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ABSTRACT

Placement services are vital if the community college is to fulfill its promise of helping individual students identify their potential in the world of work. Little has been done to facilitate a student's task of successfully implementing his college training in the occupational marketplace. Several papers from a workshop of the Northwest Community College Placement Association suggest that community colleges are unable to borrow placement concepts and practices wholesale from 4-year institutions. Transplanting existing program models would not meet the special problems and circumstances of the 2-year institution. A discussion of the ideal components in developing a guidance-oriented community college placement service resulted in a felt need to first clarify the role of placement in community colleges and then to have further workshops to (1) develop the ideals discussed, (2) suggest methods of implementation, (3) develop individual differences among colleges, (4) discuss problem areas, and (5) summarize goals and objectives.

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PROCEEDINGS: CAREER PLACEMENT WORKSHOP

"DESIGNING A MODEL FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGE PLACEMENT"

Howard B. Larsen
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SITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES

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Center for the Development of Community
College Education

CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

University of Washington

Frederic T. Giles, Director

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PREFACE

The vitality of the community college movement is due in large measure to the insistence of its advocates upon a continuing program of guidance oriented toward helping individual students identify their potential as human beings and where their potential might take them in the world of work. Curricular and service programs designed to help the student utilize the resources of the college in his developmental tasks, were based upon the assumption of guidance as the primary vehicle through which the community college accomplished its educational responsibilities. Much has been said and done by community college proponents regarding the critical developmental tasks which rise from the student's selection of an educational major, and in developing educational plans which will lead him to the successful attainment of his training objectives. Very little has been done to facilitate a student at his exit from the college in his task of successfully implementing his choice in the occupational marketplace.

Concern with the need for providing "exit" guidance helping the student through the frustrating task of finding a suitable occupational placement, which holds promise for continued personal satisfaction and development as well as maximum personal productivity in our economy, prompted the formation of the Northwest Community College Placement Association.

This Association, in cooperation with the Center for the Development of Community College Education, addressed itself to the task of formulating placement programs based on guidance concepts appropriate

to the developmental tasks faced by community college graduates. It became immediately apparent that community colleges are unable to borrow wholesale the placement concepts and practices of four-year institutions. Transplanting existing program models would not meet the special problems and circumstances of the two-year institution. Many principles were felt to be applicable, but a program base oriented specifically to the community college was deemed necessary for the formulation of realistic and productive community college placement services.

Accordingly, the Association and the Center jointly formulated plans for an initial conference addressing itself to the development of a program baseline from which community college placement directors could seek to develop community college job recruitment for employers and appropriate guidance-oriented placement from the standpoint of the college. This paper results from this first tentative step toward developing an explicit base-line of guidance-oriented community college placement. Hopefully, it will stimulate further thinking about placement services completely oriented toward the climate and circumstances of the comprehensive public community college. Through publication the Association and Center hopes to share more broadly the insights and ideas generated in our preliminary conference.

Howard B. Larsen
Associate Director for the Center

"PLACEMENT, VEHICLE FOR CHANGE "

B. Keith Duffin
Director of University
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PLACEMENT, VEHICLE FOR CHANGE

Ladies and gentlemen, I am quite pleased to be here with you today. To be invited to talk to people about something as important as I feel college placement represents an opportunity, and there is nothing I would rather talk about. Now, I do not know your attitude toward placement. I do not know whether we have here people with long years of placement service and experience, or whether you are all new, or whether we have a mix. I do feel that underlying any possibility of success in placement is the attitude you have toward the importance of doing it. I have a neighbor who is rather notorious in the neighborhood for his bad attitude about a lot of things. Just as an example, recently his son came running into the house and said, "Dad, Mom has just backed the car out of the driveway and has run over my bicycle and smashed it all up. He said, "Son, it serves you right for parking it on the lawn." Now, my daughter thinks that he has a bad attitude toward women drivers, but this report is only typical of what he does. I think if we start with the right kind of attitude toward the importance of placement, our chances are much greater of achieving the commitment we need to do the job well.

Disraeli said once that there are three kinds of lies: big lies, little lies, and statistics. I think his statement is rather important in connection with placement work because of the tendency to want to portray our success statistically. I have always thought you could look at two colleges, each able to say on commencement day that "Our students are 95 percent placed, or 100 percent placed," but when you compare them you find you have said nothing about the quality of what happened to those students. If we are interested in statistical placement and statistical success, then any placement entity that we develop is really nothing more than an employment agency. One of the things that I would like to accomplish in a few minutes here, hopefully, is to show that placement is not achieving what it ought to if in any degree we act only as an employment agency.

I would like to share with you some observations that I think are quite important in connection with the justification for placement services existing in the first place; and then a little bit of what the

philosophy of placement ought to be; and finally, how you might go about the tasks of performing effectively in a placement role.

First, I know that you have heard of, and perhaps been a participant in, the debates on four-year campuses with liberal arts faculty, especially as to whether or not a college or university has any proper role in vocational placement. In fact, the words "vocation," "occupation," and "career" are dirty words in some faculties. I assume that in community colleges you do not have that kind of problem, at least to the same degree. Most of your students are terminal; at the end of two years the majority expect to become employed. Some, of course, expect to go on to a four-year school, and perhaps eventually to graduate school. The question does arise, nevertheless, "Is there a role for the community college in connection with placement?" The answer to this question goes back to discussions of the reason for the community college existing in the first place. Why the community college? If it is simply a place where people can come and teach, or where administrators can play an administrative role, then whether or not there is a placement office or officer is of very little consequence. If the community college exists only to provide a classical education, then it might well be questioned whether you need a placement entity. But, if it exists to help something happen to people, and if you are going to teach people skills which they might use in a vocational or occupational way, then I think it can well be asked whether you have completed your job if you only train them in the classroom without regard or concern for what comes after? The most important part of what a college experience means to the person, might indeed be what happens later, and for which most of you have only laid a little ground work. Jack Brasland, Secretary to the University of Michigan, has said that a college or university placement service should be looked upon as an integral and essential part of the educational process, particularly since all colleges consider one of their primary responsibilities that of preparing young people to play useful roles in our democratic society. Otherwise all of the efforts may go for naught; when you provide training to help people acquire skills, you also have an obligation to help them find some way of applying

these skills to society.

Second, there are some selfish reasons for a placement office existing on a campus, and I am sure that some of you are conscious of these and are even reaching for the benefits. An obvious one is the ability to attract students. I have talked with hundreds of students who have indicated that one of the important elements in their selection of a school is the fact that they felt that when their training was complete, there would be meaningful help in beginning some kind of career. I think satisfied alumni, which result from helping them as they graduate, provide one desirable reason for placement services. Alumni can feedback money and support, and serve in various supportive roles and capacities with a lot of meaning for the school.

Third, one of the most important things that can happen when an excellent placement service exists is the development of a fine relationship with employers. This is, of course, a group which can provide many kinds of support and help to the institution, for example in providing the scholarships. A day does not go by that we do not see in our campus paper a picture or a name of some company giving a check to the president for several thousand dollars for scholarships or grants of some kind. Many times we see employers in this role as a result of relationships we in the placement office have developed with the companies, and sometimes as a result of a good experience they have had with one of our graduates who works with them. A man coming next week to visit me, represents a company which last year gave materials and miscellaneous gifts amounting to somewhere around \$75,000.00. If we could multiply that many times in small miscellaneous, and informal kinds of giving, this would make a significant contribution.

Fourth, we have been able through our placement service to arrange summer jobs for our students, as well as to help our faculty find many attractive sabbatical or summer employment opportunities. This is, of course, very meaningful to them as individuals, but it also helps the institution gain a growing body of people whose summer and sabbatical experiences are not only practical and desirable, but give them something they can bring back into the classroom.

I am not going to go on endlessly listing these kinds of things. Benefits of a selfish kind can flow directly to the school over and above those derived from placing individual students or filling an obligation, and I think such benefits alone can provide enough reason for the existence of placement. I have barely touched on, however, the really important aspect of placement--the one I want to underlie everything I say while talking with you. I think we will get to this if we explore the question: "What is placement?"

I may see placement a little differently than most of you, at least I have found that my view differs from that of a lot of people I have talked with. The most common definition I have heard regards placement as matching students and jobs. It amuses me when I hear people say this, because it makes me think they consider students as things to be placed like groceries on a shelf or yardgoods in a store. We train a person to be an automobile mechanic or an engineer or whatever, and then we find a situation and make a placement. Now we have completed and discharged our responsibility, because the man is employed. Placement of an individual in a job is not an end, in my opinion, but a beginning, and we must keep this in mind at all times as we do our placement work.

Let me read something by V.A. Bellman which leads into the thought I want to make in this connection. Mr. Bellman was vice president of marketing for General Petroleum Company back in the 50's and early 60's when General Petroleum was part of the Mobil Oil Company. He looked at the executives in the company, asked the question, and then proposed the answer. What kind of college training did executives need to qualify for the positions of responsibility which they held? Because an executive vice president coordinates all the crude oil findings and producing activities, one might expect him to be a geologist, but this was not the case. He was trained as an electrical engineer. The manufacturing vice president might be expected to have majored in chemistry, but instead he studied mining engineering. The comptroller studied political science, but that evened things up because the president studied accounting. The pipe-line vice president studied economics, but the economist studied engineering as did the

public relations man. The vice president who kept the company's activities in balance as head of the supply committee was Phi Beta Kappa in law. The lawyer was quite unusual in that he had studied law. Mr. Bellman himself headed the marketing department and studied English, and he could not find a single man in that department who majored in salesmanship or merchandising. This shows me that there was a pattern of selection of these men that was not mapped out scientifically in advance. It may not represent the best possible pattern but, rightly or wrongly, it existed.

Placement or career selection is not something that happens at one point in time--it is a process. If we accept the former view point we can be satisfied with statistics which show that our students were 99 percent placed at commencement time. If they were 99 percent employed at one school and 99 percent well-placed in another the statistics look identical, however, although the results could differ vastly. This suggests that the underlying thing you must keep in mind as you place students is not to achieve a statistical success, but to be concerned about what happens to them as individuals. Merely seeing them employed is not good enough anymore.

I think that community colleges would make a mistake if they developed placement services as some gross social entity at a distance from themselves, with computers grinding out job listings so that every student could become employed. I felt this was the only justification for disagreements a few years ago, between the College Placement Council and the United States Employment Service. Some in college placement made what I thought was a very foolish argument. They contended that people working in the United States Employment Service were less qualified than those in placement offices. This was ridiculous because the people in both places were probably of comparable caliber.

There were, however, factors, which made statistical placement more important with U.S.E.S., although I have not checked recently to see to what extent they still exist. This is also true of establishing commercial agencies on the campus. There is a formula by which they receive money for the number of placements they can count, and I suppose commercial agencies also get a certain amount of money every

time it makes a placement. Under this system, even when a placement counselor can see that a specific job which is being presented to a man is not the best choice for him, there is a great temptation to push him toward taking it, particularly if the agency is going to get a fat fee. My view of placement is that you should be free to counsel a prospective employee as to whether or not this is a good opportunity; you might do him the greater service by telling him not to take that job. If you are not concerned with individuals, I believe you are not doing a quality placement job. Although you may go through the motions and look great for a period of time to a lot of people, and even present statistics which make a good appearance in someone else's report, what is actually occurring is far less favorable than a evidencing real concern for individuals as they go through life. Take the case of minorities and their special problems. It seems to me that you should not talk with much pride about your fine job of placing 60 percent of the people, while doing a poor job with the other 40 percent. You need to work with individuals, to be sensitive to their varying needs and prepared to help different people in different ways. Large, standardized programs are useful only in producing a statistical kind of success.

I spoke earlier of the importance of relations with industry, and they are extremely important. I think one mistake people in the field of placement make is to assume a successful placement program requires a large number of companies coming to the campus. If you build placement success on that, what happens the years when they do not come? I believe companies are interested in people, but their job is not placement. If Boeing does not need engineers, in 1971 they are not going to come to colleges to hire engineers. You are the one who must worry about placing your engineers, and the company that hired a lot of your people one year is not necessarily going to hire them in the next. The situation with teachers presents another example. We had a shortage for many, many years, and suddenly the bottom dropped out. Districts in California suddenly stopped rushing to the other parts of the country to recruit teachers. The number of districts coming to hire teachers has reduced by more than two-thirds this

year. We must build our placement programs on something more enduring than relationships with companies that have rising and falling needs. They are not worrying in Southern California where we will place our teachers, but we are left with the need to place them.

If there is a single best way for a person to find a job, it is to go and get it. I would say that even at the height of the best placement year when companies flock to the campus. The first year I was at Brigham Young University, we had thirty-eight companies visit our campus. The year before last, we had 1400. This meant that we had twenty-five to thirty recruiters a day on the campus during the height of the season. In all this scrambling after students, I think it not only fair, but imperative for us to point out to them that campus contacts are the most competitive one can have with a company. Perhaps those at the top of the class can shine and get jobs, but when the dust has settled, you still have the bottom of the class to place. A fellow who meets a company or a government agency on campus does so on a day when he sees twenty others. Furthermore, the interviewer saw twenty students yesterday on another campus and will see twenty more tomorrow someplace else. The individual student is only one of a hundred seen in a very brief span of time. Companies obviously make their offers to those they consider the cream of the crop, and anyone with a low average tends to be missed again and again. That same fellow might go to one of the companies he saw on the campus, on a day when he is the only person interviewed with his particular skill or preparation. Now he stands alone; he is looked at as an individual, he receives more attention and time, and consequently a disproportionate result. I have seen men follow up contacts made on campus which had not resulted in a job, and by visiting companies separately and indicating their interest, came out with a job. Generally seeing companies individually may produce better results than being one of the big mass caught up in campus interviewing situations.

While not denying that we place hundreds and hundreds of our students through campus interviewing, it has another undesirable effect. As I have told engineers during the height of the companies recruiting

efforts, they may be the unlucky ones to just because things happen so easily for them. They take a job because it is convenient and is offered, rather than because it is what they want the most. We challenge our students to try to figure out what they would prefer in the way of a beginning job, if they could have anything they wanted. We advise them to try to get that rather than taking something else just because of convenience as happens so often to engineers. What they really wanted was not in the array of things that floated by, so they took something that did. In contrast, students who had to struggle to get something, started out by going after what they wanted and, surprisingly in many cases, they got it.

Another thing happening during all this furor in placements is the continued rise in beginning salaries, which obscures the wisdom of many young people. By choosing jobs because they paid a high beginning salary, and avoiding those which did not, they failed to make a choice on the basis of what counts the most. I said that selection is a process rather than something which happens at one point in time. The most important thing in a beginning job, therefore, is its potential for experience, growth and development. To give up these in favor of a high starting salary sometimes retards personal growth and may even limit advancement. On the other hand, if in a person's first employment he can find something that uses his skills, builds his confidence, and adds to what he learned in school, then he will be ready when opportunity knocks. I suppose all of you have seen it happen that someone gets an opportunity for a special assignment because of luck; he was there when someone above him died and was a natural choice so he got his opportunity ahead of time. But I have heard just as often of individuals being passed up for the fourth time. If you have not grown or used and developed your skills, it is not enough to be there in the right place at the right time.

We have told girls who would be secretaries to use their skills in the first few years, rather than risk losing them to the extent that they cannot be recalled when needed. If a girl taking her first job after college reaches for experience instead of salary, she will

obtain employment allowing her maximum development. To a degree, this preparation will serve her for the rest of her life by developing the habits, skills, and confidence that will enable her to go anywhere and take a top job in her field.

I believe that the placement office that serves its students best is the one that helps them to help themselves. Furthermore, when students are effective, in seeking their own jobs, they will go not only to the obvious companies, but to companies which you as a placement officer hardly know exist and they will find jobs even in the lean years. Their employment so many firms will vastly increase the number of your employer contacts. Placement programs should be geared so that even if you lack a single listing or a single visit, you will still be able to see students employed in good beginning positions. If you plan with this goal in mind, you can engage in the other important activities of getting listings and arranging campus visits for students who might be served by such interviews. Placement work should be oriented to the individual who is being placed, and not to the service itself, or to the accomplishment of the standard array of duties in the placement office. The latter orientation may allow you to present superficial appearance of success, but by stressing the former, you can contribute to the satisfaction of individuals because a career lasts a life-time. If you really care, you cannot see your students employed and think you have completed your job. Assuming that you are concerned about individuals, your existence and performance is, nevertheless, dependent upon having certain things; you need budgets, facilities, and so forth. This means that somehow you must convince people that placement is important and needs support.

Many in placement overlook the necessity of conducting a careful program of relations with administrators of deliberately promoting their own interests. A number of placement people have said to me, "You're lucky to have the facilities you have," "You're lucky to have the staff," and so forth. I find that when a placement office has a lot of administrative support, it has not come about because of luck, but because they caused it to happen by carefully cultivating

the administration. So many possible uses exist for the available money that if you fail to communicate your needs convincingly, it will be allocated to someone else.

There are a number of ways in which you might develop your relationship with administrators. Just as you work individually and sensitively with students, so you should approach administrators. The president at our school, for example, likes certain kinds of information to which we in the placement office have primary access. Because of his concern, I let the president know when a recruiter visits us and compliments the campus, or comments favorably about student behavior, finds the grounds attractive, is favorably impressed by the faculty, and so forth. I also share with him criticisms I hear which would not hurt any individual, but indicate ways in which the university could improve. I try to do this in a way that furthers not my own interests, but those of the placement office. As one result, the president has looked to us for information and has used it in a commencement address, as well as in other talks. He has come to feel himself a part of placement, so when we tell him our space is insufficient, or our facilities not the quality recruiters deserve, he responds differently than he would without this kind of relationship.

Attention to faculty is also important, for their support can be extremely helpful in your other relationships--with administrators and students--and lack of it can undercut your chances to succeed. Faculty will serve on committees, help you arrange contacts with companies, assist with advisement of students, and in many other ways aid your program.

Staff is another matter critical to your performance in placement work, therefore, you need to select personnel who are themselves committed. Too often we seek only the brightest people even though we do not expect to hold them very long. Yet, if a person is truly committed he will stay long enough to broaden and deepen his preparation, and develop his ability to work individually with students. We believe that every student deserves a personal interview. If you must give this up because of limitations in staff or facilities, to a standardized, impersonal kind of placement without the interview, and seeing students

only in large groups, you cannot utilize their individual differences; nor can you excite and challenge them to help themselves. Forcing students to rely on an array of posted listings, not only places them in competition with each other, it threatens the whole purpose of placement by forfeiting the chance to work with individuals. You cannot, of course, do it all yourself, so you must have a staff who shares your interests, enthusiasm, and convictions; who are committed, and willing to broaden this preparation. They need knowledge of all kinds of employment opportunities in a wide variety of fields and geographical locations. Not only must they keep abreast of changing conditions, they need to develop personal contacts with employers-- a phone call to a friend is often the best way of helping an individual with a particular problem. This cannot happen if your staff is a passing parade. It seems that just as they have developed a superficial background and some degree of commitment, they are gone and you must start over with someone else. I believe, therefore, that commitment to quality placement is essential in the staff you select.

Much has been said about facilities. There was an excellent book published a few years ago called Career Counseling and Placement. This book was a follow-up of another book called Fundamentals of College Placement. Both prescribed size of interviewing rooms and offices, which I find wise. I think it is much more important for interviewing rooms to be light, bright, and private than to be large--as long as they are large enough to serve their purpose. An interviewing room of about sixty square feet, with an outside window, would be far preferable for conducting one-to-one interviews than a large dark, dirty room. This size may seem small, but realistically you are not likely to be allocated sufficient space for larger ones. In placement literature, writers often suggest ridiculously large amounts of space for interviewing rooms and offices. About sixty square feet is sufficient if you have one or two bigger rooms for multiple interviewing situations. One book said that the director's office should be 300 square feet. I cannot conceive an office that size. With space in primary buildings so limited, I would cut it up for better utilization. And so I think you ought to strive for the amount of space you need to make the placement office a bright, clean, desirable

place with the number and variety of rooms adequate for your program.

I know of placement offices which have a very large office for the director but lack a placement library. If you are going to help students help themselves, you need an excellent placement library as part of your facilities. After talking with a student individually to motivate him to decide what he would like to do, such a library is a necessary tool in his search for a specific occupational goal.

Let me illustrate this. Three or four years ago, a man came into the office and said, "I'm prepared in public relations and I want to get a job in my field, but everyone I've talked to has told me that I can't get a job in that field right out of college. What should I do?" I told him that the very fact that everyone said he could not do it was in his favor, because they would hear the same thing about themselves. I asked him, "Why not assume that you can be the exception, and try to do it?" I advised him to seek an alternative only after trying to get his first choice. (Not three nights later I heard a public relations director of one of the nation's largest companies say the same thing to a group of graduate students preparing for that field.) The man studied the materials we had, prepared an excellent resumé, and then wrote a basic letter which he could alter for each company he contacted, using the brochures, he listed firms with programs he would like to enter, and wrote each one--a total of twenty-five or thirty letters. The next time I saw him he said, "I'm frustrated. I have five offers, and I don't know which one to take." He is still pleased with the position he accepted with one of the five companies. Four of them had one opening and the fifth had two, so having learned of these jobs through this man's efforts, we were able to place someone else with one of the firms. This is how students can help your program when they help themselves. Finding five opportunities in so short a time, was an exceptional result caused by exceptional effort. If everyone did this, it would soon become standard procedure, but most people will not; our students might as well be the ones to receive the disproportionate benefits resulting from putting forth the effort to get what they want.

A placement library, then, supplements your personal contact

with students. It should be a place filled systematically and deliberately with information which is meaningful to students; for example, the fields in which they will seek employment and the geographical locations of interest to them. Women have different employment problems than men, so we need special material in our library to help them find jobs in fields where it would otherwise be difficult. The different needs of minorities, foreign students, students who want foreign employment, and so forth, all require specific information, so we have to build a library that will help all students solve their diverse problems.

We expect 5000 students to graduate this year. If we allow all of them to concentrate on the same few companies everyone else is focusing on, we will not place more than half. Instead, we should encourage their reaching out to different geographic regions and unfamiliar companies.

In review, your plans for facilities should be modest and realistic. If you have a lot of recruiters, I recommend a place where they can relax between interviews, although community colleges may not have the number of recruiters per day to justify this. An intensive program of student communications is fundamental. If you do not find ways to reach your students and make them aware of the placement center so they can take advantage of it, you may have a model organization which nobody uses. I think you should be attentive to the problems of reaching students on your particular campus--and not just some of the students, but all of them. It might seem convenient if students who would be difficult to place never found the placement office, because is not registered there you do not show them as unplaced. That is, of course, avoiding the challenge to find and help these students, however time-consuming their problems. Students may be able to help you. Sometimes students who are going to graduate in new fields, for example, join us in projects by contacting and finding opportunities. In the process, they become more knowledgeable about the field and we gain information in that particular area.

Another aspect of communication with students is the matter of getting them to register early, and then, if possible, meeting with

them individually to let them know that they can get a job with more meaning beyond merely a source of income. But giving students leads or motivating them is not enough. I think we should systematically follow-up our graduates, to avoid losing them and also to offer our help or encouragement when needed. It is a question of standardized versus individualized service.

I think employer relations are both urgent and essential. Seventy-five percent of our students are from out of state and our market is all over the West, so we spend school money visiting employers near and far to interest them in coming to the campus and listing openings with us, and so we can refer students to them. We have waged a deliberate campaign to cultivate employers. We send them our brochure which describes our placement office, lists our fields of study, and gives the number of students we expect to graduate. It reminds them of our program and implies that we value their interest, as do the Christmas cards we have sent for years. I think our efforts supplement what students can do for themselves, and so, necessarily serve most of those students least able to help themselves.

While it is most important that your office services and procedures be done well, their effectiveness may be increased by attractive packaging. For example, after careful preparation for a visit, a few extra touches are like frosting in enhancing a cake's over all effect. But remember that something must be under that frosting.

You need personal files to provide information to employers themselves, as a type of specialized directory. In time you will have a file of employers numbering in the thousands, even though you place a person with some only once every two or three years.

I would like to caution you about a current trend in procedures, namely the use of computers. Although we would lag behind the times if we did not use the computer to assist us, I think computer assisted placement is quite different from computerized placement. Some placement offices have every mechanical gimmick you can think of for grinding out job listings or processing a little information about companies, but they still lack quality in the services they provide. We are presently working the computer into our procedures and we have

deliberately called it computer assisted placement rather than computerized placement, because I feel the latter tends to become impersonal and take over instead of merely assisting us. Within the next year at our school, a computer will prepare our schedules of company visits and print out students resumé's, thus saving clerical labor and freeing us to work with students individually. Although we will utilize the computer listings, we will not attempt to use it as the basis of counseling. Computerization is increasing in the recruitment field and the College Placement Council has the grid system familiar to many of you. Any placement office ought to utilize these sources of additional information, but never in place of their fundamental services to the student. Many four-year schools have introduced a variety of gadgets, such as film or sound-slide materials about employers which create a favorable first impression. We must resist the temptation of allowing gadgetry and superficial appearances take the place of our basic job.

In summary, placement is extremely important, because what is more important in life than dealing with beings? When we treat people as things, we develop employment agencies rather than placement offices. Although I dislike the latter term because we do not actually make placements, ultimately this takes place in the individual company. But whatever constitutes this activity we call placement, its important distinction from employment agency is the emphasis we place on individuals. Viewed in this way, our job will never become dull because working with people is far more exciting and complex than working with things. When you affect lives profoundly for the better, your work is increasingly interesting in contrast to many activities which become increasingly dull over the years. A man who formerly worked in our office recently returned and exemplifies the benefits which can result from this approach. Twelve years ago we helped and motivated him to find another position, and he came to the campus to give his third gift to the school of nearly \$100,000. He feels very loyal to and interested in the University and visits us every time he comes back. You might say that community colleges produce automobile mechanics, secretaries, nurses, and so forth, who are not going to achieve this

degree of financial success, but as people they are just as important as those in the four year colleges or graduate schools. In their careers they may achieve a different kind of success, which you may never know about. You do know, however, that their achievement will be limited unless they grow after leaving school. Your job will be less satisfying if you do not believe that people will grow.

This, then, is what I consider to be true placement. My thoughts probably do differ much from yours, but I often hear people talk as though they worked in an employment agency--one thing I would not like to be is an employment agency. I hope you would agree that, like teaching, your involvement in placement can be an essential activity which affects lives profoundly if geared towards quality. Quantity is best handled by thoroughness so that those who contact your office will be satisfied with the service they receive. I have not gone into the mechanics of placement because we can talk about those in the following two days. Instead, I focused on some basic philosophies which I think should underlie your whole operation if it is to be successful. I have appreciated talking with you, and hope we will have a fruitful two days.

Career Planning

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The task of our group was to explore the career planning aspect of the placement function, specifically with regard to how the placement officer might facilitate articulation between the rest of the student personnel staff and his office in career planning activities. Our group was in general consensus that students who come to community colleges are generally quite unprepared to make realistic decisions about the career directions they wish to pursue. I think all of us would agree that in spite of the fact that about 80 percent of our entering students declare a baccalaureate goal, the percentage in fact completing that sort of a program is minimal--somewhere between 15 and 25 percent at best. We know that 70-80 percent of our students do not complete any kind of a program at the community college. They leave for all kinds of reasons, but largely because they found that what the community college offered was inappropriate to their perceived needs.

Over the past few years, we in student personnel work have had an idea that this was occurring and many of us have tried to convey this information to our administrators and to the community at large. Some of us have been more successful than others. I think that for the first time, however, we are now beginning to get some empirical data in support of our contention that we do a disservice to the bulk of the students coming to community colleges. There are a couple of reasons for this, I think. Students come to us with relatively little knowledge of who they are, of what they have, or what alternatives they might pursue. The question arises then of what function the placement officer has in helping to make the community college experience more realistic and fruitful for more students. It seemed to the group I was in that a placement officer could and should serve as a prime mover; as a catalyst for communicating all kinds of information into the community, the student population and the faculty organization, and to the administrative structure.

One good place to begin would be in the collection of data on what happens to students who leave a community college--an essential and primary function, because both in-put and out-put are necessary. If you do not know what is happening to your students, you do not know

what is happening. Generally, this describes the situation in the community college system nationally, and not just in Everett or the state of Washington. For years we have had very little information on the kinds of students who come to us, what happens to them when they leave, and certainly very little about what happens to them while they are with us. So data collection is, I think, of primary importance. Trying to get that information back into the structure--to facilitate your actions in working with students toward more realistic ends--becomes the next major problem.

Our group discussed a number of things and it seemed to us that one of the basic needs of the student is to gain understanding of who he is. Without this basic knowledge, talk about career placement or career planning is ludicrous. We cannot choose a job, nor can a student, in an attempt to fit his personality to the requirements of that job and expect him to function satisfactorily. Once in a while it happens, but usually the result is vocationally maladjusted people. If we attempt to assist the student to define what he has, what kind of a person he is, and what kind of a person he wants to become, then a career choice or direction flows more easily and naturally. Without this kind of self-definition first, we are just spinning our wheels.

How do you get to a student to provide this kind of an experience? Some of the schools have been experimenting with different modes and techniques, and I think one of the most successful attempts so far is the career planning class. It is called different things in different schools, but it is essentially a group guidance class designed to give a student some insight into his own operation, who he is, what kind of person he wants to be, and what kinds of alternatives are possible for him.

There are, I think, many blockages within the structures we know, to developing career planning and group guidance classes. You cannot go to your president--or your dean of students, or whoever else seems critical to your function--and just say, "We need career planning classes," and hope to get them. You need data indicating that what you are now doing is inappropriate for the bulk of your students;

and I doubt that you will have much difficulty providing this information if you look for it.

One of the groups' suggestions was that we involve key people of the organizational structure--in the planning and exploration phases--people such as a member of your board of trustees, your president, your dean of students. In looking together at the results of what your school is currently doing, you need data on what has happened to the students processed through your institution. If you can show these people that 75 percent of your students left because they were dissatisfied with the program, that they did not even know there was a counseling office available, and that they failed when you know that they should not have for academic or intellectual reasons; when you begin to provide that kind of information and start generating ideas and plans about how you can do a better job with your students, the kinds of thoughts we have expressed here about career planning will come from your administrators. I think that one of the most crucial things you can begin to think about doing as a placement officer is involve people in foundation-laying plans. You serve primarily as a catalyst. You have a lot of responsibilities and things to do I have not mentioned, but in talking about getting career planning ideas started among and within students prior to their entry into your office for placement, you have to begin with output data. It is that simple; evaluate what has been done and go from there.

Profiles of Service

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We had two tasks: to clarify the role of placement in community colleges, and to make suggestions for further workshops. Our discussion of the second objective centered on job plans, interview techniques, student and faculty communications, and employer relations. We deliberately avoided considering problems of implementation because it would have taken two weeks to explore that subject.

After many digressions, we identified five areas for further workshops; 1) to develop the ideals we talked about here; 2) to suggest methods of implementation; 3) to develop individual differences among our colleges; 4) to discuss problem areas, and 5) to summarize goals and objectives.

We considered several ways in which placement offices may serve college students, alumni, employers, and senior institutions. First, the college needs to construct and maintain a comprehensive library of employment opportunities. Placement files necessarily differ from institution to institution, but should be designed in a way which best serves the interests and needs of students.

Assisting students to obtain part-time and summer employment provides them with more than work--it represents an important educational experience.

Placement services help employers through referrals and the provision of facilities. They can also arrange opportunities for meaningful, two-way exchange between faculty and employers. Both groups have information which would benefit the other, as well as students.

Effective placement requires full-time personnel; half a placement officer with a quarter of a secretary are not enough. California colleges start out with the motto, "If you have a college, you need a placement officer." To this might be added, "If you have a placement officer, he needs a secretary." As most of you know, this minimum of two people is not met in many colleges, but even though it represents an ideal rather than reality, our interest in serving students requires that we strive towards it.

Services to senior institutions are a point of contention. Some community colleges coordinate, publicize, and provide facilities for visits by representatives of four-year colleges and universities.

Others feel such activities are not the proper function of community colleges.

We felt that a constructive program of public relations must be based on an effective placement service. In addition, placement officers should be active members of all relevant advisory committees within the community college. They should participate actively in community regional, and professional groups. To become a true professional, you are obligated to share the information you develop, and this is done best in a professional organization. These contributions might be called our profiles of service.

Three hours is insufficient time to do more than make a beginning toward clarifying the role of placement services. I had forgotten the loquaciousness of placement people. In spite of our numerous and extended digressions, the experience was meaningful in that it established a starting point for further discussions.

Evaluation and Follow-up

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Our group's topic was "evaluation and follow-up." Our discussions focused on the need for evidence to support development of new programs, and the problems involved in surveying the market and following-up our students.

We recognized a need for community colleges in a region to work together in gathering data from existing agencies to justify new programs. Prior to developing such programs, we need to be aware of the problems inherent in predicting the employment situation and skills required three or four years from now.

We discussed ways in which follow-up studies of students might be used to demonstrate the effectiveness of various programs. We decided that statistical gains do not tell the whole story because we were unable to define what is meant by "a successful student."

We talked of the kinds of data we might collect from employers and students, and we mentioned some problems in obtaining such information. For example: how can a follow-up questionnaire with a high probability of return be developed; how might the resulting data be compiled, processed, and interpreted? We noted similar questions and needs for data to evaluate community service programs.

We agreed on the importance of following-up students for evidence of program effectiveness, and of continuing market research. We concluded that evaluation of programs in terms of their effects on students while enrolled is more appropriately the responsibility of the dean of instruction.