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ABSTRACT
            This paper relies on data collected through the TRUCCS
(Transfer and Retention of Urban Community College Students) Project, a
3-year, longitudinal and comprehensive study of the goals, success, and
academic patterns of 5,000 community college students in urban Los Angeles,
California. Researchers collected qualitative data on issues relating to
student success through focus groups and developed a list of 10 negative
operative principles found to be consistent among the interviews. The article
offers 10 "commandments" for what community colleges should not do if they
want to encourage student success: (1) do not allow untrained counselors
without the necessary specialization to help students with specific career or
college major questions; (2) do not neglect programs targeted specifically at
transfer and retention; (3) do not view occupational programs as "second
class"; (4) do not sustain unnecessary bureaucracy; (5) do not disconnect
students from their campuses; (6) do not disregard technology; (7) do not
offer an insufficient number of sections of basic English and math courses;
(8) do not heavily rely on part-time faculty who hold sparse office hours and
appear inaccessible; (9) do not discount the important role of campus
architecture in student success; and (10) do not neglect job placement
services and internships. (RC)

THE NEGATIVE COMMANDMENTS:
TEN WAYS COMMUNITY COLLEGES HINDER STUDENT SUCCESS

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THE NEGATIVE COMMANDMENTS:
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Introduction

The community college is an American educational success story. Evolving and taking shape during the middle of the twentieth century during the era of a sharp increase in college attendance fueled by post-war prosperity, the American community college has become a model for the world (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). Community colleges address the problem of an increasingly large population of people who are un- or under-prepared to meet the minimum admissions requirements of four-year universities, cannot attend a university due to work or family constraints, or seek job-related skills. Due to their complex missions, community colleges adopted a bifurcated mission; offering both academic and vocational/occupational training through an 'open-door' policy that allows the general public to enroll in courses at times and in places that fit work or family schedules. The documented successes of the American community college have not eliminated a rather significant number of critics. For example, some have asked whether one institution can simultaneously prepare students for rigorous undergraduate study and train competent workers to pursue vocations not requiring a bachelor degree (Dougherty, 1994). Others question how one institution can provide both of these services to a diverse student population with complex needs, given the necessity to rely on a state budget and at the same time remain competitive with four-year universities in terms of resources offered.

On of the goals of the federally funded project, Transfer and Retention of Urban Community College Students (TRUCCS), is to understand how the community college is

fulfilling its multiple missions. TRUCCS is a three-year (2001-2003), longitudinal study tracking the goals, successes, and academic patterns of 5,000 community college students in urban Los Angeles (the Los Angeles Community College District). TRUCCS consists of both yearly questionnaires as well as focus groups with the primary intent to question traditional definitions of achievement and success for urban community college students. This article uses data collected through a series of focus groups with students, faculty and administrators held at the nine campuses during the Fall of 2001. As one of the largest community college districts in the United States, the LACCD is home to more than 100,000 students – a total of 8% of the state's overall community college enrollment and 6% of the public undergraduate enrollment in California.

In an earlier sister paper to this article we described ten "positive commandments" or factors that promote student success. In this subsequent article we take the opposite approach and highlight ten negative operative principles found to be consistent among the focus group interviews we conducted. Our goal was not to oversimplify the process involved in aiding students or promoting their intellectual development; indeed, our findings suggest that the road to community college success is paved with complexities we had not previously considered or expected to find. Rather, our intent is to make suggestions for change that reflect comments and criticisms voiced by students, faculty and administrators at the nine LACCD campuses. Taken together, these lists of positive and negative "commandments" form the basis of ongoing research designed to illustrate the duality of institutional management. While we were able to identify best practices and commend the community college system for its advocacy of student potential and development, we also found areas needing attention and address.

Some of these flaws are inherent to urban environments, where issues of transportation, access and diversity are pressing. However, other problems we identified are endemic to the larger two-year system of education and speak to its shortcomings in areas of resource development, bureaucratic policies/procedures and campus architecture. When the community colleges were built they were state-of-the-art in most cases, and functional for the time period in which they originally existed. As times have changed, the campuses (often for lack of funding) have not worked to increase staff or revamp old buildings.

With so many of California's undergraduate students choosing the community college over the traditional four-year university for their postsecondary education, it is vital to consider the limitations of current campus conditions and the ways urban districts in California, and around the country, can most effectively remedy the ills that plague them. Most research suggests that the community college tallies more victories than defeats on its record of achievement, however, and all observations in this paper are based on the assumption that the American community college offers valid and expanding educational opportunities to those who might otherwise fall between institutional cracks (Diener, 1994). While it is unlikely that state funding will increase dramatically, there are procedures in place to seek grant funding, philanthropic donations and subsidization from public agencies (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). With the right balance of creativity and initiative, administrators and faculty can improve conditions for students today and generations of students yet to come. In this current article we offer our ten suggestions for what community colleges should NOT do.

Commandment I: *Thou shalt NOT* allow untrained counselors without the necessary specializations to help students with specific career or college major questions. Do not underestimate the need for accurate and consistent general counseling services.

One of the most consistent complaints we heard from students throughout the interviews was that general counseling services were not adequate. In some cases students reported that staff counselors gave false or misleading information. For an academically savvy student the issue of misinformation may not be significant, because he/she is equipped to decipher the difference between accurate and misguided advice regarding major or transfer requirements; but for students without much experience, one wrong suggestion can lead to a string of problems that result in student apathy or even dropout (Tinto, 1987). At Campus 1[1], three different students emphasized the poor quality of advisement they received on various occasions. Students at Campus 8 complained that counselors were not pro-active in reaching out to them, and that once students do visit the counseling center, frequently negative interactions reinforced their lack of trust in whatever advice they receive:

> My first impression of a counselor was horrible. I talked to him and he was
> yawning the whole time like he was too tired to help me. It was early in the
> morning (8 a.m.). I can't get past that first impression. As a result of that
> experience with a counselor I just said to myself 'forget it' and I didn't register
> for classes or come back that semester.

It is hard to imagine that any staff member could treat a student with disinterest; however, several students interviewed by the TRUCCS team indicated poor service that had undermined their faith in the system.

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[1] Instead of revealing information specific to a given Campus in Los Angeles, we have chosen to label the Campuses 1-9 in random order to protect the identities of those we interviewed.

An administrator from Campus 8 explained the problem in terms of financial deficiency: "If we had more funding we could probably have a full-time career counselor instead of a two-day a week counselor." Similar responses were echoed by administrators at Campus 7, who observed that in comparison to districts with more money that pro-actively hire additional counseling staff, the LACCD struggles to handle student demands for guidance. Whereas suburban districts with better funding can build their reputations as transfer institutions, campuses within this urban district must make due with half the number of counselors available for twice the number of students enrolled. Unfortunately, students are largely oblivious to funding restrictions placed upon multi-campus districts and thus are unable to understand the source of problems related to inadequate staffing.

Students at Campuses 2, 4 and 6 complained of counselors who either did not help them or were discouraging in their remarks regarding their intended goals. At Campus 4, a woman indicated to her counselor a desire to attend one of the University of California (UC) campuses; rather than provide her with information about UC admissions, the counselor suggested that the woman consider a lower tier university instead. She left the meeting feeling defeated: "The counselor made me want to cry. They should be more encouraging." Another disgruntled student explained, "The process of getting in to see a counselor is difficult. There is no follow-up and there is no encouragement to come back and see them. They don't ask you to come back." Several other students explained how bits and pieces of misleading information they received from counselors led to an array of negative consequences, from late registration fees to delayed graduation. One man said it took him three years to finish his coursework

because he had not declared a major, so the counselor did not explain the concept of general education or breadth requirements to him when they met. Although increased funding will provide additional staff to support the volume of student requests for information, it may not solve the problem of counselors who are insufficiently trained or inattentive to students.

Commandment II: *Thou shalt NOT* neglect programs targeted specifically at transfer and retention.

Faculty and administrators at a number of the campuses we visited were forthright about the need to increase staff in student services that specifically target retention and transfer. These services include, but are not limited to: tutoring, counseling, admissions and records, career/transfer centers and computer/writing labs. For some campuses the major problem was rooted in a lack of self-promotion: "We need to do a better job of communicating to students what services are available to them." More broadly, however, the problem is linked to limitations associated with low-level state funding. According to one administrator at Campus 7, "It would be nice to have more support for the transfer center. Just having a line item budget for the year instead of having to use so many budgets scraping for money would be helpful." A similar comment was made by a senior administrator from Campus 8: "I think we do phenomenal things in student services given what we have to work with; but if we had more funding we could expand our services in the transfer center and maybe take students on more bus trips, more field trips." The students we spoke with did not mention a desire for excursions from campus; rather, they wanted workshops on study skills, tutoring programs and general support for students who need mentoring.

Part of the problem may be a lack of awareness on the part of administrators about what resources students actually need and will utilize if properly staffed and funded. Foremost on the list of requests from students is efficiency: long lines in financial aid and admissions offices lead to frustration and drive some students to abandon their studies altogether. Students who enroll in weekend classes need accessible student services on Saturdays because they cannot come to campus during the week. For example, at Campus 5 the tutoring hours are limited to a weekday schedule, which excludes a substantial portion of that college's population. A survey of randomly sampled students might assist administrators as they plan to implement new resources or provide funding to increase staff in existing campus offices. If students do not have proper access to support services we can expect the problem of low retention rates on urban campuses to escalate in coming years.

Commandment III: *Thou shalt NOT view* **occupational programs as "second class".**
Many students are interested in certification or career advancement rather than transfer to a four-year institution.

The vocational/occupational community college track may be different from but not inferior to that for transfer. Critics of the community college system will often cite development of career education programs as an example of the way two-year colleges have devolved into job training centers and moved further away from the mission of providing quality academic preparation for baccalaureate study (Clowes & Levin, 1994). However, those who research community college issues know that vocational departments have flourished on two-year campuses since the 1960s, and enrollment continues to grow as practical training becomes more in demand and corporations begin

to partner with campuses in an effort to legitimize and subsidize industry-specific programs (Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Cantor, 1994). It is also important to note that many students attend community colleges for occupational purposes. A good number of students who already have degrees will come back to the colleges for practical or specific training.

Administrators at Campus 2 are all too aware that "the very definition of success varies from student to student. Some may only come here for a semester or two to work on upgrade training. Some plan to transfer while others have goals that are more vocational. So just defining the word success is difficult." For many students "success" can be defined as the acquisition of a particular skill, like the ability to read or write fluently in English. The pressure, however, to offer courses in diverse areas of interest can be taxing for administrators who feel the burden from state officials "to be an academic center that is going to give students a sound background to go on to UCLA or USC and at the same time train your carpenters and your typists or whatever." Perhaps the most profound difference between academic and vocational training is imbedded in a semantic struggle: the difference between job "skills" and job "competencies" is what separates one curriculum from the other. Moreover, vocational training may involve the completion of one or two courses in programming or computer processing, which does not require the development of a degree, certificate or distinct curriculum.

Still, students who desire a certification program in auto repair or criminal justice should have opportunities to find the courses they need and receive adequate institutional and financial support to complete their studies in a timely and convenient manner – just like their counterparts in traditional academic programs. To distinguish between them or

privilege one type of training over the other is to engage in a kind of academic elitism that is anathema to the community college mission. Some students reported being referred by counselors to a particular campus that is known to emphasize and specialize in vocational education. In some cases, students have been encouraged to attend this more "technically-oriented" college instead of continuing on where they currently study. The result is that fewer students express an interest in vocational classes for fear of being persuaded to attend classes elsewhere, perhaps in a less convenient or desired location. It seems as though several campuses are trying to pin the responsibility for educating technical workers on one college at the expense of students who attend the other eight schools. This practice may ultimately undermine the goal of promoting retention within the district and should be avoided both within this district and across the board.

Commandment IV: *Thou Shalt NOT* **sustain unnecessary bureaucracy, i.e. paperwork and 'red tape,' which takes time away from student services and administration.**

Several of the points covered overlap and bleed into one another because the problems we identify are not limited to one sector of the community college system or unique to a particular office on campus. Bureaucracy is the enemy of efficiency in every kind of organization; no office or institution is immune. The TRUCCS team found that students in focus groups did not complain about the issue of bureaucracy *per se*, but rather about the various symptoms of its presence on their campuses. Administrators we spoke with were more direct in their emphasis on the problems arising from "paperwork overload" and the various ways they feel paralyzed by the time wasted each day on purely bureaucratic matters.

One administrator from Campus 8 was passionate about the need to reduce time spent on bureaucratic matters and get back to the business of serving students. His main struggle is with the "amount of redundant paperwork" and other processes that slow administrators down. When asked to elaborate on these processes, he replies, "things I think sometimes get in the way of your wanting to do the right kind of job." One must work to balance campus or district demands for research, paperwork and assessment with the number of available or qualified staff available to do such work in a reasonable period of time. At the campus level, staff and administration must work together in order to enhance the ability of all offices to operate effectively; at the district level, there needs to be an increased awareness of the fiscal and personnel limitations of each campus, which dictates the amount of work any particular administration can produce before the strains of bureaucratic procedure overwhelm staff and begin to impact students.

Even more important, however, is willingness on the part of both campus- and district-level administration to test new ideas and remain flexible. Like at most campuses, there are staff who have worked at Campus 8 for many years who may be reluctant to adapt: "Despite all of the accolades we have said about many of our staff, we have some people that are stuck in their old ways and will not try anything new." Rigid adherence to outdated or inefficient procedures results in reduced productivity, which in turn impedes the ability of administrators to promote student success. If there is a newer, faster way to process paperwork, for example, staff should be open to this technology and willing to test its effectiveness. Today, many services for students are available in a web-based format, allowing students to access registration materials, transcripts and grade reports on-line. Unless staff in admissions, records and financial aid offices work to

promote this kind of self-sustaining model, long lines and hours spent waiting for assistance will continue to undermine the overall effectiveness of many community college resources.

Commandment V: *Thou Shalt NOT* **disconnect students from their campuses. There should be a central place for students to turn when they need help or have questions.**

Much of the literature on community college retention verifies the importance of a strong connection between student persistence and interpersonal bonds with peers, faculty and their environment (Tinto, 1987; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). The TRUCCS team noted myriad ways in which the LACCD impedes the development of such bonds. Part of the problem is a lack of space say administrators at Campus 8, who admit that "creating a feeling of connection has a lot to do with retention"; these administrators also concede, "The research on retention says that students drop out because they don't feel connected to the family. So if we can find ways to connect them, even through a service or a person or a setting then it's more likely that students will be retained." The campus is outdated with buildings from a different era that are hardly large enough to house the current number of students enrolled in scheduled classes. As a consequence, there are no designated study areas or facilities reserved for student organizations. Students from Campus 8 echoed the need for more open, student-friendly space. Without adequate resources, though, administrators are prevented from making substantive changes to improve student integration through construction or remodeling.

One solution may be to identify local neighborhood resources that draw students toward the campus and provide an incentive to spend more time at or near the college.

Campus 8 notes that, unlike other district colleges, they are not located close to strip malls or fast-food restaurants, which can create a broad sense of community. One administrator concedes, "We almost encourage students to come, take a class, and get out of here, get off campus, because there is really nothing to do. If we were located near a strip of fast food places students might hang out closer to campus and feel more connected ... We should be an educational mall." Most of the major four-year universities take advantage of the resources available close to the campus. For example, UCLA attracts students to the local Westwood community where there are endless varieties of restaurants, coffee shops and entertainment venues to enjoy; likewise, USC has developed local areas in Los Angeles to construct a "University Village" where students have access to an international food court, print supply stores, restaurants, banks, grocery stores and movie theaters. Unfortunately, community colleges lack the financial resources to compete with these examples. However, small steps can be taken to offer a campus cafeteria or student center with comfortable places for students to relax and study.

First generation students are more likely than most other community college populations to drift away from campus and become disconnected from faculty, other students and the campus overall (Tinto, 1987; Richardson, 1994). Often they are not culturally or socially aware enough to know how to navigate a college campus or local community, so it is especially easy for this group just to walk away after class and not develop relationships. Four-year universities can often guarantee on-campus housing to first- and second-year students, which forces them to involve themselves with the college community and participate in campus activities. Administrators at Campus 2

acknowledge that community colleges are part of a different culture – one without

housing or clear connections between students and the college environment. If our goal

is to promote student success we have to explore ways to enhance student interaction on

campus. One counselor at Campus 2 shared her wisdom on the subject:

> I am always telling students at my orientation to 'join a club, go to a meeting.
> You don't have to say a word, but try to find a group that you can feel connected
> to or form a study group with.' But we are such a commuter college. I mean,
> they have so many things going on in their lives.

We must emphasize that if students join a group or become involved with each other they

will find support networks to help them balance intra- and extra-curricular obligations.

The task for administrators and faculty is to identify and acknowledge disconnects

between students and their community college campuses, and then work to bridge these

gaps so students become more actively involved in their education.

Commandment VI: *Thou shalt NOT* **disregard technology.**

Student and faculty email accounts, computer labs, electronic library reserves and

other applications of technology can be powerful resources for student success. Just like

their counterparts at four-year universities, students at community colleges must type

papers, complete Internet assignments and communicate via e-mail. Although two- and

four-year students share the same technology needs, differences in access to

technological resources are profound. Many community college students cannot afford a

home computer, especially one with Internet access. Thus it is not surprising that many

community college students rely entirely on their college campuses to provide access to

computers and the Internet for their class assignments. At Campus 1 students often

experience difficulty with the computers on campus because they are prone to viruses.

When the lab shuts down to service computers students are unable to get their homework done on time, which impacts their progress and results in poor class performance. Part of the problem may be that lab staff do not monitor student use of the computers or utilize proper software to prevent virus infection from student disks. Additional training and increased staff monitoring of students in the lab are necessary to prevent the problems associated with impaired access to computers for required assignments.

At Campuses 4, 6 and 7 students also complained about limited technological resources. Students mentioned the need for a regular program of technology update as present lab computers are very outdated. Newer, faster computers equipped with contemporary updated software would allow students to be technologically up-to-date. There should also be separate computer facilities where faculty can take their classes and work on assignments as a group, so that class sessions do not interfere with regular student usage of the limited computers available. To summarize, technology must be available to all students, during hours convenient for both day and evening students, with as few limitations or exceptions as possible.

Commandment VII: *Thou shalt NOT* **offer an insufficient number of sections of basic English and math courses**

Community college students must work to meet general education requirements – most of which involve math, English and a few social sciences. Often these classes are filled as soon as they are offered, and waiting lists have to be established for those who register late or try to add at the last minute. Students at almost all of the campuses we visited were vocal about their disappointment with the number of courses offered in basic English and math. At Campus 1, students felt that there was insufficient variety of

classes offered. In some cases, students at Campus 1 are ready to transfer before the classes they need are finally available. Conversely, upper-level math and English classes are often closed due to low enrollment so students are unable to do advanced work before they transfer. Some universities will not allow students to transfer without having first completed the general education curriculum and some advanced course work. For students who want to transfer and pursue a bachelor degree, the problem of limited course offerings is serious. They either have to attend multiple campuses and piece together an appropriate schedule or sacrifice their goal to transfer.

Related to the issue of limited course offerings is the dearth of faculty to teach basic skills courses. One student we spoke with relayed the story of his ESL instructor who taught a number of courses, but did not appear to be qualified to do so; i.e. he could not adequately answer student questions or explain assignments. Classes close early, so instructors can – at their discretion – open waiting lists for seats left once the add/drop period expires. However, by the time most students decide to drop a good deal of the course material has already been covered. We heard from a student who had this experience and was told by her English instructor after the drop period that it was too late to add: "Half the semester is over already." Some students try to avoid the problem of competing with so many students during heavy enrollment in fall and spring by waiting for summer to take their general education courses. However, at most campuses summer offerings are extremely limited and the faculty must work within a compact schedule – cramming an entire semester's worth of work into a few short weeks of compressed sessions. The pace is hectic and some material is often sacrificed to keep assignments manageable. Students who do not possess strong study or time management skills are

rarely able to negotiate class, work and family demands with much success. To meet

demand, more classes should be offered during the regular academic year, taught by

committed and qualified faculty and varied to support students who want to transfer and

must satisfy minimum four-year university general education requirements.

Commandment VIII: *Thou shalt NOT* **heavily rely on part-time faculty who hold**

sparse office hours and thus appear inaccessible to students in need of support and

encouragement.

This commandment is directly related to commandment seven, insofar as adjunct

faculty are often contracted to teach basic courses in math, English and the social

sciences. Many tenured faculty prefer to teach upper-level or more intellectually rigorous

courses. Most students see the distinction between tenured and non-tenured faculty and

the courses they teach as counter-intuitive: the more experienced teachers should be the

ones who interact with and support new students; those who have office space and are

required to hold office hours, in their view, should be the ones in a position to mentor and

encourage at-risk students. Part-time faculty are generally committed to teaching, but

their status necessarily demands a decreased commitment to a particular campus. Many

community college adjuncts are labeled 'freeway flyers' because they commute daily to

multiple campuses. While they may teach only one or two courses at a particular

campus, in order to make a living they must teach at 3 or 4 campuses. The result is a

lack of time to interact with students or develop long-terms connections or mentoring

roles. In the future, as more full-time faculty retire administrators should consider the

costs associated with reliance upon staff whose commitments are necessarily divided

among many institutions.

Commandment IX: *Thou shalt NOT* discount the important role of campus architecture in student success. Campuses need a functional student center, cafeteria and places for students to meet and study in groups.

In commandment five we mentioned the disconnect between students and their college environments that results from a lack of space to house study areas or gathering places and examined administrative perspectives on fiscal limitations. In this section we will look more closely at student comments we recorded during the TRUCCS focus group meetings. The overwhelming response from students at all of the campuses was that community colleges in Los Angeles sometimes do not "feel" like colleges because they are not properly integrated into the environment. Space is limited not only in terms of classrooms, but also in campus parking lots – where even those students who pay for permits sometimes cannot find a place to park. In some instances buildings and landscape are not attractively maintained. At two of the campuses we visited, courses are taught in Quonset huts or portable facilities. On this topic, at Campus 8, an administrator notes: "We could have a much more attractive place for students to come to."

At Campus 4 we heard a number of student complaints about the lack of access to the campus cafeteria, which closes midday – right after lunch – and thus is not open for students who take classes in the afternoon or evening hours. While some may argue that food is not a prerequisite for quality education, we would argue that a student who works all day and then attends classes all night is hard-pressed to find time for regular meals. Such a person needs access to quality food (not the typical candy bars and soda available in vending machines on campus) either between work and class or immediately after class. At four-year universities students rarely have to think about where to eat on

campus because the choices are often varied and campus cafeterias remain open at convenient, reasonable hours for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Community college students deserve at least the same access to basic nourishment.

Commandment X: *Thou shalt NOT* **neglect job placement services and internships for student who have designated or declared a specific career path or who have demonstrated a specific and marketable skill. It is very important to promote and fund career counseling.**

We encountered a fair number of students who felt cheated because they did not have access to information about career or internship opportunities at their respective campuses. These students were aware of the access four-year students are often granted to these kinds of opportunities. In technical fields like computer science, internships can be invaluable means of experience that lead to job offers upon graduation for students who earn certificates or A.S. degrees. Today's economy has widened the appeal for occupational education as many people, some with previous degrees, are enrolling in the community college specifically in search of career training. To serve the needs of the community it is imperative for campuses to offer and advertise job placement services. This can be done through counseling centers or other student services offices, where staff have regular contact with students at all stages of their academic development. If students are made aware of opportunities available to them upon completion of course work, they can begin planning for their futures and setting goals. Community colleges can make a difference in every student's development by showing him/her the options available in terms of career paths he/she can pursue. Knowledge is power.

Conclusion

For most who read this paper and its counterpart on factors that facilitate student success, the data we discuss gathered from focus groups comments will not reveal major surprises or uncover startling revelations. This paper in particular, which focuses uniquely on the conditions that hinder student success within the LACCD, addresses problems that plague most community college districts in urban, rural, and suburban areas. While the emphasis on "commandments" may appear didactic, our goal is to highlight areas of concern and then make recommendations for ways to solve some of these problems[2]. After conducting this initial round of focus groups and discovering patterns of recurring themes in comments from all of the different campuses, we hoped to construct an initial template and begin a larger conversation about the lessons one can learn from an urban district in Los Angeles. None of the issues we have explored here can be adequately addressed in a brief paper; and almost all will require long-term changes in current policies. We necessarily leave a great deal of stones unturned, but our research is ongoing and we have extensive follow-up research planned over the next few years.

We can say with some confidence, however, that the information we gleaned is evidence of many people's collective complaints about insufficient resources and impaired efforts to improve educational opportunities for disadvantaged and under-prepared students; at the same time, however, we find proof that the community college system is taking steps to address some of these issues. This paper and its sister article on "positive commandments" may serve as building blocks for campus administrators and staff who want to speed up the process of change and develop a blueprint for the future of

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[2] We recognize that in cases where funding is at the heart of a problem, like aging architecture or technological limitations, the solution may require long-term changes that cannot be addressed in simple or

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their colleges. Appended to these two papers are two, single-sheet handouts that list the ten positive and negative "commandments"; these twenty bullet points form the skeletal structure of both articles. The handouts are compact, succinct and accessible for those who wish to review or pass along the wisdom we gained from meeting with students, faculty and administrators who live, work and study in the LACCD.

In the end, we believe researchers can benefit from examining the practice of theoretical issues as they play out in real-time scenarios and daily experiences of those we interviewed. Practitioners will, we hope, see the commandments as an attempt to chart the complex cartography of community college education. The lists are prescriptions, rather than proscriptions; they illuminate the path of those who work to make the community college system a viable and beneficial alternative to traditional, four-year models of higher education. The curricular functions of the community college have not changed much over time: academic preparation, transfer, vocational-technical education, continuing education, remedial education, and community development (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). The complexion and preparation of the student population, however, is changing with each decade. If we want to serve students in the best, most effective way possible we have to listen to their comments, heed their suggestions and respond to their needs. By giving voice to students, faculty and administrators in these papers we have taken a preliminary but important first step toward a better understanding of, and appreciation for, their experience.

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The Negative Commandments
10 Ways Community Colleges Hinder Student Success

Commandment I: *Thou shalt NOT* allow untrained counselors without the necessary specializations to help students with specific career or college major questions. Do not underestimate the need for accurate and consistent general counseling services.

Commandment II: *Thou shalt NOT* neglect programs targeted specifically at transfer and retention.

Commandment III: *Thou shalt NOT view* occupational programs "second class".

Commandment IV: *Thou Shalt NOT* sustain unnecessary bureaucracy, i.e. paperwork and 'red tape,' which takes time away from student services and administration.

Commandment V: *Thou Shalt NOT* disconnect students from their campuses. There should be a central place for students to turn when they need help or have questions.
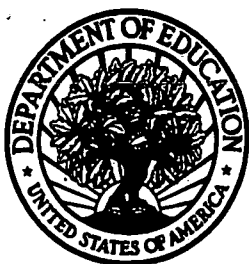
Commandment VI: *Thou shalt NOT* disregard technology.

Commandment VII: *Thou shalt NOT* offer an insufficient number of sections of basic English and math courses

Commandment VIII: *Thou shalt NOT* heavily rely on part-time faculty who hold sparse office hours and thus appear inaccessible to students in need of support and encouragement.

Commandment IX: *Thou shalt NOT* discount the important role of campus architecture in student success. Campuses need a functional student center, cafeteria and places for students to meet and study in groups.

Commandment X: *Thou shalt NOT* neglect job placement services and internships for student who have designated or declared a specific career path or who have demonstrated a specific and marketable skill. It is very important to promote and fund career counseling.

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