

CATALYST v24n1 - Community Colleges and Workforce Development in the New Economy

Connect with us

COPYRIGHT IN SPECIAL
CIRCUMSTANCES

CONTACT SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION AT
VIRGINIA TECH

CHECK OUT RECENT PUBLICATIONS FROM VIRGINIA TECH
PUBLISHING



VIRAL NETWORKS

Connecting Digital Humanities
and Medical History

Edited by E. Thomas Ewing
and Katherine Randall

how we do it. Product life cycles have become shortened, and the notion of a large number of essentially unthinking assembly line clods has been replaced with small, more flexible, interactive work teams of highly trained individuals. The notion of continuous training and continuous improvement introduced in part by the application of the management techniques advanced by Edward Deming and employed so effectively by Japanese manufacturers is gradually becoming imbedded in the basic fabric of the American workplace. Today it is not enough to receive technical education for a single job using a single technology. The workers of today and tomorrow are challenged to obtain the skills of the new workplace, and this surely includes the acquisitive learning skills to succeed in tomorrow's workplace as well (Carnevale, 1991).

The skills of the new workplace demand a postsecondary vocational curriculum that includes so-called "learning to learn" and "critical thinking skills," and a commitment to continuous learning. By definition, this would suggest that the traditional notion of a tracked two-year vocational degree, with nothing else beyond, might becoming obsolete. Already signs of the crumbling of such false tracking can be seen. California in recent years has experienced significant numbers of so-called "vocational" transfers from its two- to four-year institutions. Any large rise in postsecondary vocational transfer curricula challenges many of the assumptions undergirding the long-standing debate regarding "over-vocationalism" at the community college (Brint & Karabel, 1990; Zwerling, 1976). A very interesting long term measurement of community college success over the next decade will be to assess the numbers of and earning power for students who enroll in vocational programs at community colleges and then transfer to four-year institutions. For many years, critics of community colleges have charged that two-year vocational degrees consign talented minorities and historically underrepresented groups to lower-paying, dead end careers that disconnect them from further higher education and the opportunities resulting. Will the data bear this out?

Community college commentators have long argued that community colleges are buffeted by extant forces from the university level above as well as from the elementary and secondary levels below. In fact, proof that the concept of continuously educated workforce has been embraced is exhibited by the 2 + 2 and tech-prep programs at the secondary and community college levels, and the rise of the vocational transfer between community colleges and four-year institutions at the postsecondary level.

Perhaps the most compelling rationale justifying a broad definition of workforce development is that community colleges as a set of institutions are the largest and most comprehensive delivery system of formal education to adults in our society. Through their community services and continuing education programs, community colleges offer significant informal education as well. An important challenge in the coming years will be to measure both the formal and informal programs along the lines outlined above. Thus, the role, if not promise of community colleges in workforce development is to enhance the integration of other formal education delivery systems (i.e., secondary educational institutions, vocational education institutions, and upper division institutions), as well as less formal but equally important adult literacy, employment and training, and transitional welfare-to-work programs. Do the latter informal education programs lead directly to the more formal programs?

Table 2
Distinguishing Characteristics of Traditional and Nontraditional Community College Involvement in Economic Development

TRADITIONAL	CHARACTERISTIC	NONTRADITIONAL
-------------	----------------	----------------

Associate Degree, Certificate or Diploma	LEARNING OUTCOME	Completion of special/customized training
Mastery of generalized work methods	LEARNING OBJECTIVE	Mastery of <i>specific</i> skills & methods
Longer term	LENGTH OF PROGRAM	Short term
On campus	LOCATION	Often off-campus, often at worksite
Self-directed, non-compulsory	PARTICIPANTS	Externally directed; sometimes compulsory as a condition of employment
Mostly full-time faculty	TEACHERS	Mostly part-time (untenured instructors and trainers)
Direct, by educators/curriculum specialists	PROGRAM/CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT	Indirect, third party involvement
Variety of sources	WHO PAYS	Often single source
Internal, attached to the college	LOCUS OF CONTROL	External, detached from the college
By educators	EVALUATION	By delivery agent and third party
By institution and/or program through profession-specific and regional associations	ACCREDITATION	By individual curriculum specialist through certification
To locate and state through faculty, administration, and board of lay governance	ACCOUNTABILITY	To third party paying for the program

Source: Katsinas, S.G., & Lacey, V.A.(1989), p. 11 .

This is the real long-term challenge, for community college practitioners as well as for employment and training, welfare-to-work, and adult literacy policy makers.

The larger objective should be to create a seamless human resource development structure that positively reinforces and affirms the value and dignity of all work done well, programmatically tied to the economic, social, political, and civic needs of an information-age post-Cold War America. Ideally, such a system should be seamless, trackless, and classless, and maximize the opportunities to people to go as far and contribute as much as they possibly can. The term "seamless" speaks to the need to eliminate cracks in the system between the various levels of graded education, as well as between the formal and more informal employment and training, adult literacy, and transitional welfare systems. Trackless from the perspective of those participating means that the curriculum of the various workforce development programs should maximize the possibilities of career choices of participants. Classless relates closely to trackless, in that workforce development systems should be permeable, with freedom for individuals to choose multiple career paths enhanced and maximized whenever possible. The goal in developing a seamless and classless system should be to maximize challenges and opportunities, not to minimize and/or otherwise "cool out" or limit expectations.

Table 3 , "Community Colleges, Workforce Development and the Clinton Programs," shows how the major populations served by workforce development programs fit within the five community college functions outlined by Cohen and Brawer. The first column identifies the three major categories of persons being served by workforce development programs: new entrants into the workforce; temporarily dislocated workers; and workers currently employed. The second column lists existing community college programs related to workforce development. The third column lists current federal programs that support workforce development. The fourth column lists some of the major initiatives proposed by the Clinton/Gore Administration during the 1992 campaign and those advanced in *Mandate for Change* . The fifth and last column on the far right, "Major Public Sector and Private Foundation Reports," lists selected identifiable sources from which many of the Clinton initiatives were first advanced. It is by no means complete.

Borrowing largely from the German apprenticeship model, community colleges have offered postsecondary vocational training to students since the 1920s and 1930s. Students seeking this kind of workforce development training were almost exclusively recent high school graduates or recent high school dropouts until the 1970s, and most of the academic fields, with the notable exception of allied health, were male dominated. It was not until the 1980s that efforts to open up the complete range of traditional vocational programs to women began to occur in earnest. Today many community colleges operate Higher Education Act Title IX Women's Educational Equity Act programs, which specifically encourage women to enter traditionally male dominated vocational fields.

A phenomenon dating from the founding of higher education in this country at Harvard in 1636 has been the delivery of college preparatory coursework (Rudolph, 1962) , commonly termed "remediation" or "developmental education." In this author's view, the preferred term for these courses is "developmental education." The latin root of the word "remediate" is *mederi* , which means "to heal," a condition that by definition assumes sickness. Unemployed welfare recipients are not "sick," and temporarily dislocated workers are not "diseased" in need of healing. In the context of budget cuts and the accountability *ad nauseam* environment extant in many state legislatures, the term "remediation" carries with it a derisive, negative tone. Legislators and policy analysts, faced with pitting one service against another, are constantly searching for justification to not fund programs. The argument, "why should we have to pay for it twice?" can be heard in the halls of all too many legislatures, where lawmakers are challenged to distribute the pain of budget reductions in a rational manner. The issue of whether or not community college developmental education programs should be administered on a "full cost recovery" basis is one that many institutions and state directors presently face. There is perhaps nothing that better demonstrates the current retreat from egalitarian access than the decline in support for this vital social function of community colleges.

The derisive rhetoric often parrots language and tone found in some of the federal government-sponsored reports cited in Section One of this paper, such as the 1988 *The Bottom Line* report. These reports either directly or indirectly place the blame for the large numbers of non-College bound high school graduates inadequately prepared for the workforce on the failure of elementary and secondary school systems. Within this blame shifting context, the rhetorical use of the term "remediation" diminishes the individual efforts of students to better themselves, be they recent high school graduates, recent high school dropouts, long-term unemployed, or those never before employed welfare recipients, all of whom seek to better themselves through Adult Basic Education that lead to G.E.D.s at America's community colleges. This commitment should be honored and positively reinforced rhetorically. Perhaps the best justification for using the term "developmental education" to positively honor this commitment was stated by President Clinton himself, who noted that "In the American economy of the future, we can't afford to waste a single person" (Clinton & Gore, 1992) .

Programmatically, community college workforce development programs serve recent high school graduates and recent high school dropouts with basically the same set of programs: developmental education course offerings, career counseling, and where needed, adult basic education, leading to the traditional vocational/technical/occupational curriculum (which can include tech-prep and 2 + 2 vocational-technical programs). The process for enrollment of new first-time students at community colleges typically begins with an initial assessment, usually utilizing a standardized test instrument, followed by placement directly into the regular curriculum or into developmental education programs. At community colleges, these programs are almost always structured to lead students toward successful completion of the G.E.D. as well. Some community colleges also integrate adult basic education programs for new students who test below high school levels upon initial assessment.

Table 3
Community Colleges, Workforce Development Programs and Clinton Programs

POPULATION SERVED	EXISTING COMMUNITY COLLEGE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS	EXISTING FEDERAL PROGRAMS	PROPOSED CLINTON-GORE INITIATIVES	MAJOR PUBLIC SECTOR & PRIVATE FOUNDATION REPORTS (IDEA SOURCE)
1. NEW WORKFORCE ENTRANTS				
A. Recent H.S. Graduates	Trad. Vocational Programs; Tech Prep, 2 + 2, Career Counseling, & DevEd lead	Perkins (tech-prep), Pell(especially ability to benefit) to regular curriculum	National Service; National Test of H.S. Seniors CWS, CoopEd, TRIO	SCANS I and II; Bottom Line; various reports by NCEE and Nat'l Alliance of Bus.
B. Recent H.S. dropouts	Same as 1A above	Same as 1A above, Pell (esp. ability)	National Apprentice Program; School-to-Work Transitions	<i>Forgotten Half</i> (W.T. Grant Fdn)
C. Long-Term Unemployed (long-time dropouts & welfare recipients)	ABE/GED/VESL, DevEd & Career Counseling, leading to Trad. Curriculum	JOBS; some JTPA but not much due to "creaming"	Welfare Reform; Earned Income Tax Credit	Super Human Res Developmt Councils (Nat'l Govs Assn) <i>Meeting the Challenge</i> (US/HHS)

2. DISLOCATED WORKERS (for temporarily dislocated workers)	Continuing Education/ Quick Training; some ABE + GED (NOTE: JTPA was biased against Ed)	JTPA, TAA & TRA; Employment Service; Workers Comp System	Scrap JTPA & TAA, replace with Career Opportunity Cards; Supplement Fed UI	Mandate for Change (Dem. Leadership Council)
3. CURRENTLY EMPLOYED WORKERS (upgrading to keep competitive edge)	Continuing Education and Community Services, incl. worksite literacy; Technology Transfer Programs	1.5% Payroll Tax		High Flex Workforce (Choate) America's Choice (NCEE) American and the New Economy (ASTD/Carnevale)

DEFINITIONS:

1. ABE is Adult Basic Education, which is education below the high school level.
2. Pell means Pell Grants, formerly Basic Educational Opportunity Grants (BEOG). Prior to the 1992 restrictions passed by Congress, almost any needy student could use Pell to attend a community college, in that the standard to obtain a Pell Grant was "ability to benefit." The local institution determined who had that ability, and it historically had been liberally defined, so that nearly anyone who wanted to try could, including those in need of ABE. 3. CWS is College-Work-Study (commonly called "work-study"). Created with passage of the Higher Education Act of 1965, CWS pays students minimum wage to help them work their way through college.
4. GED is General Equivalency Diploma," which represents an alternative route to obtain the high school diploma. This program is especially important to older adults including adult immigrants, and high school dropouts.
5. DevEd is developmental education, defined to mean high school level college preparatory programs, which do not necessarily lead to the GED, since many of the students in need of DevEd are in fact high school graduates.
6. TRIO includes Upward Bound, Student Support Services, and Talent Search, programs funded by Title III of the federal Higher Education Act.
7. Perkins is defined to mean programs funded by the federal Carl Perkins Vocational and Advanced Technology Education Act.
8. JTPA are programs funded under the Job Training Partnership Act. Passed in 1982, JTPA funds are allocated by local Private Industry Councils (U.S. Department of Labor, 1982).
9. Patterned after JTPA, JOBS is the Jobs Opportunities Basic Skills program, the transitional welfare-to-work program created by the Family Support Act of 1988.

The most common area of developmental deficiency for all new students at community colleges nationwide is mathematics. The general deficiency in numeracy likely stems from the fact that the recreational activities of the vast majority of Americans do not include or reinforce mathematical computation skills. In fact, the leading recreational activity for most Americans is television, which requires no mathematical and little English language and composition competence.

Community colleges use the same programs to serve both populations because so many high school graduates come to the community college inadequately prepared for college work. To solve this vexing problem will require not blame, but planning and cooperation between the various sectors of the educational system, and the sustained focus of resources on the health and other socio-economic reasons that lie at the root of the problem. For example, at Miami-Dade Community College, long a leader in the community college field, about 60% of all of the students who enrolled at the College in the fall of 1980 following graduation from the Dade County Public Schools required some developmental education. Probably due to the very large influx of non-native English speaking immigrants during the previous decade (125,000 individuals relocated during the Mariel boatlift), in 1990 that percentage was still hovering at 60% (Office of Institutional Research, 1990).

It logically follows, then, that many of the adults who enroll at community colleges deficient in English composition and reading skills would be deficient as well in mathematics. This is particularly true for inner city and border rim community colleges that serve large numbers of new immigrants, who typically seek vocational and career education offerings for immediate employment. For many of these students, the urban and border rim community college serves as the modern Ellis Island--a welcoming station where the survival skills of language, customs, and culture needed to negotiate and participate in a new society can be gained. Immigration is itself one of the major reasons for the rise of adult basic education and developmental education at the community college.

It is for this reason that many community college presidents are concerned, if not frightened, about recent efforts in Congress to restrict the "ability to benefit" qualification in the Title IV federal student financial aid programs. Under this provision, nearly all students coming to community colleges could be determined by the institutional student financial aid office as possessing "an ability to benefit" from postsecondary education, even if the student tests at the ninth grade or below in developmental mathematics, English, reading, or composition. Some estimates indicate that well over 100,000 students in the California Community College System alone would lose financial aid if the current ability to benefit provisions were eliminated. At many community colleges located in America's inner cities, it is not uncommon for developmental education to comprise upwards of 15 to 25% of the total credit hours generated. The author can speak to personally teaching a developmental English course at Miami-Dade Community College with 23 students from 14 different nations in the spring of 1988. For these students, federally-sponsored Vocational English as a Second Language and the "ability to benefit" provisions of the Higher Education Act's Title IV student financial assistance can be viewed as workforce development programs.

The organization of workforce development programs at community colleges to serve long-term unemployed and temporarily dislocated workers is highly varied, and is often tied to available local funding and program organization. The major federally-sponsored employment and training program is the Dislocated Worker Program funded under Title II-A of the Job Training Partnership Act, passed in 1982. Under JTPA, each state must submit a plan for how it will spend JTPA funds, and the majority of federal funds must "flow through" to the local Private Industry Councils that must oversee the expenditure of funds. Under the Act, the legally defined Service Delivery Area (SDA) must have a population of at least 200,000 or be "any consortium of contiguous units of general local government with an aggregate population of 200,000 or more that serves a substantial part of a labor market area [P.L. 97-300, Section 101 (a)(4)(A)]. The PIC's SDA may encompass only the central city, the entire metropolitan area, or variations of both, depending upon the plan submitted by the state's governor in 1982. The 200,000 population requirement practically means that a central city PIC exists in every major city in America. Thus, if a community college is located in a large urban area, it might have a separate center or division for training and employment, such as exists in Cleveland's Cuyahoga Community College or Portland's Mount Hood Community College, with assigned service areas that match the SDAs.

In rural areas, however, it is very rare where the PIC SDAs match the state-assigned region of the community college. The pattern in Iowa and Tennessee, where Service Delivery Areas established under JTPA were contiguous with the state-assigned community college service (many of the PIC employees are actually community college personnel), is the exception, not the rule. An organizational scheme tying the nation's largest delivery system of formal education to adults to federally funded employment and training programs is not the pattern of organization in most states. Program fragmentation is one of the most common complaints heard when community college professionals discuss workforce development issues. It is not at all uncommon for a rural community college to serve a seven county service area, yet have to deal with three different Private Industry Councils. Often, the fragmentation is so rampant that the community college chooses not to become actively engaged in workforce development programs for the temporarily unemployed through JTPA and the Job Opportunities Basic Skills Program (JOBS), the major federally funded program serving long-term unemployed welfare recipients, which includes many programmatic provisions modeled after JTPA.

Despite the fragmentation, community colleges have emerged as a major player in JTPA-sponsored employment and training. According to a 1989 national study of community college participation in JTPA conducted by NETWORK, "America's Two-Year College Employment, Training, and Literacy Consortium," 71% of the 384 responding community colleges participated in JTPA programs financed by local PICs. The total dollar amount of these JTPA employment and training programs was estimated to be over \$250,000,000 nationwide. Twenty-nine percent, or 112 of the 384 reporting institutions indicated participation in training programs funded through their State Job Training Coordinating Councils; and 40%, or 154 institutions, offered programs through the JTPA Title III Dislocated Worker Program (Visdos & Malley, 1989).

A third major population served by community college workforce development programs are currently employed workers. Typically, programs for this population are short-term in duration, financed by the employer with little or no choice as to participation by the employee, and the training vehicle is often a curriculum that is not developed with the input of local community college faculty. Often, no formal academic credit is tied to such training. With the current recession forcing deep cuts in many state community college operating budgets, these largely noncredit programs have been forced to run on a "full-cost recovery" basis. Since these programs are frequently oriented to the needs of specific industries, they are typically called "customized training" programs. A recent study by the League for Innovation in the Community College found that nearly all community colleges (96%) provided workforce training for existing employees of business, industry, government, and labor, and that 98% of these institutions provided customized training to fit specific workforce needs, rather than relying solely upon college credit course offerings.

The active role of community colleges in customized training programs to promote workforce development is an historic outgrowth of the traditional postsecondary vocational programs that community colleges offered in the post-WWII era. At that time, community college vocational programs were designed to train workers who would typically gain employment in local heavy manufacturing industries. The employee did not change jobs, and the technologies used in the manufacturing firms did not change greatly over time as well. Initial workforce training was all that was required.

Community colleges have been challenged to provide leadership in reacting to the economic dislocation of the early 1980s. The decade saw a wholesale decline in the American heavy manufacturing base due in large measure to the imbalance created by record federal budget deficits, which moved the United States from the largest creditor to the largest debtor nation on the planet. Local economic development activities changed from solely industrial recruitment toward industrial retention (Winter, 1986). Community colleges reacted to this shift toward industrial retention and its essential requirement that workforce training be offered on a more continuous basis to help local industries cope with rapid technological change to maintain manufacturing competitiveness. The advent of technology transfer centers at community colleges was one result of the response to this need, as were business and industry institutes, to allow the institution to respond more directly to local industry need beyond the traditional for-credit curriculum, which is often slow to change (Katsinas & Lacey, 1989). The rise of organizations such as the Southern Technology Council of the Southern Growth Policies Board and the National Council of Advanced Manufacturing Centers is evidence of the critical role community colleges can play in technology transfer, and speaks to a broadly defined role in workforce development. A September 27, 1993, *Business Week* feature story on the development of the "I-85 Corridor" between Raleigh, North Carolina, and Montgomery, Alabama, noted the critically important role community colleges played in workforce development as a primary reason for new plant location in these states.

The traditional vocational curriculum at community colleges, which used to be few general education offerings and did not provide transfer to senior institutions, has gradually given way to a more permeable and transferable curriculum that includes greater integration of liberal arts and humanities offerings and it is technological changes that are driving the curriculum, it appears. Technological changes have challenged community colleges to change their traditional vocational offerings, to create a curriculum that includes training on state-of-the-art technologies, which can be very expensive, and to integrate the humanities into their vocational offerings to foster vocational transfer to upper level institutions. It is clear to many postsecondary vocational educators that the humanities should be integrated into the traditional vocational curriculum to enhance the "how to learn" skills of students in an age of rapid technological change, continuous training, and job movement (Scott, 1990). As the need for critical thinking and how to learn skills increases in this decade, calls for a comprehensive overhaul of the traditional vocational curriculum can be expected, with students placed into a general education core prior to placement into specific job oriented skill-building programs.

Section Three: Discussion and Concluding Thoughts

Community colleges have an historic opportunity to become involved in the development of workforce development policy, and are perhaps better positioned than at any time since World War II. According to American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) officials, leading figures within the new federal administration have gone out of their way to solicit the input of community colleges in workforce policy development. Officials at AACC feel that Secretary of Labor Robert B. Reich and his staff have been particularly accommodating. This indeed represents a significant departure from past involvement in that community colleges have historically not been involved in workforce development policy formation at either the federal or state levels.

Herbert J. Swender's 1990 analysis of the two national advisory panels for JTPA--the National Commission on Employment Policy and the National JTPA Advisory Board--found that no members listed professional affiliations with community colleges. Swender also examined 38 of the 51 state JTPA plans, and found that 23 made no mention at all of community colleges as service providers of JTPA programs. Only a few mentioned a significant role for community colleges. Swender also found a low level of community college participation on State Job Training Coordinating Councils, the statewide councils responsible for approving guidelines and programmatic goals for the administration of JTPA programs by the local Private Industry Councils (Swender, 1990).

Why have community colleges not been actively involved in workforce development for temporarily dislocated workers and the long-term unemployed? Some might argue that community college students have, over time, "voted with their feet," and have consistently rejected enrollment in the vocational offerings that community college practitioners have foisted on them. Proponents of this view would argue that the traditional vocational curriculum that emerged in the period immediately before and after World War II to provide training for heavy manufacturing industries was highly unpopular among students, and reinforcing a stratification that already existed within the society. This view would generally advocate that the baccalaureate degree serves as the only true vehicle of access to the better jobs within the society (Steven Brint and Jerome Karabel in *The Diverted Dream: Community Colleges and the Promise of Educational Opportunity in America, 1900-1985*, present a comprehensive treatment of this point of view). Earlier studies by Alexander Astin, as well as subsequent studies of baccalaureate degree attainment by Paull and Orfield tend to support the notion that simply by enrolling at a community college, students have a much smaller chance of ever completing the baccalaureate degree (Astin, 1977; Paull & Orfield, 1993).

A more functionalist view of community colleges would counter that students use the curriculum for their own purposes. Represented to varying degrees by community college commentators such as James L. Wattenbarger, Arthur M. Cohen, Florence Brawer, and Dale Parnell, proponents might counter that: (a) community college students "voted with their feet" to enroll in postsecondary vocational community college programs that are transferable, but still lead to immediate employment first as the students work their way through college; and (b) that data show increased numbers of students transferring from vocational programs at community colleges to four-year institutions as contrasted with traditional general education transfer oriented programs. The point here is not to provide a comprehensive review of the arguments regarding the efficacy of postsecondary vocational programs at community colleges, but instead to note that the debate over the appropriateness of this role is long-standing, and at times quite heated, and dates from at least the 1920s and 1930s.

In truth, community colleges are a very difficult set of institutions to understand because there is such variety among and between the various institutions and systems, and even within institutions in the same states. There is no generally recognized topology or classification system of community colleges as exists for four-year institutions (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1987). It is not an overstatement to observe that most of the research regarding workforce development policy since the Great Society era, including employment and training programs, welfare-to-work programs, adult literacy programs, and economic development policy, has been written by political scientists, economists, and sociologists, and to a lesser extent by historians and philosophers. Many if not most of these individuals never attended community colleges, never taught nor served in administrative capacities within community colleges, and have not been actively engaged in the literature of community colleges. It is likely that they possess little or no understanding of the internal culture of the community colleges as a unique set of educational institutions, placed between the elementary and secondary systems and upper division postsecondary systems, influenced and buffeted by both. A good number of the people involved in leading positions within community colleges chose their careers specifically because they would be practitioners, and not have to be engaged in research and writing. This perhaps explains the phenomenon that much of the best writing on the subject of community colleges comes from professors of higher education at research universities who specialize in the subject as a research interest.

Clearly, community colleges are a difficult set of institutions to understand, and their very flexibility, long considered one of their great strengths, in fact works against them when "outsiders" try to better understand them. To some extent, that community colleges are even a "system" in the true sense of the word is an arguable proposition. In many states, vocational education is the top priority of community colleges (North and South Carolina), while in others (Kentucky, for example) general education/transfer is the top priority. Within states there is also diversity: in Florida, 15 of the 28 state-assigned community college districts have all of the assigned responsibility for postsecondary vocational programs, while in the other 13, local school districts retained this responsibility (Florida Department of Education Directory, 1992). Control of postsecondary vocational offerings followed whichever entity governed the expenditure of federal vocational education funds. Thus, for community colleges districts in the State of Florida, a situation akin to a patchwork quilt exists, with an institution possessing a five county district assigned all of the postsecondary vocational funding and programs for three of the counties, and none for two. A study of federal vocational education funding at community colleges for the American Association of Community Colleges by Harry F. McKinney examined the state funding patterns under the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act, and found that the patterns between 1963 and the 1988 reauthorizations were basically frozen. According to this study, in some states nearly all of the Perkins funding was allocated to vocational programs at community colleges, while in others, virtually none (McKinney & Davis, 1988).

What community colleges do have in common is a stated philosophical commitment to access, reflected in their open-door admissions statements. In the main, they also use full-time-equivalent (FTE) as a basis for funding and transfer. This they also share with upper division universities. But the great diversity among and between the states in curriculum, funding, governance, and organization underscores the difficulties federal policymakers from outside the community college community have in understanding what these institutions do and how they do it.

One unfortunate offshoot of this may be a historic tendency by community college practitioners to focus on things local to the exclusion of active involvement in state and federal policymaking. For example, Doug Ross in his chapter on workforce development policy in *Mandate for Change* suggested a strong bias in favor of "high tech" technical training, and specifically suggested a major role for community colleges:

In case of a threat to a person's economic security, such as being laid off, being able to find only part-time work, or working full time at less than 150 percent of poverty wage, this card would entitle a person to purchase up to \$1,200 in education or training--the approximate cost of one year of community college training. Workers will have five years during which to expend this \$1,200. (p. 67)

No documentation is offered by Mr. Ross as to the derivation of this \$1,200 figure. Yet most community college practitioners would agree that it costs between \$4,600 and \$5,500 per student on an annual basis to provide high-tech training in many of the expensive, equipment-intensive employment areas related to manufacturing competitiveness, that lie at the heart of the programs called for by the Clinton Administration. Again, few of the Clintonians ever attended a community college, transferred from one, received developmental education from one, or ever worked in one. For this reason it is highly likely that most of the members of the administration would not possess a good understanding of the internal culture of the community college as an institution. The internal culture of the community college is quite powerful, and this lack of familiarity on the part of external economists and policy makers can be a barrier to understanding how community colleges can best be integrated into employment and training, welfare-to-work, and adult literacy systems.

Community college practitioners have traditionally not been involved in the front end of policymaking at federal and state levels. However, this situation is slowly changing. In the private foundations and nonprofit corporation sector, Robert McCabe of Miami-Dade Community College was the first community college president to serve as President and Chairman of the College Board (1989 and 1990). Paul Elsner of the Maricopa Community College District was the first community college president to serve on the Board of Directors of the Pew Memorial Trusts (1991). Still, in 1990, Herbert J. Swender found that none of the participants on the two federally-chartered councils empowered to provide Congress and the President with advice on federally-funded employment and training policy, the JTPA Advisory Committee and the National Commission on Employment Policy, listed community college affiliations. In an examination of 38 state JTPA plans, Swender also found that 23 did not even mention community colleges or community college linkages to JTPA (Swender, 1991). Given the fact that over 6.2 million students were enrolled at public and private community colleges in 1991, the relatively low participation on public sector and private foundation policymaking panels is disquieting.

Another concern of many community college practitioners involved in workforce development programs is the natural proclivity of the federal government to create "one size fits all" programs (it is much easier to assess program effectiveness at the national level with benchmarks and standardized measurement tools). At present, officials in the Administration are considering assessment systems for all federally-sponsored workforce development programs, encompassing JTPA (Labor), JOBS (Health and Human Services), and Perkins (Education). Any assessment system might well have the long-term capacity to drive funding, and lead to a one-shot assessment that inadequately accounts for local conditions. Should a system be based solely upon placement into jobs and wage level of jobs, it would negatively impact community colleges that serve high poverty areas, be they in the inner cities or rural areas such as Appalachia or the Lower Mississippi Valley. Studies have shown that the urban poor have limited access in many of the nation's metropolitan

areas to the transportation necessary to get to work in fast-growing suburban areas (Wilson, 1986). Similarly, in many poor rural areas, such as the Four Corners region of the Southwest or the tribally controlled areas of the High Plains, workers tend not to move regardless of economic downturns in local employment. Many federal programs have inadequately served both of these populations. For example, prior to the establishment of Hazard Community College's (Kentucky) Business Assistance Center in 1987, the U.S. Small Business Administration had never made a loan to any business in the eight-county service area of the College, despite the fact that all eight of these southeastern Kentucky counties were listed among the 319 poorest in the United States (Katsinas, 1993). It is vital that community college practitioners take the new administration up on its offer of dialogue, and speak to the need to address the special needs of rural community colleges and, in particular, rural community colleges that serve high poverty regions of the country.

The fragmentation of existing federally-funded workforce development programs, including state administered JTPA employment and training programs, JOBS welfare-to-work programs, and adult literacy programs, hits rural high poverty areas particularly hard. All three counties in the primary service area of Phillips County Community College (Helena, Arkansas), were among the 319 poorest counties in America. According to Census Bureau figures, the population of the three counties has declined from 82,325 in 1960 to 53,226 in 1990, or about 40%. Three of the top four counties in out-migration between 1980 and 1990 in the State of Arkansas were served by the College; and the out-migration rates were staggering: Phillips County had a 25% out-migration in just ten years. There are three separate Private Industry Councils that PCCC has to deal with, and a fragmented AFDC delivery system as well (Katsinas, 1993).

"Making the maps match" is one of the major challenges to improving the capacity of community colleges to serve temporarily dislocated workers and the long-term unemployed. It is important that the concerns of practitioners at urban and rural community colleges be included in the conversation regarding workforce development policy. This will be a difficult challenge, even with an administration that has attempted to reach out, given the natural tendency toward "one size fits all."

Since welfare reform will be delayed at least until early 1995, it can be anticipated that federal officials will instead try to accomplish what reform they can through regulatory rulemaking and in particular, the granting of a wider variety of waiver variances submitted by the states for implementing the JOBS program under the Family Support Act of 1988. The opportunity for community colleges will be in the "laboratories of the states," and some innovative community college state systems are already seizing the opportunity. As of July 1, 1993, for example, statewide responsibility for JOBS was formally assigned to the Illinois Community College Board. Similar experimentation in other states can be expected in the coming years, and if concerted efforts can be made through state community college associations and state community college trustees associations, this is an arena in which the community colleges can have particular success.

Of all of the programs reviewed in this analysis of the chapter authored by Doug Ross on the Clinton workforce development policies, it appeared that the technology transfer proposals were, perhaps, developed at only the most cursory level. As of September, 1993, a bill is in "mark-up" stage in Congress that would basically follow the university extension model. Given the stated bias by Mr. Ross against university-based involvement, it will be interesting to see what will happen come regulatory rulemaking time, and how this will affect the efforts of community college practitioners at the state and local levels who are presently engaged in technology transfer activities.

Conclusion

The Clinton Administration is reaching out as perhaps never before in recent years to community college practitioners and leaders. As a complex and somewhat difficult set of institutions to understand, the language community college practitioners use matters a great deal in that how a problem is defined affects how it is addressed. This paper has advanced a broad, inclusive definition of workforce development on the part of community colleges. This definition includes new workforce entrants, temporarily dislocated workers, and workers currently employed. The programs include the traditional for-credit vocational curriculum that leads to the associate degree, as well as career counseling, developmental education, adult basic education, and short-term customized training. This encompasses four of the five traditional community college functions cited by Cohen and Brawer (1989) -vocational education, developmental education, continuing education, and community services, are included. However, it is important to note that the traditional general education function is not necessarily excluded, in that the workforce development funding from the new Family Support Act of 1988 JOBS program can be specifically used to provide postsecondary education, without restriction on what kind of postsecondary education, including developmental education. Developing a system to assess the impact of community colleges on the three major populations of people served by workforce development programs remains a challenge--and a great opportunity, in that if community colleges can seize the high ground in the definitional debate, the ability to provide information about workforce development will promote a more meaningful involvement at all levels of government. Given the likely primacy of the state role in these programs, this is very important.

Community college practitioners should be particularly aggressive in pursuing policies that can make the maps of the employment and training, welfare-to-work, and adult literacy systems match the assigned community college service areas. Since welfare reform will be accomplished largely at the state level, this will need to be a continuing focus of community college policy development and formation activity. Community colleges should push particularly hard to be well represented on statewide human resource development councils, a concept presently being promoted by the National Governors Association, an organization in which President Clinton was highly visible during the 1980s. It may well prove that when historians examine the Clinton era, at least with regards to employment and training and welfare-to-work policy, they might find that a Democratic administration accomplished through waivers and regulatory rulemaking the renewed primacy of the state role as "laboratories of democracy," an objective certainly contemplated by a conservative Republican president, Ronald Reagan, in his rejected 1982 "New Federalism" scheme.

As institutions where the teaching function assumes primacy, community colleges provide the critical point of entry into the graded, credentialed system of postsecondary education for millions of Americans. Despite the high degree of variance among and between the purposes, missions and functions of these institutions and state systems, community colleges have emerged in the period following the end of the Vietnam War as the largest delivery system of formal education to adults in the United States. As the Clinton Administration charts out its workforce development policy, it is hoped that community colleges magnify this emphasis on the formal education role with strong and active participation at the state level to develop a seamless, classless, and trackless workforce development system that can assist the nation to compete in the new economy. By creatively using federal funds to pay for the developmental education that state legislatures now are beginning to back away from, the potential emerges for community colleges to positively use workforce development as a vehicle to promote social mobility for millions of Americans, and in doing so, making meaningful the promise of open-door, open access higher education.

References

- American Association of Community Colleges. (1993). *The workforce training imperative: Meeting the training needs of the nation*. A policy paper on the role of community colleges in providing workforce training. Washington, DC: AACC.
- Anderson, M. (1990). *Revolution, The Reagan legacy*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace Javanovich.
- Astin, A.W. (1977). *Four critical years: Effects of college on beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Boyer, E.L., & Peltason, J.W., Co-Chairmen. (1988). *Building communities: A vision for a new century. Report of the Commission on the Future of Community Colleges*. Washington, DC: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges.
- Boydell, J.H., & Conn, H.P. (1991). *Workplace 2000, The revolution reshaping American business*. New York: Dutton.
- Brint, S., & Karabel, J. (1990). *The diverted dream: Community colleges and the promise of educational opportunity in America, 1900-1985*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. (1987). *A classification of institutions of higher education, Technical Report*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Carnevale, A.P. (1991). *America and the new economy. Contracted report for the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor*, Washington, DC: American Society for Training and Development.
- Clinton, W., & Gore, A. (1992). *Putting people first*. New York: New York Times Books.
- Cohen, A.M., & Brawer, F. (1989). *The American community college*, 2nd edition. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Doucette, D. (1993). *Community college workforce training programs for employees of business, industry, labor, and government: A status report*. Mission Viejo, CA: League for Innovation in the Community College.
- Florida Department of Education. (1992). *Directory*. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Education.
- Howe, II, H. (Chairman). (1988, January). *The forgotten half: Non-College youth in America, an interim report on the school-to-work transition*. Washington, DC: William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship.
- Katsinas, S.G. (1993, May-August). Unpublished interviews with staff of community colleges serving high poverty regions of the United States.

Katsinas, S.G., & Lacey, V.A. (1989). *Community colleges and economic development: Models of institutional effectiveness*. Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges.

King, J.E. (1988, March 12). "The Hittites Knew Them Not." Unpublished speech to the National Conference on Trusteeship, Seminar for New Trustees and Regents. Washington, DC: Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities.

Kohlberg, W.A. (1988). *Shaping tomorrow's workforce: A leadership agenda for the 1990s*. Washington, DC: National Alliance of Business.

Koldierie, T., Lerman, R., & Moskos, C. (1993). "Educating America: A New Compact for Opportunity and Citizenship," in *Mandate for Change*. New York: Berkley Books (by arrangement with Progressive Policy Institute of the Democratic Leadership Council).

Levitan, S.A., & Gallo, F. (1988). *A second chance: Training for jobs*. Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research.

Magaziner, I. (Chairman). (1990). *America's choice: High skills or low wages!*, The Report of the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce. Rochester, NY: National Center on Education and the Economy.

Martinez, Jr., T., & Smith, D.B. (1990). (Co-Chairpersons). *Productive America: Two-year colleges unite to improve productivity in the nation's workforce*, Report 1, Issues and Strategies. Washington, DC: National Council for Occupational Education and the American Association of Community Colleges.

McKinney, H.F., & Davis, D.A. (1988). *The distribution of federal funds for vocational education to community, technical and junior colleges*. Washington, DC: American Association of Community Colleges.

Office of Institutional Research. (1990). Unpublished study of Developmental Education at M-DCC included in 1990 Title III grant submission. Miami, FL: Miami-Dade Community College.

Paull, F., & Orfield, G. (1993). *The effects of state community college systems on baccalaureate degree attainment*, " a Report to the Ford Foundation.

Reich, R.B. (1993, April 30). Unpublished testimony of the Secretary of Labor to the Joint Economic Committee of the Congress. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor Office of Public Affairs.

Reich, R.B. (1988). "The rural crisis and what to do about it," in *Economic Development Quarterly*, 2 (1), 3-8.

Ross, D. (1993). "Enterprise economics: Empowering firms and workers to win," in *Mandate for Change*. New York: Berkley Books (by arrangement with Progressive Policy Institute of the Democratic Leadership Council).

Rudolph, F. (1962). *The American college and university: A history*. New York: William A. Knopf.

Scott, R. (1990). *Integrating the humanities into the occupational curriculum*. Washington, DC: National Council on Occupational Education.

Swender, H.J. (1991). *An analysis of the perception of state and local policymakers of community college participation in Job Training Partnership Act programs*. Doctoral dissertation. Stillwater: Oklahoma State University.

U.S. Departments of Education and Labor. (1988). *The bottom line: Basic skills in the workforce*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Labor. (1991). *What work REQUIRES of schools*. A Report of the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) for America 2000. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Labor. (1992). *Learning a living: A blueprint for high performance*. A Report of the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) for America 2000. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

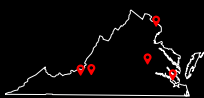
U.S. Department of Labor. (1982). *Job Training Partnership Act*. 96 Stat. 1322, P.L. 97-300. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor.

Visdos, R.J., & Malley, M. (1990). *Report on U.S. Department of Labor programs and funding through the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)--1990*. Cleveland, OH: NETWORK, America's Two-Year College Employment, Training and Literacy Consortium.

Wilson, W.J. (1986). *The truly disadvantaged*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Winter, W.F. (1986). *Shadows on the Sunbelt: Developing the rural South in an era of economic change*. A Report of the MDC Panel on Rural Economic Development. Chapel Hill.

Zwerling, L.S. (1976). *Second best: The crisis of the community college*. New York: XXX.



[GET DIRECTIONS](#)



[SEE ALL LOCATIONS](#)



[University Status](#)

[Contact Virginia Tech](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Acceptable Use](#)

[We Remember](#)

[University Libraries](#)



In today's economy, workforce development and continuing education fuel growth. They ensure that employees have the skills and knowledge to support current and future businesses and industries. The goal of workforce development is to enhance the skills of those already in the workforce as well as provide tangible and relevant skills to those looking for employment. From courses at a community college to certificate programs at a technical school to on-the-job training, individuals can find a diverse selection of workforce development opportunities to meet their professional goals. Who Needs Workforce Development? Community colleges are just one option when exploring continuing education units, workforce development courses and certificate programs. New Jersey's 18 community colleges are committed to aligning curriculum with the skills and credentials deemed valuable in New Jersey's key industries, and to strengthening partnerships with and between businesses, labor unions, county vocational-technical high schools, four-year colleges and universities, workforce development organizations, and community-based organizations. Connect with Us. Join us on New Jersey's Pathway to the Future. Stay connected, engaged and informed on our initiatives. Health Services. As the largest industry sector in the state, the health service Join the LinkedIn Group. Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) was a project of the United States Department of Labor. It provided a new approach to workforce and economic development. Through the WIRED model, regions integrated economic and workforce development activities to demonstrate that talent development can drive economic transformation in regional economies across the United States. Introduction. Some scholars predict that by 2018 the United States will be short three million college graduates (Carnevale, Smith, and Strohl, 2010). The conversation among the higher education policy community has shifted from a focus on college enrollment to concerns about college completion. Perhaps partly in response to growing concerns about an insufficiently educated labor force and low rates of college completion, there has been a large growth in short, vocationally-oriented credential programs at public community colleges over the past decade and a half. In fact, the number of short v "Workforce development" is an essential component of community economic development in any economic climate, and certainly even more critical during the financial crises we're experiencing today. Generally speaking, the term has come to describe a relatively wide range of activities, policies and programs employed by geographies to create, sustain and retain a viable workforce that can support current and future business and industry. Building on the lessons learned from past efforts, the new workforce paradigm contains an array of job strategies, including sector and place-based employment strategies, adult education, and short- and long-term training programs that are customized to different employer and jobseeker groups.[8].