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ABSTRACT

Community services and continuing education (CS/CE) has been an integral component of the mission of the comprehensive community college for over a generation. In 1968, the Kellogg Foundation funded a 3-year project designed to insure that CS/CE would achieve its rightful place in the mission of America's community colleges. A component of the Kellogg project was a series of national workshops conducted by the Leadership Program at Michigan State University. The purpose of the workshops was to promote research on the current status of CS/CE programming. One result was a 1971 study which assessed the degree to which CS/CE had diffused into community college programs of Michigan's 29 public community colleges. The findings of the study suggested that CS/CE was in a developmental stage in Michigan. Community support and publicity elements were present to a high degree, but long-range planning, integration, research/evaluation, and development were much less extensive. The study concluded that CS/CE was the outreach dimension of the community college, involving the organization and integration of the community as well as the resources of the college. CS/CE is still part of the collegiate function to the extent that it is verifiably educative and socially useful. Each college should define CS/CE with particular reference to the needs of its community and CS/CE directors must become involved in planning for development and expansion. Throughout the past two decades, the concept of community has remained central to the development of CS/CE, and the same variables have continued to influence the growth and development of both concept and program. (JMC)

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THE PAST AS PROLOGUE: VARIABLES
INFLUENCING THE CONTINUING DEVELOPMENT
OF COMMUNITY SERVICES IN AMERICA'S
COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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Introduction

The end of 1989 will mark the onset of the last decade of the twentieth century. Much consideration is being given to what is ahead for education in the 1990's. The most repeated theme seems to be change. One hundred and forty years ago, the French poet, Alphonse Karr, placed the issue in perspective: "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose."¹ We will have change--it is an inevitable constant. The challenge is to recognize, accept, and manage it. The American leadership theorist, John W. Gardner, suggests the essence of the process. "Change will occur whether we like it or not. . . . I am less interested in inducing any particular change than I am in fostering and nourishing the conditions under which constructive change may occur."² Why should those educators committed to community services and continuing education (CS/CE) in America's community college be particularly involved with developing an environment conducive to constructive change?

CS/CE has been an integral component of the mission of the comprehensive community college for over a generation. Hanken and Fey suggest a problem that has faced community services educators since the onset of programming. The ". . . lack of a clear definition [of] what is included in the rubric community services."³ With the rate of change increasing inexorably, focus and structure are essential. Harlacher states the case: "As we approach the 21st century, the evaluation and implementation of new technologies and the dramatic changes in demographic, social, and work patterns will require us to re-think basic operational concepts. . . ."⁴ To manage change toward constructive ends requires a conceptual framework that is empirical,

accountable, and statistically valid. Eaton is concise. "Leadership in developing the future of community colleges . . . is expected to be activist in nature; it should have an agenda. It requires the capacity to value the past, but go beyond it."⁵ The studies being reported on here, while separated in time, provide the data base for developing an agenda that draws upon validated past success and is directed toward the promise of the future.

Community Services: What Works and Why?

Twenty-one years ago the Kellogg Foundation funded a three-year project designed to insure that CS/CE would achieve its rightful place in the mission of America's community colleges. The Kellogg project was a logical successor to the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation national status survey conducted by Harlacher in 1967. These activities assured that CS/CE would be a major research concept during the 1970's.⁶

A component of the Kellogg project was a series of national workshops conducted by the Leadership Program at Michigan State University. Their purpose was to produce research on the current status of CS/CE programming.⁷ As a participant in these workshops, I was exposed to significant analytical paradigms and research designs suitable for assessing the status of CS/CE. The result was a study conducted in 1971 which was designed "to assess the degree to which [CS/CE] has diffused from educational theory into actual community college programs. [It] sought not only to identify the current status of programs, but to account for that status."⁸ Instrumentation for the research was an adaptation of the checklist for effective CS/CE

programming developed by Harlacher as a part of the Sloan Foundation Study. The twenty-nine public community colleges in Michigan served as the population for data gathering. I will review the findings of the study as my contribution to the process of identifying an empirically based conceptual framework for CS/CE development. In the study, answers were sought to the following questions: (1) What was the structure of community services programs? (2) What was the attitude of the community college presidents toward the community services concept? (3) What was the nature of CS/CE programming in the colleges? (4) What was the attitude of the presidents regarding the developmental direction of CS/CE during the next five years? (5) What was the relationship between the scope of CS/CE programming and the environmental variables of presidential attitude, institutional age, institutional size (number of students), socioeconomic status of the college district, number of campuses, and percent of institutional budget allocated to the CS/CE program?

The findings of the study suggested that CS/CE was in a developmental stage in Michigan's public community colleges. The parametric aspect of the study revealed that community support and publicity elements were present to a high degree. Long-range planning, integration (coordination), research/evaluation, and development, while present, were much less extensive. Findings drawn from presidential attitudes reinforced the concept of a developmental status. Presidents' conceptions of CS/CE were more advanced than the programs were in practice. The presidents were virtually unanimous in their opinion that CS/CE was likely to develop gradually and possibly

significantly during the five-year period under examination. Further, the presidents reinforced the existence of diffusion by assigning CS/CE responsibility to the entire college, not just the community services division.

The results of the statistical aspect of the study supported the parametric aspect. No significant relationship emerged between the scope of CS/CE programming and the environmental variables. Yet, four emergent relationships were evident. Institutional age was emerging as an influence on both planning and integration (coordination). Also, size and integration as well as budget and planning were approaching an inferential relationship. These results suggested that as institutions mature, CS/CE tends to broaden and diversify.⁹

In summary, CS/CE in the Michigan community colleges entered its developmental stage in the 1970's. The evidence suggesting that the development would continue proved accurate. Finally, the emergent relationships between scope of programming and selected environmental variables has been borne out. The integral role predicted for CS/CE in 1971 has come to fruition.

Implications: A Prologue Revisited

"George Sand" in Consuelo states a compelling case for the constancy of change. "All that is not a true change will disappear in the future society."¹⁰ The role of CS/CE programming and personnel in facilitating constructive change is predicted in my 1971 study. Several comparisons between implications suggested 18 years ago and current concerns are germane.

First, the data I reviewed in 1971 led to the assessment that CS/CE "is the outreach dimension of the community college. It involves the organization and integration of community as well as college resources."¹¹ Cohen and Braver report in 1987, "These activities are still part of the collegiate function to the extent that they are verifiably educative and socially useful. This rationale points community services . . . toward [activities] having broader social impact."¹² The integrative function remains an important and often elusive goal.

Second, my assessment emphasized developing structure for CS/CE programming that engaged the needs of the college's service area. "If [CS/CE] is to become a major function of the community college then there is a need for inter-facing all components of the . . . concept. By recognizing that empirical research reveals a pattern of development, the community services director can decide whether the pattern fits the particular configuration and needs of [the individual's] setting."¹³ Hanken and Fey, fifteen years later, state: "Each institution needs to define community services with particular reference to pressing needs in its service area and to articulate a clear set of community services objectives."¹⁴ Our institutions as the communities' colleges must be ever aware of accountability. Finally, planning for development and expansion emerged as a task for CS/CE directors. "The community services director must begin . . . planning now if program broadening and diversification are to continue."¹⁵ Eaton reinforces the continuing importance of planning. "Focus on the future . . . means cognizance of institutional needs and creativity

concerning institutional vision as well as coherent planning efforts."¹⁶ Without a well developed sense of purpose and direction, outcomes from CS/CE programming are unlikely to enhance constructive change.

Conclusion: What's in a Name?

The 1971 study concluded that the community dimension of CS/CE needed to be stressed if the community college was to fulfill its unique contributions to higher education. Throughout the past two decades, the concept of community remains central to the development of CS/CE. Gunder Myran, one of the leaders in developing CS/CE, provides a fitting synthesis. "A distinctive identity for the next decade must be achieved by linking [CS/CE] to central institutional priorities. These will emphasize the centrality of teaching and learning and the importance of institutional effectiveness as measured by the outcomes of learning in the lives of students and the quality of life in the community."¹⁷ Nearly two decades have passed since the Kellogg Foundation project suggested form and focus for CS/CE. Variables essential then continue to influence the growth and development of both concept and program. We continue to foster constructive change.

As we conclude our celebration of the past, it is useful to examine the promise of the future. My colleague, Dr. Robin Spaid, will examine those leadership-related variables that are influencing the continuing development of CS/CE in America's community colleges.

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