community colleges reflects a unique combination of formats and technologies. The study found that video technologies, including broadcast and cable TV, video-cassettes, satellite uplinks and downlinks, and compressed video systems, remain the backbone of many community college programs. Many interactive video courses as well as telecourses have been developed by individual colleges or have been leased from other colleges or PBS. The study also found that audio technologies, including radio, audio-cassette, and voice-mail, continued to be used by many



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community college programs. The newest of approaches, computer and telecommunications-based systems, were being incorporated into distance education programs at a growing rate. Together the print, audio, video, and computer-based approaches form the foundation of distance education efforts in community colleges today.

Regardless of the approach used, community colleges have continued to expand distance-delivered course offerings and have now begun to offer degree and certificate programs. The Annenberg/CPB Project with its New Pathways to a Degree program and PBS Adult Learning Services's Going the Distance Project have been major catalysts for the evolution from individual courses at a distance to degree programs. Recently, the League established an International Community College program that provides distance-delivered courses in partnership with Jones Intercable. Funding from state and federal governments continue to fuel distance education initiatives by contributing directly or by subsidizing the growth of the technology base needed to make new distance programming possible. Groups, such as the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, with its ambitious Asynchronous Learning Networks Project, promote the growth of distance education even further. Corporations and other private sources have joined the ranks of contributors to community college distance education initiatives as well.

The driving forces behind the explosion of interest in distance delivery, however, remain societal and technological change. The rapidly developing, easily accessed worldwide telecommunications environment has expanded the instructional world of students and faculty. The Internet and market forces that foster its growth have changed the way society does and will do business. These forces are inexorably altering education as well. Community college students and faculty are seeking the opportunity to use existing and emerging technological tools to make instruction more accessible both on and off campus.

## Revising Curricula for Distance Delivery

The core of every distance education program is a high quality curriculum designed specifically to meet the needs of learners remote from their instructor. Strategies that work well in live presentations may or may not be effective across a distance. The key is to select appropriate instructional strategies consistent with the environment in which they will be used.

Instruction at a distance requires extensive choreography. Distance instruction must be meticulously planned and implemented to avoid learner confusion, frustration, or isolation. Strategies must be identified and implemented that will anticipate and address diverse learning styles. Materials must be prepared that respond to the gambit of student reaction to the content presented. The teacher may not be present remotely or locally at the time the instruction occurs. "Real-time" instruction may be mediated by complex technology to bridge distances. In either case, the teacher does not have the option to shift strategies "on-the-fly" or try instructional alternatives as easily as is possible in the classroom. The distance educator must develop and integrate a variety of well-planned, finely tuned strategies from which students can choose as they navigate their distance learning environment. Many community college teachers have had little or no training in the process of instructional design and development of alternative instructional strategies and may require significant training and support.

Above all, distance curriculum must be designed to be student centered and student directed. The faculty member must identify and develop strategies for content delivery that promote independent learning and self direction. Peer-to-peer and faculty-to-student interaction should be carefully planned for and creatively facilitated in all distance education programs. In distance education, as in the traditional classroom, promoting active learning must remain a priority. Given the time and place barriers inherent in distance education, curricular revision is a necessary first step for effective distance education.

## Conclusion

Community colleges have long sought to expand access to quality, timely instruction. Weekend colleges, independent studies, outreach programs, and facilitated learning are just a few of the many flexible formats developed by community colleges to maximize access and opportunity as economic forces and changing social roles continue to constrain community college students' time. With an average age of mid-to-late twenties, community college students typically have significant economic responsibilities for themselves and their families. They are often working adults who want to improve their opportunities for economic success in the workplace or who require new skills to maintain their jobs. Even flexible on-campus instruction, while improving access, may not meet the needs of many community college students. For those whose life circumstance makes it difficult or impossible to come to campus, distance education may be their only opportunity. For those who can come to campus for some of their courses, distance education can offer the flexibility necessary to more quickly complete degree or certificate requirements.

Distance education in community colleges is an innovative, flexible option designed to maximize access and opportunity.

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*This article is abstracted from the introduction to a new League monograph entitled* Learning without Limits: Model Distance Education Programs in Community Colleges. *For additional information or to order copies of the monograph, contact the League office at (714) 367-2884.*

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leadership abstracts

# THE PELOTON: RIDING THE WINDS OF CHANGE

**Beverlee McClure and Tony Stanco**

The feeling of riding against the wind is not uncommon for community college teams. Indeed, today's administrators, faculty, and staff often feel as though they are racing against the winds of societal, technological, educational, and economic change with little or no support or understanding. The leaders of these weary teams would be well served to explore an organizational structure from the cycling world that helps riders come together as a group and face their powerful gusts and hilly roadways efficiently and effectively—the *peloton*. The approach of this peloton model, based on the concepts of servant leadership, coordinated effort, and goal orientation, provides interesting insights when applied to community college leadership.

## The Approach

At the start of a peloton bicycle team race, as was demonstrated so vividly this summer in Atlanta, the riders explode across the starting line with a collective purpose. As they move through the course, crosswinds and headwinds present formidable obstacles that no rider can overcome alone. Only by falling into the most natural formation for blocking the wind can the entire team conserve its energy for the ultimate goal—to win the race. In addition, depending on the direction of the wind, *pacelines*, small bands of riders that fight head- and tail-winds, or *echelons*, groups that fight crosswinds, appear and disappear as needed throughout the ride.

Maintaining these formations is a collective effort. Each rider takes a turn at the front as point-person, allowing the others to draft behind. In addition to serving as a point-person, each team member serves as a *domestique*. In biking, the role of a domestique is to support the point-person in maintaining superior position by keeping the team in formation and focused on the finish line. This is done while conserving energy for their turn at the front. When every rider performs at maximum capacity and takes a turn "pulling" the group, the formation is poetry in motion. The dynamics of the peloton provide a rich metaphor for maximizing human resource talent to deal with change.

The peloton metaphor refers to both a structure and process of leadership and followership. Most organizations are divided into smaller units, each representing a peloton. Within these various units are smaller departments, much like the pacelines that form in a race. Point-persons serve as unit leaders, but also serve as domestiques for other units. This dual role, created by the structure of the peloton, also provides a process for empowering future leaders as each person is confronted with the challenge of simultaneously leading and following.

The dynamics between the leadership and followership functions are critical to the peloton model for a number of reasons. First, leadership is rotated, allowing team members to avoid the burnout associated with both constant responsibility or redundant work. Second, this rotation provides point-persons with a body of experience within the group that can not only aid the project or task at hand, but that also can be drawn upon for guidance and encouragement.

At the heart of the peloton is a multifaceted trust and responsibility relationship, with leaders and followers interchanging vital roles as necessary. This relationship makes the pelaton distinct form traditional "top-down" or "bottom-up" models of leadership, as neither of these models meet the needs of a cycling team over the course of a race. The model is closer to Greenleaf's theory of servant-leadership, with a more focused perspective on the roles of leaders and followers in the system.

## The Application

The divisions of a community college can be seen as a collection of pelotons, with the departments as pacelines. Committees such as those that are responsible for faculty development or curriculum may be thought of as echelons. At the head of each peloton is a "coach"—a vice president or dean—that is responsible for creating



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the vision for the group to follow. Because the structure of the peloton allows for a shared work load, the coach is released from many normal day-to-day tasks and is allowed the freedom to concentrate on planning and organizing for the future. Departmental chairs and supervisors serve as point-persons for the pacelines, and if structured appropriately, should also share the responsibility and trust throughout their departments. This sharing is vital to the team concept, as well as to preparing future leaders while preserving current ones.

Applying the peloton model to the division of academic affairs, one can readily see how this structure works as a process for shared leadership. The vice-president or dean of academic affairs is the coach for the instructional peloton and fills the roles of planner, encourager, and leader. Each paceline, or department, is responsible for the day-to-day operations of that area and must ensure that all activities move the paceline forward toward the vision or goal. Heading each department is a point-person; in some colleges, this position rotates—a practice that fits nicely with the pelaton metaphor. Even if rotating leadership is not feasible for a particular institution, encouraging the domestiques of the pacelines to serve as point-persons for echelons (committees) achieves the dual-role of leadership and followership for team members. The experience received will make them better followers while grooming them for future leadership roles.

The philosophy behind the peloton is simple. Many community colleges ask the same people to serve in leadership roles, from standing appointments as division chairs to special project team leaders—particularly faculty. This practice not only burns out some of the brightest people, but ignores the potential in others. The reasons often cited for this practice are the lack of time to develop new talent and the fear of allowing someone less experienced to assume a leadership position, especially for a critical committee. The peloton model, however, allows strong leaders to serve as domestiques by supporting a less-experienced point-person. This built-in support system is integral to the peloton model, whether applied to biking or community college leadership.

## Conclusion

The implementation of the peloton model does not require a significant structural change for most colleges. What it does represent, however, is a difference in process and philosophy. This change of perspective might help those community colleges that have been forced to place an even greater burden on campus leaders through reorganizations or the addition of responsibilities. The peloton approach can compensate for this overload by creating better integrated and resourceful teams that allow people to use and develop their talents. And, in community colleges as in biking, an organization is well served by making use of shared responsibility to combine talents, helping the team face the headwinds of today's educational race.

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