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Perceptions of the Community Junior College as Held by Non-Education Professional People.

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This survey to determine perceptions of the community junior college as held by non-education professional people in two Nebraska communities found general agreement regarding the junior college's function and purposes, although the perceptions of the respondents tended to parallel the traditional liberal arts and pre-professional curricular programs of four-year colleges. It was agreed that (1) the programs of a junior college contributed to the total welfare of the community, (2) the junior college was a viable constituent of higher education, (3) there are weaknesses in areas of teaching, staff, curriculum, and selected aspects of student life, and (4) vocational-technical education was not accepted as part of the junior college instructional program. (JC)

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PERCEPTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY JUNIOR COLLEGE  
AS HELD BY NON-EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE

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PROBLEM:

To determine, in selected aspects of concern to the junior college, the perceptions of the junior college held by professional persons in two divergent Nebraska communities. One community with a junior college the other community without a junior college.

PROCEDURE:

To survey the opinions of persons considered engaged in professional occupations and determine their perceptions in selected aspects of the junior college through the employment of a twenty-five item questionnaire. The survey instrument included structured responses and free response items designed to provide a matrix from which conclusions could be formulated. An aggregate of 135 questionnaires were circulated in two Nebraska communities. The survey instrument was developed specifically for purposes of the study.

THESIS STATEMENT:

The junior college represents a substantial and important segment of the diversified educational structure in the United States. Recent proliferation of new institutions and expanding enrollments

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gives evidence of its becoming the largest and in some respects the most important component of the educational hierarchy. The increasing importance of junior and community colleges emphasizes the need for comprehensive information about these institutions. The report of this study hopefully contributes data for appraising and comprehending the two-year college; and provides new clues and insights for persons alert to the community college movement.

#### PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY:

This study grew out of an interest to determine the general image which the junior college or community college projects in the State of Nebraska. The dearth of information available in this aspect of the junior college further promoted and prompted the implementation of the study. The scope of the inquiry was limited to selected aspects of the junior college which generally conform to the basic aims and objectives outlined by advocates of the junior college movement. A search of the literature failed to reveal an adequate model which suggested a paradigm for the design and conduct of the study. As a result a special instrument was constructed. A prototype of the questionnaire included herein became the experimental data gathering instrument. For corrective purposes preliminary samples were administered. From these samples the instrument design was refined. The amended instrument was finalized and distributed to selected respondents.

The survey sampled the opinion of persons engaged in professional occupations. From their responses perceptions of the

junior college were analyzed. The sample was made on a selective basis inasmuch as, it was confined to the professional groups that could provide the greatest number of possible responses and were available in the selected communities.

This factor was considered a limitation of the study although it was not judged debilitating for purposes of analyzing the data. The designation of "professional" as employed in this study conforms to the .00 - .19 classification as prescribed in the Dictionary of Occupational Titles published by the United States Department of Labor. Utilization of the Dictionary of Occupational Titles minimizes possible misinterpretations.

An aggregate of 135 questionnaires were mailed to physicians, lawyers, dentists, accountants, bank presidents and bank vice-presidents. Professional educators were not included in the study. Responses from each community have been tabulated separately and percentages of responses in each of the several categories have been compiled and recorded on the following pages of this report. For the most part attention was focused on those aspects that tended to reveal consonant expressions and those that appeared to be at variance.

#### CONCLUSIONS:

1. There was general agreement of professional persons within each community concerning the junior college's functions and purposes. Their perceptions tend to parallel the traditional liberal arts and pre-professional curricular programs of four-year colleges.

2. No significant difference was found in perceptions of the junior college program between those residing in a community with an existing two-year institution and those where no junior college existed.
3. There was general agreement that the program of a junior college is a contributing factor to the total welfare of the community.
4. The professional persons in each community generally accepted the junior college concept as a viable constituent in the sector of higher education. They tended to credit certain functions as being more beneficial at the junior college as compared to those same functions at a four-year college.
5. In the total program of the junior college the respondents perceived weaknesses in the areas of teaching, staff, curriculum, and selected aspects of student life.
6. The acceptance of vocational-technical education as a sector of the junior college instructional program was not evidenced by the respondents.

TABULATION OF OPINIONNAIRE TO DETERMINE  
PERCEPTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY JUNIOR COLLEGE  
AS HELD BY NON-EDUCATION PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE

SAMPLE DATA

	Number Circulated	Number* Useable Responses	% of Return
Community A (Without Junior College)	115	84	73.04%
Community B (With Junior College)	20	12	60.00%
Total	135	96	

\*Three questionnaires returned incomplete or with qualifications which necessitated voiding the responses.

TABULATION OF RESPONSES

		<u>Community A</u>		<u>Community B</u>	
		Responses	%	Responses	%
*Item 1	YES	53	63.09%	6	50.00%
	NO	30	35.71%	5	41.66%
	NO RESPONSE	1	1.20%	1	8.34%
	Total	84	100.00%	12	100.00%
Item 2	YES	78	92.85%	12	100.00%
	NO	4	4.75%	0	----
	NO RESPONSE	2	2.40%	0	----
	Total	84	100.00%	12	100.00%
Item 3	YES	55	65.47%	8	66.66%
	NO	28	33.33%	4	33.34%
	NO RESPONSE	1	1.20%	0	----
	Total	84	100.00%	12	100.00%
Item 4	MORE	58	69.04%	8	66.66%
	LESS	1	1.20%	0	----
	SAME	25	29.76%	1	8.34%
	NO RESPONSE	0	----	3	25.00%
	Total	84	100.00%	12	100.00%
Item 5	YES	59	70.23%	8	66.66%
	NO	24	28.57%	3	25.00%
	NO RESPONSE	1	1.20%	1	8.34%
	Total	84	100.00%	12	100.00%
Item 6	YES	49	58.32%	7	58.33%
	NO	33	39.28%	5	41.67%
	NO RESPONSE	2	2.40%	0	----
	Total	84	100.00%	12	100.00%

\*Consult attached questionnaire for full text of the item.

Item	Description	Community A		Community B	
		Responses	%	Responses	%
Item 7	PRIVATE	14	16.66%	2	16.66%
	TAX	69	82.14%	9	75.00%
	EITHER	1	1.20%	0	----
	NO RESPONSE	0	----	1	8.34%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Item 8	PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD	16	19.05%	4	33.33%
	SEPARATE INDEPENDENT BOARD	64	76.19%	7	58.33%
	NO RESPONSE	4	4.76%	1	8.34%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Item 9	YES	62	73.80%	9	75.00%
	NO	19	22.62%	2	16.66%
	NO RESPONSE	3	3.58%	1	8.34%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Item 10	YES	77	91.65%	12	100.00%
	NO	5	5.95%	0	----
	NO RESPONSE	2	2.40%	0	----
	<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Item 11	YES	69	82.14%	10	83.33%
	NO	10	11.91%	2	16.67%
	NO RESPONSE	5	5.95%	0	----
	<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Item 12	YES	69	82.14%	12	100.00%
	NO	13	15.46%	0	----
	NO RESPONSE	2	2.40%	0	----
	<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Item 13	YES	27	32.15%	6	50.00%
	NO	53	63.09%	6	50.00%
	NO RESPONSE	4	4.76%	0	----
	<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Item 14	YES	12	14.28%	3	25.00%
	NO	70	83.32%	8	66.66%
	NO RESPONSE	2	2.40%	1	8.34%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Item 15	YES	75	89.28%	10	83.33%
	NO	7	8.32%	2	16.67%
	NO RESPONSE	2	2.40%	0	----
	<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
Item 16	TUITION FREE	7	8.32%	2	16.67%
	CHARGES TUITION	76	90.48%	10	83.33%
	NO RESPONSE	1	1.20%	0	----
	<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

		<u>Community A</u>		<u>Community B</u>		
		<u>Responses</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>%</u>	
Item 17	ACADEMICALLY	52	34.43%	9	37.50%	
	SOCIALLY	24	15.89%	4	16.66%	
	FINANCIALLY	72	47.68%	11	45.84%	
	NONE OF THESE	2	13.24%	0	----	
	NO RESPONSE	1	6.62%	0	----	
Total		151	----	24	----	
Item 18	ADVISORY & COORDINATING	72	79.12%	8	66.66%	
	DIRECT LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY	10	10.98%	2	16.67%	
	NO RESPONSIBILITY	7	7.69%	2	16.67%	
	NO RESPONSE	2	2.19%	0	----	
	Total	91	----	12	----	
Item 19	BETTER THAN	11	13.09%	2	16.66%	
	EQUAL TO	50	59.53%	7	58.34%	
	NOT AS WELL	23	27.38%	3	25.00%	
	Total	84	100.00%	12	100.00%	
Item 20	LOCAL COMMUNITY	14	16.66%	2	16.66%	
	COUNTY WIDE	17	20.23%	3	25.00%	
	MULTIPLE COUNTY	55	65.47%	5	41.66%	
	ENTIRE STATE	9	10.71%	5	41.66%	
	NO RESPONSE	4	4.76%	0	----	
Total		99	----	15	----	
Item 21	ALL	26	30.93%	6	50.00%	
	TOP 75%	23	27.38%	1	8.33%	
	TOP 50%	23	27.38%	4	33.33%	
	TOP 25%	1	1.20%	0	----	
	NONE	4	4.75%	0	----	
	NO RESPONSE	3	3.56%	0	----	
	Total	80	95.20%	11	91.66%	
	Respondent Added:	LOWER 75%	2	2.40%	0	----
		LOWER 25%	2	2.40%	1	8.34%
	Total	84	100.00%	12	100.00%	
Item 22	YES	49	58.32%	8	66.66%	
	NO	29	34.53%	4	33.34%	
	NO RESPONSE	6	7.15%	0	----	
	Total	84	100.00%	12	100.00%	
1) Housing	YES	73	86.92%	10	83.33%	
	NO	7	8.32%	0	----	
	NO RESPONSE	4	4.76%	2	16.67%	
	Total	84	100.00%	12	100.00%	
2) Recreational Activities	YES	66	78.57%	8	66.66%	
	NO	15	17.85%	2	16.67%	
	NO RESPONSE	3	3.58%	2	16.67%	
	Total	84	100.00%	12	100.00%	
3) Athletics	YES	66	78.57%	8	66.66%	
	NO	15	17.85%	2	16.67%	
	NO RESPONSE	3	3.58%	2	16.67%	
	Total	84	100.00%	12	100.00%	

Item 23		Responses	%	Responses	%
	NO FEDERAL SUPPORT	30	33.70%	3	23.07%
	LIMITED FINANCIAL SUPPORT	16	17.97%	2	15.38%
	MATCHED WITH STATE FUNDS	28	31.46%	6	46.15%
	FOR BUILDING & EQUIPMENT	15	16.85%	2	15.38%
	OTHER	0	----	0	----
	Total	89	----	13	----

Item 24		Responses	%	Responses	%
	EQUAL TO 4-YEAR COLLEGE	23	15.86%	6	28.57%
	EQUAL TO STATE UNIVERSITY	19	13.10%	4	19.04%
	LESS THAN 4-YEAR COLLEGE	31	21.37%	2	9.54%
	LESS THAN STATE UNIVERSITY	32	22.06%	2	9.54%
	EQUAL TO CHURCH RELATED	21	14.48%	4	19.04%
	LESS THAN CHURCH RELATED	17	11.72%	2	9.54%
	NO RESPONSE	2	1.37%	1	4.76%
	Total	145	----	21	----

Item 25 Tabulation not included in this report. Free response item.

**AN OPINIONNAIRE TO DETERMINE THE  
COMMUNITY PROFESSIONAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE JUNIOR COLLEGE**

**FOR ITEMS ONE TO SIXTEEN PLEASE CHECK ONLY ONE RESPONSE:**

1. Should a Junior College be considered as being a part of the secondary education program? YES NO
2. In your opinion, should the Junior College consider the needs of the community? YES NO
3. Would you recommend your son or daughter attend a Junior College? YES NO
4. To what extent would a student attending a Junior College get personal attention if compared to the personal attention he might receive at a four-year institution.  
MORE THAN LESS THAN ABOUT THE SAME
5. Should the adult education program be a part of the Junior College program rather than a part of the high school evening program? YES NO
6. Do you feel that it is the community's responsibility to provide post-high school education for its youth? YES NO
7. Do you favor a private or tax supported institution? PRIVATE TAX SUPPORTED
8. Should the board of control be the: public school board of education, OR a separate independent board
9. Do you feel that a Junior College does/should attract commercial enterprise to the community? YES NO
10. Does/should a Junior College encourage community citizens to continue their education? YES NO
11. Does/should the contribution of a Junior College improve the standard of living in the community? YES NO
12. In your opinion, is the existence of a Junior College in your community justifiable? YES NO
13. Should the Junior College take over the role of education for all freshmen and sophomore years and leave the junior and senior years for the four-year institutions? YES NO
14. Should the Junior College assume the responsibility for vocational-technical training instead of through area vocational-technical schools? YES NO
15. Would a Junior College contribute to the cultural activities of your community? YES NO
16. Do you favor a Junior College which is:  
TUITION FREE \_\_\_\_\_ CHARGES TUITION \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR ITEMS SEVENTEEN ON PLEASE CHECK AS MANY RESPONSES AS YOUR OPINION MAY REQUIRE OR MAY BE APPROPRIATE.**

17. Would a student planning to continue his education for a college degree benefit from attending a Junior College?  
ACADEMICALLY  
SOCIALLY  
FINANCIALLY  
NONE
18. What relationship should exist between the State Department of Education and the Junior College?  
ADVISORY AND COORDINATING ONLY  
DIRECT LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY ONLY  
NO RESPONSIBILITY

19. How do you think that an entering Junior College student would compare academically to a student entering a four-year institution?  
BETTER THAN  
EQUAL TO  
NOT AS WELL
20. Should the Junior College be organized to serve:  
LOCAL COMMUNITY  
COUNTY WIDE  
MULTI-COUNTY (Regional)  
ENTIRE STATE
21. Which of the following high school graduates would profit most by attending a Junior College?  
ALL TOP 75% TOP 50% TOP 25% NONE
22. Is it advisable for a Junior College to provide:  
HOUSING FOR STUDENTS YES NO  
RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES YES NO  
ATHLETICS YES NO
23. In your opinion, how much financial support for the Junior College should the federal government assume?  
NONE  
LIMITED FINANCIAL SUPPORT  
MATCHED WITH STATE FUNDS  
FOR BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT  
OTHER (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
24. Academically how do you compare a Junior College with other institutions of higher education:  
EQUAL TO FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION  
EQUAL TO A STATE UNIVERSITY  
LESS THAN A FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTION  
LESS THAN A STATE UNIVERSITY  
EQUAL TO CHURCH RELATED INSTITUTION  
LESS THAN A CHURCH RELATED INSTITUTION
25. Please make any additional comments or indicate opinions you may have which were not included in the previous questions. If additional space is needed please use reverse side.