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COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND TEACHER PREPARATION: ROLES, ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Overview

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The role of community colleges in preparing the next generation of teachers in U.S. classrooms continues to evolve. In many states, community colleges are no longer playing an informal or tangential role in teacher preparation and instead are becoming critical leaders in efforts to develop a pool of highly effective teachers for states and regions that have demand which far exceeds supply.

In August of 2006, the Education Commission of the States and the National Center for Teacher Transformation convened representatives from a variety of national organizations representing state higher education executive officers, community colleges, teacher preparation programs, teacher accreditation and K-12 education to discuss the role of community colleges in teacher education. The meeting focused on how community colleges can meet the needs of an increasingly diverse teaching industry and catalyze reform in teacher education. The following paper describes a variety of forces in education policy and reform that are providing an important context to the role of community colleges in teacher education. In addition, the paper articulates how community colleges can capitalize on their unique attributes as responsive institutions that serve a diverse population of students and industry needs to meet critical workforce demand in local and regional communities and positively impact the field of teacher education.



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Forces Impacting Community Colleges and Teacher Education

As states continue to struggle with the challenges of educating their citizens for a knowledge-based, global economy, it is no surprise that teacher quality and effectiveness are viewed as critical components of an effective state education reform strategy. Policymakers and teacher educators engaged in the development of state policy governing teacher preparation are encountering three significant forces which impact their ability to identify and train teachers who are prepared for the 21st century classroom. Among the forces shaping the future of teacher preparation are:

- Continuing demand for quality teachers, especially in specific subject shortage areas
- Recognition that retention and ongoing training of teachers is needed to maintain an effective teaching force
- Increasing economic and cultural diversity of students in U.S. classrooms requiring schools to find teachers who have the capacity and commitment to educate students who come to school with a wide range of educational needs.

In several states profoundly affected by these forces, community colleges have proven to be uniquely suited to addressing these challenges and, as a result, have seen their role in teacher preparation expand. A closer examination of each of these forces viewed through the lens of teacher education provides insight into how community colleges are well-positioned for this role.

“Of the 64 fields in which teacher education programs are offered, 29 have shortages and none of the fields report having a large surplus.”

High Teacher Demand


While there is some disagreement on whether there is a national teacher shortage, there is no question that in certain regions of the country and specific disciplines, many schools are having great difficulty finding highly qualified teachers for their classrooms.¹ These difficulties exist in some states for teachers in general and in most states for teachers in specific subject areas.

The demand for teachers in all subject areas can be linked to enrollment increases in the general student population. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 23 states will experience enrollment increases through 2014. Thirteen of those 23 states will see enrollment increases of between 5 and 15%.² In many states facing enrollment increases, the demand for teachers outstrips the capacity of traditional university-based teacher preparation programs and consequently community colleges have become more involved in meeting growing demand.

In **Nevada**, which projects enrollment increases of over 28%, the state responded by enabling Great Basin College to offer baccalaureate degrees in teacher education as a means of providing teachers for the largely rural communities that Great Basin serves.³ In **Florida**, which predicts a 10% increase in student enrollment, the state department of education projects that for the 2006-07 school year there will be a shortage of over 32,000 teachers and that the state will need to produce 20,000 new teachers a year for the next ten years to meet growing demand.

At present, 52% of the teachers graduating from “traditional” teacher education programs from Florida state universities are community college transfers.⁴ Florida has responded to the incredible demand for teachers by taking advantage of the large number of teacher education candidates who are entering teacher education programs from community colleges by allowing community colleges to confer baccalaureate degrees in teacher education, and by developing one of the nation’s most aggressive alternative certification programs at the state’s community colleges.

The demand for teachers in many regions becomes more complicated when you consider the level of demand in specific high need teaching disciplines. Of the 64 fields in which teacher education programs are offered, 29 have shortages and none of the fields report having a large surplus.⁵ Areas that have the greatest demand include: special education, mathematics, physical sciences, English as a second language, foreign lan-



guages, and vocational or technical education. According to the National Center of Education Statistics, over 25% of all schools in the United States “found it very difficult or were not able to fill the vacancies in these fields” for the 2003-04 school year.⁶

Greater concern about U.S. competitiveness has led to an array of responses to the shortage of math and science teachers. In a review of recent reports on U.S. economic competitiveness, teacher preparation and teacher quality were named as important components of a national strategy.⁷ Reports from such diverse organizations as the National Defense Education and Innovation Initiative of the Association of American Universities, the National Academies, The National Summit on Competitiveness and The Business Roundtable suggest that academic researchers, business and policymakers alike believe teacher preparation is a critical component of a national strategy for meeting long term economic goals.⁸

Community colleges have been quick to recognize the opportunity presented by the level of interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education among policymakers. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), through a grant from the National Science Foundation, identified steps community colleges should take to improve the capacity of teachers to teach in the STEM fields.⁹ As a result of their efforts, many community colleges have developed a variety of strategies for attracting students with skills and interest in STEM fields into teaching. Strategies implemented by community colleges include curriculum development, improving instruction in STEM classes at the community college, aligning student and community services in support of students with an interest in teaching in STEM fields, and building partnerships with K-12 and teacher education programs to create seamless transitions for students into community college and ultimately to a teaching license.

Community colleges, because of their history of providing responsive solutions for business, are well positioned to provide the customized programs and strategies that are needed to meet the specific workforce needs of the regions they serve. As policymakers and K-12 school districts advocate for multifaceted approaches to preparing teachers beyond the traditional model, community colleges can be powerful players capable of meeting the expectations of policymakers and K-12 leaders.

Recruiting and Retaining Highly Effective Teachers



Some argue the number of teaching candidates produced by colleges is not as much a problem as the ability of school districts to attract those candidates to their schools and to retain them. Only 60% of students who complete teacher education programs move directly into teaching jobs. Of those who do go into teaching, only 50 to 60% are on the job five years later.¹⁰

As schools and school districts are faced with the challenge of finding and retaining teachers that meet new federal and state requirements, it is more important than ever to invest in the capacity of teachers through professional development opportunities designed to improve their effectiveness. The use of technology in the classroom, data-driven decisionmaking and enhancing content knowledge are just a few of the areas in which teachers must continually develop new knowledge and skills. These opportunities need to be available and customized to meet the unique needs of specific schools and school districts.

Community colleges can play a critical role in providing customized professional development for teachers that is available and accessible. In many communities, the community college provides not only the expertise, but also the facilities that are conducive to providing quality training opportunities for teachers. At Anne Arundel Community College in **Maryland**, the Teacher Education and Childcare (TEACH) Center within the institution's customized training division has created an innovative model for developing customized training opportunities for teachers from surrounding schools. The ability of the community college to offer solutions that directly respond to the needs of local area educators is viewed as a critical economic development strategy for providing the support teachers need to persist in their positions and to provide the best possible education opportunities for their children.



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Economic and Racial/Ethnic Diversity of Students

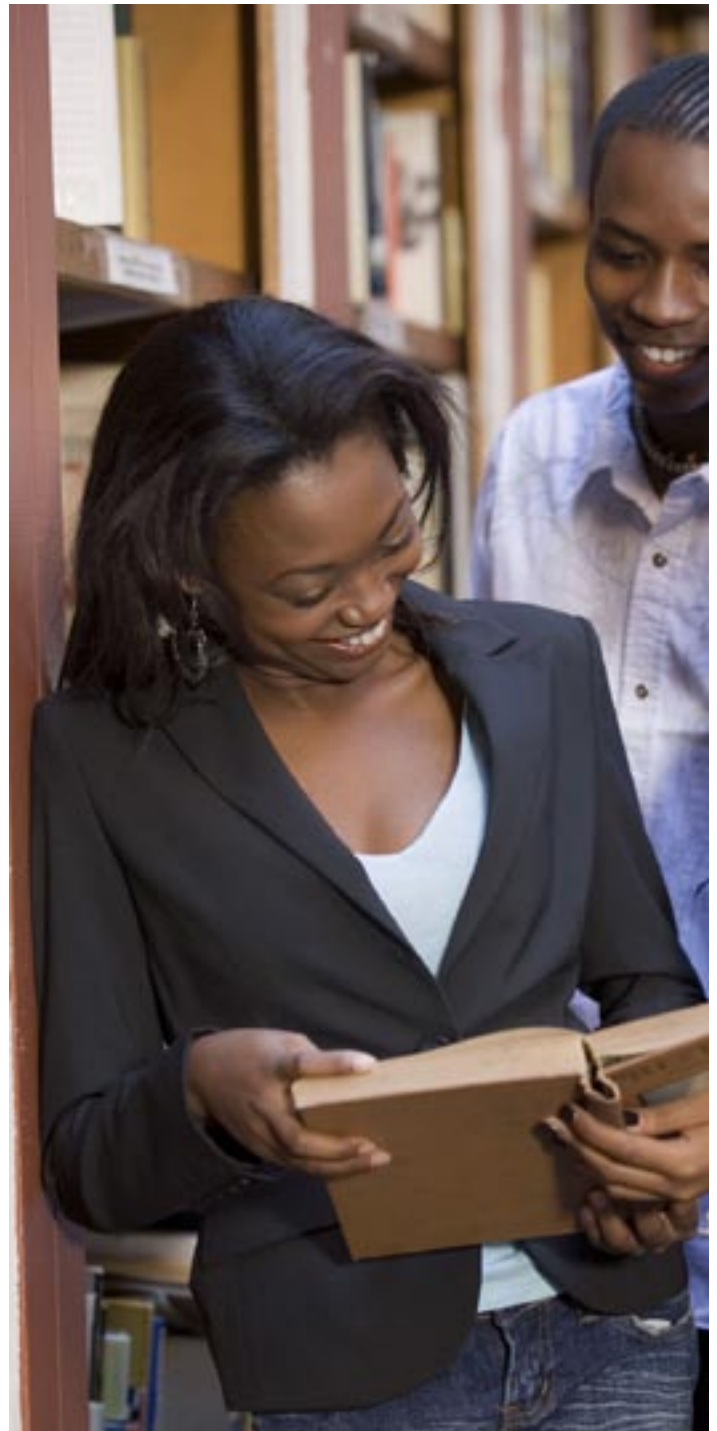
In addition to the rapid increases in enrollment in many states and the subsequent demand for teachers it generates, many more states are seeing their K-12 enrollments become more racially, ethnically and economically diverse. In 2004, 41% of all students enrolled in U.S. schools were either Hispanic, black or Asian/Pacific Islanders. In areas experiencing the greatest enrollment increases, minority students make up an even larger percentage of enrollments. In southern states, 46% of students were from minority groups and in western states, 57% of enrollments were from minority groups.¹¹

These changing demographics will require schools to hire more teachers in specialty areas such as English as a second language. In addition, the low number of teachers from minority and immigrant communities creates another complication for many classrooms that seek to create differentiated instruction for children of various backgrounds, skills and dispositions.¹²

Community colleges have traditionally been a primary access point for minority and low-income students. Over 40% of students enrolled in community colleges were from a racial/ethnic minority group. In addition, over 28% of dependent students at community colleges came from families with annual incomes of less than \$32,000, and 46% of independent students earned less than \$25,000 per year.¹³ As a result, the community college has a unique understanding of students from diverse backgrounds and can be a source of teachers who are well equipped to meet the needs of minority and low-income students. At many community colleges that serve urban communities, the college is directly impacted by the quality of the education provided to low-income and minority students who ultimately enroll in the community college. As a result, the college has both a unique understanding of the circumstances of students as well as an opportunity to become actively involved in both the preparation and professional development of teachers from urban K-12 schools.

At Miami-Dade College in **Florida**, where 88% of students are either Hispanic or African American, they offer a BS in teacher education, with a large percent of the students who earn a degree staying in the immediate area to teach.¹⁴ As a result, the college is not only receiving students from Miami's diverse K-12 schools, they are actively engaged in preparing the teachers

that will educate the Miami-Dade students of the future. All of these forces are having a tremendous impact on both the supply of teachers and the demand for their services. As the teaching industry becomes more complicated, it is more important than ever for states to consider diversified approaches to preparing teachers. The traditional four-year university experience may be too narrow an approach for preparing the wide range of candidates that could meet the precise needs of schools and districts.





Community Colleges: Providing Diverse Approaches to Teacher Education

The flexibility and responsiveness of community colleges in teacher education is evidenced by the many different approaches to teacher preparation they pursue. Throughout the country, community colleges have implemented a variety of strategies ranging from offering introductory education courses to awarding baccalaureate degrees in teacher education. The most prominent approaches to teacher preparation involving community colleges fall into the following four categories:

- ♦ 2 + 2 arrangements with teacher education programs at traditional baccalaureate granting colleges and universities
- ♦ Alternative certification programs for post-baccalaureate students
- ♦ Baccalaureate programs offered by the community college
- ♦ Customized professional development programs created in collaboration with local school districts.

Each of these approaches show great promise for meeting teacher education needs in states. However, there is also much to be learned about how to ensure that these efforts ultimately produce highly effective teachers. Following are brief descriptions of each approach along with some of their strengths and weaknesses.

2 + 2 Programs

2+2 programs are the most common approach taken by community colleges involved in teacher preparation. Providing core general education courses for students who intend to transfer to a baccalaureate granting institution is a key aspect of the traditional mission of most community colleges. The more specific goal of preparing students for transfer into traditional teacher education programs has led to a myriad of strategies ranging from providing relevant general education courses and possibly one or two teacher education courses to more sophisticated partnerships with traditional teacher education programs. Examples of the latter include: Associate of Arts in Teaching degrees that are aligned with public four-year teacher education programs; joint admission programs where a course of study is designed by the community college and teacher education program for students they jointly admit; common course numbering agreements at the state level which ensure courses will transfer from the community college to a four-year institution; and finally entrance exams

for community college students (such as Praxis I or College Learning Assessment [CLA]) which ensure students are academically prepared for teacher education coursework.¹⁵


The strength of the 2+2 approach is that virtually every community college can become a feeder into teacher education programs by coordinating with the degree granting program. A community college that has a strong general education curriculum and is able to offer an introduction to teaching or another similar intro-level course can attract a viable pool of teacher candidates, particularly students who cannot afford more expensive four-year programs. The challenge of this approach is that detailed and binding articulation agreements between colleges are hard to negotiate and sustain.¹⁶ Agreements between a community college and a teacher education program at a private college or even a four-year public institution can often be a difficult give-and-take in which students are caught in the middle.

Alternate Certification Programs for Post-Baccalaureate Students

Community colleges in many states offer opportunities for individuals to complete the credits necessary for teacher licensure through a post-baccalaureate program. While post-baccalaureate programs are also offered by traditional teacher education programs, community college programs often differ in many respects. While most post-baccalaureate programs at four-year institutions provide the opportunity for post-baccalaureate courses to apply toward a master's degree, community college programs may only provide coursework on a non-credit basis and, as a result, not provide progress toward a master's degree or any other advanced credential.¹⁷ There are exceptions, like Rio Salado of the Mariopa Community Colleges in **California**, where master's credit is available through partnerships with master's-level universities. By and large this is rare and consequently most students enrolled in community college alternate certification programs are not able to earn graduate-level credit.

The strength of the community college post-baccalaureate program is it provides a low cost option for earning a teaching license, which is particularly attractive to displaced workers who require additional training to shift careers. While a non-credit alternative certification program may not lead to a master's degree, it can be argued that a non-credit program meets the demands of a specific segment of the teacher preparation market that community colleges are ideally suited to serve.

Offering a program that is such a departure from traditional four-year teacher education programs – at institutions that



do not have long track records in providing teacher education – make post-baccalaureate programs at community colleges subject to scrutiny. Consequently, these programs need to go to great lengths to establish their credibility. An example of this is the Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs) created by the Florida State Legislature, which provide a variety of teacher education services to include post-baccalaureate licensure. In addition to seeking the same level of approval through the state as other teacher education programs, the EPIs work with the state of Florida to develop a common competency-based curriculum, appropriate pre- and post-learning assessments, agreements with state teacher education agencies on establishing appropriate quality controls, training for faculty in scientifically based instruction techniques, standards for field experiences, and a sound program evaluation and accountability system.¹⁸

Community College Baccalaureate Programs

Despite the controversy that surrounds it, the community college baccalaureate program has become a very important option for states with teacher shortages in particular fields or geographic regions.

Opponents often argue that offering baccalaureate degrees is outside the scope of the community college mission. Community college leaders from baccalaureate-granting institutions respond that offering these programs is consistent with their mission – to meet the needs of the surrounding community. According to those who run these programs, baccalaureate-level teacher education programs at community colleges do not replicate what occurs at established traditional teacher education programs and instead create programs more customized to the needs of the communities they serve. Likewise, the programs tend not to be steeped in the traditional curriculum of many teacher education programs, but model their programs around emerging theory, research and practice in education.¹⁹

Most community colleges add the baccalaureate option after a careful analysis which determines whether the program will meet a critical need in the community or state in which the institution resides. According to Tom Furlong, senior vice-president of Baccalaureate Programs and University Partnerships at St. Petersburg College, the community college will first determine whether an existing college which offers baccalaureate degrees can meet the need in the community. Next, if existing baccalaureate-granting colleges cannot meet the need on their own, the community college will pursue a partnership with the degree-granting college to offer the program jointly. It is only after these two avenues are exhausted that St. Petersburg College would develop its own baccalaureate program.²⁰

Typically, community colleges will offer baccalaureate degrees in one of the following circumstances:


- ♦ Offering new degree pathways for existing occupational programs offered by the community college
- ♦ Creating new degree capacity in high demand career programs
- ♦ Developing programs in areas where there are no four-year programs or limited offerings
- ♦ Offering degrees in areas where no other higher education institution exists within hundreds of miles
- ♦ Providing a low-cost choice in an area that serves high numbers of low-income students
- ♦ Meeting a region's bachelor degree needs by offering a flexible option that enables students to take courses at night, online or on weekends
- ♦ Ensuring that the state's residents are proximate to a low-cost baccalaureate degree choice.²¹

The challenge for community college baccalaureate teacher education programs is changing negative perceptions about community college capacity and earning acceptance from those who employ their teacher candidates. Many still question the quality of community college offerings and the students they enroll. The systems and processes established by community colleges to ensure they provide a high-quality option that meets a clear community need are intended to counter these concerns. To further demonstrate their quality, many community colleges go to great lengths to earn accreditation for their program as soon as possible.²²

Community College Professional Development Programs

Professional development programs are yet another way community colleges provide teacher education. Like many of the other community college teacher education strategies, professional development programs are often tied to the needs of the communities in which colleges are located. Unlike the other approaches, professional development programs involve a much more intimate relationship with the schools and districts within those communities. Community colleges provide a venue and a means for providing customized professional development for teachers based on specific expectations outlined by school districts.

The types of professional development programs offered by community colleges can range from courses required for recertification to cutting-edge courses focusing on the use of technology in the classroom, and pragmatic sessions on how to meet the needs of the growing diversity of students in classrooms.²³



The unique capacity of community colleges to provide customized training to employees in various industries ranging from manufacturing to health care makes the community college a logical location to offer innovative professional development opportunities to meet the specific needs of schools and districts. For this reason, many feel professional development programs at community colleges could benefit from being viewed as part of the economic and workforce development efforts of community colleges. Anne Arundel Community College has applied a workforce development/customized training model to its professional development efforts by consolidating all its education-related services under one umbrella called the Teacher Education and Childcare Institute (TEACH). This approach has made all of the college's teacher education services more accessible to students, current teachers and school systems.²⁴

Unlike other customized training programs at community colleges, professional development programs for teachers are not a source of revenue for the college.²⁵ School districts typically have limited funds for professional development and colleges are not able to charge rates consistent with their private sector partners. Instead, community colleges view their professional development efforts as part of their community service mission and not as a growth sector for the college. As a result, these programs may not be optimized as true engines of innovation in teacher education.

Challenges and Opportunities for Community Colleges in Teacher Preparation



Community colleges are well positioned to be innovators in teacher education. As with all other systems of teacher preparation in this age of increased accountability, there are areas that need to be addressed to ensure their effectiveness and credibility. These areas provide an opportunity for community colleges to leverage their assets and mission:


1. Achieving quality
2. Moving from articulation to alignment
3. Establishing mission differentiation
4. Responsiveness to the education industry
5. Capacity to generate and analyze data.

Quality

Whether or not a community college is required to adhere to federal, state or accreditation standards of quality, they should seek to design their programs with these definitions of quality in mind. Baccalaureate and alternative licensure programs should strongly consider seeking accreditation from organizations like the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). In addition, programs that do not confer degrees or recommend students for licensure and therefore are not required to adhere to established government or accreditation standards should nevertheless set quality standards for their efforts that are consistent with those identified by state departments of education and accrediting bodies.

As community colleges have expanded their role in teacher preparation, they have taken the challenge of ensuring quality in course offerings seriously. In many states, community colleges are under the same state-level requirements for program approval as four-year institutions. This requirement can be invaluable for the purpose of statewide acceptance of community college-based teacher preparation programs.²⁶ Additionally, community colleges often use boards and advisory committees that include members of the K-12 education system to review and approve the quality and variety of course offerings. At Great Basin College in Nevada, for example, this takes the form of the Teacher Education Committee which serves as the formalized structure for program evaluation, review and modification.²⁷

There are challenges remaining in the quality arena, however, for both community colleges and teacher preparation programs based at four-year institutions. Issues of quality have intensified with the increased accountability resulting from the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Although the primary focus of NCLB is at the K-12 level, it is expected that its focus on accountability will extend to postsecondary education through the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, and specifically Title II of the Act which deals with institutions responsible for teacher preparation.²⁸ Additionally, the federal government is considering changing their requirements from the more degree- and knowledge-based standards of highly qualified teachers to an outcomes-based system of highly effective teachers. These new standards will require a shift in how teachers are assessed throughout the system, including their preparation programs. One way to respond to this challenge would be to create a more outcomes-based system including a common definition of quality and a consensus on standards for what potential teachers should know and be able to do at the end of their preparation programs. With all providers of teacher education required to meet these standards, the as-



sumption about quality based solely on the type of institution at which preparation was received should be eliminated.

As the federal government, states and accrediting agencies continue to create greater clarity in their standards for teacher preparation, it will become easier for community colleges to become a more credible player in teacher preparation. No longer will the sole purview of teacher education standards fall within the realm of four-year teacher education programs. The result could be a proliferation of postsecondary institutions that offer teacher education opportunities.


Moving from Articulation to Alignment

The use of articulation agreements between community colleges and four-year institutions are one method through which community colleges are engaged in quality teacher preparation. Articulation agreements take many forms. Four common types are:


- ♦ **2+2 programs**, where successfully completing a specified core curriculum at a two-year institution guarantees junior status transfer to a four-year institution
- ♦ **Joint admissions programs**, where students choose both the two- and four-year institutions they will attend before they begin their program, and work with both institutions to design a seamless transition
- ♦ **Common course numbering agreements**, which ease transfer of credits by allowing students to take the same courses, by number, at a two-year institution as would be required of students in the four-year institution's program
- ♦ **Externally validated criteria for transfer**, where students must pass an exam external to the two-year institution (such as PRAXIS I or CLAs) in order to be admitted to the four-year institution.²⁹

One challenge with articulation agreements is the perception by community colleges that the system is more top-down because of university mandates on what it will or will not accept than collaborative where the objective is to create an integrated four-year program. The top-down model results in a bifurcated system of teacher preparation whereby only basic education courses are taken at the community college and content and pedagogical specific courses are taken at the university.

Cheri St. Arnauld from the National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs (NACCTEP) argues that 2+2 programs must move from negotiating articulation agreements to creating and sustaining curricular alignment.³⁰ According to St. Arnauld, colleges must recognize that it is more important than ever for community



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colleges and traditional teacher education programs to shift from working as two separate entities negotiating articulation agreements to deeper partnerships where the goal is a sustained commitment to curriculum alignment between the community college and the teacher education program.

To fully utilize community colleges, teacher preparation must be viewed as a four-year process including content and pedagogical training continuously throughout the four years. A change to a fully integrated system would also respond to the continuous call – among those advocating for teacher preparation reform – for earlier field and teaching experience in teacher preparation programs.

Establishing Mission Differentiation

“Mission creep” is a term often used in connection with the practice of community colleges’ expanded role in teacher education, specifically if these institutions offer a four-year teaching degree. In these situations, four-year institutions have claimed that community colleges are extending outside of their missions into the traditional territory of universities. In the face of this accusation, it is important to remember the primary mission of community colleges is to respond to the needs of the community in which they are situated, both as these needs relate to serving the students residing in the community and the needs of the business or other industry of that community. The expanded role of community colleges in teacher education is a direct reflection of that mission.



Community colleges often structure course offerings at times and formats more amenable to a working individual's schedule, through evening or compressed weekend courses. For example, teacher preparation programs at Great Basin College in Nevada serve students in a variety of classroom settings from traditional live lectures to technologically based interactive classrooms to integrated seminar sessions utilizing multi-faculty teaching teams from a variety of academic disciplines. Courses can also be delivered to branch campuses and satellite centers to serve the needs of regionally bound students thereby providing rural students wishing to remain in their community the opportunity to pursue a baccalaureate degree.³¹

In addition to focusing on student needs, community colleges usually have close ties with the business community in which they reside and are able to design courses and degree programs tailored to the needs and opportunities available. In teacher preparation programs at community colleges, this function is often formalized through committees or advisory councils, which include principals, superintendents and other members of school districts.³²

It is important to note that the “mission creep” argument opposing the expansion of community colleges’ roles in teacher education is most strident in systems where public funding is attached to student attendance and less so where the community colleges and universities maintain a focus on serving the needs of the students and workforce. In addition to maintaining this focus, policymakers who advocate for greater collaboration throughout the education system can promote positive working relationships between community colleges and traditional teacher education programs by supporting teacher education programs at community colleges. Creation of high quality policy can also help. States that have authorized community colleges to offer four-year degrees have done so with state workforce needs in mind, and as a result often include language in legislation and policy that preserves the community colleges’ core mission as responsive, community-based institutions.³³

As they say, the genie is out of the bottle with regard to community colleges and their role in offering baccalaureate degrees. Due to the leadership of several key states that have ventured into this new territory of offering opportunities to earn licensure at their community colleges, other states now considering how to meet their future teacher preparation needs will have a growing base of knowledge by which to consider an expanded role for their community colleges.

Responsiveness to the Education Industry

As mentioned above, an essential part of the mission and history of community colleges is to respond to the needs of the surrounding community and the industries employing its residents. Current needs in the teaching workforce include increasing the racial/ethnic diversity and experience of teachers, ensuring that high-quality teachers are equitably distributed to rural and hard-to-staff schools, and making available high-quality pre-service and in-service programs tailored to the needs of the education community. Community colleges provide access to a population typically underserved by universities – people with racial/ethnic diversity, older adults, first generation college students and individuals who are place-bound. These are the same people who are underrepresented in the K-12 teaching force.

Increasing diversity


There are currently over 1,000 community colleges across the country enrolling 11.6 million students. Forty-five percent of all undergraduate students are enrolled at community colleges and they represent a broad array of racial, ethnic and age diversity – 47% of black undergraduate students, 55% of Hispanic undergraduate students, 47% of Asian/Pacific Islander undergraduate students and 57% of Native American undergraduate students attend community colleges. Additionally, the average age of a community college student is 29.³⁴ Providing these students with the opportunity to gain teacher preparation in a student-focused environment in which they feel comfortable could encourage them to complete teacher preparation programs and join the teaching force.

Equitable distribution

There is some evidence that teachers remain geographically close to where they were trained when they enter the workforce.³⁵ Community colleges often serve geographic areas not served by universities. Great Basin College in Nevada, for example, serves a 62,000-square-mile service area in rural north-east Nevada not served by any university. Providing the opportunity for individuals already living in these areas to participate in teacher education programs without requiring them to leave their homes and families increases the supply of well-prepared teachers in these areas.

Tailored pre-service and in-service programs

The close working relationships community colleges maintain with their communities allows them to customize both pre-service and in-service training for the needs of the education industry. One example of this is the creation of alternative preparation programs based at community colleges. At



St. Petersburg College in Florida this has taken the form of Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs), which are competency-based alternative certification programs for individuals with non-education baccalaureate degrees.

As discussed above, community colleges also offer professional development tailored to the needs of the industry. In 1998, Anne Arundel Community College and Anne Arundel County Public Schools collaborated on a technology training model for teachers. The T3 Project served the needs of teachers in the area and has evolved beyond its original function to include new initiatives such as a credit program for teaching assistants in response to new requirements articulated in NCLB.³⁶

The market community colleges serve and the business models they employ provide a new and valuable resource for generating a more numerous and diverse teaching force, as well as a responsive model that provides customized professional development solutions to local schools and school districts. States should consider how they might provide resources to support further innovation and collaboration between K-12 education and community colleges to further develop this source of innovation.

Capacity to Generate and Analyze Data

An institution must be able to collect and utilize appropriate data in order to improve practice and sustain high-quality programs. Community colleges are continuously challenged by difficulties in gaining access to data on student performance. State licensure examinations and credentialing requirements typically serve as the standard by which quality is determined. Unfortunately, data on student performance is often not shared with the community college system, thereby blocking that means of obtaining feedback on community college programs. Community colleges often do not receive feedback on the performance of transfer students once the student is enrolled at the four-year institution. An example of quality use of data for improvement community colleges should monitor is *Achieving the Dream*, a multi-year national initiative that uses data to drive change and help community college students achieve success.³⁷

Making the data available is only one challenge, however. Community colleges often do not have the resources for trained analysts or other personnel to translate these data into information for program improvement. *Achieving the Dream* is demonstrating the importance of having trained institutional researchers on campus.

Federal and state-level debates over longitudinal data systems from pre-K through postsecondary education may provide

some relief to community colleges as they seek to engage in continuous improvement strategies; however, it is more important than ever for community colleges to build their own capacity to collect and analyze data. This may require difficult decisions on how to prioritize resources, but in the end may prove critical to their efforts to be seen as credible players in the teacher preparation field.

Courses of Action



Community Colleges are a valuable partner in meeting the needs of teachers and the K-12 education sector (because of their history and ability to respond to the needs of the students and communities they serve). There are steps that can be taken and challenges that need to be addressed in order to take full advantage of the expanded role of community colleges in teacher preparation:

- ♦ Teacher preparation should be viewed as a four-year process that includes content and pedagogical training continuously throughout the four-years
- ♦ Outcomes-based standards of what teachers should know and be able to do at all levels of preparation should be created, and all pathways to teacher preparation should be assessed against these standards
- ♦ Program and course development should be a collaborative process including representation from universities, community colleges and the K-12 sector that is focused on needs and goals of the teaching workforce
- ♦ Common data components focused on program improvement should be agreed upon and shared among all institutions involved in teacher preparation
- ♦ Each state department of education should encourage ongoing “collaboration and communication” among legislators, community colleges, universities and the K-12 sector on how the community college teacher preparation model can be used to improve the quality of teacher preparation and ameliorate state teacher shortages
- ♦ Policymakers and institution leaders should consider providing resources to either community colleges or K-12 school districts to support customized training for teachers through negotiated contracts and/or partnerships between community colleges and school districts.



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Appendix 1

Participants in Community Colleges and Teacher Preparation: Roles, Issues and Opportunities Meeting. August 8-9, 2006, Washington, D.C.

Sharmila Basu Conger, Policy Analyst, State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO)

Judith Bilsky, Vice-Chancellor, Florida Community College System

Kay Burniston, Associate Vice-President, Baccalaureate Programs, St. Petersburg College

Tricia Coulter, Director, Teacher Quality and Leadership Institute, Education Commission of the States (ECS)

Tom Furlong, Senior Vice-President, Baccalaureate Programs and University Partnerships, St. Petersburg College

Donna Gollnick, Senior Vice-President, National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

Danny Gonzales, Deputy to the President, Great Basin College

Adeniji Odutola, Director, National Center for Teacher Transformation (NCTT)

Leslie Roberts, President-Elect, Board of Directors, National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs (NACCTEP)

Faith San Felice, Senior Program Associate for Teaching and Learning, American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)

Terry Schwartzbeck, Policy Analyst, American Association of School Administrators

Martha Smith, President, Anne Arundel Community College

Cheri St. Arnauld, Executive Director, National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs (NACCTEP)

Bruce Vandal, Director, Postsecondary Education and Workforce Development Institute, Education Commission of the States (ECS)



Appendix 2



Featured Community College Teacher Preparation Programs

Florida Educator Preparation Institutes

Educator Preparation Institutes at accredited postsecondary institutions provide professional development for teachers for classroom improvement and for recertification, training for substitute teachers, paraprofessional instruction, and competency-based instruction for Bachelor Degree holders leading to temporary and full teacher certification. EPIs provide an alternate route to certification for mid-career professionals and college graduates who were not education majors. The EPIs choosing to offer competency-based post-baccalaureate certification must meet the same standards and the same accomplished educator practices as any 4-year teacher education program, including field experience and a passing score on each of the Florida Teacher Certification Examinations (FTCE). All twenty-eight community colleges have implemented EPIs. Twenty-five community colleges collaborated on a common teacher preparation curriculum in submitting a joint EPI application to DOE, and all received full DOE approval.

Great Basin College, Nevada Baccalaureate Teacher Education Program

As the first of the baccalaureate programs offered by Great Basin College, the Elementary Education degree pioneered the unique integrated curriculum that has set Great Basin College apart from peer institutions across the nation. Held up as a national model for innovation and efficiency, the program creates a learning experience that integrates knowledge, skill and methods of inquiry from several disciplines.

Students create an e-Portfolio demonstrating competencies in meeting or exceeding the state teaching standards. The e-Portfolio includes sample lesson plans research, and videos of student teaching experiences.

The program collaborates with five school districts in northeastern Nevada, to coordinate field and student teaching experiences.

St. Petersburg College Baccalaureate Teacher Education Program

St. Petersburg College in Florida offers six areas of concentration in their bachelor's degree program in teacher education. In addition, the IMPACT programs allows students with a bachelor's degree to earn their teacher certification.

T3, Anne Arundel Community College

Anne Arundel Community College's (AACC) Total Teacher Training (T3) develops and offers courses to meet specific instructional and technological professional development needs of Anne Arundel County Public School (AACPS) employees in all job categories. The T3 Project, a joint venture of the college and the school system began in 1998 as a training model that melded two county institutions utilizing the strengths and infrastructure of one to advance the professional development goals of the other. The T3 Project, originally titled Teacher Technology Training, has become a link between the two institutions that has evolved beyond its original function to include new initiatives such as credit programs for conditional teachers and teaching assistants in response to No Child Left Behind legislation, as well as non-credit training in Building Quality Relationships with Parents, Internet Safety and Spanish for Educators. T3 programs provide instruction for all audiences, including classroom teachers, administrators, school and central office support staff. The partnership involves collaboration among directors and coordinators of both institutions in order to assess specific professional development needs and determine the most efficient and effective delivery model.



TEACH Institute, Anne Arundel Community College

The TEACH Institute of Anne Arundel Community College (AACC) provides a continuum of educational programs for those who currently are or who plan to become professionals that work with children from birth through grade 12 in learning environments and child care settings. The vision of the TEACH Institute is to enrich the lives of the children of Anne Arundel County by supporting and informing the adults who have chosen as their careers to educate and care for them. In 2003, AACC combined three areas of the college, the traditional credit Education Department, the non-credit Child Care Training and the contract T3 Project, to create the Teacher Education and Child Care (TEACH) Institute. *The mission of the TEACH Institute is the preparation and continuous development of educators who meet the diverse needs of learners in all educational settings. Full-time and part-time faculty members are certified professionals who model effective teaching practices and provide relevant student-centered learning experiences to prepare future educators. Family care providers, licensed centers and the county school system rely on the TEACH Institute to provide pre-service and in-service training for those in the field of early childhood education and care.*

Teaching By Choice Initiative, American Association of Community Colleges

With support from the National Science Foundation (NSF), AACC, in partnership with the National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs (NACCTEP) and the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges (AMATYC), developed Teaching by Choice (TBC): Addressing the National Teacher Shortage. TBC is a two-part initiative focusing on the increasing demand for K-12 teachers and community college faculty in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The project resulted in two reports:

Teaching by Choice: Cultivating Exemplary Community College STEM Faculty

is a 34-page report of recommendations and promising practices in the recruitment, retention, and professional development of exemplary, diverse community college faculty in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, outlined during the Teaching by Choice National Leadership Summit on Community College Faculty, convened in Washington, DC, December 12-14, 2005.

Teaching by Choice: Community College Science and Mathematics Preparation of K-12 Teachers

is a 35-page report of recommendations for community college K-12 teacher preparation programs developed during the Teaching by Choice national conference, convened in Washington, DC, September 9, 10 & 11, 2004.



Appendix 3

Resources on Community Colleges and Teacher Preparation

National Center for Teacher Transformation

The National Center for Teacher Transformation (NCTT) at St. Petersburg College in Florida was created in 2003 by a congressionally authorized grant through The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. The goal of NCTT is to identify solutions for critical issues affecting education through the establishment of creative partnerships that will result in the education workforce excellence.

<http://www.spcollege.edu/nctt/>

State Higher Education Executive Officers

The State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO) is a nonprofit, nationwide association of the chief executive officers serving statewide coordinating boards and governing boards of postsecondary education.

<http://www.sheeo.org/default.htm>

National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education

The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is the teaching profession's mechanism to help establish high-quality teacher preparation. Through the process of professional accreditation of schools, colleges and departments of education, NCATE works to make a difference in the quality of teaching and teacher preparation today, tomorrow and for the next century. NCATE's performance-based system of accreditation fosters competent classroom teachers and other educators who work to improve the education of all P-12 students. NCATE believes every student deserves a caring, competent, and highly qualified teacher.

<http://www.ncate.org/>

National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs

The National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs (NACCTEP) is an organization of community colleges, staff and students involved in teacher education programs; universities involved in teacher education programs; and industry partners and professional associations who work as partners with community college teacher education programs.

NACCTEP serves as a voice for community colleges in national discussions about teacher education. It works to enhance current community college teacher education programs and serves as a resource for those looking to develop new programs. NACCTEP facilitates connections between and among community college teacher education programs and community college teacher education faculty.

<http://www.nacctep.org/>

American Association of School Administrators

The American Association of School Administrators (AASA), founded in 1865, is the professional organization for more than 13,000 educational leaders across America and in many other countries. The mission of AASA is to support and develop effective school-system leaders who are dedicated to the highest quality public education for all children.

<http://www.aasa.org/>

Education Commission of the States

The Education Commission of the States (ECS) is an interstate compact created in 1965 to improve public education by facilitating the exchange of information, ideas and experiences among state policymakers and education leaders. As a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization involving key leaders from all levels of the education system, ECS creates unique opportunities to build partnerships, share information and promote the development of policy based on available research and strategies.

<http://www.ecs.org/>



American Association of Community Colleges

Founded in 1920, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) has, over four decades, become the leading proponent and the national “voice for community colleges.” AACC is the primary advocacy organization for community colleges at the national level and works closely with directors of state offices to inform and affect state policy. AACC supports and promotes its member colleges through policy initiatives, innovative programs, research and information, and strategic outreach to business and industry and the national news media.

<http://www.aacc.nche.edu/>

