

DIRECTOR'S COLUMN

THOMAS R. BAILEY



The Community College Research Center has now been in existence for over three years. The CCRC was initially funded by a generous grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and that grant was renewed for an additional three

years in April 2000. Since community colleges are vital to the aspirations of people and their communities, it is imperative that they become part of the mainstream research agenda. The mission of the CCRC is to carry out and promote research on major issues affecting the development, growth and changing roles of community colleges in the United States.

Since its inception, the CCRC has taken a broad and comprehensive view of the community college, seeking out the most important issues confronting these institutions. Over the past three years, the Center has organized its substantive work around two broad areas. The first is based on an institutional perspective where we have explored the missions and functions of the colleges, emphasizing their role in workforce and economic development. We have paid particular attention to the potential conflicts and complementarities between the diverse and growing missions of the colleges. From this perspective, we think of the community college sector as an industry that serves a multitude of needs. The second broad area is based on the perspective of the individual student. This area focuses on how the student moves through the education system and under what conditions he or she benefits most from community college education. We have explored all of these issues by relying primarily on

fieldwork-based case studies of individual colleges, but we have also carried out quantitative studies using available data. So far, we have conducted research at over 50 community colleges and, for purposes of comparison, several four-year colleges.

Community colleges in particular, and higher education in general, are experiencing profound changes associated with developments in technology; the growth of new and increasingly competitive providers; an increased emphasis on accountability; and new forms of certification. Perhaps most important is the increasing variety of students who arrive with vastly different educational needs and preparation and a multiplicity of goals and objectives.

Over the next few years, CCRC will conduct a variety of projects designed to map the changing landscape of community college education. The CCRC National Field Study will be based primarily on case studies of approximately 15 community colleges. CCRC has also received a contract from the U.S. Department of Education to study and assess emerging trends in postsecondary occupational education. The project will use national educational data to describe the patterns of edu-

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cational participation, and to evaluate the outcomes of postsecondary occupational students. In addition, CCRC is conducting a project funded by the National Science Foundation to analyze the impact of Advanced Technological Education (ATE) centers and projects on the community colleges in which they are housed, as well as examine how ATE activities are being institutionalized to last after the funding ends. Also, CCRC, in conjunction with the National Center for Postsecondary Improvement (NCPI), was awarded a grant in 1999 by the U.S. Department of Education to study the effects of the for-profit sector on community colleges and the interactions between the two sets of postsecondary institutions. Preliminary findings from this study as well as in-depth descriptions of CCRC projects are included in this newsletter.

In addition to carrying out its own research, the CCRC strives to attract new scholars to the field, promote discussion and debate about crucial and often controversial issues, and disseminate existing research. To provide intellectual leadership, CCRC sponsors an ongoing seminar series. Participants—including community college practitioners and presidents, and academic and institutional researchers—gather to exchange ideas, present research findings, explore new areas of study, and collaborate in developing a common agenda to strengthen the influence and effectiveness of these colleges. The CCRC also draws upon the expertise of a national advisory board of community college practitioners, policymakers, and research scholars, and funds research fellowships for graduate students committed to developing dissertations on community college topics. CCRC produces reports of research findings, occasional papers, and Briefs (summaries of research reports), which are available from the Community College Research Center.

We hope you will find this information useful, and we encourage any comments or questions you might have about our work. Community colleges have developed into one of the most significant innovations within American higher education—and our goal at CCRC is to conduct research that outlines their promise and importance, and helps them to grow and develop over the next decades.

SLOAN FOUNDATION EXTENDS GRANT TO COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH CENTER

In April 2000, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation approved a three-year extension of its previous grant to the CCRC. “The renewal of the grant reflects both the quality of the research carried out by the Center so far and a growing conviction among foundations and government funders of the central role that community colleges play in the nation’s education system,” said Thomas Bailey, Professor of Economics and Education at Teachers College and Director of CCRC.

As Director, Bailey heads a team of junior and senior scholars and practitioners who collectively have established the Center’s strategic direction and who carry out the research and outreach activities of the Center. For the past three years, the CCRC has examined changes in higher education and community colleges in particular. Initially, the Center focused on the roles of community colleges in workforce and economic development, including the growth of for-profit competitors. Researchers also looked at changes in the traditional view of higher education in which students just out of high school went to college full-time for four years, lived in a dorm, and after graduation, worked or went on to postgraduate education. This image of higher education describes a minority of today’s students, since there are an increasing number of older, part-time, working students who take many different pathways through higher education.

Community colleges enroll nearly half of all first-time freshmen, a significant percentage of all minority undergraduates, and an unknown but very large number of non-credit students. In addition, they provide many other services to their communities. “When we speak of the transition from school to work, we will be speaking more often of the community college,” says Professor Bailey. “When we speak of retraining our nation’s labor force, we will also be speaking more often of the community college.”

With more part-time students mixing work with education, people are attending more than one institution. Although it would seem as if this

should benefit community colleges, some two-year schools are losing enrollment to four-year schools or to for-profit organizations that provide specific certifications. Many four-year colleges in turn try to avoid providing remediation, leaving this as a community college function. While community college personnel are committed to the colleges' developmental role, some are worried that the colleges will increasingly be seen as remedial rather than as collegiate institutions.

With funds from the extended grant, researchers will conduct case studies at approximately 15 community colleges across the nation where they will measure the extent of change, examine reactions to those changes, and assess the impact of those developments on the colleges. Specific areas being studied are: the mission of the community college; alternative pathways for students through postsecondary education; the roles colleges are playing in workforce development; connections between the high school and community college; the rise of new competitors; distance education; alternative skill certifications and skill standards; increasing state and federal demands for accountability and assessment; the rising demand for remediation; and the changing nature of guidance and counseling. According to David Wessel, a reporter for the *Wall Street Journal* and a CCRC Advisory Board member, "CCRC represents a sorely overdue effort to increase our intellectual capital by conducting and disseminating credible research on what community colleges actually do and who benefits."

Working closely with Professor Bailey in conducting and coordinating this research is Vanessa Smith Morest, a doctoral candidate in the Sociology and Education Department at Teachers College, as well as several Teachers College faculty members and distinguished researchers from other universities and organizations.

STUDY TO ASSESS THE PARTICIPATION AND OUTCOME PATTERNS IN POSTSECONDARY OCCUPATIONAL EDUCATION

The Community College Research Center has been awarded a two-year contract from the U.S. Department of Education to study and assess

emerging trends in the way individuals attain their postsecondary occupational education. This two-year study stems from the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 (Perkins III), which called for a national assessment of vocational education.

The project will use national educational data to describe the patterns of educational participation and to evaluate the outcomes of postsecondary occupational students. The likelihood of graduation and the change in earnings resulting from that accomplishment are to be evaluated. The main purposes of the study are to tell a comprehensive story of (1) who participates in postsecondary occupational education (including their goals, aspirations, and economic outcomes), (2) what are the unique characteristics of the paths these students travel to attain their education, and (3) the extent to which these pathways and features of the program of study affect subsequent economic success.

Part of the challenge is to determine who are occupational students on the postsecondary level. The researchers will examine the data according to different patterns of enrollment in occupational programs. Project staff will then look for factors that lead a student to follow a particular pathway. All of the features of the education, including how it is obtained, are likely to influence one's prospects for earnings and even graduation itself. The project's goal is to develop a comprehensive, definitive assessment of postsecondary occupational education.

Although the current national assessment builds on earlier national assessments, it is taking place during a period of particularly significant change in postsecondary and work-related education. Increasing skill requirements, changing educational technology, the growth of a private postsecondary sector, and the spread of non-credit industry certification have created great uncertainties, challenges, and opportunities for postsecondary, occupational educators. Concurrently, there has been a proliferation of different sequences or pathways to educational attainment, the effects of which have yet to be fully determined. These changes make the analysis for this project both challenging and extremely important.

According to David Goodman, from the United States Department of Education and the individual responsible for NAVE: "We believe that the findings will be useful to education policymakers in Congress, the Executive Branch, and elsewhere."

This research is being led by Marc Scott, Assistant Professor of Educational Statistics at NYU, and Gregory Kienzl, CCRC Research Associate, under the direction of Thomas Bailey. Thomas Bailey and Gregory Kienzl have prepared a report entitled, *What Can We Learn About Postsecondary Vocational Education From Existing Data*, which summarizes the pertinent issues motivating this study. This report was presented at the Independent Advisory Panel Meeting of the National Assessment of Vocational Education in May 1999, and is available online at <http://www.tc.columbia.edu/ccrc/PAPERS/nave01.pdf>

Findings from this study are expected in spring 2002.

THE INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATION GRANTS ON COMMUNITY COLLEGES

In response to the 1992 Scientific and Advanced-Technology Act (SATA), the National Science Foundation (NSF) initiated the Advanced Technology Education (ATE) program to promote systemic reform of the nation's science, math, engineering and technology (SMET) education. Specifically, this initiative calls upon two-year colleges to expand the pool of skilled technicians in the advanced technology fields, with the objective of increasing the nation's productivity and competitiveness in these areas. "The establishment of the ATE program represented a significant departure in the way NSF viewed community colleges. It offers important new opportunities for community colleges to develop innovative technician education programs," stated Lynn Barnett of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). In fact, these ATE grants comprise the largest federal commitment to community college curricula and programs.

The ATE initiative, through grant-funded centers and projects, is encouraging the development and dissemination of cutting-edge curricula

in technician education. However, the impact of the ATE programs is not automatic. For this reform to be sustained and replicated, it must extend beyond the limitations of grant funding and achieve buy-in from community college faculty and administration across SMET disciplines and throughout the colleges. Other research conducted by the Community College Research Center indicates that there are a number of institutional constraints that can prevent the ATE program from achieving its full potential, primarily because grant-funded programs are difficult to integrate into present organizations.

Thus, the CCRC is initiating an NSF-funded project that is intended to broaden and deepen the influence of the ATE program on community colleges. The proposed research will analyze the impact of the ATE activities on the institutions in which they are housed, and examine how the programs can be sustained within the regular programs of the college. The research will be carried out by CCRC research associates, Vanessa Smith Morest and Yukari Matsuzuka, under the leadership of CCRC Director, Thomas Bailey, and James Jacobs, Associate Director of Community College Operations at CCRC. The project will be guided by an advisory board comprised of Diane Troyer, President of Tomball College; David Harrison, Vice-President of Seminole Community College; and Lou Tornatsky, a consultant in organizational innovation.

Research for this project will be accomplished over the course of two and a half years, through ten case studies of ATE centers and projects throughout the county. This research will result in a report and workshops that will advise community college administrators, ATE PIs, NSF, and policymakers on how the influence of the ATE program can be broadened and sustained to bring about improvement in all SMET education. According to Gerhard Salinger of NSF, "we are looking forward to the results of this study to guide our efforts and those of community colleges and secondary schools at making the ATE programs more efficient and effective in the future."

For more information about the ATE programs, see the NSF/ATE website at <http://www.ehr.nsf.gov/EHR/DUE/programs/ate/>

COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND THE GROWTH OF FOR-PROFIT POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The lead article in the *Community College Journal* two years ago was titled "The Realities of Competition: Will Our Students Become Theirs?" (Zeiss, T., 1998), warning:

If we [community colleges] don't meet the needs and expectations of students, the for-profit colleges and training organizations certainly will; indeed they already have the jump on us. Yes, there is competition for community colleges, and it's spelled with a capital "P" for proprietary colleges.

The article gave voice to a growing fear that community colleges were losing the race for students because they failed to respond to new market needs. The article argued that community colleges were available but not convenient, teacher-centered rather than learning-centered, and tradition bound rather than entrepreneurial. Indeed, the number of proprietary postsecondary institutions has nearly doubled in the last fifteen years, their revenues are expanding, and a disproportionate share of their students enjoys public federal aid (Strosnider, K., January 23, 1998, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*).

Concrete and systematic information about private two-year colleges is scarce, leaving policymakers with little foundation on which to respond to the growth in enrollment and use of public student-aid funds. Questions about the relative quality of private postsecondary schools, about the core values and the mission of public colleges to prepare students with broad knowledge rather than narrow technical skills, and about the quality of instruction and student outcomes have remained unanswered.

To develop a better understanding of how proprietary and public two-year colleges compare with respect to their students and their programs, the National Center for Postsecondary Improvement (NCPI) joined with the Community College Research Center to pursue an exploratory study of the relative competitive and complementary roles of these institutions. The research, which is led by Thomas Bailey and Norena Badway, Director of

the Community College Cooperative, is based on analysis of available data and case studies of a for-profit private school chain and community colleges that operate in the same markets. The study asks the following key questions:

- a) What is the size of the for-profit sector among two-year colleges?
- b) How have public two-year colleges been influenced by the rise of local proprietary competitors, and how have they reacted?
- c) How do the academic and technical programs offered in the two types of educational setting compare?
- d) Are there differences in student outcomes, including persistence, graduation and placement or continued education following graduation?

Preliminary findings suggest that the for-profit sector still accounts for a very small share (less than 5 percent of the enrollment) of two-year institutions. Moreover, this share did not grow during the middle years of the 1990s. On the other hand, there has been significant growth of for-profit four-year institutions, although they still account for less than 10 percent of enrollments in four-year colleges. Perhaps the most interesting conclusion from the data analysis is that the for-profit four-year institutions actually confer more associate's than bachelor's degrees. Therefore, to the extent that the for-profits are competing with the community colleges, that competition is coming from institutions that grant both AAs and BAs.

The fieldwork for the case study component of the project is in the process of being completed, but preliminary conclusions suggest that the for-profits have internalized the concept that students prefer an accelerated and flexible schedule because they want to get on with their lives as quickly as possible. Faculty commitment and expertise at for-profit colleges are similar to those at public colleges, and so far we have not identified significant differences in the quality of instruction. One important difference is that the for-profits have less political pressure to expand their missions and therefore are much more focused on a smaller number of high-demand degrees.

The report is expected to be published in the spring of 2001.

DID YOU KNOW?

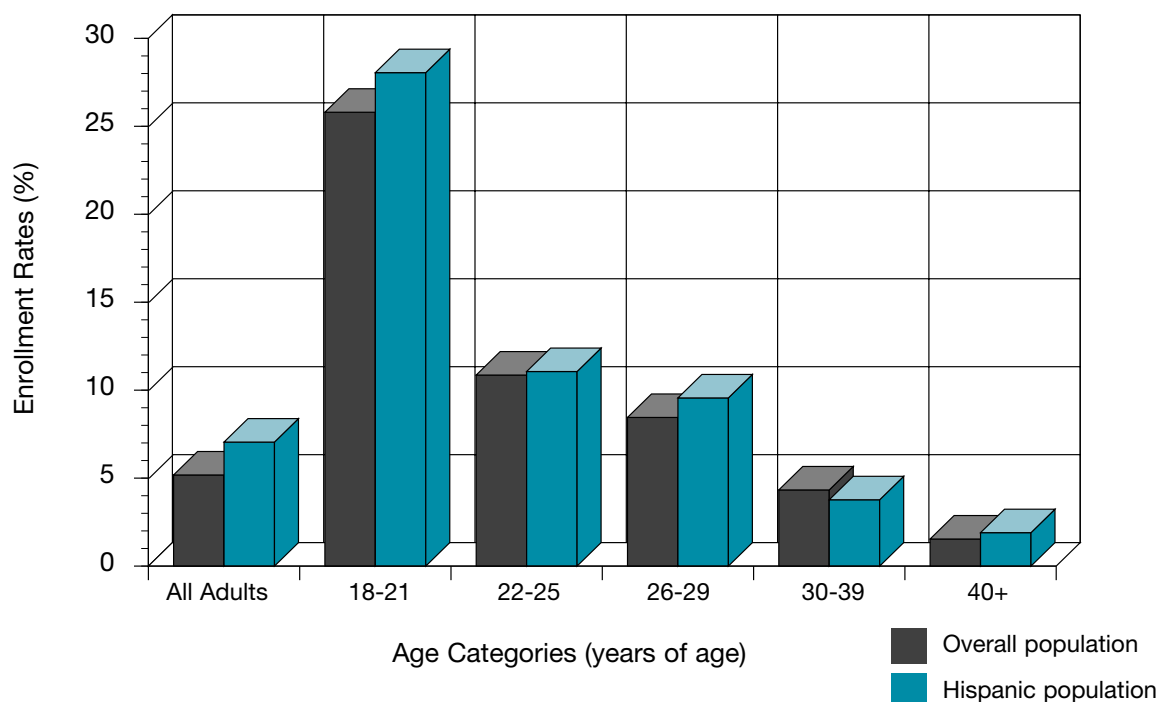
Hispanic students who attend community college seem to exhibit unique college enrollment patterns. (By “Hispanics” we mean people of Hispanic ethnicity whose race is neither Asian nor Native American.) Hispanics were over-represented among undergraduates in the 1995-1996 academic year: while Hispanics constituted 8.6% of the national adult population, they were responsible for 10.2% of undergraduate enrollment and 11.8% of sub-baccalaureate enrollment (1996 *Statistical Abstract of the United States*; *National Postsecondary Student Aid Survey*, 1996). This could be attributed to the fact that Hispanics tend to be younger than the overall population (60.1% of Hispanics are under age 40 as compared to 45.4% of adults overall), and are therefore more likely to be represented in a college sample.

However, if we restrict our attention to adults under the age of 25, we find that Hispanics actually attend college at lower rates than the overall population. Within the 18-21 age group in particular, Hispanics enroll at a much lower rate

than the overall population (42.5% as compared to 50.7%); the differential is largest for this age group. Thus the larger prevalence of Hispanics in undergraduate enrollments is compositional in nature: there are more young Hispanics, so there are more Hispanic undergraduates—but their actual rate of enrollment is lower than that of the population as a whole. There is no strong trend one way or the other for Hispanics at older ages.

If we examine *sub-baccalaureate* programs, however, we find that Hispanic students are over-represented even within age categories. (See Figure 1.) Up to age 30, Hispanics enroll in such programs at a higher rate than the overall population. Sub-baccalaureate programs play a significant role in the education of Hispanic students—69.7% of all Hispanic college students enroll in sub-baccalaureate programs as compared with 60.6% of college students overall. These findings suggest that sub-baccalaureate programs are relatively attractive to Hispanic students. This may be a result of their structure, cost, or availability. However, at this level of analysis, the reasons for these distinctive enrollment patterns are unclear.

**Rates of Sub-baccalaureate Enrollment for the Overall and Hispanic Populations.
By Age Category, 1995-1996**



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jim Jacobs Joins CCRC Staff



James Jacobs, former Associate Vice President at Macomb Community College in Michigan, has accepted the position of Associate Director of Community College Operations at CCRC. Jacobs assumes this position in a unique arrangement between CCRC and Macomb Community College, since Jacobs will remain on the staff at Macomb, as Director for the Center for Workforce Development and Policy. Jacobs credits Dr. Al Lorenzo, the President of Macomb Community College, for his wisdom and leadership, as well as Professor Thomas

Bailey, for making this appointment possible.

In his position at CCRC, Jacobs will be responsible for ensuring that the Center addresses the issues of most concern to colleges, and that the conclusions of the Center's work reach the widest possible audience. Jacobs will also be responsible for working with the CCRC Advisory Board, and hopes to generate increased dialogue between researchers and practitioners.

Jacobs has spent 33 years at Macomb Community College, both as a faculty and administrator. His major areas of expertise are workforce and economic development issues upon which he has written extensively. He has served on many national commissions, and is currently on the National Assessment of Vocational Education (NAVE) Advisory Board, and is the Vice President for Collaborations and Partnerships for the National Council on Occupational Education (NCOE).

CCRC PUBLICATIONS

- Bailey, T. & Averianova, I. (1998). *Multiple missions of community colleges: Conflicting or complementary.*
- Brewer, D. (1999). *How do community college faculty view institutional mission? An analysis of national survey data.*
- Dougherty, K. & Bakia, M. (February 2000). Community colleges and contract training: Content, origins, and impact. *Teachers College Record*, 102(1), 197-243.
- Dougherty, K. & Bakia, M. (1999). *The new economic-development role of the community college.*
- Grubb, W.N. (2001). *From black box to pandora's box: Evaluating remedial/developmental education.*
- Grubb, W.N. (1999). *Learning and earning in the middle: The economic benefits of sub-baccalaureate education.*
- Orr, M. T. (1999). *Community college and secondary school collaboration on workforce development and education reform: A close look at four community colleges.*
- Orr, M. T. (1998). Integrating secondary schools and community colleges through school-to-work transition and educational reform. *Journal of Vocational Education Research*, 23(2), 93-113.
- Perin, D. (2001). Academic-occupational integration as a reform strategy for the community college: Classroom perspectives. *Teachers College Record*, in press.
- Perin, D. (1998). *Curriculum and pedagogy to integrate occupational and academic instruction in the community college: Implications for faculty development.*
- Quinley, J. & Quinley, M. (1998). *Four-year graduates attending community colleges: A new meaning for the term "second chance."*
- Rosenbaum, J. (1998). *Unrealistic plans and misdirected efforts: Are community colleges getting the right message to high school students?*

Rosenfeld, S. (1998). *Community college/cluster connections: Specialization and competitiveness in the U.S. and Europe.*

CCRC Briefs, summaries of all CCRC publications, are available free of charge from the Community College Research Center.

Electronic versions of all published papers and Briefs can be found at the CCRC web site: <http://www.tc.columbia.edu/ccrc>

CCRC STAFF

Director:

Thomas Bailey, Professor of Economics and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, and Director of the Institute on Education and the Economy.

Associate Directors:

James Jacobs, Associate Director of Community College Operations, and Director for the Center for Workforce Development and Policy at Macomb Community College.

Lisa Rothman, Associate Director of Administration and Communications.

Senior Research Associates:

Gregory Anderson, Assistant Professor of Higher Education at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Norena Badway, Director of the Community College Cooperative at the University of California, Berkeley.

Debra Bragg, Associate Professor of Human Resource Education and Educational Organization and Leadership, and Director of the Office of Community College Research and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Kevin Dougherty, Associate Professor of Higher Education at Teachers College, Columbia University.
 W. Norton Grubb, David Gardner Chair in Higher Education at the University of California, Berkeley.
 M. Terry Orr, Associate Professor of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University.
 Dolores Perin, Associate Professor of Psychology and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University.
 Stuart Rosenfeld, President of Regional Technology Strategies, Inc.
 Marc Scott, Assistant Professor of Educational Statistics at the School of Education at New York University.
 David Weiman, Senior Program Officer at the Russell Sage Foundation.

Research Associates

Gregory S. Kienzl, doctoral candidate in the Economics and Education program at Teachers College, Columbia University.
 Yukari Matsuzuka, Ph.D. in Economics and Education from Teachers College, Columbia University.
 Vanessa Smith Morest, doctoral candidate in the Sociology and Education program at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Research Assistants

Mariana Alfonso, doctoral candidate in the Economics and Education program at Teachers College, Columbia University.
 Kerry Charron, doctoral candidate in the Higher Education program at Teachers College, Columbia University.
 Rebecca Cox, doctoral candidate in the Policy, Organization, Measurement and Evaluation program, Graduate School of Education, University of California, Berkeley.
 Kathleen Keane, graduate student in the Scientific Foundations program at Teachers College, Columbia University.
 Ben Kennedy, MA in teaching from Boston College.
 Jennifer Eunmi Kim, doctoral candidate in the Sociology and Education program at Teachers College, Columbia University.
 Timothy Leinbach, ABD in Geography from University of Minnesota.

Project Assistants

Tia Dole, MA candidate in the Developmental Psychology program at Teachers College, Columbia University.
 Gretchen Koball, MA candidate in the Anthropology and Education program at Teachers College, Columbia University.

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 Wall Street Journal

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Community College Research Center
 Teachers College, Columbia University
 525 West 120th Street, Box 174
 New York, New York 10027

Director: Thomas R. Bailey
 Managing Editor: Lisa Rothman
 (212) 678-3091 fax (212) 678-3699

ccrc@columbia.edu
<http://www.tc.columbia.edu/ccrc>