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Background

Evolving Priorities and Expectations of the Community College

The American community college dates from the early years of the twentieth century. Among the social forces that contributed to its rise, most prominent were 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 supposedly would be enhanced if more people had access to higher education. Community colleges seemed also to reflect the growing power of external authority over everyone's life, the peculiarly American belief that people cannot be legitimately educated, employed, religiously observant, ill, or healthy unless some institution sanctions that aspect of their being.

The ideas permeating higher education early in the century fostered the development of these new colleges across the country. Science was seen as contributing to progress; the more people who would learn its principles, the more rapid the development of the society would be. New technologies demanded skilled operators, and training them could be done by the schools. Individual mobility was held in the highest esteem, and the notion was widespread that those people who applied themselves most diligently would advance most rapidly. Social institutions of practical value to society were being formed. This was the era of the Chautauqua, the settlement house, the Populists. And in the colleges, the question, "What knowledge is of most worth?" was rarely asked; the more

likely question was, "What knowledge yields the greatest tangible benefit to individuals or to society?" The public perceived schooling as an avenue of upward mobility and a contributor to the community's wealth. The diatribes of Veblen (1918) and Sinclair ([1923] 1976) against domination of the universities by industrialists were ineffectual outcries against what had become a reality.

Publicly supported universities, given impetus by the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1890, had been established in every state. Although many 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 general extension divisions. Access for a wider range of the population was increasing as programs to teach an ever-increasing number of subjects and occupations were introduced. Schools of business, forestry, journalism, and social work became widespread. People with more diverse goals demanded more diverse programs; the newer programs attracted greater varieties of people.

Probably the simplest overarching reason for the growth of community colleges was that an increasing number of demands were being placed on schools at every level. Whatever the social or personal problem, schools were supposed to solve it. As a society, we have looked to the schools for racial integration. The courts and legislatures have insisted that schools mitigate discrimination by merging students across ethnic lines in their various programs. The schools are expected to solve problems of unemployment by preparing students for jobs. Subsidies awarded to businesses that train their own workers might be a more direct approach, but we have preferred paying public funds to support vocational education in the schools. The list could be extended to show that the responsibility for doing something about drug abuse, alcoholism, teenage pregnancy, inequitable incomes, and other individual and societal ills has been assigned to schools

soon after the problems have been identified. Schools were even supposed to ameliorate the long-standing problem of highway deaths. Instead of reducing speed limits and requiring seat belts in the 1960s, many states enacted laws requiring schools to provide driver education courses. And recently, instead of imposing automobile mileage standards similar to those that have been in place in Europe for decades, we are installing "green" curriculums in an effort to teach young people to conserve energy.

Despite periodic disillusionment with the schools, the pervasive belief has been that education, defined as more years of schooling, is beneficial. It was not always that way. In earlier centuries and in other societies, people did not ascribe such power to or make such demands on their schools. Instead the family, the workplace, and various social institutions acculturated and trained the young. But the easily accessible, publicly supported school became an article of American faith, first in the nineteenth century, when responsibility for educating the individual began shifting to the school, and then in the twentieth, when the schools were unwarrantedly expected to relieve society's ills. The community colleges thrived on the new responsibilities because they had no traditions to defend, no alumni to question their role, no autonomous professional staff to be moved aside, no statements of philosophy that would militate against their taking on responsibility for everything.

Institutional Definitions

Two generic names have been applied to two-year colleges. From their beginnings until the 1940s, they were known most commonly as junior colleges. Eells's definition (1931) of the junior college included university branch campuses offering lower-division work either on the parent campus or in separate facilities; state junior colleges supported by state funds and controlled by state boards; college-level courses offered by secondary

schools; and local colleges formed by groups acting without legal authority. At the second annual meeting of the American Association of Junior Colleges, in 1922, a junior college was defined as "an institution offering two years of instruction of strictly collegiate grade" (Bogue, 1950, p. xvii). In 1925, the definition was modified slightly to include this 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. It is understood that in this case, also, the work offered shall be on a level appropriate for high-school graduates" (p. xvii). But the instruction was still expected to be "of strictly collegiate grade"; that is, if such a college had courses usually offered in the first two years by a senior institution, "these courses must be identical, in scope and thoroughness, with corresponding courses of the standard four-year college" (p. xvii). Skill training alone was not considered sufficient to qualify an institution for the appellation *junior college*. A general education component must be included in the occupational programs: "General-education and vocation training make the soundest and most stable progress toward personal competence when they are thoroughly integrated" (p. 22).

During the 1950s and 1960s, the term *junior college* was applied more often to the lower-division branches of private universities and to two-year colleges supported by churches or organized independently, while *community college* came gradually to be used for the comprehensive, publicly supported institutions. By the 1970s, *community college* was usually applied to both types.

Several names in addition to *community college* and *junior college* have been used. Sometimes these names refer to the college's sponsor: *city college*, *county college*, and *branch campus* are still in use. Other appellations signify the institutions' emphases: *technical institute* and *vocational, technical, and adult education center* have had some currency. The colleges have also been nicknamed

people's college, *democracy's college*, *contradictory college*, *opportunity college*, and *anti-university college*—the last by Jencks and Riesman (1968), who saw them as negating the principles of scholarship on which the universities had been founded.

Sometimes deliberate attempts have been made to blur the definition. For example, during the 1970s, the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) sought to identify the institutions as community education centers standing entirely outside the mainstream of graded education. In 1980, the AACJC began listing "regionally accredited proprietary institutions" in addition to the nonprofit colleges in its annual *Community, Junior, and Technical College Directory*. Since the 1990s, a few states have authorized their community colleges to offer bachelor's degrees, thus further blurring the definition. The Carnegie Foundation's 2006 reclassification of institutions of higher education created a new category, "baccalaureate/associate colleges," into which it placed associate degree-granting colleges that awarded as many as 10 percent of their degrees at the bachelor's level. And the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the major national data compiler, moved the institutions that were awarding bachelor's degrees to its "Four-year Public" category, a decision that accounts for its losing twenty-five community colleges between 2004 and 2005. But as of 2006, the states reporting fiscal appropriations for the annual "Grapevine" tabulations were still listing as community colleges even those institutions that had begun offering bachelor's degrees, as were the National Association of College and University Business Officers and the College Board.

We define the community college as *any institution regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate in science as its highest degree*. That definition includes the comprehensive two-year college as well as many technical institutes, both public and private. It eliminates many of the publicly supported area vocational schools and adult education centers and most of the proprietary business and trade colleges that are accredited by

the National Association of Trade and Technical Schools but not by the regional accrediting associations. However, numerous institutions in the latter group, the fastest-growing sector of post-secondary education in the 1980s and 1990s, are being accredited to award associate degrees; hence, some lists include them in the two-year college category. By 1985, "half of the private two-year institutions were organized as profit-making entities," according to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), which had begun counting them as part of the group (Adelman, 1987, p. 5); by 2003, this proportion had risen to more than 90 percent.

Figures reported in this book generally refer to institutions in the public two-year college sector. However, some information related to independent and proprietary institutions is included in areas where data are available.

Development of Community Colleges

The development of community colleges should be placed in the context of the growth of all higher education in the twentieth century. As secondary school enrollments expanded rapidly in the early 1900s, the demand for access to college grew apace. The percentage of those graduating from high school grew from 30 percent in 1924 to 75 percent by 1960, and 60 percent of the high school graduates entered college in the latter year. Put another way, 45 percent of eighteen year olds entered college in 1960, up from 5 percent in 1910. Rubinson has contended that the growth of schooling in the United States can be predicted by a "model in which the proportional change in enrollments at any given level of schooling is a simple function of the numbers of people in the relevant age group and in the previous level of schooling" (1986, p. 521). Green (1980) put it more simply, saying that one of the major benefits of a year of schooling is a ticket to advance to the next level. As high school graduation rates

stabilized at 72 to 75 percent in the 1970s, the rate of college going leveled off as well, but turned up again in the 1990s.

The states could have accommodated most of the people seeking college attendance simply by expanding their universities' capacity, as indeed was the practice in a few states. Why community colleges? A major reason is that several prominent nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century educators wanted the universities to abandon their freshman and sophomore classes and relegate the function of teaching adolescents to a new set of institutions, to be called junior colleges. Proposals that the junior college should relieve the university of the burden of providing general education for young people were made in 1851 by Henry Tappan, president of the University of Michigan; in 1859 by William Mitchell, a University of Georgia trustee; and in 1869 by William Folwell, president of the University of Minnesota. All insisted that the universities would not become true research and professional development centers until they relinquished their lower-division preparatory work. Other educators—such as William Rainey Harper, of the University of Chicago; Edmund J. James, of the University of Illinois; Stanford's president, David Starr Jordan; and University of California professor and member of the State Board of Education Alexis Lange—suggested emulating the system followed in European universities and secondary schools. That is, the universities would be responsible for the higher-order scholarship, while the lower schools would provide general and vocational education to students through age nineteen or twenty. Folwell argued for a strong system of secondary schools with "upward extension to include the first two college years," because "a few feeble colleges, an isolated university, cannot educate the people" (cited in Koos, 1947a, p. 138). Harper also contended that the weaker four-year colleges might better become junior colleges rather than wasting money by doing superficial work. In fact, by 1940, of 203 colleges with enrollments in 1900 of 150 or fewer students, 40 percent had perished, but 15 percent had become junior colleges (Eells, 1941a).

In California, it probably would have been feasible to limit Stanford and the University of California to upper-division and graduate and professional studies because of the early, widespread development of junior colleges in that state (nearly two opening every year between 1910 and 1960). Such proposals were made several times, especially by Stanford's President Jordan, but were never successfully implemented. Grades 13 and 14 were not given over exclusively to community colleges in any state. Instead, the colleges developed outside the channel of graded education that reaches from kindergarten to graduate school. The organization of formal education in America had been undertaken originally from both ends of the continuum. Dating from the eighteenth century, four-year colleges and elementary schools were established; during the nineteenth century, the middle years were accommodated as colleges organized their own preparatory schools and as public secondary schools were built. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the gap had been filled. If the universities had shut down their lower divisions and surrendered their freshmen and sophomores to the two-year colleges, these newly formed institutions would have been part of the mainstream. But they did not, and the community colleges remained adjunctive well into the middle of the century.

Their standing outside the tradition of higher education—first with its exclusivity of students, then with its scholarship and academic freedom for professors—was both good and bad for the community colleges. Initially, it gained support for them from influential university leaders who welcomed a buffer institution that would cull the poorly prepared students and send only the best on to the upper division. Later, it enabled them to capitalize on the sizable amounts of money available for programs in vocational education, accept the less-well-prepared students who nonetheless sought further education, and organize continuing-education activities for people of all ages. But it also doomed community colleges to the status of alternative institutions. In some states—notably Florida, Texas, and Illinois—upper-division universities were built

so that the community colleges could feed students through at the junior level, but few of those innovative structures survived.

Organizationally, most of the early public community colleges developed as upward extensions of secondary schools. Diener has compiled several nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century papers promoting that idea. Included are statements by Henry Barnard, the first U.S. commissioner of education; John W. Burgess, a professor at Columbia College; William Rainey Harper; and Alexis Lange. In 1871, Barnard proposed that the schools in the District of Columbia be divided into five sectors, one of which would be "Superior and Special Schools, embracing a continuation of the studies of the Secondary School, and while giving the facilities of general literacy and scientific culture as far as is now reached in the second year of our best colleges" (Diener, 1986, p. 37). In 1884, Burgess recommended that high schools add two or three years to their curriculum to prepare students for the work of the university. Harper also proposed that high schools extend their programs to the collegiate level: "Today only 10 percent of those who finish high school continue the work in college. If the high schools were to provide work for two additional years, at least 40 percent of those finishing the first four years would continue until the end of the sophomore year" (Diener, 1986, pp. 57–58). Lange regarded the junior college as the culmination of schooling for most students, with the high school and junior college together forming the domain of secondary education. But in his view, the junior college would do more than prepare young people for college; it would also train for "the vocations occupying the middle ground between those of the artisan type and the professions" (Diener, 1986, p. 71). Increasing access to postsecondary education was also an important aspect of Lange's plans.

Rationalizing the New Form

Reasons for the growth of community colleges in their early years have been stated by numerous commentators, each with an

argument that has some appeal. The idea that rapid growth in the high school population in the early years of the twentieth century led to student demand for additional years of schooling could be rationalized, but so can many others. The claim that businesspeople supported the institutions so that they would have a ready supply of workers trained at public expense has some adherents; this seems more valid in the light of contemporary events as states put forth low-cost funding and education projects in attempts to attract industry, with the community colleges as central elements in their presentations. And the literature certainly supports the idea that community leaders saw the formation of a college as an avenue to community prestige. Even the notion of a grand scheme to keep poor people in their place by diverting them to programs leading to low-pay occupational positions has found some acceptance, particularly among those who perceive a capitalist conspiracy behind all societal events.

Which belief has the most credibility? Each has its adherents. But why can't they all be true? There certainly does not need to be one reason above others for any major shift in institutional forms. Each year of schooling does give rise to a desire for an additional year. School superintendents may want to be college presidents, and teachers to be college professors. Communities erect signs pointing to their local college and announce its presence in all their displays. Industries and professions need skilled practitioners. All the reasons mentioned can be justified as contributing to the opening of one thousand public community colleges in not much more than fifty years. Why must one argument be more valid than the others?

Harder to reconcile is the fact that the other developed nations, especially those of Western Europe from which most of the American ideas of education were imported, did not develop community colleges of their own. They all faced the same phenomena of rising populations, changing technologies, different expectations for child rearing, and a shifting pattern of preparation

for the workforce. However, they built adult education centers and vocational schools separate from each other and rarely founded institutions that would enable people to transfer credit to baccalaureate programs. Were their school superintendents less eager to become college presidents? Were their high school populations more docile in accepting the decision that they would never have a chance for a baccalaureate? Were their communities less eager to enjoy the prestige that goes with a local college? Were they more subject to conspiracies to keep the lower classes in their place, hence to keep poor people out of school entirely?

The best answer might be that since its founding, the United States has been more dedicated to the belief that all individuals should have the opportunity to rise to their greatest potential. Accordingly, all barriers to individual development should be broken down. Institutions that enhance human growth should be created and supported. Talent is potentially to be found in every social stratum and at any age. People who fail to achieve in their youth should be given successive chances. And perhaps most crucial—absent a national ministry of education or even, until recently, much state control or oversight—the local school districts could act on their own.

Much recent scholarship (Dougherty, 1994; Frye, 1992; Gallagher, 1994; Pedersen, 1987, 1988, 2000) has documented the influence of local officials in forming the colleges. Pedersen especially challenges community college historiographies that emphasize the emergence of junior colleges as a reflection of a "national movement intent on fundamentally transforming an elitist higher education into a democratic and socially efficient system of advanced learning" (2000, p. 124). Through an examination of primary sources such as local school records, newspaper reports, community histories, state surveys, and dissertations, he attributes the development of the early public community colleges to local community conditions and interests. Frequently operating in high school facilities, the colleges were local institutions,

and much civic pride surrounded their development. As they were formed, schoolteachers became college professors and school superintendents became college presidents, a significant force for building an institution that would accord prestige to its staff and its township.

Prior to midcentury, the notion of statewide systems or a national agenda hardly existed. But by then, according to Meier, the American Association of Junior Colleges had become a major presence, promoting "an educational social movement combining evangelism, moderate liberalism, and civic nationalism," to accelerate college growth in every state. The association's leaders from the 1950s through the 1970s did not hesitate to conflate "Christianity, education and democracy" in furthering the spiritual dimensions and social purposes of the movement, including reference to Scripture: "Behold, I have set before thee an open door," and employing "the rhetoric and organizing techniques of evangelical religion" to further their agenda (2008, pp. 8–10).

Historical Development of the New Form

The thesis attributing the rise of two-year colleges to the efforts of local, civic, and professional leaders has merit. For one, it provides an explanation for the two-year colleges as a twentieth-century phenomenon, although calls for their development had been made by university leaders decades earlier. The need for trained manpower had been apparent too, but apprenticeships were the dominant way into the workforce. Until the 1900s, two essential components were not yet in place: sizable numbers of students graduating from high school, and public school districts managing secondary schools to which they could readily append two more years of curriculum, with or without special legal sanction.

Much of the discussion about junior colleges in the 1920s and 1930s had to do with whether they were expanded secondary schools or truncated colleges. The school district with three types of institutions (elementary schools with grades 1–6, junior

highs with grades 7–10, and combined high schools and junior colleges with grades 11–14) was set forth as one model. This 6–4–4 plan had much appeal: curriculum articulation between grades 12 and 13 would be smoothed; the need for a separate physical plant would be mitigated; instructors could teach in both high school and junior college under the same contract; superior students could go through the program rapidly; vocational education could be extended from secondary school into the higher grades; and small communities that could not support self-standing junior colleges would be helped by appending the college to their secondary schools. The 6–4–4 plan also allowed students to change schools or leave the system just when they reached the age limit of compulsory school attendance. Most students did (and do) complete the tenth grade at age sixteen. A high school that continues through grade 12 suggests that students would stay beyond the compulsory age.

Would a four-year junior college beginning at grade 11 enhance schooling for most students? Those who completed the tenth grade and chose to go beyond the compulsory age would enter a school in their home area that could take them through the senior year and on to grades 13 and 14 or through a vocational program. But hardly any public school districts organized themselves into a 6–4–4 system, possibly because, as Eells (1931) suggested, this system did not seem to lead to a true undergraduate college, complete with school spirit. He also mentioned the ambition of junior college organizers to have their institutions elevated to the status of senior institutions. And as Kisker (2006) has argued, the 6–4–4 plan was antithetical to most community college laws enacted by state legislators who were focused on governing and funding two-year colleges as institutions of higher education, separate from the high schools from which they emerged.

However, the idea did not die. In 1974, educators at LaGuardia Community College in New York established Middle College High School, a secondary school within a community college (described by Cullen and Moed, 1988) and eventually facilitated over thirty

middle college replications across the country. The idea of integrating high school and community college also gained some traction in recent years. Funded by over $120 million in grants primarily from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 130 Early College High Schools (small, autonomous institutions that combine high school and the first two years of college into a coherent education program) were established in twenty-three states between 2002 and 2006.

Arguments in favor of a new institution to accommodate students through their freshman and sophomore years were fueled by the belief that the transition from adolescence to adulthood typically occurred at the end of a person's teens. William Folwell contended that youths should be permitted to reside in their homes until they had "reached a point, say, somewhere near the end of the sophomore year" (quoted in Koos, 1924, p. 343). Eells posited that the junior colleges allowed students who were not capable of taking the higher work to stop "naturally and honorably at the end of the sophomore year" (1931, p. 91). "As a matter of record, the end of the second year of college marks the completion of formal education for the majority of students who continue post–high school studies" (p. 84). They would be better off remaining in their home communities until greater maturity enabled a few of them to go to the university in a distant region; the pretense of higher learning for all could be set aside. Harvard president James Bryant Conant viewed the community college as a terminal education institution: "By and large, the educational road should fork at the end of the high school, though an occasional transfer of a student from a two-year college to a university should not be barred" (quoted in Bogue, 1950, p. 32).

The federal government provided impetus in 1947 when the President's Commission on Higher Education articulated the value of a populace with free access to two years of study more than the secondary schools could provide. As the commission put it, because around half of the young people can benefit from formal

studies through grade 14, the community colleges have an important role. That idea had lasting appeal; fifty years later President Clinton (1998) underscored the importance of making education through grades 13 and 14 as universal as a high school diploma.

Expansion of Two-Year Colleges

Junior colleges were widespread in their early years. Koos (1924) reported only 20 in 1909 but 170 ten years later. By 1922, thirty-seven of the forty-eight states contained junior colleges, this within two decades of their founding. Of the 207 institutions operating in that year, 137 were privately supported. Private colleges were most likely to be in the southern states, publicly supported institutions in the West and Midwest. Most of the colleges were quite small, although even in that era, public colleges tended to be larger than private colleges. In 1922, the total enrollment for all institutions was around twenty thousand; the average was around 150 students in the public colleges and 60 in the private. California had twenty private junior colleges in 1936. But those institutions together enrolled fewer than two thousand students, and by 1964, all but three of them had disappeared (Winter, 1964).

By 1930, there were 440 junior colleges, found in all but five states. Total enrollment was around 70,000, an average of about 160 students per institution. California had one-fifth of the public institutions and one-third of the students, and although the percentages have dropped, California has never relinquished this early lead; in 2004, its full-time student equivalent enrollment was well over double that of the next largest state. Other states with a large number of public junior colleges were Illinois, Texas, and Missouri; Texas and Missouri also had sizable numbers of private junior colleges. By 1940, there were 610 colleges, still small, averaging about 400 students each. One third of them were separate units, almost two-thirds were high school extensions, and but ten were in 6–4–4 systems (Koos, 1947a).

The high point for the private junior colleges came in 1949, when there were 322 privately controlled two-year colleges, 180 of them affiliated with churches, 108 independent nonprofit, and 34 proprietary. As Table 1.1 shows, they began a steady decline, merging with senior institutions or closing their doors. No new independent nonprofit schools have been organized since the mid-1970s. Never large, the median-sized private, nonprofit college had fewer than 500 students by the late 1980s. By contrast, the median public college enrolled nearly 3,000 students. The sources of information on the number of colleges vary because they may or may not include community colleges' branch campuses, the two-year branches of universities such as those in New Mexico, South Carolina, and Wisconsin, and various categories of technical institutes such as those in Indiana, where not until 2005 did the state legislature mandate their offering transferable courses and two-year degree programs. Not only do the data vary among the directories, but because of revised survey procedures or definitions, they are not consistent from year to year within the same directories.

Although the number of colleges has changed little recently, enrollments have grown. Even so, this has not changed the median college size, because most of the growth has taken place in the larger institutions. In 2004, one-third of the public community colleges had enrollments of 2,440 or fewer, one-third enrolled between 2,441 and 5,855, and one-third were from 5,856 on up to 40,000 or more (Carnegie Foundation, 2006). This is essentially the same breakout of small, medium, and large-size colleges as was apparent in the early 1980s. In the 1990s, more than one million students were enrolled in colleges that had over twenty thousand students each.

More than any other single factor, access depends on proximity. Public universities, even highly selective ones that are located in urban areas, draw most of their entering freshmen from within a short radius. Hence, the advent of the community college as a neighborhood institution did more to open higher education to

Table 1.1. Numbers of Public and Private Nonprofit Two-Year Colleges, 1915–2005

		Public		Private Nonprofit	
Year	Total	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1915–16	74	19	26	55	74
1921–22	207	70	34	137	66
1925–26	325	136	42	189	58
1929–30	436	178	41	258	59
1933–34	521	219	42	302	58
1938–39	575	258	45	317	55
1947–48	650	328	50	322	50
1952–53	594	327	55	267	45
1956–57	652	377	58	275	42
1960–61	678	405	60	273	40
1964–65	719	452	63	267	37
1968–69	993	739	74	254	26
1972–73	1,141	910	80	231	20
1976–77	1,233	1,030	84	203	16
1980–81	1,231	1,049	85	182	15
1984–85	1,222	1,067	87	155	13
1988–89	1,231	1,056	86	175	14
1992–94	1,236	1,082	88	154	12
1996–97	1,239	1,080	87	159	13
1998–99	1,244	1,075	86	169	14
2000–01	1,220	1,076	88	144	12
2003–04	1,204	1,086	90	118	10
2004–05	1,173	1,061	90	112	10

Sources: American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, *Community, Junior, and Technical College Directory*, 1992; Palmer, 1987b, National Center for Education Statistics *Digest*, 1993–2006.

a broader population than did its policy of accepting even students who had not done well in high school. Pederson (2000) notes that community colleges in rural and suburban areas were given a great impetus in the 1920s when federally funded highways were built allowing students to drive to campus. The interstate freeways

that followed federal funding beginning in the late 1950s had a similar effect, as community colleges were built along the beltways that ringed the major cities. Throughout the nation, in city after city, as community colleges opened their doors, the percentage of students beginning college expanded dramatically. During the 1950s and 1960s, whenever a community college was established in a locale where there had been no publicly supported college, the proportion of high school graduates in that area who began college immediately increased, sometimes by as much as 50 percent. The pattern has not changed: 96 percent of the two-year-college matriculants nationwide are in-state residents; the distance from their home to the campus is a median of ten miles (Horn, Nevill, and Griffith, 2006).

Fueled by the high birthrates of the 1940s, this rapid expansion of community colleges led their advocates to take an obsessive view of growth. Obviously, though, the number of new institutions could not continue expanding forever. In 1972, M. J. Cohen studied the relationship among the number of community colleges in a state, the state's population density, and its area. He found that community colleges tended to be built so that 90 to 95 percent of the state's population lived within reasonable commuting distance, about twenty-five miles. When the colleges reached this ratio, the state had a mature community college system, and few additional colleges were built. As that state's population grew larger, the colleges expanded in enrollments, but it was no longer necessary to add new campuses. In the early 1970s, seven states had mature systems: California, Florida, Illinois, New York, Ohio, Michigan, and Washington. In these states, the denser the population, the smaller the area served by each college and the higher the per campus enrollment. Applying his formula of the relationship between number of colleges, state population, and population density, Cohen (1972) showed that 1,074 public community colleges would effectively serve the nation. In 2001, 1,076 such colleges were in

operation; thus, after three decades, the formula has been proven valid and the resultant figure incredibly precise.

Diversity marked the organization, control, and financing of colleges in the various states. Like the original four-year colleges and universities, junior colleges grew without being coordinated at the state level. Decapitation was one impetus. Four-year private colleges struggling to maintain their accreditation, student body, and fiscal support might abandon their upper-division specialized classes to concentrate on freshman and sophomore work and thus become junior colleges. The University of Missouri helped several struggling four-year colleges in that state to become private junior colleges. In southern states where weak four-year colleges were prevalent, this dropping of the upper division also took place, helping to account for the sizable number of private junior colleges in that region. Originally, over half the private colleges were single-sex institutions, with colleges for women found most widely in New England, the Midwest, and the South.

The public sector grew in various ways. A few junior colleges opened in the 1930s under the auspices of the federal government. More often, colleges were organized by public universities wanting to expand their feeder institutions. The first two-year colleges in Pennsylvania were established as branch campuses of the Pennsylvania State College. The state universities of Kentucky, Alaska, and Hawaii also organized community colleges under their aegis. Some public universities established two-year colleges on their own campuses. A University Center System gave rise to several two-year institutions in Wisconsin, and the University of South Carolina founded several regional campuses.

Although community colleges now operate in every state and enroll half of the students who begin college in the United States, they found their most compatible climate early on in the West, most notably in California. One reason may have been that many of the ideals of democracy first took form in the western states,

where women's suffrage and other major reforms in the electoral process were first seen. But the expansion of the community college in the West must also be attributed to the fact that during the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, while colleges sponsored by religious institutions and private philanthropists grew strong elsewhere, the West had not yet been populated. In the twentieth century, it was much easier for publicly supported institutions to advance where there was little competition from the private sector. California became the leader in community college development because of support from the University of California and Stanford University, a paucity of small denominational colleges, and strong support for public education at all levels. Even now, more than half of the college students in Arizona, Washington, and Wyoming, as well as California, are in community colleges.

A 1907 California law authorizing secondary school boards to offer postgraduate courses "which shall approximate the studies prescribed in the first two years of university courses," together with several subsequent amendments, served as a model for enabling legislation in numerous states. Anthony Caminetti, the senator who introduced the legislation, had been responsible twenty years earlier for an act authorizing the establishment of high schools as upward extensions of grammar schools. Actually, the law sanctioned a practice in which many of the high schools in California were already engaged. Those located at some distance from the state university had been offering lower-division studies to assist students who could not readily leave their home towns at the completion of high school. When Fresno took advantage of the law to establish a junior college in 1910, one of its presenting arguments was that there was no institution of higher education within nearly two hundred miles of the city. (Such justifications for two-year colleges have been used throughout the history of the development of these institutions.) Subsequent laws in California authorized junior college districts to be organized

entirely independent of the secondary schools, and this form of parallel development continued for decades. Indicative of the inchoate nature of the institution in its early years, in 1927 California had sixteen colleges organized as appendages of the local secondary schools, six as junior college departments of state colleges, and nine organized as separate junior college districts. In 1936, the number operated by the high schools had increased to twenty-three and those by separate junior college districts to eighteen, but the junior college departments of state universities had declined to just one. By 1980, nearly all the junior college districts had been separated from the lower-school districts.

The beginnings of the two-year college in other states that now have well-developed systems followed similar patterns but with some variations. Arizona in 1927 authorized local school districts to organize junior colleges. In Mississippi, they were spawned by county agricultural high schools. In 1917, a Kansas law allowed local elections to establish junior colleges and create special taxing districts to support them. Michigan's authorizing legislation was passed the same year. Public junior colleges had already begun in Minnesota before a law was passed in 1925 providing for local elections to organize districts. Missouri's legislation permitting secondary schools to offer junior college courses dates from 1927, although junior colleges were established there earlier. Most of the community colleges in New York followed a 1949 state appropriation to establish a system of colleges to "provide two-year programs of post-high-school nature combining general education with technical education, special courses in extension work, and general education that would enable students to transfer" (Bogue, 1950, p. 34). Each state's laws were amended numerous times, usually to accommodate changed funding formulas and patterns of governance.

But these patterns are not uniform. Many aspects of college operations continue as they were when the institutions were under the local control of school boards; faculty evaluation procedures

and funds awarded on the basis of student attendance are prime examples. And sometimes, just as one characteristic of the college changes in the direction of higher education, another moves toward the lower schools. In 1988, the California legislature passed a comprehensive reform bill that made many community college management practices correspond with those in the state's universities, but in the same year, a proposition that was passed by public initiative placed college funding under guarantees similar to those enjoyed by the K–12 system.

Curricular Functions

The various curricular functions noted in each state's legislation usually include academic transfer preparation, vocational-technical education, continuing education, developmental education, and community service. All have been present in public colleges from the beginning. In 1936, Hollinshead wrote that "the junior college should be a community college meeting community needs" (p. 111), providing adult education and educational, recreational, and vocational activities and placing its cultural facilities at the disposal of the community. Every book written about the institution since then has also articulated these elements, and recently, the definition of community has been broadened to include foreign nationals and a global workplace (Levin, 2001).

Academic Transfer

Academic transfer, or collegiate, studies were meant to fulfill several institutional purposes: a popularizing role, a democratizing pursuit, and a function of conducting lower-division general education courses for the universities. The popularizing role was to have the effect of advertising higher education, showing what it could do for the individual, and encouraging people to attend. The democratizing pursuit was realized as the community colleges became the point of first access for people entering higher education; by the late

1970s, 40 percent of all first-time-in-college, full-time freshmen were in the two-year institutions. The function of relieving the universities from having to deal with freshmen and sophomores was less pronounced because the universities would not relinquish their lower divisions. Instead, community colleges made it possible for them to maintain selective admissions requirements and thus to take only those freshmen and sophomores they wanted.

In 1930, Eells surveyed 279 junior colleges to determine, among other things, the types of curricula offered (Eells, 1931). He found that 69 percent of the semester hours were presented in academic subjects, with modern foreign languages, social sciences, and natural sciences predominating. The 31 percent left for nonacademic subjects included sizable offerings in music, education, and home economics and courses similar to those offered in extension divisions. At that time, there was little difference between the curricula presented in public colleges, whether state controlled or locally controlled, and in private denominational or independent institutions; but the older the institution was, the more likely it was to be engaged in building a set of nonacademic studies. The universities accepted the collegiate function and readily admitted transferring students to advanced standing, most universities granting credit on an hour-for-hour basis for freshman and sophomore courses. Bogue reported that "60 percent of the students in the upper division of the University of California at Berkeley, according to the registrar, are graduates of other institutions, largely junior colleges" (1950, p. 73).

Vocational-Technical

Vocational-technical education was written into the plans in most states from the earliest days. The first act providing state funding for community college in North Carolina, passed in 1957, specified that "most of the programs offered within the Community College System are designed to prepare individuals for entry level technical positions in business and industry with an associate of

applied science degree (North Carolina Community College System, 2007a, I, 6). In the 1970s, the U.S. Office of Education popularized *career education,* which is still widely used. However, it never replaced *vocational education,* the phrase used throughout this book as a collective term for all occupational, career, and technical studies. Originally conceived as an essential component of terminal study—education for students who would not go on to further studies—vocational education in the two-year colleges was designed to teach skills more complicated than those taught in high schools. Whereas secondary schools in the 1930s were teaching agriculture, bookkeeping, automobile repair, and printing, for example, junior colleges taught radio repair, secretarial services, and laboratory technical work. Teacher preparation, a function of the junior college in the 1920s, died out as the baccalaureate became the requirement for teaching, although it reappeared in the 1990s, as in Maryland where a transferable Associate of Arts in Teaching degree was formulated (McDonough, 2003). But a sizable proportion of the occupational curriculum in the 1930s was still preprofessional training: prelaw, premedicine, preengineering. According to Eells (1931), in 1929 the proportional enrollment in California public junior colleges was 80 to 20 in favor of the collegiate; in Texas municipal junior colleges, it was 77 to 23. By the 1970s, the percentage of students in vocational education had reached parity with that in the collegiate programs.

Continuing Education

The continuing education function arose early, and the percentage of adults enrolled increased dramatically in the 1940s. The 1947 President's Commission on Higher Education emphasized the importance of this function, and Bogue noted with approval a Texas college's slogan: "We will teach anyone, anywhere, anything, at any time whenever there are enough people interested in the program to justify its offering" (1950, p. 215). He reported also that "out of the 500,536 students reported in the 1949 [AACJC]

Directory, nearly 185,000 are specials or adults" (p. 35). The open-end nature of continuing education fit well with the idea that the colleges were not to be confined to particular curricular patterns or levels of graded education but were to operate in an unbounded universe of lifelong learning, which would, not incidentally, enhance public support.

Developmental Education

Developmental education—also known as *remedial, compensatory, preparatory,* or *basic skills* studies—grew as the percentage of students poorly prepared in secondary schools swelled community college rolls. Although some remedial work had been offered early on, the disparity in ability between students entering community colleges and those in the senior institutions was not nearly as great in the 1920s as in recent years. Koos (1924) reported only slightly higher entering test scores by the senior college matriculants. The apparent breakdown of basic academic education in secondary schools in the 1960s, coupled with the expanded percentage of people entering college, brought developmental education to the fore.

Community Service

The community service function was pioneered by private junior colleges and by rural colleges, which often served as the cultural centers for their communities. Early books on two-year colleges display a wide range of cultural and recreational events that institutions of the time were presenting for the enlightenment of their communities. Public two-year colleges adopted the idea as a useful aspect of their relations with the public, and special funds were set aside in some states for this function. By 1980, the AACJC *Directory* listed nearly four million community education participants, predominantly people enrolled in short courses, workshops, and noncredit courses. The community service function also

included spectator events sponsored by the colleges but open to the public as well as to students.

Intertwined Functions

This book presents separate chapters on each of the curricular functions: collegiate (academic transfer and general education), vocational (technical, occupational), and developmental (remedial) education. Community service and continuing education are merged, and student guidance, often mentioned as a major function, is covered in the chapter on student services. Yet all the functions overlap because education is rarely discrete. Community college programs do not stay in neat categories when the concepts underlying them and the purposes for which students enroll in them are scrutinized. Although courses in the sciences are almost always listed as part of the collegiate program, they are career education for students who will work in hospitals or medical laboratories. A course in auto mechanics is for the general education of students who learn to repair their own cars, even though it is part of the offerings in a career program. Collegiate, vocational, and continuing education are all intertwined. Who can say when one or another is being provided?

Such definitions are pertinent primarily for funding agents and accreditation associations and for those who need categories and classification systems as a way of understanding events. "Vocational" education is that which is supported by especially earmarked funds or is supposed to lead to direct employment. When a course or program is approved for transfer credit to a senior institution, it becomes part of the "collegiate" function. When it cannot be used for associate degree credit, it is "developmental" or "community" education. That is why community college presidents may honestly say that their institutions perform all tasks with great facility. When confronted with the charge that their school is not doing enough in one or another curriculum area, they can counter that it is, if only the courses

and students were examined more closely. All education is general education. All education is potentially career enhancing. All education is for the sake of the broader community.

Colleges in Other Countries

All nations face similar issues of workforce development, societal cohesion, and providing avenues of individual mobility, and every nation with a formal education system has institutions that serve people between the years of compulsory schooling and various adult pursuits, especially transition into the workforce. Whether named a school, college, or institute, two-thirds of the institutions listed in Table 1.2 have *vocational* or *technical* in their title. No other countries but the United States (and to some extent Canada) have formed comprehensive community colleges. The primary reason is that compulsory schooling continues for a greater number of years for America's young people than it does in any other nation, a phenomenon seeding the desire for more schooling. The second reason is that Americans seem more determined to allow individual options to remain open for as long as each person's motivations and the community's budget allow. Placing prebaccalaureate, vocational, and developmental education within the same institution enables students to move from one to the other more readily than if they had to change schools.

Changing Emphases

Community colleges have led to notable changes in American education, especially by expanding access. Well into the middle of the twentieth century, higher education had elements of mystery within it. Only one young person in seven went to college, and most students were from the middle and upper classes. To the public at large, which really had little idea of what went on behind the walls, higher education was a clandestine process, steeped in

Table 1.2. Sample Listing of Institutions Providing Community College Functions in Other Countries

Country	Institution
Australia	Technical and Further Education (TAFE) College
Austria	Regional or District College
	Fachhochschule (Institute of Technical/Vocational Higher Education)
Belgium (French)	Haute Ecole (Higher School)
Canada	Collège Communautaire (Community College)
	Collège d'enseignement Général et Professionnel (CEGEP)
People's Republic of China	Dazhuan (Upper-level Specialized College)
	Gaodeng Zhiye Jishe Xueyuan (Vocational-Technical College)
	Zhiye Jiaoyu Zhongxin (County-level Vocational Education Centre)
Croatia	Veleučilište (Polytechnic)
	Visoka Škola (School of Professional Higher Education)
Czech Republic	Střední Odborné Učiliště (Upper Secondary Vocational School)
	Vysoká Škola (College)
Denmark	Korte Videregående Uddanelser (Short-Cycle Higher Education Institution)
	Voksenuddannelsescenter (VUC) (County Adult Education Centre)
Finland	Aikuiskoulutuskeskus (Adult Education Centre)
	Avoin Ammattikorkeakoulu (Open Polytechnic)
France	Lycée Professionnel (Vocational College)
	Institut Universitaire de Technologie (IUT) (Technology Institute)

Germany	Fachhochschule (Institute of Technical/Vocational Higher Education) Berufsakademie (Vocational Academy)
Greece	Institouta Epaggelmatikis Katartisis (IEK) (Vocational Training Institute)
Hungary	Szakiskola (Vocational School)
Iceland	Idnskólar (Vocational School) Sérskólar (Specialized Vocational School)
Ireland	Institute of Technology
Israel	Vocational Training Centres National Institute for Technical Training
Italy	Istituto Tecnici (Technical School) Istituto Professionale (Vocational School)
Japan	Tanki-Daigaku (Junior College) Koutou-Senmon-gakko (College of Technology) Special Training School
Luxembourg	Lycée Technique (Technical Secondary School)
Mexico	Colegio Nacional de Educación Profesional Técnica (CONALEP) Universidad Tecnológica (Public Technological University)

(*Continued*)

Table 1.2. (*Continued*)

Country	Institution
Netherlands	Regionaal Opleidingscentrum (ROC) (Regional Training Centre) Vakschool (Specialized Vocational College)
Norway	Videregående skole (Upper Secondary School) Teknisk fagskole (Technical schools)
Poland	Technikum Uzupełniają ce (Supplementary Technical Secondary School) Szkoły Policealne (Postsecondary School)
Portugal	Centro de Formação Profissional (Vocational Training Centres) Reconhecimento, Validação e Certificação de Competências (RVCC) (Centre for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competencies)
South Korea	Vocational Junior College
Spain	Institutos de Educación Secundaria (Secondary Education Institutes)
Sweden	Upper Secondary School
Switzerland	Höhere Fachschule/Ecole Professionnelle supérieure (Advanced Vocational College)
Turkey	Mesleki ve Teknik Lise (Vocational and Technical High School)
United Kingdom	Further Education College Community Consortia for Education and Training (CCETs)

Sources: Cohen, 1994; Raby, 2001; Philips, 2007.

ritual. The demystification of higher education, occasioned by the democratization of access, has taken place steadily. After World War II, as a result of the GI Bill, which made available the first large-scale financial aid packages and made it possible for people to be reimbursed not only for their tuition but also for their living expenses while attending college, the number of people going to college increased rapidly. By 2005, 37 percent of all American adults had completed four years of college (OECD, 2006).

The increase in enrollments was accompanied by a major change in the composition of the student body. No longer were colleges sequestered enclaves operated apparently for the sons of the wealthy and educated, who were on their way to positions in the professions, and for the daughters of the same groups, who would be marked with the manners of a cultured class; now colleges were opened to ethnic minorities, lower-income groups, and those whose prior academic performance had been marginal. Of all the higher education institutions, the community colleges contributed most to opening the system. Established in every metropolitan area, they were available to all comers, attracting the "new students": minorities, women, people who had done poorly in high school, those who would otherwise never have considered further education.

During this same era, community colleges contributed also to certain shifts in institutional emphasis. They had always been an avenue of individual mobility; that purpose became highlighted as greater percentages of the populace began using college as a way of moving up in class. The emphasis in higher education on providing trained personnel for the professions, business, and industry also became more distinct. Admittedly, it is difficult to identify the students who sought learning for its own sake or who went to college to acquire the manners that would mark them as ladies or gentlemen; perhaps students whose purposes were purely nonvocational were rare even before 1900. But by the last third of the twentieth century, few commentators

on higher education were even articulating those purposes. Vocationalism had gained the day. College going was for job getting, job certifying, job training. The old value of a liberal education became supplemental, an adjunct to be picked up incidentally, if at all, along the way to higher-paying employment.

Other shifts in institutional emphasis have been dictated not by the pronouncements of educational philosophers but by the exigencies of financing, state-level coordinating bodies, the availability of new media, and new groups of students. There has been a steady increase in the public funds available to all types of educational institutions, but the community colleges have been most profoundly affected by sizable increases in federal appropriations for vocational education. Beginning with the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 and continuing through the Vocational Education Acts of the 1960s and later, federal dollars have poured into the education sector. Community colleges have not been remiss in obtaining their share. Their national lobbyists have worked diligently to have the community college named in set-asides, and the colleges have obtained funds for special occupational programs. The vocational education cast of contemporary colleges is due in no small measure to the availability of these funds.

State-level coordinating agencies have affected institutional roles. Coordinating councils and postsecondary education commissions, along with boards of regents for all higher education in some states, have attempted to assign programs to the different types of institutions. These bodies may restrict lower-division offerings in community colleges. In some states, continuing education has been assigned; in others, it has been taken away from the colleges.

The new media have had their own effect. Electronic gadgetry has been adopted, and elaborate learning resource centers have been opened on campus. Because learning laboratories can be made available at any time, it becomes less necessary for students to attend courses in sequence or at fixed times of day.

The new media, originally radio, then television, and more recently computers, have made it possible for institutions to present sizable proportions of their offerings over open circuits. The colleges have burst their campus bounds.

But the new students have had the most pronounced effect. The community colleges reached out to attract those who were not being served by traditional higher education: those who could not afford the tuition; who could not take the time to attend a college full time; whose ethnic background had constrained them from participating; who had inadequate preparation in the lower schools; whose educational progress had been interrupted by some temporary condition; who had become obsolete in their jobs or had never been trained to work at any job; who needed a connection to obtain a job; who were confined in prisons, physically disabled, or otherwise unable to attend classes on a campus; or who were faced with a need to fill increased leisure time meaningfully. The colleges' success in enrolling these new students has affected what they can offer. Students who are unable to read, write, and compute at a level that would enable them to pursue a collegiate program satisfactorily must be provided with different curricula. As these students become a sizable minority—or, indeed, a majority—the college's philosophy is affected. Gradually, the institution's spokespersons stop talking about its collegiate character and speak more of the developmental work in which it engages. Gradually, faculty stop demanding the same standards of student achievement. Part-time students similarly affect the colleges as new rules of attendance are adopted to accommodate students who drop in and out. And new types of support systems and learning laboratories are installed for those who do not respond to traditional classroom-centered instruction.

Overall, the community colleges have suffered less from goal displacement than have most other higher education institutions. They had less to displace; their goals were to serve the people with whatever the people wanted. Standing outside the tradition,

they offered access. They had to instruct; they could not offer the excuse that they were advancing the frontiers of scholarship. Because they had expanded rapidly, their permanent staffs had not been in place so long that they had become fixed. As an example, they could quite easily convert their libraries to learning resource centers because the libraries did not have a heritage of the elaborate routines accompanying maintenance and preservation of large collections. They could be adapted to the instructional programs.

In 1924, Koos was sanguine about the role of the junior college in clarifying and differentiating the aims of both the universities and the secondary schools. He anticipated an allocation of function "that would be certain to bring order out of the current educational chaos. . . . By extending the acknowledged period of secondary education to include two more years . . . allocation of purpose to each unit and differentiation among them should take care of themselves" (p. 374). Koos believed that most of the aims and functions of the secondary school would rise to the new level, so that the first two years of college work would take on a new significance. These aims included occupational efficiency, civic and social responsibility, and the recreational and aesthetic aspects of life. The universities would be freed for research and professional training. Furthermore, the college entrance controversy would be reduced, and preprofessional training could be better defined. Duplication of offerings between secondary schools and universities would also be reduced by the expansion of a system of junior colleges.

Clearly, not many of Koos's expectations were borne out. He could not have anticipated the massive increase in enrollments, the growth of universities and colleges and the competition among them, or the breakdown in curriculum fostered, on the one hand, by part-time students who dropped in and out of college and, on the other, by the institutions' eagerness to offer short courses, workshops, and spectator events. His scheme did not

allow for students who demanded higher degrees as a right, crying that the colleges had discriminated against them when degrees were not awarded as a matter of form. And he was unaware of the importance that students and educators alike would place on programs related to job attainment.

Current Issues

The revolution in American education, in which the two-year college played a leading role, is almost over. Two years of post-secondary education are within the reach—financially, geographically, practically—of virtually every American. Three generations have passed since President Truman's Commission on Higher Education recommended that the door to higher education be swung open. Now community colleges are everywhere. There are systems with branches in inner cities and rural districts and with programs in prisons and on military bases. Classes are offered through online instruction, twenty-four hours a day, every day. Open-admissions policies and programs for everyone ensure that no member of the community need miss the chance to attend.

Riding the demographics of the World War II baby boom, the fiscal largesse resulting from an expanding economy, and a wave of public support for education, community colleges had been organized in every state by the 1960s. By the mid-1970s, when the colleges enrolled 34 percent of all students in U.S. higher education, there were nearly eleven hundred institutions; this mature system has taken its place as a central element in the fabric of American postcompulsory education.

This maturity has not changed the colleges' perennial problems of funding, public perception, relative emphasis, purposes, and value. To Bogue in 1950, the critical problems of the community colleges were devising a consistent type of organization, maintaining local or state control, developing an adequate general education program integrated with the occupational, finding the

right kinds of teachers, maintaining adequate student guidance services, and getting the states to appropriate sufficient funds. These problems have never been satisfactorily resolved.

Recent changes in both intra- and extramural perceptions of community colleges have led to other issues. Some of these shifts are due to educational leadership at the state and the institutional level, but more are due to changing demographic patterns and public perceptions of institutional purposes.

First, there has been a blending in the uses of vocational and collegiate education. Vocational education was formerly considered terminal. Students were expected to complete their formal schooling by learning a trade and going to work. Students who entered vocational programs and failed to complete them or failed to work in the field for which they were trained were considered to have been misguided. Collegiate programs were designed to serve as a bridge between secondary school and baccalaureate studies. Students who entered the programs and failed to progress to the level of the baccalaureate were considered dropouts.

Since the 1970s, however, high proportions of students who complete vocational programs have been transferring to universities. Vocational programs typically maintain curricula in which the courses are sequential. Many of these programs, especially those in the technologies and the health fields, articulate well with baccalaureate programs. Most have selective admissions policies. Students are forced to make an early commitment, satisfy admissions requirements, maintain continual attendance, and make satisfactory progress. This pattern of schooling reinforces the serious students, leading them to enroll in further studies at a university. The collegiate courses, in contrast, are now frequently taken by students who have not made a commitment to a definite line of study, who already have degrees and are taking courses for personal interest, or who are trying to build up their prerequisites or grade point averages so that they can enter a selective-admissions program at the community college or another institution.

Thus, for many students enrolled in them, the collegiate courses have become the catchall, the vestibule program.

A second issue is that by the 1970s, the linear aspect of community colleges—the idea that the institution assists students in bridging the freshman and sophomore years—had been severely reduced as a proportion of the community colleges' total effort. The number of students transferring was reasonably constant, but most of the expansion in community college enrollments was in the areas of vocational and continuing education. The collegiate programs remained in the catalogues, but students used them for completely different purposes. They dropped in and out, taking the courses at will. Among California community college students, Hunter and Sheldon (1980) found that the mean number of credit hours completed per term was between seven and eight, but the mode was three—in other words, one course. The course array in the collegiate programs was more accurately viewed as lateral rather than linear. Not more than one in ten course sections enforced course prerequisites; not more than one course in ten was a sophomore-level course. What had happened was that the students were using the institution in one way, whereas the institution's patterns of functioning suggested another. Catalogues displayed recommended courses, semester by semester, for students planning to major in one or another of a hundred fields. But the students took those courses that were offered at a preferred time of day or those that seemed potentially useful. In the 1980s, many colleges took deliberate steps to quell that pattern of course attendance, but requirements regarding sequence proved difficult to enforce until the recent growth in the number of eighteen-year-olds brought higher proportions of baccalaureate-bound students into the community colleges.

Third, a trend toward less-than-college-level instruction has accelerated. In addition to the increased number of remedial courses as a proportion of the curriculum, expectations in collegiate courses have changed. To take one example, students

in community college English literature courses in 1977 were expected to read 560 pages per term, on average, whereas, according to Koos (1924), the average was three times that in *high school* literature courses in 1922. These figures are offered not to derogate community colleges, but only to point out that the institutions cannot be understood in traditional terms. They are struggling to find ways of educating students whose prior learning has been dominated by nonprint images. The belief that a person unschooled in the classics was not sufficiently educated died hard in the nineteenth century; the ability to read anything as a criterion of adequate education has been questioned in an era when most messages are carried by wires and waves.

Fourth, external demands for *achievement indicators* have not been uniformly well received. Introducing finite concepts such as graduation, transfer, and job-getting rates into an enterprise that has at bottom the open-ended goal of leading people to a better life has had a jarring effect, which explains much of the antagonism to contemporary moves toward judging, comparing, and in some cases funding, community colleges on the basis of their products or outcomes. Statements such as "The value of education becomes apparent only years after the students have left college" (sometimes expressed as "The things we teach can't be measured") have been made for decades by staff members whose focus is on process. In sum, an unbridgeable gulf exists between concentrating exclusively on individual progress and assessing institutional accomplishments.

But all questions of curriculum, students, and institutional mission pale in the light of funding issues. Are the community colleges—or any other schools—worth what they cost? Have the colleges overextended themselves? Do their outcomes justify the public resources they consume? Can they, should they, be called to account for their outcomes? These questions have appeared with increasing frequency as public disaffection with elementary and secondary schools has grown. Whether the

community colleges stand alone or whether they are cast with the higher or lower schools, their advocates will be forced to respond.

Several other current issues may also be phrased as questions. How much more than access and illusory benefits of credits and degrees without concomitant learning do the colleges provide? Are they in or out of higher education? How much of their effort is dedicated to higher learning, to developing rationality and advancing knowledge through the disciplines? How much leads students to form habits of reflection? How much tends toward public and private virtue?

Is it moral to sort and grade students, sending the more capable to the university while encouraging the rest to follow other pursuits? Commenting on the terminal programs—the commercial and general education courses that did not transfer to the universities—Eells noted, "Students cannot be forced to take them, it is true, but perhaps they can be led, enticed, attracted" (1931, p. 310). And in his chapter on the guidance function, he stressed, "It is essential that many students be guided into terminal curricula" (p. 330). Koos also contended that "the great majority will be best served by terminal programs" (1941b, p. 327).

What would the shape of American education be if the community colleges had never been established? Where would people be learning the trades and occupations? Apprenticeships were the mode in earlier times. Would they still dominate, as they do in Europe? Would the less-than-college-level regional occupational centers and area vocational and technical schools be larger and more handsomely funded? Would different configurations have developed?

What would have happened to the collegiate function? How many fewer students would be attending college? Would the universities have expanded to accommodate all who sought entry? Community colleges certainly performed an essential service in the 1960s and 1970s when masses of high school graduates, the first wave of baby boomers, demanded access. By offering an

inexpensive, accessible alternative, these colleges allowed the universities to maintain at least a semblance of their own integrity. How many universities would have been shattered if community colleges to which the petitioners could be shunted had not been available? Similar issues arose in the 1990s, when the second wave arrived and a steady increase in the number of high school graduates brought access forward once again as a major issue.

If there were no community colleges, what agencies would be performing their community service? How many of the services they provide would be missed? Would secondary schools better maintain their own curricular and instructional integrity if community colleges were not there to grant students absolution for all past educational sins? Would other institutions assume the developmental function?

Although such questions have been asked from time to time, they have rarely been examined, mainly because during most of its history, the community college has been unnoticed, ignored by writers about higher education. Books on higher education published from the turn of the century, when the first community colleges appeared, through the 1980s rarely gave even a nod to the community college; one searches in vain for a reference to them in indexes. In 1950, Bogue deplored the lack of attention paid to the junior colleges, saying that he had examined twenty-seven authoritative histories of American education and found only superficial treatment of junior colleges or none at all. Rudolph's major history of the higher education curriculum, published in 1977, gave them a scant two pages. Pascarella and Terenzini's massive review, *How College Affects Students* (1991), offered little more. Recently, however, their 2005 update and a small body of literature, noted in Chapter Twelve on research, have been filling in some of the gaps.

Perhaps community colleges should merely be characterized as untraditional. They do not follow the central themes of higher education as it developed from the colonial colleges through the

universities. They do not typically provide students with new value structures, as residential liberal arts colleges aspire to do. Nor do they further the frontiers of knowledge through scholarship and research training, as in the finest traditions of the universities. Community colleges do not even follow their own traditions. They change frequently, seeking new programs and new clients. Community colleges are indeed untraditional, but they are truly American because at their best, they represent the United States at its best. Never satisfied with resting on what has been done before, they try new approaches to old problems. They maintain open channels for individuals, enhancing the social mobility that has characterized America, and they accept the idea that society can be better, just as individuals can better their lot within it.