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-THE CHANGING ROLE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

by

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I. INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Community colleges have brought about changes in the educational system of America, especially by expanding access to college-level work. Until the middle of the twentieth century, few young people went to college and most were from middle and upper classes. GI Bills and financial aid packages made college available to more people. This increased enrollment brought a major change in the composition of the student body.

Minorities, lower-income groups, women, and those who otherwise would never have considered higher education had access to community colleges. The emphasis in higher education to provide trained personnel for professions, business and industry became more distinct. Vocationalism became the main reason for attending college.

The community college reached those who were not being served by traditional institutions: those who could not afford the tuition, those who could not attend full-time, and those who had inadequate preparation. As community needs change, so do community colleges. They are not bound by tradition. Community colleges have been altered and revised to fit the needs of a growing, changing, and more technical society.

IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

To study the changing role of community colleges is to study the shift and change of society. A study of the needs of the students at these institutions shows the needs and desires of the community itself. As the business world becomes more technical, so does the training necessary to fill these

occupations. The community college has begun several projects to try to fulfill the needs of a changing society.

Community colleges have changed and altered programs to keep pace with the recent technological advances. Expanding access, training personnel, and preparing students for transfer to larger institutions are among community college purposes. These colleges are playing a larger role in higher education. It is important to keep accounts of the changes in the community college because they are a reflection of the changes in each representative community and in society as a whole.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND FINDINGS

A. Background and history

The American community college dates from the early years of the twentieth century. Several social forces contributed to its rise. The most prominent was the need for workers trained to operate the nation's expanding industries; the lengthened period of adolescence, which mandated custodial care of the young for a longer time; and the drive for social equality, which was enhanced by opening more schools and encouraging everyone to attend.

Across the country, the ideas permeating higher education fostered the development of these new colleges. Science was seen as enhancing progress; the more people who would learn its principles, the more rapid the development of the society. The new technologies demanded skilled operators.

Publicly supported universities had been established in every state. Although many of them were agricultural institutes or teacher training colleges little resembling modern universities, they did provide a lower-cost alternative to private colleges. The universities were also pioneering the idea of service to the broader community through their agricultural and their general extension divisions. Access for a wider range

of the population was increasing as programs attracted greater varieties of people.

Probably the simplest overarching reason for the growth of community colleges is that this century has seen a plethora of demands placed on the schools at every level. Whatever the social or personal problem, schools were supposed to solve it.

The American Association of Junior Colleges, in 1922, defined junior college as "an institution offering two years of instruction of strictly collegiate grade." In 1925 this definition was modified slightly to include the statement, "The junior college may, and is likely to develop a different type of curriculum suited to the larger and ever-changing civic, social, religious and vocational needs of the entire community in which the college is located."¹

The nature of the two-year college is difficult to grasp because of its elusive characteristics. The use of the generic name, "junior college," and failure to identify and differentiate among the various types of two-year institutions has brought about much confusion and inconsistency in the discussion of the two-year college and how it relates to contemporary society.

Educators generally fail to recognize the accelerated changes that have occurred in two-year college development. The complete lack of significant dialogue in this area has led to acute debilities which must be corrected. Definitive statements about the philosophy, purpose and function of the two-year college are difficult to find. The available body of writing is often vague, platitudinous and aimed at various factions within a larger but unrealized segment of higher education.

The evolution of the junior college has produced a contemporary institution known as the comprehensive community college. The product of a century of transition in American education, it is unique and distinct among all other

¹ Arthur M. Cohen, Florence B. Brawer, The American Community College, (London: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1982) p. 4.

institutional forms of higher education. While the community college is closely related to other two-year colleges, including the junior college, it is still quite different in philosophy, purpose and function. Due to its impact, the community college has brought about a new interest in improved pedagogy, nontraditional study, external degrees, credit by examination and other developments for mass education in a technological society.

Visions of what a community college should be were extremely narrow not long ago. This view was one of providing pre-baccalaureate degrees and eventually expanded to include occupational education. Fortunately some began to broaden the scope and vision.

In the sixties most of the community college leadership came from backgrounds as high school superintendents and principals. This leadership had little or no experience in working with the community to assess the needs and wants. A change in leadership led to keeping community colleges viable, allowing an understanding of the dynamics of the community and relating to the community. One of the rules became staying close to the community; knowing what the public wants by staying in constant contact with business and industry to determine their needs. This communication leads to establishing programs to serve those needs, not some needs thought to exist.

As challenges change, campuses debate new issues such as limited budgets, low morale, declining enrollment, changing attitudes and questions concerning the value and quality of post-secondary education. New institutions are developing. Some focus on technical training, some on occupational training and all are altering the "traditional" role of higher education. The community colleges need to identify these trends and respond to them in ways to enhance the aims and values of higher education as well as meet the demands of a changing society.

Community-based colleges, which have emerged over the last fifteen years to serve primarily low income adults who generally have been excluded from the mainstream of American social, economic and political life, are the latest example of educational institutions specifically designed to reach those left out of the traditional educational experience.

These new institutions are the result of a major shift over the last forty years in society's perception of the role of higher education. Where college was traditionally considered a privilege reserved for society's future leaders, higher education is now widely considered a right of citizenship - a necessity for participating in the country's decision-making process. This shift in perception has fundamentally altered the nature of higher education and has had a major impact on the creation of new kinds of colleges.

B. Community College Purpose

Nearly 30 reports issued by commissions, task forces and individuals have made it clear to the American people that their nation will be "at risk" unless they pay attention to their schools.

Most of these reports emphasize the need to better prepare students for entering college. Yet three-fourths of U.S. children do not graduate from college. A major responsibility of schools in the future will be to prepare students to enter a rapidly changing job market. If the United States is to compete in the worldwide marketplace, American workers will need to be more highly trained than at present. This means a greater emphasis on high-tech vocational education will be needed - an issue most educational reformers have ignored.²

Higher education can be likened to a business or industry that must respond to the needs and demands of society. It also

² Marvin J. Cetron, Barbara Soriano, Margaret Gayle, "Schools of the Future," The Futurist, (August, 1985), pp. 18 - 23.

must recognize that it is special in that it provides a professional service by rendering services to clients. Higher education must respond to student desires. Community colleges must consider major fields to offer, hours to teach classes, cost, support services and teaching styles.

These changes have come due to many factors. Declining birth rates account for a variance in the profile of traditional students as well as a decline in enrollment. It is anticipated that more students will be adults, minorities and part-time students. Trends over the last decade have led to an increased dependence on financial assistance programs. Many businesses and industries have determined that it is more cost and time effective to offer their own personalized training programs. All of these factors make social trends that community colleges must assess.

The community college has focused its efforts on providing access to higher education. For many the community college may be the only source of postsecondary study reasonably available to them. There is little question that cost, courses and proximity play a large role in the decision of a college choice. These needs were seemingly met by the placement of community colleges.

Community-based colleges, as a group, place special emphasis on basic skills, encompassing language and literature, writing and math. Interdisciplinary courses are particularly popular and field based internships are more common. Learning through experience and the development of competency for particular vocations are part of the non-traditional models adopted by these colleges.

Instead of distribution requirements and the traditional awarding of one credit for fifteen hours of classwork in a semester, integrated offerings and the assignment of more total credits than hours spent in class are the rule. Because community colleges cater to adult students who are working during the day and attending classes at night, time is an

important resource and traditional time-based undergraduate course are not feasible.

C. Current trends

Current social trends dictate that post-secondary education is a national objective. Jobs are becoming more complex and are requiring more advanced skills and knowledge. More trained personnel are needed in the technical and service fields and there is widespread concern about providing higher education to the nation's minorities.

It is estimated that by 1994, due to declining birth rates, the number of "traditional" eighteen-year-old college entrants will be 25 percent lower than in 1979. Part of this decline will be offset by a growing number of "nontraditional" students: adult men and women, part-time students and minorities.³

According to another source, the enrollment of students 25 years old or older increased by 88 percent between 1970 and 1980. It is estimated that by 1990 almost half of all college and university students will be over the age of 25, and 30 percent will be over 30; additionally, almost 50 percent of all students will attend classes on a part-time basis.⁴

A recent report by the Education Commission of the States revealed that of the 12 million students attending classes at our nation's 3300 institutions of higher learning, only two million fit all of the traditional characteristics. The report further stated that two out of every five attend college part-time. It is predicted that by 1990 almost 50 percent of college students will be "non-traditional."

In addition to this demographic shift among those seeking undergraduate degrees, approximately 40 million adult

3 Donna M. Arlton, Theodore J. Kalikow, "Who Will Offer the Degrees of the Future?", North Central Association Quarterly, (Vol. 60, No. 3, Winter, 1986) p. 380.

4 Martin M. Frankel, Debra E. Gerald, "Projections of Education Statistics to 1990 - 1991," (Vol. 1, National Center for Educational Statistics, Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982) p. 11.

Americans are in career transition. Approximately 60 percent of those plan to seek additional education. Furthermore, business claims that we are now in a four-year technological obsolescence cycle which will require that workers be retrained every five years.⁵

Among the institutions available for higher education, community colleges seem the most readily accessible to most people. With egalitarianism as a foundation, community colleges are capable of emphasizing a broad curriculum and including many specific occupational requirements.

Today there is only a faint perception that public higher education has two sectors. Rather, we see only the state sector, with its 1500 institutions, as public. The 1600 institutions in the independent sector are miscalled "private," and it is a common experience for presidents in the sector to be called on to explain why the taxpayer should provide any funding whatever for "private" education. This linguistic confusion has led to a certain amount of folly in the development of public policy.

Today the two sectors enroll some 11.5 million students, of which 9.0 million are in the state sector and 2.5 million in the independent sector. The state sector, which began the century with less than 40 percent of all college students now enrolls 80 percent of them. The independent sector has moved from a commanding position to that of a decreasing and threatened minority.

Although independent institutions enroll only 20 percent of the students, they produce 33 percent of baccalaureates, and they graduate 63 percent of the lawyers, 40 percent of the physicians, and 36 percent of those who receive the Ph.D. degree.

⁵ John Carlin, "Continuing Higher Education: The State's Role in Meeting the Challenge of the New Majority," Journal for Higher Education Management, (Vol. 2, No. 2, Winter/Spring, 1987) p. 5.

One reason for this discrepancy between enrollment and degree production in the two sectors is that 46 percent of the students in the state sector are enrolled in two-year colleges, educating 46 percent of the students in the sector. In contrast, only 17 percent of the institutions in the independent sector are two-year colleges, and they enroll less than 8 percent of the students in the sector.⁶

What reasons do today's students give for deciding to go to college? Getting a better job tops the list when students in all types of colleges are considered. This was also true in 1978 when students were asked the same question. However, preparing for work ranks only third among university students (Table 1) as a motivation for higher education. A large percentage of students are still coming to college to gain a general education and develop an appreciation of ideas. While colleges rush to add more job-related majors, the data indicate they should also continue to respond to these other student objectives.

⁶ John R. Silber, "Higher Education in the United States," Vital Speeches of the Day, (Vol. LI, No. 23, September 23, 1985) p. 708.

Table 1 The Five Most Common Reasons Freshman Give for
Deciding to Go to College: 1984

Reasons for attending college	All colleges	2-year colleges	4-year colleges	university
To be able to get a better job	76%	80%	74%	72%
To learn more about things that interest me	72%	70%	73%	75%
To gain a general educa- tion and appre- ciation of ideas	65%	61%	61%	68%
To be able to make more money	68%	71%	66%	77%
To meet new and interesting people	56%	48%	59%	65%

Source: American Council on Education and University of California
at Los Angeles.

What about the goals of education? Students come to college because they want jobs. They also want to become educationally enriched. Most significant, perhaps, is the growing trend for college level work to be taken while still in

high school. Institutional lines are becoming blurred. This trend gives the community college another role. (Chart 1).

Chart One

Percent of students who had taken college credit courses while still in high school by type of current institution: 1984.

Percent

30

25

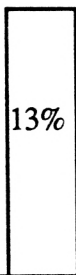
20

15

10

5

0



Total

Research

Doctoral

Comp.

Lib. Arts

2-year

Source: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

What is changing in America is the perception of the university as an entity separate from societal and economic forces. The ivory tower is being breached, circumvented, and even torn down.

Faced with a world in which resources are shrinking while populations in the poorest areas are exploding, we have an obligation to bring our best efforts to the solution of such problems. On an individual level, many universities have begun to see themselves as economic resources, contributing to the overall good of their communities, states or their nations. Purdue University has developed methods for providing technical assistance to small businesses; they cooperate with the state's government in efforts to bring new industry to the state; and have developed programs designed to make educational offerings more accessible to people who live in areas where skilled workers are needed. They have done these things singly and in partnership with other universities, notably Indiana Univeristy, which is another state-related institution and with whom they share two campuses, one in Indianapolis and the other in Fort Wayne.

Using satellite transmission, the National Technological University offers a wide range of courses and seminars including master's degree programs. This allows the professional to study in his home area, yet have the programs of great universities at his disposal. What NTU is doing is bringing the realities of modern communications into the service of higher education.⁷

As community colleges, as well as universities, respond to a changing economy and workforce, there is a need for more creative and cooperative interaction between business and education. The programs must be able to be tailored to satisfy these unique educational demands.

⁷ Steven C. Beering, "Trends in American Higher Education," Vital Speeches of the Day (Vol. LII, No. 1, October 15, 1985) p. 22.

Shaping lifelong learning can be accomplished by combining corporate classrooms, technology and community colleges. The community college could be the bridge to join traditional and non-traditional education through the use of technology.

Training for the job world does not keep people from going to college. One indication is that from 1974 - 1979, part-time college enrollment increased by 25.8%. More students are now prolonging the period between when they graduate from high school and when they enter college. Some of that delay is caused by the fact that federal grants and loans for college students has declined dramatically.⁸

In general, lawmakers and governing boards must change the way they view student populations and realize that funding formulas based on a traditional view of student populations are no longer adequate. When as many as 57 percent of the students at one of Kansas' universities are over the age of 25 and many of those are part-time students, formulas based on full time equivalency short-change such institutions.

It should also be recognized by those controlling the purse strings for higher education that many adult learners do not desire or require credit courses. In many states, non-credit courses are not funded at the same levels as credit courses, and in some cases they go virtually unfunded. In many instances, such courses are important for maintaining a well-trained workforce within the state. Growing emphasis by state governments on economic development should also include university non-credit courses as part of that effort.

Economic development efforts could also be enhanced through development of policies that give tax breaks to corporations that underwrite employee participation in degree programs. Cooperation with industry to provide off-campus,

⁸ Marvin J. Cetron, Barbara Soriano, Margaret Gayle, "Schools of the Future," The Futurist" (August, 1985) pp. 18 - 23.

on-site courses for employees could also solve part of the funding problems facing universities.⁹

Many corporations have undertaken the task of training personnel and some even offer degrees. The Wang Institute in Boston offers a Ph.D. and enrolls students from around the world.¹⁰

The National Technology University in Fort Collins, Colorado, beams satellite courses to corporate classrooms across the country, and the customers of this new technology university include employees at IBM, Westinghouse and RCA. Course content is being prepared not by software companies but by ranking institutions in higher education.¹¹

According to the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development at the University of Texas, a program linking five Illinois community colleges, and those working in small community governments has been established through the Community Information and Education Service (CIES) of the University of Illinois. The project, established in 1980 and funded by the Kellogg Foundation, has a two-fold purpose. First, it provides educational opportunities for local leaders to explore complex issues and learn to effectively locate resources, and, second, it helps educational institutions, particularly colleges serving small communities, increase their role in community outreach.

Despite the difficulty of finding a job in the last decade, 75 percent of nearly 22.5 million college graduates in the labor force were in occupations that usually require a degree. Of those in jobs usually requiring a degree, more than half were in professional occupations in such fields as engineering, science

⁹John Carlin, "Continuing Higher Education: The State's Role in Meeting the Challenge of the New Majority," *Journal for Higher Education Management*, (Vol. 2, No. 2, Winter/Spring, 1987) p. 6.

¹⁰Ernest Boyer, "Toward the Year 2000 and Beyond," Community, Technical and Junior College Journal, (Aug./Sept. 1986, Vol. 57, No. 1) p. 15.

¹¹Ernest Boyer, "Toward the Year 2000 and Beyond," Community, Technical and Junior College Journal, (Aug./Sept., 1986, Vol 57, No. 1) p. 16.

and health. About 30 percent held college-level jobs in managerial and management support occupations. About 5 percent were technicians. Another 5 percent were in marketing and sales. The remainder held college-level jobs in a variety of other occupations, such as estimator, investigator, police officer and detective, farm manager and blue-collar worker supervisor.

Although a small number were unemployed, most of the remaining 25 percent of college graduates in the labor force held jobs that did not require a degree, mainly in service, blue-collar, and administrative support including clerical occupations.¹²

Specific projects have included seminars on personnel evaluation and management, a symposium on school reorganization for school superintendents and board members, and workshops on the management and investment of municipal funds held for city treasurers and clerks.

Over 4,000 local leaders, over half of whom serve communities with populations of less than 2,000 have benefitted from the programs.¹³

D. Anticipated Future Developments and Needs

Community colleges daily respond to the great complexity of its representative community. Facing this challenge often puts the college in a two-edged sword position. It is one of its most appealing features and it attracts students. At the same time it creates an urgent expectation to respond in sophisticated ways to diverse needs. Such a variety of activity does not create a simple educational picture for the community college. Rather it describes an institution enhancing its

¹² Jon Sargent, "An Improving Job Market for College Graduates: The 1986 Update of Projections to 1995," Occupational Outlook Quarterly, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, (Summer, 1986) p. 3.

¹³ "Business, Education Reap Mutual Benefits of Carefully Crafted Partnerships," Linkages, The University of Texas at Austin, (Vol. 8, August/September, 1985).

associate degree working with and profiting from a diverse clientele, sensitizing itself and becoming responsive to a set of evolving realities that is intercultural and international in scope.

"Much of the talk about non-traditional programs has emphasized the need for reaching people who are unable or unwilling to come to the campus. Furthermore, the research indicates that institutions presently offering non-traditional programs are concentrating on 'new ways of teaching old subjects as such.' A closer examination of data reveals that the new methods are not really very new. In particular, the new technologies are not yet making their predicted impact. Most non-traditional programs use the old stand by of lectures and class discussion; they just transport it to off-campus locations, usually regional learning centers."¹⁴

Television assisted courses are a common means of taking instruction to learners. In states with significant rural populations such as Kansas, such delivery systems are especially important.

The expanded availability of cable television channels makes this approach to instruction realistic for most universities. Courses offered through television should meet the same standards demanded of on-campus courses. Faculty screening for content should be included to ensure that courses compare with credit courses offered in traditional settings. Where possible, on-campus meetings should also be scheduled.

Non-credit courses can also be provided via the airwaves. Through satellite reception capabilities, Kansans have been able to receive a number of courses from national sources.

Expanded availability of computers and innovations in telecommunications will make electronic delivery systems more available. However, these delivery systems should be

¹⁴ K. Patricia Cross, John R. Valley, Planning Non-Traditional Programs, (Jossey - Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1975) p. 5.

coordinated through a statewide plan to best utilize resources and avoid costly duplication of services among universities.

E. Student Studies

Fort Hays State University in an attempt to meet the demands of a changing society, has initiated off-campus programs offering baccalaureate and graduate degrees through community colleges in western Kansas. Baccalaureate and graduate courses are offered in education, business and general studies.

It is well to look beyond the campus confines for the development of great significance to Fort Hays State University, western Kansas or the state. Many western Kansans are beyond commuting distance to FHSU and are unable to become resident students. Instructional centers have been established at Colby, Dodge City, Garden City, Great Bend and Liberal in cooperation with community colleges in those areas to provide educational opportunities and special programs to those communities.

Forty-four western Kansas counties, which constitute approximately 45% of the state's geographical area, are designated by the Kansas Board of Regents as the primary service responsibility of Fort Hays State University. The University and the School of Education are by philosophy, tradition and performance, committed to providing higher education services to as many citizens and members of the teaching profession and pre-professionals as resources will permit.

The agreements between the community colleges and the University are made for the purpose of increasing the higher education opportunities for citizens in western Kansas. The current general objectives for the Centers include the following:

1. To identify and facilitate a University response to regional needs for off-campus education, training, research and public service.

2. To maximize the resources committed to the support of higher education in western Kansas.

3. To innovate, experiment and apply modern technology to teaching and learning.

4. To serve western Kansas society more directly - by contributing to political, social and educational change and service.

5. To provide general support services to University faculty and to students enrolled in Fort Hays courses and programs.

6. To identify and facilitate cooperative projects between the community colleges and the University.

7. To provide general and special education which require cooperation beyond institutional boundaries.

Each Center is currently staffed by a part-time Director and clerical support as circumstance demands. All Center administrators in addition to their responsibilities for University directed activities are employed by the specific community college in positions ranging from Dean of Instruction to career guidance.

Fort Hays is the only graduate degree-granting institution in western Kansas; which is a service area comprising approximately 30,000 square miles, with a population of just over 300,000.

Graduate programs in education are in teaching and related fields and there is a constant demand for these programs.

Teacher and administrator turnover, career development of teachers, and a growing expectation that educators will pursue graduate degrees all portend well for FHSU's graduate programs in education. Regional off-campus centers have been established to help meet the demand for graduate programs in education.

Many of the principals and most of the 304 school superintendents in Kansas are in their 50's. Over the next 15 years there will be a growing demand for well qualified educational leaders to fill positions of those who will retire. Roughly 65 percent of the approximately 4,500 teachers in western Kansas do not hold master's degrees.

These regional centers were developed to help meet the demand for graduate and in-service programs in education for the practicing professional in western Kansas. Regular on-campus faculty deliver instruction and other academic services at the centers. The School of Education is committed to the following objectives:

1. To develop and maintain a three-year cycle of course offerings leading to selected graduate degrees by center location.
2. To establish and maintain a sequence of on-site academic advising meetings to assist pre-professionals and practicing professionals.
3. To arrange, announce and implement planning meetings with school administrators for the purpose of identifying and responding to local and regional needs.

The general studies degree is particularly attractive to off-campus and non-traditional students. The program is flexible and may include courses from any academic department.

Within the past four years, curriculum changes have been made in order to make all the majors within the School of

Business more competitive. In addition to on-campus instruction, commitments have been made to three remote locations for the delivery of coursework leading to the bachelor's degree in business.

Except for program specializations, Kansas Regents' policies preclude direct infringement on territorial service rights by sister institutions for off-campus academic credit and non-credit activities only. Thus, except by proximity, Wichita State University and Kansas State University have posed to date minimal competitive disadvantage to Fort Hays in terms of program extension. Similarly, the private institutions have by mission or by student cost reduced their potential to be significant rivals. However, Saint Mary of the Plains College has established off-campus degree options in education and business at Garden City, Colby, and Liberal.

The advent and presence of five community colleges in the assigned 44 county service area presents a pronounced competitive circumstance. Since the community colleges operate under regional management and support, they have attained a degree of independence which imposes competitive strains upon Fort Hays State University for first and second year students. Resource advantages and staffing flexibility permit the community colleges excellent latitude and responsiveness in program offerings. Consequently, their drawing potential for a clientele that seeks near immediate employment or income return is unsurpassed. A segment of the population who might seek the more traditional or long-term academic options is similarly lured by available financial support and bargain pricing within their communities.

As community colleges have responded to localized need, the private sector similarly has addressed a portion of its own training education requirements. Further, both direct involvement and subcontracting of educational services has become commonplace.

Competition for prospective college students has grown increasingly intense as the effects of a declining birth rate have

resulted in fewer and fewer seniors in Kansas high schools. The American College Testing Program (ACT) offers an empirical description of the competitive situation. This identifies the specific institutions to which ACT-tested high school seniors asked that score reports be sent.

ACT identified 11 regions in the State of Kansas to investigate the degree to which "competition" and "geographic locale" were related.

University of Kansas clearly competed on a state-wide basis, but it had an urban bias. Kansas State University shared with Emporia State University the distinction of being most free from regional domination. Wichita State University relies heavily on Wichita students. Fort Hays State University was concentrated in the west; Pittsburg State University concentrated in the southeast; and Washburn University held a municipal nature.

F. SCCC Needs Assessment

A Long Range Planning Committee at Seward County Community College researched the students and faculty to assess the needs of the community. Many comments reflected a need for an off-campus program offering bachelor's and master's degrees. Television course offerings were preferred by 19.72% of the respondents. Continuing education beyond the associate's degree was preferred by 35.78%. Comments were: "We need affiliation with other state schools for continued education."

"I would be interested in a master's degree program from one of the state schools."

"SCCC needs to provide the opportunity for continued education through one of our state universities to benefit both the employer and employee. The permanent resident of southwest Kansas needs an opportunity to obtain this education locally and it needs to be available."

In the community 28.07% stated this need and 35.7% of the college students stated this need.

III. Summary

The community college has evolved from what William Cowley¹⁵ calls an "historical accident" to become what Robert Hutchins¹⁶ calls the "characteristic educational institution of the United States." Economic, educational, vocational, social and value changes have continually served to intensify rather than alleviate the needs which the community college serves. In short, this institution is the product of interlocking revolutions that have evolved along with society over the past century.

This study supports the thesis that the community college has evolved into a distinct educational form which has undertaken unique tasks that differentiate it from the conventional junior college. Only after a long struggle did the community college become more closely identified with higher education than secondary education. No longer a mere bridge between secondary and higher education, the community college overlaps and encompasses certain features of both, while retaining unique features of its own; its unprecedented dual status remains viable.

Providing a variety of personal and social assistance to multiple cultures has generated a new community dimension, with academic and nonacademic services constituting the educational program. The community becomes a work-study laboratory and change characterizes the defined outcome of its mission. The college is potentially free to be many things to many people, if only it will. It is challenged to deal with the common problems of higher education except that it will provide different but better solutions.

¹⁵ William H. Cowley, "Critical Decisions," Twenty-Five Years 1945 - 1970, ed. by G.

Kerry Smith, (Washington: American Association for Higher Education, 1970).

¹⁶ Robert M. Hutchins, "The Confusion in Higher Education," Harper's Magazine, (173:449 - 58, October, 1936).

The real strength of the community college lies with the people it serves. More diverse than any other clientele in post-secondary education, those who are served by this institution reflect divergent characteristics from a wide range of society and mirror the community in which each institution is located. The usual connotations associated with students are inadequate and inappropriate in describing this heterogeneous group. With a median age of 27 and rising, the new clientele turn more and more toward part-time and continuing education that will require new modes of delivering instruction. As a group, they defy simplistic generalizations and make it necessary to realign much of the traditional thinking about a student's profile.

The community college is in the midst of change, as are all other educational institutions. In a concerted effort, its philosophy must be better developed and articulated at local levels.

Underestimation of the importance of state initiatives in meeting the demands of the new majority of adult learners is impossible. Economic development efforts and the overall quality of life a state offers are both tied directly to how well citizens are educated and the availability of lifelong learning opportunities. Whether those opportunities are in the form of credit courses in a traditional setting or special non-credit courses designed to update careers or prepare for career transitions, state governments have a responsibility to monitor the policies, funding mechanisms, delivery systems, curricular offerings, faculty preparation and student services to meet the needs of this population of students.

We have entered a time when the future is in the hands of the students, but those students are no longer limited to the young. Those states that recognize that fact and adjust to the changing face of university populations will be those states that lead this country.

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THE CHANGING ROLE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

by

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The Changing Role of Community Colleges

Community colleges were developed to broaden access to higher education; however, recently this role has been expanded to include course offerings to meet the needs of the ever-changing community. Most citizens believe that an educated society is a benefit to all. Greater access to low-income, older and minority students gives a broader base for educating Americans.

Job markets change and business and industry need well trained personnel. This need may be met by individualizing programs of study to suit the needs of individual communities. Shifts in the job market also create a need for current employees to be retrained. This phenomenon leads to a growth in non-traditional students. Many of these are incapable of moving to a four-year institution and must either meet their needs within the community or become unemployable.

Programs must be tailored to be creative and cooperative. Satellite transmissions, pre-recorded courses, Telenet courses and other non-traditional programs must be emphasized in order to meet the needs of society. Off-campus programs can bring four-year programs to two-year institutions. Many off-campus programs offer graduate degrees to practicing professionals as well as undergraduate degrees. These programs can offer training, research and public service courses to be specialized for the individual community it serves.

No longer is society willing to accept whatever academia has to offer. People are demanding specialization and community colleges are responding. The community college has evolved into a functional, viable and necessary educational institution. The people it serves will produce a more informed, enlightened and educated society.