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## **MANAGING COMMUNITY COLLEGES: ASSESSMENT AT THE CENTURY MARK**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In the truly vast body of literature about community colleges, no one seems to be asking the rather basic question: Do we really need these schools? Has whatever purpose they may have served a hundred years ago, gone away or been supplanted or something of the sort? Such an assessment would be a major undertaking. This paper is just a sketch, suggesting the lines of inquiry I think might be profitable in such an assessment and surveying some of the likely literature-highpoints. The topics identified — the origins of the community college, and the stakeholders — are probably those most significant to the larger inquiry. The data and commentary surveyed indicate a good deal of confusion as to mission and goals, in a generally entrenched, *ancien régime* matrix of politicians, administrators and teachers with mixed agenda. This supports a preliminary conclusion that, by and large, it's time for two-year community colleges to either mature into a different kind of tier-three institution, or go away, yielding to a comprehensive tier-two model that includes tier-three elements.

The community college, as a concept, is just about a hundred years old. This places the community squarely in the mainstream of the progressive-education movement.<sup>1</sup> Progressive education, as a movement, is — if not altogether discredited — subject to careful scrutiny. The larger universe has changed, and what constitutes a good education has changed as well, perhaps. As such, it seems appropriate to look at community colleges, and the conceptual edifice they embody. Are community colleges and their conceptual underpinnings congruent with the larger constellation of concepts that frames a world quite different from that in which they initially took their shape?

In short, what is the condition for undertaking this kind of educational enterprise? Does that condition obtain?

Most assessment of the congruence of community colleges with the larger world in which they subsist, is carried out in fairly simplistic ways. One reason for this may be the sheer volume of material that has been produced already — it may be too hard to master it all. Another may be a tendency to reduce critique to analysis merely. Then too, there is an overriding assumption among community college staff (whence come most community college commentators), that the universe — at least, their part of

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<sup>1</sup> Diane Ravitch, *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reforms*: New York (S&S) 2000, provides a very good overview of the history of the progressive education movement; there are numerous others. Dr. Ravitch is a character; that no one seems to fault her history *propter se* suggests its soundness. Her account of progressive education is of the grades; her description is, nevertheless, adequate to the task of locating community colleges in the progressive-education matrix.

it — stays pretty much the same. This suggests an “*ancien régime*”<sup>2</sup>, in which change is never fundamental, always merely retrospective and limited to incremental changes at most.

A proper assessment is a major undertaking. This paper is just a sketch, suggesting the lines of inquiry I think might be profitable in such an assessment and surveying a sample of likely literature where some of the requisite research has been done. That literature presents the origins of the community college, and at the stakeholders — administrators and faculty, students and the larger community which provides a matrix in which community colleges subsist. The intention is to develop hypotheses to be demonstrated — or knocked down.

### **Whence Came Community Colleges?**

The advent and ongoing existence of the community college marks two different movements:

1. Community colleges represent a kind of “democratization” of post-grade school education, in several senses.
2. Community colleges are a U. S. response to changes in thinking about education originating in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The first of these, democratization, is typically 20<sup>th</sup> century American.<sup>3</sup> Community colleges are local, often controlled by local boards — like the

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<sup>2</sup> See the last note in the paper, for a bit more prolix discussion of *ancien régime*.

<sup>3</sup> In a fascinating study of volunteerism in the United States (*Diminished Democracy*: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003), Professor Theda Skocpol demonstrates that civic associations arising at the highest levels of social organization, reached downward to include members across a wide spectrum, based on the common mission. Leaving out all the middle steps, a case can be made that this tendency to set mission above other things, and seeing it as crossing other, more conventional social structures, was a hallmark of the American democracy that was increasingly “institutionalized” through the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

grade schools that were as much a part of the national scene as churches from the earliest days.

The second underscores the dramatic changes in U. S. education initiated, especially, in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In no small measure, these changes were not a matter of better pedagogical thinking, but a response to the demands of the changing society — especially, the business culture<sup>4</sup> — and the challenge represented by U. S. colleges' inability to compete with the great scientific-powerhouse universities, especially of Germany, Scotland and Austria. Within the educational establishment, and the larger social establishment of which it was (and is) a part, this was a driving force for the creation of a new model university.

Community colleges, as tier-three post-grade-school, sub-baccalaureate institutions, never as carefully defined as traditional colleges and universities, have mutated over the century. Harold Geller summarizes the received view of this process of change.<sup>5</sup> Following Deegan & Tillery, authors

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A case could be made that the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, into the 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen this replaced with a tendency to more oligarchical patterns. Both these patterns seem to show up in the way the educational system is operated.

<sup>4</sup> Cf: Thomas K. McCraw, *The Essential Alfred Chandler*: Cambridge (HBS Publ.), 1991; *passim*. Especially consider Chandler's essays on the organizational changes in merging businesses of the 1870's and 1880's, also those where he discusses the organizational changes at General Motors under Pierre DuPont and Alfred Sloan. Before 1830, such industry as there was in the U. S. consisted in relatively small-scale owner-operated exploitation of raw materials for largely local consumption. The rise of more complex firms after the American Civil War, with multiple locations and a headquarters operation at some distance from line functions, dictates more sophisticated reporting and analytic tools. This increasingly drives a demand for business education, which is widely perceived as merely vocational training until after the second World War. See also "In Step with the Changing Times" in the *Financial Times*, September 23, 2002, for a summary of the development of business education.

<sup>5</sup> Harold Geller, "A Brief History of Community Colleges and a Personal View of Some Issues (Open Admissions, Occupational Training and Leadership): ERIC, 2001.

of a standard text on community college development,<sup>6</sup> he lists six “generations” of community college development:

1. In the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, community colleges are unambiguously extensions of high school, generally vocationally oriented, education.
2. From the onset of the Depression, through the doldrums of the second World War and the back-to-normal period to 1950 (including, most importantly, the back-to-school movement funded by the G. I. Bill), is characterized as “the junior college” generation.
3. The next two decades are characterized as the community college generation.
4. This leads to what is called the “comprehensive” community college generation.
5. The fifth generation, dated from 1985 to the end of the century, is not given a name; Geller proceeds to define (with Terry O’Banion<sup>7</sup>) a further refinement (a sixth generation), that of the “learning community college”, focused on the specific learning needs of different constituent student groups.

This elaborated taxonomy is mysterious. It is far from clear that community colleges have ever abandoned one role, as they added another role. For example, many community colleges still serve as extensions of the public high school system. Both in more strictly academic courses, and in vocational, career-oriented instruction, the programs tend to articulate with

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<sup>6</sup> William Deegan and Dale Tillery, *Renewing the American Community College: Priorities and Strategies for Effective Leadership*: Hoboken (Wiley), 1985

high school programs. The distinctions between the “junior college” and the two “community college” periods appear more a matter of emphasis than of substantive change. “Comprehensive” seems merely a way to describe a situation in which a variety of ends is served by an institution evolved in an *ad hoc* way. The evolution may be a sign of vigor (that is, adaptation to one mission has not been so detailed as to render impossible meeting new challenges). It is not clear, however, that this amorphous character is well-regarded.

This is not unusual. There is a great deal of interest in imposing externally developed, coherent and comprehensive models as explanatory of community colleges — an “is-versus-ought” matter. For example, one finds papers and course-syllabi in normal college academic-administration programs featuring Robert Birnbaum’s *How Colleges Work*.<sup>8</sup>

Geller’s taxonomy also addresses academic *amour propre* in its suggestion that community colleges are somehow moving away from the vocational-institute model. But community colleges are complex. That these institutions were from the very beginning vocational schools has been

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<sup>7</sup> Terry O'Banion, *A Learning College for the 21st Century*: Phoenix (Oryx), 1997

<sup>8</sup> E. g.: Michael Ponton, “Birnbaum’s Model of the Collegial Institution”: ERIC, 1996. Birnbaum’s successor volume, *Management Fads in Higher Education: Where they come from, what they do, why they fail* [San Francisco (Jossey-Bass)] also merits attention. Birnbaum’s interest, by the bye, appears not at all normative; his studies seem entirely descriptive and pragmatic, consistent with his background as a college administrator. Birnbaum’s book looks at different models as a way to discuss college governance, but academic *amour propre* among those expanding from his foundation focuses immediately on models which are consistent with collegiality. That model assumes a small, residential, generally liberal-arts college such as obtained through the 19<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is clearly not at all the situation of a large number of (one might even guess, most) colleges these days; it has never been part of the community college model. Birnbaum’s other models — especially the bureaucratic model he describes — are more effectively descriptive for community college.

persuasively demonstrated.<sup>9</sup> They continue to be vocational schools; the enrollments in “career” departments are convincing evidence. That one significant population in community colleges consists of older workers seeking career-change training, has been widely reported in the popular press. That traditional-undergraduate age student enrollments tend to rise coincident with unemployment, suggest that many of these students are also career-oriented, though perhaps undertaking a program not defined by such a major subject.<sup>10</sup>

All this confirms confusion as the community college’s role. The kind of discussion that prompts a paper such as that of Wattenbarger and Witt is *prima facie* evidence of the confusion. The extent of the confusion is explained in Bernard Levin’s paper, “Community College Mission: A ‘60s Mission looking at a Y2K world.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Community colleges have been intended *ab initio* as vocational training schools, cf: Wattenbarger & Witt, “Origins of the Comprehensive Community College” in *Community College Journal of Research & Practice*, v19,#6, November/December 1995, p.565ff. The complex character of program selection is taken up by Jim Palmer in “Is Vocationalism to Blame?” in *Community, Technical and Junior College Journal*, vol. 60, #6, June/July 1990, pp. 21ff.

<sup>10</sup> That there is a tie between more years of schooling and economic tough times has been reported for the period of the Great Depression; this led to more young people completing high school. More recently, unsettled times in the ‘60s benefited college — including community college — enrollments. But, community college students intending a four-year degree in, e. g., business, are actively discouraged from taking too many business courses as lower-division undergraduates. Should they take them anyway, some four-year colleges, even in articulated transfer programs, will commonly not accept “comparable-course” transfers beyond those on a set “short list” for credit toward the career-oriented major.

<sup>11</sup> ERIC, 1998. This paper was read at the August 1998 meeting of the Southeastern Association for Community College Research. The very existence of such an association is perhaps further reason to posit an excessive confusion anent the nature of community colleges.

Harriet Robles's extremely interesting papers<sup>12</sup> on community college governance may offer the most insight on the specifics and general character of community colleges— based on her own experience in California's very large community college system, as well as very clear thinking. Dean Robles's views combine an acute sense of the history of community colleges, with an understanding of the central difficulty of organizational change, and a fundamental shift in what underlies such colleges' very existence.

Starting in the 1980s, according to Robles, education in general undergoes a significant reform. Issues of equity and access, as well as the specific requirements of employers relevant to community college mission as vocational/technical institutes are paramount. Robles responds by adapting Peter Senge's concept of the learning organization, a management concept based in System Dynamics, and certainly among the more sophisticated advanced over the years.

Robles appears to hold that elements of collegiality — a “system-shared governance” — can operate alongside and cooperatively with the bureaucratic governance that normally prevails in community colleges (regardless of a college's constituting documents, and which, it seems to me, has been taken over more or less wholesale from the public grade-school system). That is, Robles appears to adopt the general characterizations of college governance patterns set out in Birnbaum's earlier book, then shows that no pure system obtains.

Robles's response to this — as pragmatic as Birnbaum's, and for similar reasons (Harriett Robles is, after all, a successful dean) — is to apply “systems theory”. But systems theory — interesting as it is, in an intellectual

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<sup>12</sup> E. g., “Reconceptualizing Schools and Learning: The California Community Colleges” and “Community Colleges as Learning Organizations” — both ERIC, 1998.



constellation dominated by rational-choice strategy — can easily be shown as a flawed tool. Its use requires that all participants in the system have the fairly elaborate training in systems-oriented thinking, as Robles acknowledges; it also requires that the basic assumptions be accepted by all the players (infinitely harder to do, especially where academic *amour propre* may be compromised in the process). Even then, the entire reduction of decision-making to rational-choices may be inherently flawed.<sup>13</sup>

It seems to me, a look at the various accounts of what community colleges are, and how they got to be that, shows a discontinuity between the obvious and admitted origins of community colleges, and how they are presently understood. Is this because stakeholders are trying to avoid one or another unpleasant conclusion? Would that, one way or t’other, include the changing nature of the niche to be filled, and that the community colleges cannot fill it?

### **The Persisting Elements in Community Colleges**

A college can be constituted anywhere; what is essential are teachers and students, with some administrative structure to hold the whole thing together. Instructional staff (faculty proper, and other teaching staff) and those who operate the bureaucracy (both academically credentialed and education diplomates) are the *persisting* parts of the college.

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<sup>13</sup> Governance is more likely the realm of prudence, and prudential reason is just not the same as scientific reason. See Ernst Vollrath, *Rekonstruktion der politischen Urteilskraft*: Stuttgart (Klett), 1976. Vollrath, resting on a close reading of Kant’s *Kritik der Urteilskraft* and a vast array of other literature, on both politics and the judgment of taste (Kant’s model of judgment, as it is for Plato in *Statesman*), argues not so much that decision-making is other than rational, but that the reason employed is very different from the “scientific” reason which increasingly predominates after Descartes and which eventually produces system dynamics and so on. Systems theory is, therefore, suspect.

There seems to be greater attention to community college administrators, than to faculty. This extends to detailed profiling, in the case of community college presidents. An impressive survey of this sort was produced in 1998 by George Vaughan and Iris Weisman.<sup>14</sup> Large parts of this survey are concerned with personal characteristics — educational and family background, lifestyle, professional background and so on. Three chapters — four and seven, and to a lesser extent, six — target policy issues and the way the respondents (about a third of those receiving the survey) address them. The usual problems with such surveys appear to obtain here; the interpretive apparatus is over-thin.

A paper presented at the 1998 annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education<sup>15</sup> offers a more intensive, qualitative look at senior women administrators in Midwestern community colleges. This paper is useful in two ways: It identifies gender roles and relates management styles to gender stereotypes. It suggests some background for hiring and other human-resources practices that may be more obvious in public colleges and those — especially, community colleges — more closely in tune with management practices as generally associated with the public grade-school systems.<sup>16</sup> This does not represent new ground, so much as a rehearsal of the obvious.

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<sup>14</sup> Vaughan & Wesiman, *The Community College Presidency at the Millenium*: (Community College Press), 1998. This appears to be an updated survey, encompassing and extending a decade-earlier survey by Vaughan.

<sup>15</sup> Tedrow & Rhoads, "Senior Women Community College Administrators: Life in Higher Education's Inner Circle"

<sup>16</sup> See note 19 below on other sociological areas I think likely to be at work, but for which my preliminary literature research yielded little or no information.

In his paper, “Chairs and Change in the Evolving Community College”<sup>17</sup>, Joseph Byrne suggests an interesting shift in the makeup of community college faculty and staff. Byrne claims that the traditional view — strongly bureaucratic organization and faculties with lower levels of academic achievement — is obsolete. Changing student demographics and vocational education parameters have led to a more professionally able faculty, more professionally competent chairpersons, and less bureaucratic governance.

There is much to be said for this view. The concept of “professional competence” or “professional ability” is perhaps too blithely assumed. [The key element — changed student demographics and a change in demands for vocational education — is discussed further in the next section.]

Instructional staff in most community colleges is substantially different, and generally, more educationally accomplished (at least, more highly credentialed) than was hitherto the case.<sup>18</sup>

Until well into the 1960s, there is good evidence the teaching staffs for community colleges were recruited from the ranks of high school teachers. It is consistent with the concept of community colleges as vocational/technical schools extending the high school model and experience.

An appointment to a tier-three college teaching post was a step up the academic ladder for high school teachers. The work load was lighter; the prestige was greater — perhaps more so, where the tier-three school was part of a larger system, not uncommonly the case for public community colleges.

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<sup>17</sup> ERIC identifier: ED428781, 1997. This paper looks to be a nicely thought through comment on what’s been happening in community colleges, and I’m rather surprised it has not found a wider public that more conventional publication might afford.

There simply was no well-defined, specifically *academic*, and *disciplinary* training for teachers in career-oriented areas. On the other hand, one could readily find public grade-school teachers, with substantial experience, who had pursued advanced professional teaching certifications in the normal colleges.

All this obtained as “open enrollment” programs developed during the 1960s and subsequently. As the demand for advanced educational opportunity increased, so did the need for programs intended to correct the educational deficits of increasing numbers of less well prepared public school graduates. Public school teachers with advanced certification in various “remedial” areas — readin’, writin’, ’rithmetic — and various forms of bi-lingual instruction and the teaching-of-English-as-a-Foreign-Language, found the same opportunity for advancement to the greater prestige, lighter workload and so on, as was attractive to their fellows in more conventional subjects.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> However, take this *cum grano salis*. A review of the faculty list in some community college catalogues suggests the actual changes are limited and not across the board.

<sup>19</sup> I am inclined to believe there is some room for sociologizing in a more detailed inquiry. There seems good anecdotal evidence to support the view that grade-school teaching ceased being a principle opportunity for middle-class women who wished to find a career outside the home, as U. S. society moved into the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A more aggressive, first-generation-gone-to-college group of teachers, from historically marginalized parts of the community, entered teaching. This fits nicely with the large number of community college teachers holding terminal normal-college degrees in academic areas, alongside those with normal-college diplomates in community college career and remediation divisions. This is an area in which some confusion is likely; among other things, tier-one and tier-two universities with normal colleges now grant Ph.D.s in education. Cf. Kathleen Alfano, “Recent Strategies for Faculty Development,” ERIC, 1994. In both groups, one would expect significant cognitive dissonance.

Especially urban two-year community colleges have been more likely places for those seeking college teaching careers from parts of the community less commonly represented in professorial ranks. Women and members of minority populations made up a larger part of the grade-school teaching ranks from which community colleges drew their initial faculties; the slight disdain of tier-one and tier-two institutions for tier-three schools precluded the “old boy” network from bothering too much with its hiring practices; the very nature of urban

Not surprisingly, given the events of the late-1950s and through the 1960s, there was a dramatic surge in the number of terminal degrees completed in all the arts and sciences, appearing in the early-1970s.<sup>20</sup> While the reasons have changed, the overproduction continues at a pace the tier-one and tier-two schools cannot absorb. Community colleges have a wider range of recruitment choices.

An interesting congruent effect appears in various “faculty development” programs; this almost always translates into a get-the-terminal-degree support venture. The idea: Salaried instructional staff not ready for retirement can be “retrofitted” with advanced degrees. Quite a few of these programs focus, in one or another way, on improved teaching strategy; the advanced study is tied to teaching skills, as much as or more than on greater academic puissance. That is, “faculty development”, at least in community colleges, is more involved with the sorts of things associated with normal college programs of study, than with traditional university

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unrest which characterized most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (“race riots” are a frequent occurrence from the onset of the depression through the rest of the century, with few quiet periods. This whole area of inquiry is likely to prove thorny: On the one hand, *arriviste* minority group instructional and administrative staff members, especially in urban community colleges, seem in some cases (on the anecdotal evidence) to distance themselves from students from those same groups (poor students being *sans-culotte* to faculty *petite-bourgeoisie*). On the other hand, (often equally *arriviste*) instructional and administrative staff from other, usually “ethnic” but not “minority”, groups, often first-generation-gone-to-college seem to demonstrate an often ill-concealed distaste for, if not active prejudice against, students from official “minorities” — quite commonly manifesting as a marked paternalism toward such students. The matter is complicated by the way in which “minority” is defined. In one large urban university system, “Italian-American” is a legitimate minority classification. Awkward as this is, I think it is important to understanding both the tensions that develop in community colleges, both among the persisting elements, and between those elements and the transitory, student population.

<sup>20</sup> The view, that too many doctoral degrees were being given out, especially in the arts and in social sciences, is widely supported. In New York, for example, the Regents aimed at reducing the number of Ph.D. programs; this seems to have been successfully resisted by the universities (I find no evidence that doctoral programs were forcibly “de-registered”). The most perfect summary of the situation as it obtained then and continues to obtain, is offered by Professor Carolyn Heilbrun, in her *persona* of Amanda Cross, in her novel, *Honest Doubt* (New York: Ballantine, 2001 — a very good read, by the bye...).

studies in the arts and sciences. The advent of non-residential doctoral programs — initially, mostly for the Ed.D. diploma, but increasingly for the Ph.D., is consonant with this kind of program.<sup>21</sup>

Two significant changes need to be examined, only tenuously related: Salaried, full-time instructional staff is “upgraded” by hiring more *academically* credentialed teachers, and the salaried instructional staff already in place (generally, protected by tenure) are “retrofitted” with improved credentials. Part of the new community college discourse talks of “academic” as distinct from “vocational/technical” studies.<sup>22</sup>

The distinction presents some difficulties. Tier-three schools (indeed, most tier-two schools) are ill-equipped to support advanced research; a review of projects submitted for such support as is available, suggests that, were support available, there would still be a quality issue. In both academic and “career” disciplines, a quick search of common databases indicates that salaried full-time instructional staff substantially under-perform, or have attained less general and professional recognition, once past their degree studies, than hourly-wage part-time instructional staff. That tier-three colleges can achieve a more prestigious, “academic” appearance, simply by hiring more terminal-degree holders, is easily shown as misleading. The *real* reputation of the college may come to rest on a group with greater recognition than the core full-time instructional staff, but which is not subject to the

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<sup>21</sup> In a longer discourse, it would probably be useful to examine the issue of quality. In some departments, recruitment seems largely focused on teaching skills; others seem to favor scholarly capabilities; in some departments, it is very hard to discern what job-related skills played a role of any sort. A related issue: One chairperson has told me point-blank, his college’s insistence on hiring more salaried full-time instructors was a problem; they are hard to choose, hard to deploy, and, once secure in employment, some simply do not remain current in their subject areas.

<sup>22</sup> See note on Coastal Bend College, p.15 below.

same constraints as the full-time staff. Many members of both groups, if one can judge from conversations, find this chafes.

Byrne's article<sup>23</sup> points toward the change: "Community college faculty include a growing number of doctorate degree holders...." He also notices the increasing use of hourly-wage, part-time university teachers — many of whom have terminal degrees, who are not necessarily candidates for salaried positions (for a variety of reasons), and who may comprise half the faculty, teaching a third of the courses offered in a particular college.<sup>24</sup> Neither Byrne, nor others, appear to have a lively appreciation of the subtleties involved, and the difficulties that arise in consequence.

Matters are made more complex, according to Byrne, by changes in college governance; he believes (consonant with notions in Harriet Robles's various papers mentioned previously) that salaried teaching staff, taken together and in various tasked-team groupings, are likely to have effect on the traditional governance structure. In part, this rather blithe belief rests in

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<sup>23</sup> *loc. cit.*

<sup>24</sup> See "Part-time Faculty in Washington Community and Technical Colleges. Research Report No. 98-4", ERIC identifier: ED430642. While details will surely vary (e. g., the percentage of classroom teaching done by hourly-wage part-time instructional staff is probably greater in some places), this appears to be a median sort of situation.

The mix may be changing, however. E. g., the City University of New York aims to increase the number of salaried full-time instructional staff, on grounds of claimed superiority. There is some reason to think this also reflects a management realization that salaried instructional staff are more subject to management control than hourly wage staff, as well as being more academically respectable. Management has union support for this: The union presses for "parity" between salaried and hourly-wage pay and benefits, which eliminates a substantial reason for management to favor hourly-wage staff — not on academic, but cost grounds. However, a problem, especially for tier-three schools: In order to fill salaried full-time positions, without losing flexibility, these schools tend to use 1-year substitute lines — effectively, one-year contract staff with an even higher turnover rate than obtains among hourly-wage staff. Another problem: The really competent salaried staff thus recruited, are in demand elsewhere in the Academy and (in many disciplines) outside the walls. Those who are likely to be available for retention comprise a sort of doctoral flotsam and jetsam.

the unanalyzed assumption of uniform greater competence, consequent on generally more advanced credentials.

Community colleges increasingly promote the notion they are “academic”, more than “vocational/technical”.<sup>25</sup> The myth of collegial governance is part of that notion. Community colleges were constituted from public high school models, are operated and controlled by systems that are more akin to public grade school systems, are commonly administered by people holding normal college degrees in academic administration — not significantly different from the training of high school principals — and the administrators often are much separated from the academic tradition of teaching-scholar, upon which such collegial governance was founded. Stress arises between an ec-centric assumption of what might be and the exigencies of what is.

With the accession of community college faculties to larger numbers of traditionally-schooled Ph.D.s, as well as, more latterly, newly-promoted terminal degree holders (and possibly, a range of additional sociological elements not immediately obvious), substantial tensions are bound to develop. And they do.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> See the website of Coastal Bend College:

[http://vct.coastalbend.edu/content/index.cfm/fa/viewpage/category\\_id/85.htm](http://vct.coastalbend.edu/content/index.cfm/fa/viewpage/category_id/85.htm). This web page in particular suggests the changing nature and mixed community colleges are serving. It also suggests that the community colleges themselves are fostering a distinction that was inimical to their original constitution. Other instances of the distinction and shift abound.

<sup>26</sup> For an academic’s argument: Robert Doud, “Two Essays on Shared Governance”. For more managerial perspectives: Harriet Robles’s various papers and Jann Freed, “The Challenge of Change: Creating a Quality Culture”, presented at the 1998 meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education. There is, in addition, a substantial body of, generally anecdotal, evidence consisting in various “gripe” papers, usually by faculty against community college administrators perceived as anything from insensitive to downright totalitarian. As an example of tension: Jamilah Evelyn, “Padron’s Way” in *Black Issues in Higher Education*, vol. 15, #14, pp. 26-29, September, 1998; part of the issue in this case appears racial in the usual sense (black versus white), part is cultural (southern/black versus



Collegial governance was always more talked of, than seen. There is excellent reason to think that the strongly centralized university chancellery, with an all-powerful “CEO”, is increasingly admitted to be the actual governing structure of the institution. As collegiality even in higher-tier institutions is increasingly marginalized, it mirrors general admiration in various quarters to the way in which community colleges are run. E. g., New York’s City University has flirted (unsuccessfully) with the appointment of people with normal college diplomas related to school administration, to the presidency of “senior” (tier-two) colleges.

In any case, community college governance is not something that will readily be altered at the college level. Community colleges are too much the product of larger political spheres, and too subject to forces well beyond their sundry closes.<sup>27</sup>

The initial survey seems clear, there is agitation for changes in the hitherto unchallengeable relations among persistent elements. The most vocal proponents of change are members of the salaried, full-time instructional staff. The changes they seek, so far as these can be generalized, necessitate substantive changes in the common community college culture of top-down governance, to some idealized notion of shared administration. To the extent all this rests on an ideal view, and to the extent that such a shift is

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Hispanic), part is faculty versus administration (the faculty coming together in a union). One also suspects a class issue, of an established black bourgeoisie confronting a seemingly *arriviste* Hispanic bourgeoisie. These patterns can be observed, *mutatis mutandis*, elsewhere.

Cogent discussions of relevant issues can be found in most standard management textbooks, and have been summarized powerfully already by Frederick Herzberg in Herzberg *et al.*, *The Motivation to Work*: Transaction Publ., 1993 (reprint of the 1959 original). One commonly sees, in Herzberg’s language, marked decline in motivation-factor satisfaction, with ongoing and rising dissatisfaction in hygiene factors.

both precluded by higher-level charters and the advent of management theories into higher education, it seems unlikely to come about. Add to this, both the ready availability of alternative, often better-recognized, less costly, more flexible hourly-wage instructional staff, and the core full-time instructional staff have little leverage.

Two mitigating factors: Like all employment cycles, it is quite likely the overproduction of new-Ph.D.s will correct; old-Ph.D.s remain attractive longer than would older professionals in other areas of employment, but the number does decrease, not least because some simply get tired of the fight. It's also possible, the professional administrative staff operating community colleges can forge an alliance, case by case, with full-time instructional staff members, based on the need to advance the college's interest within public-college systems of which they are commonly a part.<sup>28</sup>

This must be balanced against a growing interest in the appointment of people to senior administrative positions whose previous experience has been "outside the walls" or whose studies have been in academic administration proper. The latter group may be prone to the usual *Academic amour proper*, manifesting as a personal sense of one's own rectitude in all things, with a congruent difficulty in perceiving the interests and perspectives of others. Difficulties arising from this may be exacerbated by

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<sup>27</sup> See, for example: "Administrative Rules of the Illinois Community College Board", 1999. Community colleges are politically touchy issues, and their governance is subject to public approval in ways that even public tier-two colleges can often — but not always... — avoid.

<sup>28</sup> This can be observed in two-year colleges of the City University of New York, in the wake of substantial threats to some colleges' continued operation. Long-standing management-labor confrontation has been reduced, in part to keep the college functioning, in part having the character of management-*cum*-salaried-instructional-staff against an increasingly frisky hourly-wage instructional staff (represented in the same union, but with stronger ties to the central union organization, than to the local college "shop").

an equivalent dismissal by those with credentials in more traditional learned disciplines.

### **The Transitory Element — Mostly, Students...**

Instructional and administrative staff are persisting elements in community colleges; the most obvious transitory element is the body of students. The assessment of the way in which students fit in things is the most confusing part of the picture of community colleges.

There is no lack of study given to some dimensions of this population. A common approach is to look at community colleges as fostering social stratification and a class society.<sup>29</sup> The general argument is, students are “tracked” into different post-high school educational programs, and — especially in community colleges — into particular career programs, based on perceived socio-economic status as well as local workplace needs. There is a good deal of anecdotal evidence for this view.<sup>30</sup>

At least, this sort of thing would be inconsistent with the common mythos, that anyone with sufficient pluck and luck can attain to the highest

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<sup>29</sup> Examples of this view are to be found in B. A. Scott, “The Stratification of American College Students”, *Community Review*, v.6, #1, Fall 1985 p. 6ff and R. G. Templin & R. W. Shearon, “Curriculum Tracking and Social Inequality in the Community College”, *New Directions for Community Colleges*, v.8, #4, Winter 1980, p. 83ff.

<sup>30</sup> E. g.: One of the City University of New York’s two-year colleges has established a “business trends institute”, ostensibly doing research on business interests in its urban area, but ultimately, according to the college’s president, so the college can effectively market its mainline and continuing-education offerings to employers (perceived as grant sources) and their employees (students, who may also get tuition assistance from employers). Similarly, a local branch community college in Maine’s Waldo County has reportedly substantially retrofitted its curriculum as a training program for MBNA’s new operations centered in Belfast. This is entirely consistent with the late-19<sup>th</sup> century agenda of progressive education, and, one is inclined to think, the usual normal-college/public-education agenda. The socio-economic ground for tracking is notoriously demonstrated by various — now obsolete — practices in California, documented at length in many places.

levels of success. At worst, it might involve deliberately lying to students,<sup>31</sup> particularly those in the first generation pursuing study past high school.

So far as these *are* problems in community colleges, they arise from community colleges having been unable to resolve an hiatus between what they were intended to be, and what has actually come about.

Taken in conjunction with the changing staffing patterns, faculty and administration expectations about college students are incongruent with the students they encounter. Faced with the incongruence, a patronizing, even belittling behavior toward students might be expected. A class-based attitude would be more generally acceptable than, say, a race-based attitude — especially since the instructional and administrative staff, especially in urban community colleges, are more likely to be members of racial or ethnic minorities.

This is consistent with the implicit view of students seen in formulating community college curricula. It is particularly evident in remediation and developmental education, taken altogether but with some important exceptions.

Community colleges are a delivery method of choice for correcting some problems in grade-school education. Something happened (what, is beyond the scope of this paper); students completing the course of high school studies have done less well in standard college-admissions testing since the 1970s. There is substantial evidence that these problems were more severe in urban, minority (as they were then, anyway) communities.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. F. L. Pincus, "The False Promises of Community Colleges: Class Conflict and Vocational Education", in *Harvard Educational Review*, v.50, #3, August 1980, p. 332-361.

<sup>32</sup> A mid-'90s review and survey of responses is found in J. A. S. Henricksen, "The Influence of Race and Ethnicity on Access to Postsecondary Education and the College Experience",

E. g., for a decade after the City University of New York instituted an open-admissions policy, different two- and four-year colleges implemented a variety of remedial programs. Among other things, some colleges embodied, under the heading “Developmental Skills”, entire high school programs. Effectively, under the heading “remediation”, these programs executed an accelerated program of skills-training, intended to supply the lack in entering college students.<sup>33</sup> These programs were costly, and their outcomes were debated. Objections of an *arriviste* middle-class voiced by *Biedermeier*-populists such as New York’s Rudolph Giuliani effectively rendered the whole open-admissions / remediation concept politically unviable.<sup>34</sup>

The view of students presented in much of the “official” literature is disturbingly inconsistent with anecdotal evidence as to actual student performance, and with some larger considerations as well. In her 1989 study, “The Lie and the Hope: Making Higher Education a Reality for At-Risk

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*ERIC Digest*, 1995. One has a sense, the problems are more severe in public colleges — including community colleges — than they are in private colleges. Public colleges are cheaper for students, and therefore attract more applicants; they seek an apparently objective criterion for rejection, for practical and political reasons. California’s ability to compel the College Entrance Examination Board to substantially revise the SAT (rather than risk losing something like 13 percent of CEEB’s revenue base, as reported in a recent *U. S. News & World Report*) is interesting. The various California public university systems rely increasingly on nominally objective criteria, just as private colleges are becoming increasingly willing to look at a variety of other, subjective elements in an applicant’s profile.

<sup>33</sup> A. Colby, “Controversies Surrounding Developmental Education in the Community College”, *ERIC Digest*, 1987, appears to offer a good picture of what remediation is, and how it is supposed to work, while aiming at a response to ongoing criticism of the concept.

<sup>34</sup> G. D. Sussman, “Presentation on Remediation at CUNY”, presented at the April, 1998 conference of the American Association of Community Colleges. Dr. Sussman’s paper describes a complex devolution from open-admissions, and suggests a change in the university’s overall program toward the appearance of greater academic rigor, consistent with the City University’s own self-image of its past. This entails a range of problems all on its own, and beyond the scope of this paper. It may also prove, finally, unworkable, due to the way in which that particular public university is constituted. Most especially, the attempt to create university-wide standards may come up against enabling-legislation issues; *vid. infra*.. The degree of college independence within CUNY system (about which Sussman writes) also represents a hard-to-track variable.

Students”,<sup>35</sup> Laura Rendon summarizes the official view at the end of the 1980s. Starting with the usual students-are-tracked-*ab-initio* observation, she concludes that higher education is desired, but not attainable for many members of minority groups. Students entering the system through community colleges, according to her research then, rarely transfer out of them — presumably, into baccalaureate programs. Conversations with community college administrators in other places, and more recently, suggest that this view of the matter continues to obtain.

It is hard to reconcile this with other information. For example, there have been occasional reports — generally not pursued vigorously — that students transferring to baccalaureate study after a year or two in a community college complete the regimen in as timely a way as those admitted directly to the four-year program. A study in one of New York’s better city colleges (not, as I understand, published) indicated *better* performance than directly admitted students. There are other reasons for discounting this view.

It is also interesting that in the same conversations with community college administrators, they regularly lament the lack of follow-up research. That is, that the students don’t transfer, or don’t continue their studies appears inferred from accidental data, rather than from complete and careful outcomes research. In short, if the student has not completed the prescribed program for the lower-division diploma and made a conventional transfer, that student disappears “off the radar”, as likely as not.

The criterion of success is also suspect: The lower-division diploma (various Associate’s degrees) is clearly not well regarded even by those

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<sup>35</sup> In the AAHE Bulletin, vol. 41, #9, 1989, pp.4-7. See also, Laura Rendon, “Eyes on the Prize: Students of Color and the Bachelor’s Degree” in *Community College Review*, vol. 21,

granting it. Community colleges seem more likely to follow the careers of those who complete the regimen, *then* pursue baccalaureate study; this seems consistent with earlier observations about changes in the persisting elements of community colleges, and the larger issue of *Academic amour propre*. Setting the criteria this way may impose an unacceptable bias in the way students are viewed and assessed.

[A recent presentation<sup>36</sup> by David Crook, the CUNY dean of institutional research, suggests this could be partly corrected, through analysis of records compiled by banks tracing student-loan recipients. Using agreed and likely projections, the apparently dismal completion rate (something like 35 percent), actually may be more like 60 or 65 percent. This is consistent with U. S. Department of Education published numbers for public colleges. Of course, this still means at least a third of students entering upon universities studies in public institutions disappears in one way or another; the percentage of students disappearing in private institutions is not dramatically better, at around 25 percent.]

In his speculative paper, "Community Colleges: Some Tentative Hypotheses"<sup>37</sup>, David Riesman offered a range of criticisms of community colleges as they were then. These ranged from social issues (breaking from home and high-school peer-groups) to career choices and academic advisement. One might read this paper as agenda for further research; most of the same topics reappear continually. This would seem to support the view that the issues thus far noted are neither new, nor well addressed in any of the subsequent revisions of program or planning in community colleges. On

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#2, pp. 3-13, Fall 1993.

<sup>36</sup> The presentation was part of the Asian Asian-American Research Institute Friday Lecture series, on December 6, 2002. Dr. Crook's presentation included the most recently compiled data for the City University of New York.

the other hand, some of the problems Riesman notes, especially those related to ongoing connection to home and high school peer-groups, may be inherent in the commuting-college model.

This is a minority opinion which surfaces in some papers, suggesting that students are changing the rules of the game. This view focuses on the way some community college students have used the community colleges in ways quite different from their original, tier-three, vocational-technical intentions. In a 1991 paper,<sup>38</sup> Grace Quimbita summarizes strictly academic opportunities for community college students, offering a number of examples.

This points to a phenomenon that became very apparent in the 1980s. While community colleges persisted in their vocational-technical educational model, students began using the community colleges in a very different way. These students had problems: The grade school system had failed substantially. College tuition, room & board charges were rising dramatically. Good students going away to college were simply unprepared for the rigors of life on their own without family and friends around. And so on.

The local community college offered the opportunity to repair the lacks of a poor grade-school education (beyond remediation proper). Students who had gone off to a — perhaps more distant, most likely more rigorous — tier-two college and had found themselves unable to cope, could repair the damage to their record in the more congenial, more supportive, more familiar

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<sup>37</sup> In *Community Services Catalyst*, vol. 8, #2, p.1-5, Spring 1978.

<sup>38</sup> “Preparing Women and Minorities for Careers in Math and Science: The Role of the Community Colleges”, ERIC Digest, 1991.



(in several senses) and generally less rigorous community college around the corner. Costs were lower, even compared to public tier-two colleges.<sup>39</sup>

That this was not part of stated community college agenda at least through the 1980s is clear from the advertising of the time, as well as from the courses of study offered and ongoing hiring patterns. Community colleges continued to aim at attracting students who were considered not to be “college material”, for whom a vocational program was particularly suited.

This unanticipated consumer shift suited the Academy very nicely. Tier-two schools, in particular, have a need for an ongoing supply of transfer students. As much as a quarter of an entering class can disappear for one or another reason in the course of the first two years. Since almost all colleges are now altogether reliant on transfer payments (grants, scholarships and loans, transferred *through* the student to the college’s operating funds), failure to replace disappearing students is unacceptable.

At the same time, a shift to a more “academic” orientation ratified *Academic amour propre*. Community colleges began to define programs for transfer students, and to subtly re-value “terminal” career degrees downward.<sup>40</sup>

The wide range of cultures represented in entering student populations — even outside major urban areas — is not well considered. Most of the easily available research has concentrated on the waxing hispanophone

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<sup>39</sup> E. g., annual tuition at a SUNY comprehensive college runs around \$3,000/an.; fees add between \$300 and \$500. Room and board can raise the total well past \$10,000/an.. See the fee schedule for SUNY Farmingdale at [www.farmingdale.edu](http://www.farmingdale.edu). By comparison, a CUNY two-year college (claimed to be the highest in the U. S.) is about \$2750/an.; see the fee schedule for Borough of Manhattan Community College, [www.bmcc.cuny.edu](http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu).

<sup>40</sup> See note 25 above.

population. This population appears to be regarded as homogeneous.<sup>41</sup> But there are substantial *émigré* populations from eastern Europe and both east and south Asia, discussions of which are fewer and less detailed. These populations are also far from homogeneous, even where they share a common national origin.<sup>42</sup>

One demographic element, for example, is elusive. There is some reason to wonder if there is an upsurge in the absolute number of more or less traditional-college-age people. Recent data in the City University of New York suggest that this is the case (see the bracketed remark on p. 22); enrollment in New York's city colleges are approaching those at the height of the baby-boom period of about 30 or 35 years ago, according to the university's institutional research office. But, since the university is a different place, one expects the distribution to be dramatically different. For example, one expects a substantial shift in enrollment away from CUNY's flagship City College — and that appears to be the case.

In any case, the point is fairly simple: Students are important to the way community colleges are developing. In at least one important way, they

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<sup>41</sup> Avalos & Pavel, "Improving the Performance of the Hispanic Community College Student" ERIC ED358907, 1993. The paper treats of a whole range of things done to retain Hispanic students. These students are treated as sharing a single cultural matrix. Experience in some places where hispanophone populations of different origins have settled, and have built entirely hispanophone communities, in which English is only spoken occasionally, suggests a rich diversity of — often aggressively antipathetic — cultures. In New York, e. g., there can be significant tension between hispanophones of garifuna, Puerto Rican and Dominican origins.

<sup>42</sup> In particular, note the substantial number of local-area associations in Chinese quarters such as New York's Chinatown, and the apparently similar situation in south Asian ("Desi") enclaves. In New York's Chinatown, dominance by the Cantonese-speaking population is increasingly offset by a new-immigrant Fujianese element; PRC flags appear over the family-association headquarters of more recent immigrants, while the older ROC flag dominates the older, and still dominant community association, and so on. Matters are more complex: There may be a shift in influence, with the newer, relatively more affluent, Mandarin-speaking community based around Flushing supplanting the older, generally recent-immigrant community in Manhattan as the politically visible Chinese community.

have caused a significant shift in the way some community colleges are allocating resources (away from vocational training, toward traditional lower-division undergraduate arts-and-sciences studies). There is interesting evidence students are generally accepting, but not for that reason satisfied, with the regimen as it currently obtains. However, this population has not been effectively studied, and its relatively short-term (two years, non-resident, commuting — these kids are simply invisible, even when compared with students in tier-two colleges) association as “consumers” (never to return...), coupled with a decided institutional solipsism in the Academic elements most likely to do the studies, has meant that student populations and many of their issues have been generally neglected.<sup>43</sup>

### **Town & Gown — The Community College *in situ***

From their inception, community colleges have had a political dimension.

In one sense, the Progressive movement in education was not wrong to think that there needs to be a third tier of post-grade school education, aimed squarely at provision for specific careers. The development of university-level professional schools in business and law reflects the received opinion of the

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<sup>43</sup> As an example: Community colleges run on schedules more or less the same as those of four-year colleges — two semesters, or three “trimesters” or four quarters. These are augmented by one or two summer terms of six or eight weeks. [Actually, the current schedules are somewhat shorter; many public university systems have followed the lead of California, shortening the semester from 15 weeks to 14 weeks, with slightly less than 13 weeks of instruction.] Most students in commuting-college situations, and most especially in community colleges, would welcome a *longer* academic year, with three full 15 week terms. The resistance to this comes mostly from salaried instructional staff. For an interesting if dated discussion of this see Richard Parrish & Marie Pascale, “Traditional vs. Non-Traditional Calendar: A Case Analysis of Faculty, Students and Administrative Opinions in a Medium-Sized Public Community College”, ERIC 1978. An intriguing element: Even though California set a new standard in cheapened education with its mandated 175 instructional-day limitation, there has been little real discussion of calendar alternatives. An *enriched* calendar is *never* considered, in the very small body of literature on calendar alternatives.

Academy of the way in which general theoretical reflection can merge effectively with applied skills in advanced diplomate programs. Tier-one and tier-two institutions have generally monopolized this trend — in ways not generally expected by Progressive educators, who had before them a very different model of post-grade school education.

What such a program was, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is probably quite different from what it ought to be, at the onset of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This was already apparent in the mid-1990s. The main changes that have driven reassessment were those of changing suburbia.<sup>44</sup> Some of the changes are already accounted for in earlier sections of this paper. The economic shift and related changes in class and ethnic structures are already apparent in the discussion of changes in community college faculty. These and the effects of changed costs of college education and reduced resources to pay them is noted in the discussion of students. What is less clear, is the way in which community colleges can adjust to the new social circumstances, arising “outside the walls”.

A strictly traditional approach continues the emphasis on community colleges in economic development programs.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to the original vocational-technical education role, community colleges have become effective retraining institutions. Retraining people for jobs in a new industry is always complex; there is massive resistance to such retraining, generally speaking. However, where the notion gains acceptance, or for those parts of the local population who will embrace the notion, community colleges — already in place, staffed and so on — do a

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<sup>44</sup> Cf: Donald Phelps, “What Lies Ahead for Community Colleges as We Hurtle toward the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” in *Community College Journal*, vol. 65 #1, p.22ff, Aug-Sep, 1994.

good job.<sup>46</sup> In more urban settings, this is particularly important for people who reach middle-age (40+, and early-50s) whose jobs either disappear, or who simply need an entirely new life for one or another reason. This is widely reported in both popular and more rigorous literature.

Finally, there is that population already discussed, the college-bound student needing a better record, or fixing a damaged record or just getting bearings lost in the horrors of a bad first semester away from home.

All of these are socially significant roles. Only the first fits the original Progressive educational agenda. The Progressive idea is, simply put, there are too many people being too well trained; all these overqualified people will never get jobs suited to the degrees they are getting. There is consequently a fundamental hiatus between student expectations and their actual sense of fulfillment.<sup>47</sup> *That* part of the Progressive view might be collective deficient judgment, based on obsolete prejudices and, very likely, a misunderstanding of vocational and technical education and reflecting the *Biedermeier* attitudes noted above.

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<sup>45</sup> For a summary of such involvement, see Diane Hirshberg, “The Role of the Community College in Economic and Workforce Development”, ERIC Digest 1991.

<sup>46</sup> See the note on Waldo County’s local college and its role, p. 18. Also see Carolyn Prager, “Tech Prep/Associate Degree (TPAD) Academic Outcomes”, ERIC Digest 1994. This latter paper is interesting directly in its assessment of the merit of combined comprehensive programs linking the end of grade-school vocational/technical schooling to post-grade school education, including that carried out in what are now becoming known as “comprehensive” colleges, offering both two-year and four-year programs. It is indirectly interesting, in suggesting the idea that tier-three — career oriented — educational objectives are consistent with baccalaureate and even magistral regimens in a knowledge-oriented high culture. *Why* this should be peculiar, given the long-standing tradition of, e. g., baccalaureate programs in business administration, is not clear. Deborah Catri, “Vocational Education’s Image for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”, ERIC Digest, 1998, suggests the problem is entirely one of image. This rings true; community colleges “don’t get no respect”, as it were — from within the Academy and from outside it.

<sup>47</sup> See Laura Rendon’s papers cited above on p. 21. Rendon’s view is typical of a certain kind of thinking I find rather patronizing. It is also dubious, given the much richer foundation in skills needed to function at the opening of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, than was true even 30 years ago.

Or, it may point to a real problem, that job-creation is heaviest in low-level, poorly paid jobs and high-level professional jobs. If that is so, then the vocational/technical education model fails to meet a community development need, since the mid-level jobs targeted in the model no longer exist, or are being automated out of existence.

The other element in this discussion is the direct role the community college plays as an agent of cultural uplift in its local community. Community colleges are, in many places, subject to a large degree of local control. Many have local boards representing community interests in different areas. Where more central control obtains, community college administrators may still seek to develop formal ties to the local community — to avoid tensions and to secure access to local funding beyond what may be available from the public fisc.<sup>48</sup> That colleges *do* this sort of thing — especially in less urban areas — is undeniable. *How* it is done, may be less clear.

That said, the general consensus has been that community colleges do not do well in serving larger community social agenda. This is explicit in “The People’s College & the Street People: Community Colleges & Community Development” from Terry O’Banion and Rosemary Gillett-Karam.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> California is very forward in its awareness of and connection to the 72 community college districts throughout the state. The Community College League serves as a “trade association” and its quarterly publication for trustees and officers, *Board Focus*, appears to be a model of what such a discussion can be.

<sup>49</sup> In *Community College Journal*, vol. 67 #2 pp.33ff, October 1996. A more generous view of the matter appears in a later issue of the same publication: James Tschechtelin, “A White President of a Predominantly Black College Speaks Out About Race” in *Community College Journal*, vol. 69, #3, pp. 6-10, December 1998.

At the end of all this, some things are clear; there are more questions, than answers:

1. There is a great deal of information on some aspects of community colleges. A great deal of it is extremely repetitive.
2. At the same time, a number of issues have been skirted.
  - To what extent does the original model of career-oriented education obtain, and to what extent is that model adequate to real career paths? What is the mission of the community college — in a sentence?
  - To what extent are lower-division undergraduate students career-oriented in a clear way? To what extent do they understand the role of the Academy in such a path? Does the community college's strictly lower-division regimen preclude it addressing 21<sup>st</sup> century vocational and technical educational needs?
  - What changes need to take place to address changing workplace needs and student career interests? Which require substantial changes to curricula? Which are merely administrative changes?
  - Is there a larger social role for community colleges?
  - Given the three populations particularly served by community colleges, to remain viable the programs need to be inexpensive; the current trends are to raise tuition costs. Can community colleges keep tuition and fees in line with the low-cost model, while implementing the sorts of changes that may be needed to address a changing role? Should "tier-three" be changed from a lower-division regimen, to a "comprehensive college" model — essentially like the tier-two four- or six-year college, but with emphasis on career-oriented programs?

- Should currently favored staff recruitment model — essentially, tier-one models — be continued, even extended? Or, are tier-three objectives better served by different models — a single model may not serve the very mixed needs of tier-three educational objectives? This might hinge on the redefinition of tier-three as equivalent and not inferior to tier-one and tier-two institutions — but nevertheless, very different.

One can speculate that changes in overall employment patterns, coupled with rising costs in, especially private, tier-two colleges (increasingly competing with community colleges), and an uptick in students seeking matriculation, community colleges that succeed in being flexible and even forward in a changing environment will remain viable. The challenge from tier-two schools is not insignificant; many of them have already found ways to be cost-effective for students and have long lead times in student-friendly policies, aimed squarely at the population hitherto the exclusive preserve of the community college.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> A comment on the expression, “*ancien régime*”: It is, obviously, an extension and generalization of views anent the failure of the monarchy in France, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The general view is, monarchial government arose more or less at the outset of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, forcibly replacing an increasingly defective feudal regime of fractious nobility with a highly centralized bureaucracy, itself legitimizing a new bourgeois nobility. This group was, in this view, incapable of looking at current and forward development, but responded to challenges in already established, ostensibly proven ways, with such small modifications as seemed likely at the moment.

The notion of *ancien régime* has generally not garnered great support outside its limited Academic discussion. E. g., management, literature has looked to *successes* for models — inevitably, *past* successes. In the wake of corporate scandals originating as early as 1998, becoming public between 2000 and 2003, new studies have come out, seeking to describe the *failures* of the past. Generally, the line is, the larger and more successful the enterprise, the more likely it is to attempt to resurrect a previously successful strategy and tactics when faced with new (generally, unprecedented, however seemingly like) challenges. This, so the line goes, engenders failure which can lead even very large enterprises, with enormous staying power, to the brink of collapse.

This may mean, the problems of the *ancien régime* may at last be finding their way into more or less mainstream thinking.