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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the extent and diversity of student volunteer programs in the Los Angeles Community College District (California) to determine the amount of college support and acceptance accorded them. The junior colleges should take advantage of the great student potential for positive social action and realize that, in the area of curriculum development, the student can test what he learns in class against the real world. The student populations of the eight colleges in the district are broken down by race, and the volunteer programs examined for: purpose, structure, funding, and the portion of community serviced. No district-wide commitment to student volunteer services was found, but where there are programs, the faculty and administration do support them. The programs seem to concentrate on improving skills and self-image among disadvantaged members of the community, especially elementary-age children. Most of the programs are loosely structured. The colleges with a high concentration of minorities show weak attempts at operating student volunteer programs. This can be explained partly by other demands on their time and partly because existing minority organizations may not operate through the colleges. There is a wide variance in funding sources. Based on the findings, recommendations are made. (CA)

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STUDENT VOLUNTEER SERVICE PROGRAMS

Los Angeles Community College District

JC 7/10/88

Education 470 C
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Submitted by:
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July 26, 1971

UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
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CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

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Introduction

Its Development

Since 1962 the student volunteer movement in education has gained great momentum. Prior to the Civil Rights Movement and President Johnson's Declaration of War against Poverty, little thought was given to mobilizing the college students for an attack on educational, social and political inequities. Those volunteer programs that did exist prior to 1962 reached only a very few and the services were tainted with the connotation of the privileged few doling out services to the needy. The volunteer programs of the past might be characterized as attempts to collect donations of money and goods to be distributed among the poor.¹ This is not so of the volunteer programs of today. The students of today realize the short-comings of such fleeting assistance. The students have a desire to really become involved, to have some impact on changing the educational, social and economic conditions now existing.

The Peace Corp, founded in 1961, and VISTA, founded in 1964, were very successful social action programs. They afforded the young an opportunity to attack the social problems of the disadvantaged. These programs were designed primarily for the college graduate and thus did not satisfy the needs of students remaining on campuses throughout the country.

Volunteer programs of various designs and with differing objectives began springing up over the nation. Although the volunteer programs differed in organizational structure and in their approaches, most had the same special objective--helping city children from low-income and poverty backgrounds. In 1963, it was estimated that some 5,000 students were serving as volunteers.

The results of a Gallup Poll, in 1969, revealed that seventy-five per cent of the students polled would consider working as part-time volunteers if there were projects operating in or near their campuses.²

A small number of colleges and universities began to officially support the volunteer programs. In 1967, the University of Michigan became one of the first schools in the country to set up a separate office, with a full time coordinator devoted to volunteer programs.

During the Presidential campaign of 1968, Richard Nixon talked of a national voluntarism program as one of his objectives, if elected. In 1969, he established the Cabinet Committee on Voluntary Action. In the summer of 1969, the National Student Volunteer Program (NSVP) was established as a part of the National Program for Voluntary Action. The objective of this organization was to recognize and assist the thousands of student volunteer activities across the nation.

Today, the student volunteer program continues to grow. There are a variety of types of programs operating. By no means has the program achieved its fullest potential. Although many programs have received college or university recognition, it will require a greater commitment from the institutions before this potential is realized.

Purpose of Study

This study will investigate the extent and diversity of student volunteer programs in the Los Angeles Community College District. A secondary objective will be to determine the amount of college support and acceptance accorded those programs that do exist.

The Los Angeles Community College District is "new and attempting new things," according to Superintendent Donald Click. It consists of eight campuses serving 882 square miles, with 1,800 instructors and 100,000 students. This

makes it the world's largest community college district. Its size and diversity of campus environments, in a major urban center, makes it ideal for investigating the present status of student volunteer programs in community colleges.

Significance of Study

Seven out of ten students indicating that they would consider working part-time to help others, points out that the great majority of students want to take constructive action to change society. This is a tremendous potential that colleges and universities might well cultivate and bring to maturity. This study should reveal the extent to which the Los Angeles Community Colleges are using this opportunity to allow students to direct their concern with social problems to positive ends.

The study also has significance in the area of curriculum development. Because student volunteers come directly into contact with the real world, they can test and check what they have learned in the classroom. Invaluable experience can be obtained, aiding in career planning and gaining an understanding for why certain courses are required for a particular major.

The types of programs operating within the district will hold some significance. If the programs are limited in scope, it might raise two basic questions: 1) Are they meeting the needs of the students and the community? 2) Is there adequate college support of the programs?

Related Literature

Student Volunteer Programs

Published information on the topic of student volunteer programs is very limited. There are several reasons for this deficiency in the quantity of written materials. The development of volunteer programs has not been an orderly and organized progression, with the blessings of academic research. It has just

grown. In so doing it has not waited for the guidance of research; it has not waited for documentation of successes and failures. It has just continued to grow--in the number of participants, recipients and scope. As students wanted to help or become involved they did it, either individually or in groups. What information or experiences one group or institution gained remained the possession of that group.

The formation of the National Student Volunteer Program brought with it a centralization of information on student volunteer programs. One of its services is to gather and disseminate information on student volunteer programs throughout the country.

Several articles did offer some information on programs in operation. Most of these were in the form of reports on individual programs. Among them was the North Carolina 1964 Volunteer Program. This was an experiment in mobilizing students from thirteen colleges for assistance in communities. Several reports were found in the ERIC Collection, notably the programs at Peralta College and Nairobi College.

Researching the literature on this subject pointed out the need for a clearing house for information on the many programs in existence throughout the nation. Although the reasons for a school committing its resources to a volunteer program are numerous, there is very little data on volunteer programs that are curriculum related and offer academic credit for service to community agencies.

The most encouraging information uncovered was a news release from the new volunteer agency, ACTION. It announced a new program called University Year For Action, a new program that would permit students to devote a full year of service to local communities while receiving academic credit and a subsistence allowance.

Method of Securing Data

The dean of students, of each of the eight colleges in the district, was contacted by telephone to inquire if there was any kind of student volunteer program in operation on the campus. If any volunteer program existed, the person he named as "director" was interviewed, in person. The responses recorded provided the data for this study.

The study is encumbered by several limitations. Time prohibited any evaluation based on contacts with the participants or the recipients of the service. The information is based solely on interviews with the persons who might be classified as directors or quasi-directors of programs. The evaluations of the programs were restricted to a subjective rather than objective treatment. Even with these limitations, the results should shed some light on the status of student volunteer programs in the Los Angeles Community College District.

Student Volunteer Programs in Operation

Los Angeles City College

Enrollment 17,455 Caucasian 45% Negro 30% Mexican American 10%
Asian 15%

VJTAL - Volunteers In Tutoring and Learning

The most successful student volunteer program at Los Angeles City College is the VITAL Program. The stated goals are:

- (1) To relate college student's formal educational experience to relevant educational experiences in the community.
- (2) To aid community agencies and projects in providing better services to the people they serve, by supplying them with student volunteers and/or paid community aides.

- (3) To increase the communication between Los Angeles City College and the community.
- (4) To provide community oriented employment for minority students handicapped by language, social and economic disadvantages.
- (5) To increase the level of aspiration and achievement of individuals from culturally deprived, minority status backgrounds, by means of a continuous program of cultural enrichment.

The VITAL Program had its beginning in 1968, as the EPIC (Educational Participation in the Community) Program. It was patterned after the EPIC Program, in existence at California State College, Los Angeles. The major portion of the initial funding was donated by the Associated Students of California State College, Los Angeles. As was the case at the State College, student volunteers were sent to institutional agencies (schools, recreation facilities, social agencies, etc.) to provide services.

There was apparently very little direction or supervision offered by the college. The program was student organized and operated. The student interest in participating in community action programs provided the energy to perpetuate the program.

In 1970 the student volunteer program changed its name from EPIC to VITAL and added a new dimension. Not only were student volunteers sent to institutional agencies but students began developing their own programs in the communities. These programs were designed for poverty communities and housed at community centers and housing projects. Also at this time the VITAL Program was placed in the Community Services Division of the College.

The VITAL Program is now operating with a full time director, who reports to the Director of Community Services. The entire program is funded through the Community Services Budget.

The VITAL Program now serves thirty-five agencies in the area of tutorial services, recreation, arts and crafts, social services, health and hospital, handicapped, probation and correction. Student volunteers are recruited through extensive flyer distribution and word of the mouth. There is no orientation or training program conducted by the director. Each agency is responsible for conducting its own orientation program for volunteers. Neither is there a follow-up evaluation of volunteer performances conducted by the VITAL staff.

The program is entirely voluntary and there is no compensation, money or academic credit awarded to participants.

According to a study by Miss Robin Baltuch, a profile of the average VITAL volunteer would be as follows. "He is male, single and about twenty-three years old. He is either Caucasian or Black and has a major in the social sciences. Chances are he had volunteered prior to working with VITAL."

In addition to the volunteer program, VITAL also recruited disadvantaged students to work as community aides. These students were paid with funds provided through Senate Bill 164.

TIC - Tutorial Information Center

Although not a student volunteer program TIC warrants mentioning. TIC was established to maintain a communications network between tutorial projects in Los Angeles and to keep abreast of current trends, techniques and resources in the field of tutoring. Its basic purpose is to serve as a clearing house for information on tutorial projects in the Los Angeles area.

East Los Angeles College

Enrollment 14,455 Caucasian 48% Negro 6% Mexican American 39%
Asian 7%

Out Reach Program

In the fall of 1969 the Out Reach Program was established at East Los Angeles Junior College. This program was developed as a Title I project and funded as such. The Out Reach Program was designed to raise the level of expectation, improve the self image and place maximum emphasis on obtaining an education for disadvantaged youth. These goals were to be achieved by sending college students into the elementary and secondary schools in the East Los Angeles Community.

The Out Reach Program recruited students to visit the local schools to provide tutorial services and to deliver motivational talks to the pupils. A trailer was used to transport the students and equipment to the site. There the college students tutored and counseled the pupils, always with the basic objectives in mind.

The participating college students were in three categories. There were those who volunteered their time, those who were paid out of Title I funds and those who were assigned through a class. Usually the student volunteered for the program and was placed on the payroll as soon as circumstances permitted.

The Out Reach Program was originally funded for two years. It required one year for development and to become functional and experienced less than a year in operation. With the withdrawal of Title I funds, came the demise of the program.

At East Los Angeles Junior College, there is now existing, a no structured continuous student volunteer program. Service fraternities and sororities, clubs and organizations will often contribute their time and energy to a specific project or to an agency for a limited period of time. The amount of interest exhibited by the organization rises and falls with the incumbent leadership.

Los Angeles Harbor College

Enrollment 8,484 Caucasian 64% Negro 12% Mexican American 12%
Asian 12%

Reading Center Program

Los Angeles Harbor College operates a community Reading Center, on its campus. Children and adults, from the community, visit the center to improve their reading skills. The center is partially manned by student volunteers. The volunteers conduct exercises in reading drills and phonics.

The Center is funded by the Community Services Division and has a full-time director. With a staff of eight paid aides and twelve volunteers, the Center serviced 2,100 clients last year. The people who come to the Center range in age from 10 to 68 and from every conceivable background.

According to Miss Newman, director, the most remarkable improvement of any student was that of a young woman, who in four months went from a virtual non-reader to the 11-year old level.

Students volunteering to work at the Reading Center receive no academic credit, but do receive a certificate of recognition.

Los Angeles Harbor College has no other structured on-going student volunteer program. There are service clubs and organizations that promote fund raising activities for specific projects and sponsor programs for neighborhood youth, but no programs exist with permanency attached.

Los Angeles Pierce College

Enrollment 16,692 Caucasian 95% Negro 1% Mexican American 3%
Asian -1%

Service Organizations

At Pierce College there appears to be no on-going organized student volunteer program. Student volunteer activities tend to follow the lines of the more traditional community activities. Service organizations, fraternities and sororities sponsor special projects and fund raising drives designed to aid certain segments of the community. Following the recent earthquake that devastated sections of the Valley, Pierce College students spent many hours assisting residents of the area. During special seasons: Christmas, Easter, etc., these same organizations solicit donations and plan special events for children and

adults in the community.

The Valley section of Los Angeles County Community Chest operates a volunteer Bureau. It is reported that the students from Pierce College have a good record for applying as volunteers. After routine screening these students are assigned to agencies requesting volunteer services.

Although members of the faculty and staff, interviewed, display great pride in the volunteer activities existing, there is no program that is continuous, well defined and shows a commitment from the student body or college administration.

Los Angeles Southwest College

Enrollment 2,908 Caucasian 3% Negro 93% Mexican American 2%
Asian 2%

According to the Dean of Student Personnel Services, there are no student volunteer programs operating at Southwest College.

Los Angeles Trade-Technical College

Enrollment 15,811 Caucasian 36% Negro 39% Mexican American 19%
Asian 6%

There are no student volunteer programs currently operating at Los Angeles Trade-Technical College.

Los Angeles Valley College

Enrollment 18,425 Caucasian 90% Negro 2% Mexican American 7%
Asian 1%

Valley College Tutorial Project

The Valley College Tutorial Project has been operating successfully for a number of years. As described in its literature, the purpose of the Valley College Tutorial Project is to assist children from the lower middle class areas of Pacoima, to develop their academic activities and self confidence. The Project attempts to accomplish this purpose by providing both educational services and by developing healthy personal relationships between tutor and tutee. To achieve these goals, the Project operates a diverse program which involves the College students tutoring elementary and junior high school students under three programs:

Elementary (one-to-one).

Individual tutoring of elementary school children on a one-to-one basis comprises the major portion of the Tutorial Project. This program emphasizes both the academic and personal aspect of tutoring.

Elementary - Special Interest Activity.

This program gives fifth and sixth graders the opportunity to explore the areas of the Arts. The tutors instruct groups of approximately twenty students in several of the Arts--guitar, sewing, arts and crafts, theater arts and modern dance. The special interest program places the greatest emphasis on developing personal relationships.

Junior High (one-to-one).

This program involves the tutor working on a one-to-one basis at a junior high school. The program places its greatest emphasis on academics, but the fostering of personal relationships is also important.

All programs are designed to give special attention to the students who have been overlooked by large educational systems. The tutees, primarily from depressed areas, are more often remedial students. Special emphasis is placed upon the development of the child's own feeling of self worth. Stress is also placed upon the basic skills (reading and writing). Each tutee is recommended by his teacher and comes voluntarily to the program. Tutor and tutee meet at least once a week for an hour and a half at the tutee's school, but outside the formal classroom atmosphere.

A social profile of the area served by the Valley College Tutorial Project is as follows:

23% of all families have an income of less than four thousand dollars a year.

6.5% of the male population is unemployed.

20% of the adult population have less than eight years of formal education.

48% of the Community is made up of minority groups.

At present, 120 elementary school students and 15 junior high school students are being tutored on a one-to-one basis. Another 130 elementary school children are participating in the special interest activity program. There is a total of 160 College student volunteers in the Tutorial Project.

A faculty member, a Sociology Professor, serves as advisor to the Project. Three co-directors, students, organize and generally assume responsibility for the three programs. Eight coordinators are each in charge of an individual day of tutoring and are responsible for the activities at the tutoring sites. The co-directors and coordinators act as liason between the school administration and the tutors. All those working with the Tutorial Project are volunteers.

The Project is funded entirely through student body funds. The Valley College Tutorial Project had its beginning in 1964, when a student, who had worked in a similar project at UCLA, recommended such a project to the Dean of Students. The idea received total support from the Dean of Students.

During its formative stages there was some resistance from elementary school principals to having college students on the school grounds. Unknown to the students, the college administration encouraged the elementary schools to participate and assured them that the college students would not be a disruptive force on their grounds. Success at the first schools influenced other principals to request the tutorial services. It is now difficult for the Project to satisfy demands for its services.

Recruitment is through a letter sent to each enrolling student. The number of participating volunteers has remained constant throughout the existence of the Project. Each volunteer receives orientation and training before going into the schools. Volunteers receive neither pay nor academic credit, but do receive a letter of recognition at the conclusion of each semester.

West Los Angeles College

Enrollment 4,468 Caucasian 63% Negro 30% Mexican American 5%
Asian 2%

West Los Angeles Community Tutorial Service

The tutorial project at West Los Angeles College is curriculum related. The tutorial service is an integral part of an Education Course. Its objectives are to assist the community in the west area of Los Angeles and to bring an awareness of actual teaching experiences to students who are considering pedagogy as a career. Although the project concentrates on services to the communities in West Los Angeles, tutors have been assigned to schools as far south as Watts.

The project was developed as part of the Introduction to Education Course, at the suggestion of a student. The instructor and student developed the proposal and received the full support of the administration. The instructor of the class also serves as director of the project.

Students participating in the Project number from 70 to 100 each semester. Although the majority of participants are enrolled in the class, participation is not restricted to class enrollment. Because academic credit is awarded only once, a substantial number of volunteers will continue offering their services as non-members of the class.

Recruiting of participants is accomplished through the college catalogue, school paper and word of mouth. Being a class related project, extensive orientation and training are offered through the theory sections. According to the instructor, valuable assistance has been given by the specialists in tutorial projects, provided by the Los Angeles City School District.

The project is funded as part of the Introduction to Education Course.

Each school is requested to submit an evaluation form for the tutors. This form is similar to a teacher evaluation form and provides the tutor, as well as the instructor, with some insight as to his abilities in pedagogy. For those participants not enrolled in the class, a certificate of recognition is awarded.

The director of the project is quite pleased with the accomplishments to date and holds sanguine expectations for expanding the services to community learning centers. He was quick to point out that a number of former tutors have gained employment as aides because of the experience obtained working with the project.

Analysis of Findings

In reviewing the information obtained in their study, it is obvious that District wide, there is no commitment to student volunteer programs either from the college administration or from the students themselves. Of the eight colleges comprising the district, three, maybe four, have programs that could be characterized as strong, on-going student volunteer programs with direction and purpose. In each case where a project is thus qualified, there is evidence of strong support from college faculty or administration.

Three colleges with a high concentration of minorities, East Los Angeles, Trade Tech and Southwest show, at best, very weak attempts at operating student volunteer programs. The most logical explanation is that these students' inactivity have been greatly influenced by other demands for their time. Many are married and/or employed and find it difficult to budget their time to accommodate volunteering for community projects. Consideration should also be given to the possibility that services offered by some minority organizations (BSU, MECHA) may not operate through the college and thus go unreported. It would seem that with greater support and assistance from the College, these

three colleges could become stalwarts in student volunteer programming.

There is consistency, among those schools with programs, as to objectives. Each is concentrating on improving skills and self image among disadvantaged members of the community. Although some programs are geared to assist adults, the primary focus is on young people, specifically, elementary school age.

The majority of programs are very loosely structured, administratively. With the burden of administration on the students, there is very little continuity and programs boom or bust as student leaders assume or reject the responsibility. There is a correlation between the loose administrative structure and finding of the existing volunteer programs. There is wide variance in the sources of funding for the existing programs. Funding sources run the gamut from a total college commitment, a total student body commitment to programs operating with no funds at all.

Only one college with a non-curricular related program included an organized training and orientation segment in its program. There was also very little follow-up and evaluation of volunteer performance at the sites. One college left the orientation entirely the responsibility of the agency.

All colleges reporting any semblance of a student volunteer program, felt that the project has a positive impact on both the volunteer and the recipient. The college profited from the good school-community relations that developed.

The most highly developed curriculum related program was found at West Los Angeles College. There were other colleges that reported curriculum related volunteer programs, that might better be classified as work experience programs. The writer is inclined to differentiate between volunteer programs that are curriculum related and work experience programs. The latter lacks the element of serving needy individuals in the community.

Recommendations

"Although community colleges have a relatively short period of time to help students learn about society and themselves, the students can gain personal meaning from the concepts and information of course material through related, practical experience. Colleges may, therefore, find it beneficial to incorporate community service experience into the academic program."³ This statement encourages each college administrator, to at least investigate the establishment of a student volunteer program on his campus.

The potential for using this student power to effect change within the institution, within the community and serve as a model for future programs is unlimited. How better can a multi-campus community college district respond to the needs of the disadvantaged.

The following recommendations are submitted:

- (1) Top level college administrators should make a full commitment to the establishment and support of student volunteer programs.
- (2) A full time director for the programs should be provided but the programs should be organized and guided by students.
- (3) The volunteer program should be integrated into the college program.
- (4) College personnel should be informed of the programs' existence and goals.
- (5) All participants should undergo a training and orientation period before being sent to sites.
- (6) Each participant should be evaluated on job performance and given assistance when necessary.
- (7) Participants should be given the option of receiving academic credit for service, if they so desire.

- (8) A firm, secure source of funding should be established.

Summary and Conclusions

The quality of any program will depend upon:

- (1) The definition of goals and groups to be served
- (2) Strength of leadership
- (3) Handling of volunteers
- (4) Relations with schools⁴

The college is equipped to function effectively in all four areas mentioned. The largest single source of volunteer help is college and university students. With the leadership, experience and support of the college they could become a potent force in reducing the social and educational shortcomings of many citizens.

There are problems connected with student volunteer programs. College students have many problems of their own; heavy schedules of academic and non-academic activities, they sometimes confuse their needs with the needs of the children, they often feel a need to see results sooner than do adults. These problems are not unsolvable. They can be eased with the proper assistance from the college staff.

There are a variety of types of volunteer programs and varying levels of student commitment to volunteer programs. Programs might be classified in three categories; those of a general nature which might involve a variety of student talents and abilities, those involving students majoring in particular subjects, e.g., medicine, business, law, and those projects that might be taken on once or twice a year by organizations that do not want to run sustained programs.

There is clear evidence that the Los Angeles Community College District is confronted with the need of the community and the interest and desire of the students. It should now assume its responsibility of coordinating the efforts that would bring the two together.

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