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of Community Colleges.*

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Presentation Proposal Deadline

October 31, 2010

**Community College
Baccalaureate Association**

Eleventh International Conference

**February 25 - 27, 2011
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2010 Student Essay Contest

Community College Week

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE COVERING COMMUNITY, TECHNICAL AND JUNIOR COLLEGES, SINCE 1988

Contest Sponsor

CCBA 2010 Essay Contest Finalists

- Alicia Cox, Vincennes University, IN
- Jeremy Hayden, Georgian College of Applied Arts and Technology, OT Canada
- Gary Holloway, Lurleen B. Wallace Community College, AL
- Adaobi Obika, Central Piedmont Community College, NC
- Chris Roll, Missouri State University – West Plains, MO
- Miguel Tapia, College of the Desert, CA
- Rebekah Stringfellow, St. Petersburg College, FL
- Dujuan Walker, Milwaukee Area Technical College, WI
- Sarah Zelitt, Douglas College, BC, Canada
- Deborah Dunham Alt, Mid-South Community College, AK

University of Illinois Considering Creating 3-Year Degree Program

Interim University of Illinois President Stanley Ikenberry asked his staff at a March board of trustees meeting to look into creating an “accelerated” degree program that could save students thousands of dollars in living costs and could allow students to graduate within three years of enrolment. Ikenberry directed university staff to report back to him with a proposal by fall. He said an accelerated program could be available to students applying for the 2011-12 school year.

Students would have to take college-level courses before enrolling and would attend classes during summer and winter breaks. Some might choose to start at U. of I. the summer immediately after graduating from high school. Ikenberry acknowledged that finishing in three years would be more realistic for students in Urbana-Champaign because only 21 percent of students at the Chicago campus finish in four years, compared with 64 percent at Urbana-Champaign.

The university would incur additional expenses by offering courses during breaks but Ikenberry said that new courses could be paid for by increased tuition revenue as more students study in the summer. Students could take online courses while living at home.

Colorado Approves Baccalaureate Degrees

The Colorado House of Representatives voted 55-9 (with one absence) to pass Senate Bill 10-101. The bill would permit Colorado Mountain College, a comprehensive community college to offer up to five bachelor's degrees. The bill had previously been passed by the state Senate, 33-1-1.

The bill now goes to the governor's desk, for his veto or approval. If Gov. Bill Ritter signs the bill, possibly later this month, the college would then need the official approval of its accrediting body, the Higher Learning Commission. For months college administrators have been in discussions with the commission to determine what gaining such approval would entail.

Additional Washington Colleges Approved to Confer Bachelor's Degrees

South Seattle Community College, Bellevue College and Olympic College have been accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities to confer bachelor's degrees. Peninsula College is near the end of the application and review process for its own baccalaureate accreditation.

The three colleges launched their baccalaureate programs in fall 2007 with Bellevue College offering a bachelor of applied science degree in radiation and imaging sciences; Olympic college

offering a BSN and South Seattle hospitality management. Peninsular College offering a degree in applied managements.

Since the first four community college baccalaureate programs were approved in 2006, four more have been added. Bachelors of applied design, behavioral science and management are offered by Lake Washington Technical College, Seattle Central Community College and Columbia Basin College, respectively, and Bellevue College launched a baccalaureate program in interior design in January.

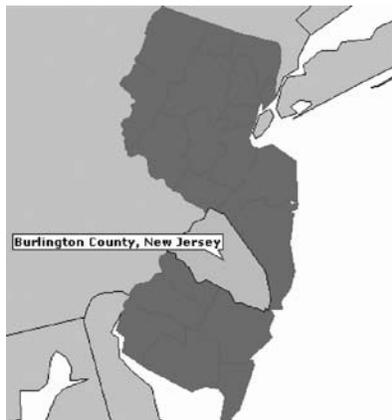
Community College Funding - A Very Public Collision



Dr. Robert C. Messina, Jr., President,
Burlington County College, Pemberton, NJ

Community colleges are public entities. They are dependent upon securing their funding in a variety of ways using divergent sources. Much like their private college cousins who depend on the stability of tuition revenue, the community college is equally dependent upon the stability of their varied resources for day-to-day operations. Put simply, the community college needs its funding sources much like plants need the sun – for its very survival. If we are to appreciate how community colleges manage their revenues, then we must examine and understand the history, cultures and norms of the states in which they are located.¹

Essential to that contextual understanding is the fact that Burlington County is the largest county in New Jersey covering 827 square miles. According to the Population Estimates Program, Population Division of the US Bureau of the Census, the estimated population of Burlington County is 450,743 as of 2005. The total area is 529,351 acres including 5,191 acres of water. Due to its sheer size, forty political subdivisions exist within the county, consisting of three cities, six boroughs, and 31 townships. The county seat is located in Mount Holly. The median income for a household in the county was \$72,466, and the median income for a family was \$85,117 as of a 2007 estimate².



It is against this backdrop that Burlington County College was founded in 1966 by the citizens of Burlington County and the Board of Chosen Freeholders. The belief that learning is a lifelong activity and that every person should have the opportunity to pursue all of the education from which he/she can benefit, the College opened its doors in 1969 in temporary facilities. Building on the philosophical foundation of lifelong learning, the mission of Burlington County College, identifies the College as a **comprehensive** community college, and its purpose "...to provide all individuals access to affordable and quality education" builds on the statutory funding model first promulgated in New Jersey in 1967 (§ 18A:64A-22) which states, "...**the board of trustees of a county college may, based upon the itemized statement fixed and determined pursuant to N.J.S. 18A:64A-17-22, apply to the State Treasurer and receive State support:...For operational costs to the extent of 43% but not to exceed 50% of the educational and general costs of the county college...**"³ The intersection of institutional mission and statutory regulation steered Burlington County College on a path of determined access and affordability.

Despite the statutory parameter that extends permissible state funding to 43% for the operational activities of the New Jersey County College system, the funding reality never approached the allowable maximum. In fact, even in the earliest years of BCC, the model with which most state legislators became familiar was the non-formalized "gentlemen's agreement" of one-third [state], one-third [county] and one-third [student tuition]. However, in the case of Burlington County College, even that model eluded the day-to-day operational reality.

Burlington, like its eighteen sister colleges in New Jersey, and for that matter the other 1,195 community colleges in the United

[Dr. Messina's original article has been edited to fit the space available in the Beacon. The article is available in its original length on CCBA's web site.]

States⁴, has both witnessed and experienced a declining percentage of states' budget dollars being spent on higher education over a twenty year period. A trend made even more ominous in the current decline of economic vitality. In fact, the net price (tuition minus grant aid) of the cost of a college education over the past decade has increased more for students attending public institutions than private institutions.⁵

The collision between constrained public funding and the need to increase postsecondary access and degree attainment is by now well known by every prospective student, professor, administrator and college president in America. In fact, when this reality is juxtaposed against President Barack Obama's challenge issued in February 2009 that "...By 2020, America will once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world." the dilemma becomes clear. The problem stems from structural pressure on state budgets, growing dependency on tuition revenues, and institutional cost structures that require unsustainable funding increases. It is the postsecondary funding gap that has been growing in most states for some time, and is reaching critical proportions with the recent economic collapse of 2008-2009. The economic situation will push higher education in understandable but predictable directions—tuition increases, cutbacks in enrollments where possible, and rollbacks in programs designed to reduce attainment gaps and increase degree production. The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education has stated the problem facing higher education with unusual clarity. "While states and institutions are facing difficult times, this crisis cannot be construed as a reason to abridge historic commitments to affordability, access, and investment in instructional improvements needed to meet future needs for educational attainment."⁶

The mission of BCC as stated earlier is: "*Burlington County College, a comprehensive community college, provides all individuals access to affordable and quality education.*" BCC thus finds itself at the very intersection of forces that the National Center for Public Policy warned against. When examining the changing complexion of revenue sources that BCC's operational expenses, it is clear in the figures to follow that BCC has become more and more reliant on student tuition as its primary funding source.

Going forward to the current academic year, Figure #2 reveals how much from both the statutory model and the informal agreement model state and county funding has strayed. Currently, student tuition now accounts for 54.30% of BCC's funding sources, county support has been reduced by nearly 50%, and state funding similarly reduced by 4%.

In addition to the financial retrenchment of state and county support for the funding of the operational budget, a similar cutback has occurred with the funding of capital needs and equipment creating the "perfect storm" of increased demand and diminished resources; the absolute collision between constrained public funding and the societal need to increase postsecondary access and degree attainment. Access must first mean developing the capacity to serve. Without capacity, low tuition is meaningless and access an illusion. Without capacity everyone loses: employers who need skilled workers, students who need higher-paying jobs, and even the government that needs greater tax revenues from higher-wage earners.⁷

What's a Community College to Do?

By now it seems apparent that community colleges in general will have to develop more innovative ways to deal with this very public dilemma of increased demand versus diminished resources. Some of the more creative things that community colleges can do are:

More entrepreneurial activities (customized training, business and science incubation, etc.)

Creative, flexible, and motivated employees can mean the difference between our success or failure. They must be entrepreneurial in developing new curricula and working with external partners.

Community colleges are poised to do innovative things. The possibilities are limitless. Disciplinary expertise could be applied across traditional subject boundaries. Although faculty members would have to learn how they fit into other disciplines, the college would not have to pay for duplication of efforts if the teaching were reciprocal. For example, a philosophy professor could present issues of death and dying to nursing students, a nursing instructor could teach police-academy recruits about the treatment of stress, and a police instructor could present the practical problems of rights to a philosophy class. Students and faculty members would gain wider perspectives, and professional differences would become an institutional asset.⁸

Fundraising and Endowments Over the last decade, almost every one of the 1,100 community colleges in America has had to become a fund raiser. The money is supplementing operating budgets, but community colleges are also beginning to build endowments.

Proportional tuition – eradicating the tuition credit hour model regardless of the major area of study pursued and introduce proportional tuition charges to cover more expensive programmatic operations such as nursing, dental hygiene and the engineering technologies. The latter three programs are no doubt loss leaders in every community college across the United States, yet the skill sets that their graduates acquire are priceless to our society as a whole. Perhaps it is time to examine “tuition burden shared by all” approach, and give serious consideration to the proportional tuition model.

Greater reliance on innovative partnerships such as cost sharing with hospitals for nursing training, utility companies for sustainability energy certification and training, etc. Lack of partnership opportunities could also mean the closing of some high cost programs.

Reduction of operating expenses through alternative energy sources.

2010 Winning Essay

A Hail Mary Pass for the Hard-Luck Case

Last May I realized that we would run out of money in ten weeks. I had been struggling as an actor in Los Angeles while my wife taught piano lessons. My son was about to start preschool. Although I happened upon success earlier in my career, I hadn't worked in over a year. We had stretched our budget to its limit. My wife and I cobbled together a plan: we would sell our house and bunk up with my in-laws while I churned through the prerequisites for nursing school.

I enrolled at Portland State, but because my parents-in-law lived in Oregon and we were coming from California, I was considered a non-resident. The tuition floored me. I would have to borrow huge loans. If I were not accepted into nursing school, I would have to find a job and start repaying those loans immediately. Having recently clawed our way out from under the debt of owning a house, incurring a new mountain of debt chilled me. I ditched that plan and enrolled at Portland Community College.

The safety net of Community College caught me before I hit bottom. Without the low cost and guaranteed admission at PCC, I would have had to take a minimum-wage job to support my family. Getting into a private school was impossible. Although I had attended the Juilliard School of Drama, my grades weren't stellar, and my old acting teachers wouldn't remember my name, let alone write me a good recommendation. Being a recent transplant from California also decreased my eligibility for scholarships. I needed

The challenge for community colleges is to position themselves at the forefront of that movement.

Building generating plants and selling energy to the local utility market may be a perfect example of an academic enterprise residing in an entrepreneurial environment. Can community colleges forge an energy enterprise that results in recycled profits being added to the operating costs of the institution? This is the very type of question that innovative and flexible faculties and administrations should tackle.

Developing a 3 year baccalaureate program - with more Americans pursuing both baccalaureate and advanced degrees, it makes practical pedagogical sense to examine ways to lessen the undergraduate portion of their postsecondary education.

Structure all public higher education so that the first two years of college are undertaken at community colleges. Such a bold model would save our state approximately \$300 million dollars annually. Those funds could then be redistributed to the community colleges and the senior institutions would then be free to concentrate on the final two years of baccalaureate education along with their graduate programs.

CONCLUSION

As higher education continues to evolve, the new culture will demand innovation and flexibility from the institutions that serve the nation's learners be they traditional age or adult or lifelong. Increasingly, more students after high school than ever before have adopted a “cafeteria” approach to their education, taking classes at multiple institutions before obtaining a diploma, transferring after one semester of community college to a senior institution, stopping in and stopping out of college (both two and four year schools), etc. Moreover, the growing numbers of adult learners aren't necessarily seeking degrees at all. Many simply want to improve their careers by acquiring a new skill set that employers are increasingly demanding. In this consumer-driven environment, students increasingly care little about the some of the minutiae that occupies academicians; instead they are more concerned, as we should, about the outcomes.

Matthew Keeslar
Portland Community College



an inexpensive education that would help me land a job. I needed a place to start over.

Portland Community College offered me the opportunity to improve my academic record and work toward a Bachelor's of Science in Nursing. Because PCC is allied with Oregon Health and Sciences University, OHSU will accept my nursing school credits. The possibility of earning an affordable four-year degree cannot be underestimated. As hospitals strive to fill positions with the best candidates, and nurses take on an increasingly important role in health care, the BSN has become a crucial element in securing a job after graduation. Enrolling in community college is giving me the chance to enter the work force with the training I need to succeed.

As the demand for specialized knowledge in the workplace escalates, the need for a four-year degree likewise increases. Community colleges offer an education to those students who are willing to work hard despite past failures or hardships. By offering a Baccalaureate degree to students, community colleges would be acknowledging the current need for degrees beyond the associate's level. They would also be enriching the community by turning out graduates more qualified to concentrate on and become experts in a particular field. Although I my monetary resources had dwindled to zero, I had the initiative to strike out on a path to self-actualization. Luckily, my community college met me half way.

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WHAT IS THE CCBA MISSION?

To promote better access to the baccalaureate degree on community college campuses, and to serve as a resource for information on various models for accomplishing this purpose.

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