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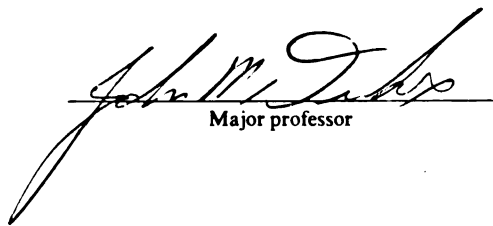
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CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS' PERSPECTIVES ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN THEIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE

By

Timothy M. Jackson

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ABSTRACT

CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS' PERSPECTIVES ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT IN THEIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE

By

Timothy M. Jackson

Community colleges operate in a world that is filled with complex issues, multiple stakeholders and limited resources. Among the many issues is workforce development. Chief Academic Officers are important members of each college's management team, and they are often in line for succession to a presidency of their own college. Because Chief Academic Officers are in key decision-making positions, and because workforce development is an important factor within colleges, this qualitative study seeks to illuminate the perspectives of Chief Academic Officers on workforce development within their community college.

Eight Chief Academic Officers participated in the study, and they were purposefully selected to ensure a representative distribution both geographically and demographically. They provided data by way of semi-structured interviews and written responses to a limited number of follow-up questions. Document review of mission statements, course catalogs, and state reports completed the data collection.

Of interest in this study was determining how perspectives on workforce development are influenced and the ways in which contextual factors such as the environment in which Chief Academic Officers work inform and shape perspectives.

Significant findings included perspectives on training and education as workforce development, a challenge to the fundamental mission of the community college through a re-defining of education, and a number of contextual factors that influence perspectives.

Among these factors are government programs, strategic partnerships, and a desire to meet the needs of the local community. Additional findings showed strong support for the role of workforce development within the college.

Implications of the findings include a need for reflective practice among Chief Academic Officers, less reaction and more purposeful planning, and a need to narrow rather than further broaden the mission of the community college.

This dissertation is dedicated to Benjamin K. Jackson,
Nicholas T. Jackson and most of all to my loving wife and partner in everything,
Patricia Keilen Jackson

Without your sacrifice, support, and encouragement
I never would have made it.

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To countless friends and acquaintances; you supported me during the tough times and motivated me during the doldrums. Now we can celebrate together.

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From humble beginnings near the advent of the twentieth century through a post-war explosion of enrollment in the fifties and rapid institutional expansion in the sixties, the American community college has grown to accommodate a complex and ever-changing role within higher education. Conceived of the need to provide access and technological instruction to masses of students clamoring for higher education, community colleges built themselves upon the principles of academic transfer education and to a lesser extent, vocational education (Cohen and Brawer, 1989). While the success of the community college in providing services in these areas has to this point provided a clear mission and circumscribed an identifiable niche for the college, new questions, forces and needs within local communities are carving new functions for old colleges. Among these is the need to address the skill level requirements for workers in the businesses and industries of local employers (Lorenzo, 1994).

Administrative perceptions of different concerns, problems, and stakeholder needs influence institutional direction and response. For this reason, the purpose of this study is to determine the perspectives of influential administrators, specifically Chief Academic Officers, on issues related to workforce development within their college and the ways in which factors have shaped and influenced these beliefs.

Background and Rationale

The growing interest in the role of the community college in workforce development reflects a long-standing historical issue. Since the early days when work-focused education became a part of the community college, controversy over the issue has

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followed. While workforce development at the community college level has provided countless millions with the skills necessary for success in the workplace, some argue that students completing career education coursework lack the basic skills in writing, computation and problem solving to adapt to the rapidly changing workplace (Lorenzo, 1994). Long-standing theoretical underpinnings to the mission of the community college yield conflicting views regarding the role it should play in workforce issues. Authors such as Dougherty (1994), and Brint & Karabel (1989) argue that community colleges engaged in workforce education "demoralize" academic programs by shifting resources away from the traditional transfer function, or by limiting opportunities for the lower and middle classes by tracking students into vocational programs. Others, including Blocker, Plummer and Richardson (1965), and most notably Grubb (1996) advocate for an increased emphasis on workforce, vocational and economic development roles of the college, indicating that community colleges are best suited among all of the available alternatives to offer efficient and appropriate workforce education.

Despite the controversies surrounding this issue, America's community colleges are asserting their role as the premier provider of locally driven, workforce related, education. Studies conducted in the mid 1990s indicate that 96% of responding colleges regularly provided workforce related training and education to area employers, usually for companies with fewer than 500 employees (Beckman and Doucette, 1993). Colleges successfully provided service in workforce related areas to as few as 10 or as many as 55,000 students, and some created revenue streams of more than one million dollars (Johnson, 1995). Further, eight of ten area businesses, industries, or manufacturing

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centers either utilize or are familiar with the training services of their local community college (Day, 1996).

For many, the community colleges represent one of the nation's front-line workforce development education and training centers. Day (1996) argues that each college should serve as a leading provider of workforce education and training, and continue to join with regional, state and local businesses to strengthen the economic competitiveness and provide the critical link between training services and jobs. From a national perspective, the need for involvement of community colleges in local workforce development is well documented. So important is this function, the American Association of Community Colleges has adopted issues related to workforce development plus closely related functions as five of its ten *Core Indicators of Effectiveness for Community Colleges* (Alfred, Ewell, Hudgins & McClenney, 1999). Among the specific indicators addressed are placement rate in the workforce, employer assessments of students, licensure or certification attainment, and student (client) assessment of programs and services. From a Michigan specific perspective, the enhancement of workforce development is one of 13 goals related by the Michigan Community College Association (Myran, 2000).

If a college wishes to make entry into workforce education, what are the keys to developing a successful program? One of the most significant factors in fostering this shift is the perception of key administrators toward workforce development. The National Workforce Development Study (Quinley, 1997) indicates that the support of workforce issues by senior leaders including college presidents and governing boards, was paramount in the success of such programs. At the same time, deans and directors of

workforce programs suggest that support from all levels of the organization is essential

for their success, and that generally, this was in place. Grubb et al (1997) are more

succinct in stating importance of administrative leadership to the success of workforce

programs by citing the results of a survey:

> Community college respondents are quick to point to the personal
> attributes of particular administrators in explaining the growth of their
> workforce and economic development programs. (p. 19)

As with most successful programs within any institution, the approach and commitment

taken by decision-makers can readily influence the outcome. This appears particularly

true of workforce programs in community colleges.

The focus on the importance of administrative perceptions to workforce

development occurs within the context of increasing attention to management and

leadership issues within the college. Most any community college related journal is filled

with papers addressing management and administrative issues. Titles such as *Adapting*

Institutional Structure and Culture to Change (Padilla, 1993), *Organizational Change in*

the Community College (Levin, 1998), and *A Framework for Fundamental Change:*

Context, Criteria and Culture (Lorenzo, 1998) provide ample evidence of the changing

ways in which community colleges are managed. Woven within this environment of

change, is the thread that provides address to the need for understanding and nurturing

employee attitudes and perceptions in regard to institutional function and mission. This

thread is best summarized by Lorenzo (1993):

> Faculty and staff attitudes must be monitored systematically and
> objectively. Institutional climate is an aggregate of employee attitudes,
> and it can be assessed by measuring factors such as communication,
> satisfaction, cooperation, decision making, trust, leadership and
> collaboration. By acting on the findings of such assessments and
> monitoring improvements, community college leaders can foster higher

levels of employee commitment, and enthusiasm, which is central to improving institutional performance. (p.53)

Joining this statement with the findings of Quinley (1997) (regarding the need for administrative support at all levels, for workforce development), there is provided powerful support for this project. Policymakers, employers, governing board members and community college administrators will find that a more thorough understanding of the administrative beliefs regarding workforce issues and those administrative attributes associated with these perceptions valuable in assessing program success or failure within their own institution. Additionally, this study seeks to provide the same audience with useful information regarding the potential for professional development needs of future institutional leaders in the area of workforce education.

Chief Academic Officers are chosen for this study for a simple and straight forward reason. Providing a succession of prepared leaders to assume top leadership positions is an important function of any organization. Within community colleges, individuals holding the office of Chief Academic Officer are far more likely than holders of any other position to ascend to the presidency (Vaughn, 1986). While authors such as Vaughn have written extensively about college presidents, little is known about those likely to succeed them. Understanding the characteristics and attitudes of administrators beyond just presidents helps to shed light on how community colleges might deal with the issues related to workforce education in the future.

It is true that administrative decision-making and community college leadership is changing. Current research and writings suggest strongly that in the future, the successful community college will employ a management and leadership style that is inclusive of all groups. The "flattened" organization that is emblematic of this inclusion

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is generalized by Senge (1994) and contextualized to community colleges by Alfred and Carter (1993) and Lorenzo (1993). These descriptions illustrate the utility of including faculty, staff and administration along with the college governance system in establishing mission and implementing programs.

Thus, one could argue that faculty are also key decision-makers in this shifting orientation of community colleges. Efforts to understand the faculty's view of the role of workforce education in context of the overall college mission have been successful. Brewer (2000) provides the results of a 1996 survey of community college faculty in which respondents indicated both their personal and their perception of their institution's mission priorities. In this way, Brewer's survey provided a partial picture that this study intends to complete. What is missing, however, is an understanding of the administrative beliefs that provide the direction of institutional movement on the issue and ultimate success or failure of workforce related programs.

Limits

While conflicting views as to the mission of the community college provide a rich foundation for the institutional conundrum outlined above, it does not provide the genesis of this study. Rather, this study seeks to uncover administrative views of workforce issues, then consider these views in light of the environment in which Chief Academic Officers work. What is of interest, is whether a specific environmental attribute or set of attributes are closely associated with identifiable beliefs regarding workforce development issues. As such, conflicts over allocation of resources, management, leadership, administrative style, or followership will be considered only as part of the definition of the problem, not as support for the analysis or interpretation of data.

In addition, this study seeks explanation of administrative beliefs only in regard to issues related to the importance of workforce development. Correlation, explanation, or comparisons between environmental attributes and other institutional priorities may be identifiable through analysis of the data gathered for this project, but these are not the intent of this project.

Research questions

The research questions associated with the purpose that this study seeks to answer are:

1. How do chief academic officers make sense of workforce education issues within their institution?

2. What are the perceptions of contextual factors by Chief Academic Officers and in what way do these perceptions shape or influence perspectives of workforce development?

Design of This Study

This study uses qualitative techniques to gather data and appropriate techniques for analysis pertinent to the research questions and purpose suggested earlier. Semi-structured interviews, conducted in person, probed for specific environmental attributes that are associated with workforce beliefs, but also allow the chief academic officer latitude in explaining his or her beliefs. Intertwined with probes regarding the environment or context in which each chief academic officer works are questions regarding the personal background of each of the informants. An understanding of the context, along with personal attributes completes the picture of administrative beliefs.

The interviews were detailed, seeking to elucidate those aspects of the subject's work along with the environmental factors that have provided influence on his or her perception of workforce development.

Organization of This Study

This current chapter introduces the problem, states the purpose, and provides the context for the study.

Chapter two is divided into two parts. Part one provides an in-depth exploration of the issues facing community colleges regarding institutional mission and the ways in which the faculty, staff and administration view this mission further define the problem. Part two focuses upon the need for community college participation in workforce related education.

Chapter three provides an explanation of the research techniques used in answering the research questions, plus the rational for their use. Chapter four presents the data gathered from the qualitative research, and Chapter five provides an interpretation of the data. Chapter five also includes a section on future steps in the continuing research around the problems associated with workforce development in community colleges plus suggested additional questions generated by this study.

Chapter Two

A Review of the Literature

This chapter is intended to provide a foundational understanding of the environment in which the issues related to workforce development at community colleges reside. Part one provides an overview of the evolution of American community colleges, focusing on the movement from status as a two-year junior college to the current condition of a comprehensive community college. Within this section, the contentious arguments for and against the workforce development role will be examined.

Part two moves beyond the origins and evolution of the college, and examines current literature that is both supportive and descriptive of current workforce programs. Here will be highlighted success stories, along with the reasons some colleges have embraced workforce programs, while others have decided against it.

The Evolution of the Comprehensive Community College

From humble origins in the early 1900s, America's community colleges have endured a state of constant evolution and reformation that has seen their role expand from that of the traditional two-year junior college with a focus on education for transfer, to a comprehensive postsecondary educational institution designed to meet the changing needs of the community in which they reside. A full and detailed history of the community college is provided by Cohen and Brawer (1989), so specific details of the growth, evolution and transformations will be left to the text of their book. Rather, this section will highlight the key elements of vocational, workforce and technical education that underpin the current state of such instruction and education in community colleges.

Terms used to describe the educational offerings of community or junior colleges have evolved along with the institutions themselves, such that we only now have a widely accepted nomenclature for workforce related education. Early on, junior colleges offered courses of study that were considered either *general studies*, leading to transfer to a baccalaureate granting institution, or *terminal,* studies that were not applicable to a baccalaureate degree. *Vocational* studies were terminal studies that usually prepared people for work in agriculture, the trades or sales. *Semi-professional* studies were for the preparation of future employees in engineering technology, or as laboratory technicians, while *technical* training or instruction usually implied preparation for work in scientific or industrial fields (Cohen and Brawer, 1989, p. 199-201). Some new terms are current with expanded college roles outside of general studies. *Contract training,* comprises those courses of training delivered "firm-specific" where an industry, company or governmental institution pays all or some of the cost for specific deliverables (Dougherty and Bakia, 2000, p. 2). *Customized training*, is considered to include credit or non-credit instruction that meets specifically articulated employer or community needs while *workforce development* includes programs that provide individuals with the competencies necessary for employment – including technical skills, basic academics, and "soft skills" such as motivation, reliability and teamwork (Grubb, 1999, p. 3). *Economic development* is an additional term defined by Grubb et al. (1997) that indicates the community college's efforts (other than providing courses) that stabilize or increase employment in their community. He also defines *community development* as the ways in which a college promotes the well-being of their community in political, social or cultural areas. Throughout this study, the term *workforce education* will be used to indicate a broad

range of education and training alternatives, all of which prepare students for entry-level employment or enhances employment and career potential for current workers.

Regardless of the specific terminology used to describe the expanded role of community colleges, scholars agree that in many cases, the new functions have created a college within a college, operating with new culture, under new rules, and with little regulation. Authors Jacobs and Teahen (1997) coined the term "shadow college" to describe the non-credit granting functions that operate within a comprehensive community college specifically to meet workforce and community development needs. "Shadow" was the chosen descriptor, because these functions are not usually recognized when citizens think of the community college, and because they reside in the shadow of the traditional institution. Grubb et al. (1997) use the term *entrepreneurial college* to describe similar functions within an established institution. The reality for community college administrators is that clean demarcation of functions, whether in new and entrepreneurial functions, or in enhancement of traditional functions, is difficult to achieve.

When relating the enhanced efforts of colleges in the arena of workforce education an understanding of the actual functions of the typical comprehensive college has been difficult to achieve, not so much because of a lack of familiarity, but from the fact that the "regular or typical community college is not necessarily a traditional education institution at all" (Grubb, 1997 p. 1). Grubb describes the comprehensive community college as providing offerings in thee areas. General studies, targeted at students seeking eventual transfer to four-year baccalaureate granting colleges, comprises roughly half of the course offerings in most colleges. Occupational education, designed to offer a

terminal associate's degree with an emphasis in a technical skill area and readily applied to the work place, provides the other half. Community education, or recreational education for community interest, contributes a varying amount to the overall college bottom line. The atypical or non-traditional aspects center on areas such as remediation and workforce development (Grubb, 1999).

Remembering from chapter one that the purpose of this study is to determine the perceived importance of issues related to local workforce development to community college administrators, it is in the non-traditional areas described by Grubb that the tension addressed by this project lies.

The Case for Workforce Education

Over the last 20 years, business leaders, educators and policymakers have devoted substantial time and effort to the issues of workforce education and readiness in an era of rapidly emerging technology, global competition and a re-defined workplace. Many have begun to question the ability of the American worker to compete in this new environment, and certain government reports have explicitly articulated perceived and actual shortcomings of the workforce. Authors of *A Nation at Risk* (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), *The Forgotten Half* (Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship, W. T. Grant Foundation, 1988), and *America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages?* (Commission on the Study of the American Workforce, 1990) conclude that the educational system, and the workforce it produces, are not up to the challenges created by the new business environment. An aging workforce, lack of technical knowledge, and an overall lack of workplace readiness are among the specific

problems in the workforce outlined by the Secretaries Commission an Achieving

Necessary Skills Report (U. S. Department of Labor, 1991).

In response, America's community colleges have been given and have accepted a key

role in workforce education. Of the early responses to the challenge created by

workforce education, Kazis (1994) expresses an emerging opinion:

> It is no surprise…that the two-year college is seen by many as the most
> appropriate institution for the delivery of the technical skill training in this
> country and, therefore, as the logical post secondary partner…linking
> school to work. (p. 3)

As cited in the Introduction, Day, writing for the Commission on Workforce and

Community Development of the American Association of Community Colleges (1997),

responds to the call by suggesting that community colleges are not just a key provider,

but instead the primary provider, of lifelong workforce training. His rationale is

compelling:

- The nation's 1,300 community colleges are strategically located such that 95 % of the

  U. S. population is within 25 miles of a community college.

- A majority of first-year college freshmen, minority students and women, are enrolled

  in a community college.

- 80% of business surveyed were familiar with or had used community college

  services.

- Businesses perceived community college workforce education as cost-effective, of

  high quality, and available in a desirable location.

According to Day, no other institutional type offers the expertise, location and reputation

as do community colleges.

Griffith and Conner (1994) state the importance of community colleges to workforce development even more clearly:

> The point is that perhaps never before in their half century or so of existence have the community colleges of America been so well positioned to play a major role in America's future. If we as a nation decide that "high skills" is our route to the future, there is no better institution than the community college system to address the massive education effort this will require. (p. 80)

Why Community Colleges?

A number of reasons make community colleges the vendor of choice for providing workforce education, especially when compared to the competition. Community colleges may compete with public and private postsecondary vocational schools, four-year colleges, equipment makers, consultants, private training services, unions and professional organizations, yet they usually come out ahead when workforce education is contracted (Dougherty and Bakia, 2000). So what makes the community college so attractive for employers?

Lower cost. One reason employers choose local community colleges as their provider of workforce education is cost. Indeed, Zeiss et al. (1997) surveyed approximately 2,500 employers who had done business with their local community college, and found that, when asked why they selected the community college for workforce education, 68% checked "cost effective value for money invested (p. 45-46). Zeiss cites a number of factors that contribute to the unique competitive position enjoyed by community colleges when cost is considered.

Classrooms and labs originally constructed for traditional educational offerings often make excellent facilities for workforce education when re-purposed for use during otherwise idle hours. These facilities, built with public money, often are world-class in

quality, and highly desirable to employers. In what amounts to indirect government subsidy of corporate training, colleges have become adept at leveraging their physical plant within the community to keep costs low and quality high.

The ability to recruit faculty specifically for the purpose of teaching in workforce education programs, at a lower rate, also contributes to lower the cost of training to employers. Zeiss, as cited in Dougherty and Bakia (2000), indicates that trainers and part-time faculty members are willing to work for a college for less money, because it gives them greater credibility and more exposure (p. 8).

Perhaps most important in keeping cost low is direct government subsidy of workforce education through grants and contracts that come under the guise of economic development. Many states, with Michigan among them, offer substantial grant programs to employers who partner with community colleges for workforce education and training. This subsidy, under programs that Grubb (1997) describes as *categorical funding,* provide colleges with direct or competitive grants specifically to address the workforce education needs of employers. Typically, these categorical funds come with strong regulations attached so that colleges use them only for education and training that meet the greater good of society. This is in contrast to what Grubb describes as mere public subsidy to private employers that occurs when little regulation is involved (p. 27). Overall, the resources for workforce education come from a combination of regular state funding for community colleges, categorical funding, local tax revenue, employer payments of tuition or for contracted services, and occasionally, student tuition.

Academics, reputation, and flexibility

The very nature of community college education and the position of the college within all of higher education make it attractive to employers as a provider of workforce education. While four-year colleges occasionally compete with the community college in some locations, they are usually viewed as being too rigid and credential driven to offer the education and training employers want. Course development, curricular changes and even scheduling situations that take months to address in a four-year college can be dealt with in a few days by the community college. Further, most community colleges are willing to accommodate employers' desires on what, when and where to teach, offering curricula tailored to specific employer needs. Community colleges appear to be more willing to provide offerings at employer sites, through distance education, on weekends or at night (Zeiss cited in Dougherty and Bakia, 2000, p. 9).

At the same time, community colleges hold a competitive advantage over most private or public vocational schools due to their ability to offer coursework and training programs that are part of an associate's or bachelor's degree program. While proprietary schools may be even more flexible than many community colleges in customizing a training program, the fact that community college-based training is more prestigious than that of a pure vocational school is of interest to employers (Cantor, 1992). Community colleges also benefit from the perception that they are more reliable and here to stay. Proprietary schools are seen as less stable or reliable in the long term.

Benefits to the College

Community colleges enjoy three primary benefits from increased participation in efforts related to workforce education.

An enrollment boost. Without question, workforce education brings new students to the college. Contracted training provides an immediate, albeit short term shot to student numbers that may be dramatic in the case of a large contract with an area employer. Even better, contracted training occasionally results in additional enrollments when students find an interest beyond the narrow boundaries of the training they were sent for, and they enroll in additional courses. Other students may attend when they spy job openings with area employers that require skills that can be acquired at the local college (Dougherty and Bakia, 2000)

New Revenue. While contracted or customized workforce education and training is a money-maker, there is the potential for enormous benefit beyond direct profit. Strong relationships with businesses have netted colleges equipment, facilities, personnel and community support that ranges far beyond a simple training agreement.

Political Benefit. Bailey and Averianova (1998) cite political influence as the most important benefit of close ties to the business community:

> Political support was the most important benefit of stronger ties with business. Engaging in politically popular activities such as workforce development can build political support for all of the colleges functions. Since community colleges are funded primarily by state and local public funds, this form of political cross-subsidization may be more important than economic cross-subsidization based on generating surplus revenues through charging fees for economic an workforce development functions. (p. 26)

Keeping abreast of business's technical needs. Community colleges can benefit from close relationships with employers through workforce related education involving employers more deeply with issues such as pedagogy, curriculum development, facilities planning, or student placement. The new economic development role has kept community colleges more current with the technology of business resulting in more up-

to-date instructional activities. This is particularly important as colleges face more and more competition from private colleges and training centers (Bailey and Averianova, 1998, p. 27).

Tensions

While a thriving effort to better address the workforce education needs of the local community is a reasoned effort that has benefit to the community college, these efforts are not without their detractors. Forces residing both within and without of the college view workforce education from a different perspective and contributing to these differing views is the question of the mission. Beyond mission, however, are even more basic issues from the political and economic areas that fuel the flames of tension over the role of workforce education in the community college.

Many community college scholars and practitioners still consider providing transferable liberal arts education and enhancing access to higher education as the core function of the college (Brint and Karabel, 1989). It is through this function that community colleges realize their mission as the nation's primary provider of access to higher education. Balancing this assertion is the bona fide growth of workforce related education experienced by colleges nationwide. Other programs, tied to both the academic and vocational functions have grown along with colleges as a whole, so that most institutions are now described as comprehensive community colleges (Griffith and Conner, 1994, p. xiii). Cohen and Brawer (1996) assert that enrollments in traditional liberal arts at community colleges have declined steadily since the 1940s and that the drop became precipitous in the 1960s and 70s when enrollment in vocational programs skyrocketed.

Assuming that America's community colleges began as transfer focused institutions that later grew into their comprehensive roles that also maintained their original mission, critics of the growth of workforce education point to workforce programs as taking valuable institutional resources away from the core function. The resources in question are not all financial. Indeed, Dougherty and Bakia (2000, p. 18) describe administrative time and attention as a finite entity, and as such, consumed by whatever projects require the most effort while at the same time offering the most reward. Currently, this appears to be workforce related education. As a result, less energy and effort is given to transfer programs, and the high maintenance and often fragile articulation agreements necessary for easy transfer feel the effect of the lack of attention. The result is increased difficulty for students in transfer process.

Dougherty's earlier work (1994) goes even further in asserting that damage done to transfer programs by workforce related education is substantial:

> The community college's concern with vocational education has led it to stint on transfer education, as it has shifted funds and attention to developing vocational programs. And its purpose of saving the state money by being a two-year commuter institution has meant that it has renounced such important means of promoting student retention and baccalaureate success as providing a campus residential life and upper division programs. (p. 8)

The potential effect of increased emphasis on workforce related education on other programs cannot be overstated. Take for example, remediation.

Grubb and Kalman (1994) provide evidence that the remedial function of the community colleges is increasing, with between 25 and 78 percent of all students enrolled in some kind of remedial course. This trend is likely to increase as public four-year institutions attempt to shore-up their image by increasing admission standards and

backing away from remediation. Community colleges remain the only institution of higher education that appears interested in serving this function (Cohen and Brawer, 1996), but at what cost? The financial repercussions of an increased role in workforce education are also apparent. Grubb et al. (1997) suggest that as workforce education, under what he calls he entrepreneurial college, continues to grow and become increasing well funded, the traditional roles of transfer and remedial education will become starved for scarce economic and political resources. This potential problem is highlighted by data provided in a 1991 study that shows employers paying approximately 42% of the actual cost of contracted training for workforce education, with the remainder coming from student tuition and governmental (both state and local) funding (Lynch, Palmer and Grubb, 1991). When considered in a holistic sense, it becomes apparent that increasing and conflicting demands on finite resources like remedial and workforce education, will result in internally and externally generated tension within the college. Grubb worries that internal tension generated by faculty and staff who support or are against workforce related education may essentially divide colleges into two institutions: the regular college, that which tends to be more student-centered and operating according to established institutional practices, and the entrepreneurial college, which is more employer and market oriented (Grubb, 1997, p. 35).

Theoretical Aspects of the Debate

Little question remains as to whether there resides within community colleges, two camps near the battleground of workforce related education. It is expected that, while those in favor of workforce education efforts will continue to gain valuable ground, nay-sayers will continue the battle with sustained enthusiasm. Underpinning the continued

fight over workforce education are theories from political science and sociology that help to inform the debate and provide understanding of the deep-rooted feelings regarding this issue.

Dougherty (1994) is an excellent source of information about the theoretical foundations of community colleges, and his application of three predominate perspectives roughly circumscribe the issues associated with the continued debate over the vocational and work-focused function.

Pluralist functionalism. Advocates describe the community college as serving several central needs of society: providing college opportunity, training middle-level workers, and preserving the academic excellence of our universities. As such, community colleges democratize college access by being inexpensive, located close to population centers, and adhering to "open-door" admissions policies thus making a college education accessible to anyone. These claims draw upon the *functionalist* theories of sociology as applied to education by several authors and cited by Dougherty (1994). The functionalist theory focuses upon the ways in which an organization serves the fundamental needs of society, which in the case of education includes the perpetuation of the values and norms of society, the preparation of people for work, providing opportunity for social mobility and the creation of new knowledge.

Functionalists support the involvement of the community college in workforce education, citing the need for a highly skilled workforce and the upward mobility offered by a community college education. Most college administrators no doubt subscribe to a functionalist view.

Instrumentalist Marxist. Critics of workforce education point to Marxist theory as illustrative of the role played in society by community colleges, especially in regard to perpetuation of social class. They argue that the community college is a democratizing institution only in word, and that in practice it actually contributes to the reproduction of the class inequalities of a capitalist society (Dougherty, 1994, p. 18). Colleges do this in two specific ways.

First, colleges provide employers with workers who are trained either totally with public money or with substantial public subsidies. These workers fit smoothly into the corporate structure, and they bring lowered expectations and a willingness to accept an authoritarian workplace (Pincus, 1980). Pincus (1986) becomes even more pointed in his criticism of college involvement with training programs for business as he describes the relationship between colleges and businesses involved in contracted training. He maintains that business has much to gain in regard to the low-cost training offered by the local community college, and indeed the college gains some things also. His concern, however, is the cost to the college related to engaging in such a contract. Specifically, Pincus suggests that the allure of new funding sources will allow business an increasingly large role in setting college curriculum and making college policy such that eventually, the distinction between education and training at the college will be totally lost (p. 49). At a point, the college will be nearly 100% dependent upon local employers and the training of their employees to stay in business. This relationship amounts to state supported enterprise, an activity closely related to Marxist thought.

Second, community colleges maintain class inequality by supporting student inheritance of their parents' social class position. Zwerling (1976) holds that:

Not only is maintaining the social hierarchy a primary function of the
community college, but the community college is also remarkably
effective at the job. It takes students whose parents are characterized
primarily by low income and educational achievement and slots them into
the lower ranks of the industrial and commercial hierarchy. The
community college is in fact a social defense mechanism that resists
change in the social structure. (p. xix)

Karabel (1986) re-asserts a similar opinion in that the expansion of the community

college has contributed to the reproduction of existing patterns of social and economic

inequality. Far from increasing the rate of social mobility or the level of economic

equality, colleges have in fact, codified the very social structures they say they seek to

change. Much the same as state subsidy of enterprise, maintaining social class is one of

the hallmarks of Marxist political theory.

Institutionalist. As Karabel's thinking matured, he shifted away from a Marxist

perspective on the growth and proliferation of workforce related education and moved to

an institutional base. In 1989, he teamed with Brint (Brint and Karabel, 1989) to consider

the institutional dynamics of growth, and the fact that community college vocational

programs flourished even without significant business or student pressures. As such, they

synthesized what is termed an *institutionalist* theory as explanation of community college

growth. Within this theory there is embedded the notion that the larger state universities

use community colleges to protect their academic and social exclusivity even in the face

of mounting pressure for admission by masses of students. The state universities have

actively supported community colleges as an alternative to the four-year university and,

in fact, helped mold the educational offerings of community colleges to meet the crush of

less-well prepared students. Clearly, community colleges act to maintain the elite status

of baccalaureate degree institutions by placating the masses who seek higher education.

Succinct statements summarize this explanation:

> For the higher education system to function properly, two-year students must somehow be diverted from the four-year schools. The scarcity of the bachelor's degree must be protected…This diversionary role of the two-year college is, again, not accidental, but an intended, intrinsic function of these schools within state systems. (Nasaw, 1979' p. 228)

Birenbaum echoes Nasaw by providing this analysis:

> For millions of students, community colleges are indeed a doorway to higher education, but they also serve as filters for the senior system. To keep their doors open, to remain respectable filters, they are pressured to honor the curricular values and styles of those very colleges that originally rejected many of the students whom they admit. The senior colleges, eager to embrace the cream of the two-year college crop, count on them to be effective filters, but at some point, filters close the doors of opportunity for those who are filtered. (Birenbaum, 1986, p. 10)

What Birenbaum and Nasaw are saying is that, for the majority of students who enroll in community colleges with the stated intention of transferring to a baccalaureate granting institution, community colleges have a way of "weeding out" all except the very best and brightest. The institutional conspiracy contrived by universities and public officials provides yet another part of the overall explanation for the growth of workforce education, but also allows for criticism.

As suggested earlier, Dougherty (1994) is a prime source for the distillation of the theories that underpin criticism of the workforce education roll of community college, but he does not stop with explanations of the work of others. In fact, Dougherty finds the functionalist, instrumental Marxist and institutionalist theories to be inadequate for the explanation of the growth of community colleges and the vocational aspect in particular. He proposes instead, an explanation he calls the *state relative autonomy* perspective.

In this theory, Dougherty suggests that the growth of community colleges is a result of public officials acting in their own self-interest. Local school officials founded community colleges because it brought them prestige and admiration within the community. Elected officials recognized the worth of colleges in supporting re-election, both by providing grass-roots level access to higher education, and by keeping overall state expenditures for higher education lower. The role of business and other private special interest groups is important, because they derive direct benefit from the proliferation of community colleges and the education they provide for the workforce. Employers are willing to support those officials who they see helping them achieve their goals. The result is a system where the autonomous nature of community colleges has allowed a wide variety of public officials to benefit from by building the system, thus providing impetus to do so.

The attachment of the state relative autonomy theory to the increased effort that community colleges place on workforce education makes sense as Dougherty (1994) provides the specific statement:

> Even without business prompting, many government officials have strongly supported vocationally oriented community colleges because they believe that vocational education benefits society as a whole and groups that they value in particular. Most policymakers firmly believe that what is good for business is on the whole good for the entire community, for business constitutes the core of our economy and therefore of our society. (p. 29)

Note that this theory is not a direct extension of instrumentalist Marxism. Under the state relative authority scheme, public officials support growth workplace education for their own direct gains rather than for the specific needs of the business community. The fact

that business benefits from this support is important to the official, but it is not the bottom-line reasoning behind the support.

Further explanation is provided in Dougherty and Bakia (2000).

> We argue that the most convincing explanation of the rise in contract training [workforce education] is one that--while acknowledging the powerful role of business pressure--also stresses the key role of community colleges and government bodies pursuing interests and values of their own. Community colleges and government bodies need to extract resources from their environment and this leads them to be active, modifying their environment as much as being modified by it. But we don't want to exaggerate the degree of autonomy community colleges and government bodies enjoy. They are still constrained—though not commanded – by business pressure, capitalist culture and the power of business to invest or dis-invest in an area's economy. (p. 5)

After thorough analysis of the theories that attempt to address the growth of workforce-focused education within community colleges, it is safe to assert that no singly identifiable action, group, policy or force is responsible. Rather, it is a complex set of sociological, political, and economic forces that have shaped the community college into the complex institution we see today. Individual administrators who hold perceptions about their college, especially in regard to the role of workforce-focused education, will likely subscribe to one or more of these theories, and determining which theory supports administrative perceptions is a collateral aspect of what this study hopes to achieve.

The Conundrum of Mission

The mission of the American community college is a long-debated, and sometimes hotly contested matter among academics and practitioners alike. As they continue to take on an increasingly large variety of programs and functions, they will continue to undergo a significant shift in focus. Through open-door admissions, they are still crucial providers of access to higher education, especially to minorities and working adults.

Further, community colleges continue to take responsibility for functions necessary in society, but that no other higher-education institution wishes to do. Remedial education and community service are two such functions. The overlay of opportunities in areas such as workforce education, whether through existing vocational education or through new initiatives such as contract training, serve to buttress the comprehensive nature of the community college that administrators, policymakers and the public have come to hold in high esteem (Bailey and Averianova, 1998).

Alternative views posit the myriad of functions comprising the comprehensive community college as a detriment—that the comprehensive college lacks a clear purpose and as such, is a weaker institution. Implicit in this argument is the understanding that in most cases, organizations need clear and shared visions to be effective. Less than that opens the possibility for competition over scarce resources, fractures in the mission, and an aimless wandering of institutional purpose (Senge, 1994). While the focus of this study is on the attributes that contribute to the ways in which administrators view workforce education, community college practitioners, including faculty, administrators and presidents, view the mission of their institution in different ways and these are an importance aspect of this study.

Faculty views of institutional mission were surveyed in 1995-96 by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, and reported on by Brewer in 2000 (Brewer, 2000). This survey of 1,700 individuals in 92 institutions asked a random sampling of community college faculty members to identify those aspects of institutional mission they feel are most important, and what the actual mission of their college appears to be. When asked to identify the most important aspect of the current mission of their

college, the results were evenly split between workforce preparation (28.1%) and the transfer function (27.1%). The additional functions of basic skills (16.2 %) and community service (6.2%) were distant finishers in the rating.

Results were somewhat different when respondents were asked to provide their rating of the *ideal* mission; 33% said workforce preparation (a five% increase over the perception of actual) while basic skills were rated even lower as ideals. This result indicates that the faculty generally offer more support to workforce education, yet they do not see their institutions offering quite the same level. Not surprising, faculty members in vocational or workforce related programs favor workplace education as the primary mission (47.5%) while only 21.4% of the academic faculty believe workforce preparation is most important. What is most surprising, is that both academic and vocational faculty rate basic skills education and community service lowest among the four choices. The appearance is that community service (usually comprised of non-credit courses) is of little importance, and basic skills education is characterized by Brewer (2000, p. 2) as "a necessary evil" within the college.

Similar survey data from presidents or other administrators appears lacking in the literature, yet some inferences can be made from the readings that are available. Specifically, authors that operate from within the community college such as Lorenzo (1998) and Jacobs (1997), as well as those scholars like Grubb (1997), Bailey (1998), Zeiss (1998), Alfred (1998), and Alfred and Cantor (2000) that practice at research universities, are in general agreement that community colleges can and should provide local employers with workforce education. This should include non-credit, customized or traditionally formatted coursework. While dissention (as outlined above) exists, the

consensus is that the broad vision of community colleges as a whole, and the specific missions of individual colleges, give clear license for the accommodation of workforce education within the college as well as the proliferation of college sponsored programs within the community.

The upshot of these survey results is further solidification of the perception of conflicting views of the primary mission of the college, this time, among the faculty. This becomes problematic as colleges continue to expand services into community education, especially in non-credit training for workforce education. Summarizing the argument in support of community college participation in workforce education, Zeiss, himself a community college president, responded to a question as to whether involvement in job-training would be sacrificing the core values and mission of community colleges:

> His reply: On the contrary, most colleges will violate their core values and their mission if they don't adapt to meet the needs of their students and their communities. (Zeiss, 1998, p. 13)

Summary of the Literature Review

The following passage from Alfred and Carter (2000) in a small way, summarizes the review of the literature germane to the problem addressed by this study:

> "We are in the business of education, not training" or "General education does not get students jobs." How often do we see faculty engaged in intense discussions about what constitutes "education"? The education/training debate is as old as community colleges themselves. In pitting faculty with different backgrounds, expertise and belief systems against one another, it is perhaps the foremost tension the blocks effective change in our colleges." (p. 7)

Easily, the term administrators could be substituted for faculty, such that administrators with different backgrounds, expertise and belief systems are pitted against one another

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over the priority given to workforce education and training versus the transfer, community service or other roles of the comprehensive community college.

The literature is full of support for the expansion of the community college role in workforce education. In fact, governmental policy, community pressure, and most interpretations of the fundamental role of the local college within the community, suggest that colleges can and should be involved in local workforce education. The benefits to the community and the college are substantial.

Smaller in number, are the nay-sayers, mostly members of the academy who see community college occupational, vocational or workforce education as a "dead-end" tracking students toward lower paying jobs to the benefit of local employers. Not that these critical views are without theoretical foundation. Indeed, well-documented theories provide plausible arguments both in support of, and highly critical of, the workforce related education function. Of the theories outlined, the institutionalist and the state relative autonomy theories appear to be the ones most commonly drawn upon as providing explanation for the continued growth of workforce education.

Faculty members appear equally divided in their view of workforce education, some seeing the transfer function as more important within their college, while others agree that education for work is most important. No comprehensive analysis of the overall opinion of administrator views on the topic are available, but the growth of such programs would indicate that college decision-makers and leaders are in favor of continued growth. What is left then, is to understand the nature and composition of contextual attributes that contribute to the perspectives of Chief Academic Officers regarding workforce education, which in fact, is the purpose of this study.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to determine the perspectives of Chief Academic Officers in community colleges regarding issues related to local workforce development and the ways in which education, experience, family history, environment and other factors have shaped and influenced these perspectives. As a means to address this purpose, the study attempts to find answers to specific research questions addressing perspectives directed toward workforce issues:

1. How do Chief Academic Officers make sense of workforce development issues within their institution?

2. What are the perceptions of contextual factors by Chief Academic Officers and in what way do these perceptions shape or influence perspectives of workforce development?

Research Design

This study makes use of qualitative methodology, based upon interviews of Chief Academic Officers (Patton, 1990). Analysis of these data was aimed at generating a conceptual understanding of administrative perspectives regarding workforce education issues within community colleges. Through this method a description of the perspectives of workforce education plus a description of the factors that inform these perspectives was generated.

Role of the Researcher

> Qualitative research is interpretative research. As such, the biases, values and judgement of the researcher become stated explicitly in the research report. Such openness is considered to be useful and positive. (Locke, Spirduso and Silverman, 1987, cited in Cresswell, 1994, p. 147)

This research project was not approached with a blank slate. Rather, the interests, experiences and personal struggles of the author in answering the research questions served as a source of motivation for completion of the work. The author's experience as both a faculty member and administrator in two different community colleges has provided exposure to the tensions, both personal and institutional, that surround the issue of workforce oriented education. In fact, it is the observation of this tension and the ways in which it has effected my former employers that provides the interest in the topic. My teaching and administrative work has always been in the "occupational" or work related side of the college. Therefore, I bring to this project, a strong affinity for workforce education, not at the expense of transfer or remedial programs, but as an equal partner within the institution.

Context

Community colleges exist in a variety of political, bureaucratic and economic environments, each operating autonomously and governed by its own independent board. Many states hold little control over curriculum, course offerings or college operations, so each college is free to establish its own priorities and chart its own course. Most community colleges would likely describe themselves as, what Bailey (1998) would term "comprehensive", in that they offer a full range of transfer, work-focused and remedial education.

Each college is free to organize its administration, but the most common structure has at the top, a president (or chancellor in a multi-campus college) with a number of vice-presidents on the next level. Among the vice-presidents there usually is one identified as, or who serves the function of, "vice-president for academic affairs". This individual

exercises the most direct influence upon the teaching and learning in the college, and it is this individual that is most likely to be responsible for maintaining an appropriate institutional balance within the comprehensive college. The vice-president for academic affairs, (identified in some colleges as the provost, dean of academic affairs or various other titles) holds a position that is considered the community college Chief Academic Officer (CAO) (K. Snow, personal communication, April 15, 2001).

Selection of the sample

Eight chief academic officers (CAO) at Midwestern community colleges were identified and semi-structured interviews were conducted with each. The selection of CAOs to interview was based upon what Patton (1990) calls *maximum variation sampling*. With this technique of identifying subjects, the goal was to "capture and describe central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of participant or program variation" (p. 172). This method of subject selection was particularly useful, as the study seeks not to generalize findings to large groups of chief academic officers, but to uncover information that elucidates programmatic variation and significant common patterns within that variation. In order to identify cases appropriate for study, a network of colleagues employed at community colleges around the United States was employed.

As an initial point of contact, letters of introduction were mailed to CAOs identified through the collegial network. This letter briefly described the study and set the stage for formal inquiry regarding the CAO's interest in participating. Follow up phone calls determined the level of interest in participation, and began the process of arranging interview times and places. The follow-up phone call allowed for discussion of factors

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such as the involvement of institutional research offices, permissions, or protocol as well as provided opportunity to answer questions regarding the project.

Upon verbal agreement to participate in the study, and preliminary agreement upon a time and place for the interview to take place, a formal letter of agreement was mailed. This letter provided an outline of the standard interview protocol, statements of confidentiality, proper UCRIHS documentation, a consent form (a signed copy of which was returned to the interviewer) and an enhanced description of the study.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the eight CAOs selected for inclusion in this study. These interviews focused upon two primary areas, the self-reported perspectives regarding workforce related education, and the factors such as work environment or experience that provided the individual with the meaning making that informs the perspective. The interview technique allowed for the interviewer to provide direction for the interview, yet allowed the interviewee the opportunity to elaborate in some areas while providing limited information in others (Patton, 1990). Leedy (1997) suggests that this type of data collection involves starting with broad questions, then offers additional probes seeking elaboration on points specifically associated with the aim of the study. In this way the interviewer directs the interview toward the acquisition of specific information, yet the informant has adequate latitude in providing the information he or she determines most important. This method was chosen as it is designed to minimize the impact of interviewer effect upon the data gathered. An interview guide was established and pilot tested prior to use with actual study subjects. Prior to collecting formal interview data, a pilot test of the semi-structured interview was conducted as a

means of refining the protocol, practicing the timing and sequence of questions, and testing the relevance of questions intended to be asked.

Interviews were arranged to occur at each of the colleges with the exception of Orange Community College and Vice-President Smithers. This interview was conducted at a local hotel where Smithers was attending a meeting. Each interview was approximately 90 minutes in length. Minor collateral information from document review was gathered as near to the time of the interview as possible, usually the same day as the interview.

Each interview was recorded and then transcribed. Additional notes from observations and document review relevant to the collection of data were added, such that the complete folder of information about each CAO, and notes on his or her college was assembled into a "case study" after which the case materials were analyzed according to the design provided below.

Documents

Additional data collection, through document analysis, provided minimal anecdotal evidence of the institutional climate for work-focused education. The specific intent was to examine the web-sites, college catalogs, schedule of courses and course descriptions of each college employer to gain a sense of the relative number and scope of course offerings dedicated to workforce education. While it was intended that document analysis would provide additional insight into the position and regard workforce development held within each college, it became apparent after two attempts to analyze documents, that these efforts held little hope of providing useful information. Rather, because this study focuses upon perceptions and perspectives of Chief Academic Officers, the decision was made to use only interviews for generating data.

Data Analysis

An *inductive* analysis (Patton, p. 390), based upon patterns, themes and categories that emerge from the data provided the bulk of information necessary to answer the research questions as stated. Fundamental to this method of analysis is the *case study* analysis of interview data, such as provided by Patton (p. 376). In the case study format, the semi-structured interview protocol constitutes a descriptive analytical framework for building a case, or complete description of the CAO being studied. Because similar questions are asked in each of the interviews conducted, and the questions are asked in somewhat the same order, each case reads in similar fashion without a mass re-organization of the data. Data analysis occurred concurrently with data collection. That is, I did not wait until all interviews are complete before getting into the data. By keeping close to the data, I achieved a more significant set of findings.

The actual analysis of each case study was built upon the inductive components that were *indigenous* in origin (Patton, p. 390). That is, certain categories and typologies were identified by those being studied. This means that information provided in case studies was organized around themes and patterns provided by cases themselves. For identifiable patterns and themes not specifically identified by participants, *analyst-constructed* typologies were produced such that data was organized in useful ways.

Once categories had been established, data was sorted, and descriptions of relevant themes and patterns was generated. These richly described themes and patterns provided the findings associated with this study, and it is these that will be interpreted in the later chapters of the final work.

Limitations

The limitations associated with qualitative research are well documented. Among them are bias and lack of generalizable findings. By recognizing and acknowledging personal bias in the analysis as stated earlier, all readers will be aware and all interpretation will be considered proper context. Findings associated with this study are not subjected to evaluations of *objectivity,* as is often a goal of research, rather, findings will be considered in light of what Patton (p. 481) terms *fairness.* In this way, multiple realities or truths are recognized, multiple perspectives on the data are accommodated, and the effect of the research project itself, on the subjects, is taken into account in the analysis and findings presented. Fairness is the term by which this study should be judged.

It is noted that findings associated with this study, or in fact most qualitative studies, are not generalizable to large populations. Instead, this study attempts to describe a bounded set of subjects in relation to a specific set of phenomena. Any generalization derived from the findings will be synthesized by the reader rather than the writer.

Chapter Four

Findings

In-depth interviews, along with targeted follow-up questions, provided the data

necessary to address the purpose of this study, which is to determine the perspectives of

Chief Academic Officers on issues of importance related to local workforce development

within their community college. Because these perspectives might vary based upon a

number of factors, the purpose is also to examine whether certain factors are associated

with perceptions, in what way, and why. This presentation of data is organized as a

thematic consideration of administrative perceptions of workforce development of

significance.

Eight separate interviews of Chief Academic Officers were conducted during the

summer of 2002. Purposeful sampling from among community colleges ensured a cross-

sectional representation. The description of each college is limited such that the

anonymity of the respondent is not compromised and each institution is given a fictitious

name of a color. When referred to in this description, the city in which the college resides

is referred to as the "color-town". Each CAO is named as the Vice-President of their

institution no matter what their actual position was titled, all CAOs are given a masculine

gender, and their names are assigned in a way to protect their actual identity. While this

is not indicative of the actual demographic or professional make-up of the group, this

way of referring to the individuals and the institutions involved helps to provide an

anonymous, yet personalized presentation of the findings.

The interviews provided insight and information regarding administrative perspectives

of workforce development. These insights show feelings of deep commitment to the

cause of workforce development, an allegiance to the community and meeting the needs of local residents and employers, and a commitment to meeting the needs of students of all types. In addition, perspectives that shape the foundational mission of the community college as well as challenge the relationship of education and training were illuminated. Further presentation and development of these perspectives comprise the majority of the rest of this presentation.

The Informants

The Chief Academic Officers participating in this study were seasoned veterans of the administrative ranks within community colleges, and they are characterized as being in the mid to later stages of their career. Three of the informants were women, and six of the eight held doctorate degrees. Of those earning Ph.D. credentials, two were classically educated in liberal arts disciplines while the others specialized in areas related to their position in administration. One of the individuals was of African ancestry, while the others appeared as a typical mix of people of northern European extraction.

Vice-President Hibbert grew up in what he terms "a Norman Rockwell" like setting in a suburban area of the East Coast. His parents were high-school educated civil servants, and he enjoyed the benefit of living and attending school through his undergraduate years within a "bike-ride distance from anywhere he needed to go." Hibbert was one of the four interviewees that attended Catholic high school and one of only two to attend a local community college. After community college he transferred to a small, regional university in his hometown and completed a bachelor's degree in history. As a result of his very positive experience with the teaching and learning process at the high school and community college levels, he decided on a career in teaching at the college level. This

took him to two major East Coast public universities in pursuit of a doctorate in history. Once this terminal degree was in hand, he specifically sought a teaching job at a community college, which brought him to his current employer, Red Community College. Here, Hibbert ascended the ranks from instructor, to department chair, and currently to Chief Academic Officer.

Red Community College is a small to medium size institution of approximately 4,000 students. It is located in a medium sized community that mixes light manufacturing, with significant specialized agriculture and a large amount of tourism. Redtown takes great pride in its diversified economy and highly regarded quality of life. Redtown continues to be one of the most rapidly growing communities in its state.

Vice-President Simpson has a background similar to that of Hibbert in that he grew up in a middle-class family, but Simpson's father was a college educated clergyman while his mother tended to the family. His hometown was a small Midwestern city that depended upon light manufacturing and agriculture for an economic foundation. Simpson attended public high school, a church-affiliated liberal arts four-year college, and he pursued a career as a traditional academic by earning a doctorate in English literature at a major Midwestern state university. Along the way to his terminal degree, he found himself teaching remedial writing in the evening, at the local urban community college. It was here that he was "turned-on" to the important role the community college plays within the system of higher education and it was this experience that convinced him to continue a career in community colleges. He began his formal teaching career by continuing to teach remedial writing (a pursuit he continues even as a Chief Academic

Officer), and like Hibbert, he rose through the ranks as department chair, Dean, and now CAO.

Simpson's employer, Blue Community College, is one of the smallest community colleges in his state with approximately 2,000 students. It is located in a heavily tourist orientated area. The community looks to Blue primarily for transfer education and except for a limited amount of training and one occupational education program, workforce development is non-existent.

Vice-President Wiggam grew up on a farm in an area considered isolated. His father was a public school teacher and his mother managed the farm. Catholic primary and secondary schools placed Wiggam clearly on a college-bound track, and he progressed through a major university eventually earning a degree in Nursing. This lead to faculty positions in Nursing education at various community colleges, then positions as a program manager, Dean, then Chief Academic Officer. Wiggam holds a master's degree in nursing. Wiggam works at Yellow Community College, a medium size college in a diversified industrial city about an hour drive from a major metropolitan area.

Vice-President Syslak has a different background. His mother was a nurse and father a tool maker. He attended Catholic schools and he left home at age 14 to attend seminary. During his high school days he developed skills as a baseball player, and he hoped to one-day join the professional ranks. Unfortunately, this did not work out, nor did a religious vocation. After high school, Syslak found himself as a bright and motivated 19 year-old possessing neither the skills for work nor the money for college so he enrolled in a short-term training program to become an x-ray technician. He earned his way through college by working in the local hospital at night and on weekends, and he graduated with

a bachelor's degree in teaching. His first job was as a high school teacher and baseball coach at a Catholic high school.

Low pay and long hours eventually forced Syslak to consider alternatives to teaching, and he soon took employment as a training coordinator for a hospital. During that time, most nursing and allied health education was done in-house, but as times changed, the educational programs migrated to the community college, and so did Syslak. Then, after joining the local community college as Dean of Allied Health programs, Syslak was able to move up the administrative ranks until now near the end of his career, he is in his current position at Black Community College. Along the way he earned a doctorate in educational administration.

Black is a large suburban college, serving an area that is considered wealthy and where most adult residents hold college degrees. Due to a large and well-diversified industrial base and high property values, Black Community College has more than ample financial resources. Vice-President Syslak perceives the community to look at Black as a "nice place to go to college, but not for my child", an image he is working hard to change. Syslak is especially proud of his investments in facilities and programs that align closely with local employers, and he considers many of his education and training programs to be the best in the country.

Vice-President Lovejoy is like Wiggam, a nurse. He grew up in a highly ethnic and urban neighborhood, attended public schools, the local urban university, and eventually earned a doctorate in educational administration from the same institution. He moved in and out of nursing education programs at both the community college and university levels, and eventually took the job of director of nursing at Pink Community College.

This large, multi-campus, urban college serves an ethnically diverse student population and has an extensive heavy manufacturing industry base. Lovejoy takes pride in the variety of programs the college offers, and now toward the end of his career, he seems to be particularly beholden to the needs of his student population.

Vice-President Flanders differs from the others as he is in his mid-forties (the youngest of those interviewed), he grew up in the south as the offspring of working class parents, and he worked his way thorough a historically black college in the south. There he earned a degree to become a high school counselor. After moving into the local community college, he climbed the latter of student services, earned a doctorate in education administration, and hopes to soon become a community college president. Flanders' college, Brown Community College, is large (about 16,000 students), has a diversified service area that includes urban, rural and suburban neighborhoods, and offers programs equally divided among transfer, occupational, business specific training.

Vice-President Smithers comes from a professional family. His parents were public school administrators, and he grew up clearly on track for a college education. A business and psychology major in college qualified him to teach business courses, so after a couple of failed business ventures, he took a job in a private two-year college that focused clearly on education for work. The unique emphasis on work-focused education at this college was Smithers first exposure to the application of knowledge in a specific context, and he developed a perspective that places this application as a priority in educational offerings. He works hard to carry this perspective into his work at Orange Community College. Unfortunately, he sees his president, governing board, and the community of Orangetown as more appreciative of the transfer function than workforce

development at Orange Community College. His college is small, and located in rural Orangetown County. Unique is the fact that over 75% of the adults living in Orangetown County leave the county for work each day.

Finally, there is Vice-President Burns. Burns characterized himself as a "hot-rodder", able to get through high school only because of the "take shop till you drop" practice of his high school counseling department. He left high school as a bright, but unmotivated student, and even though he was told repeatedly by his parents, high school teachers, and college officials that he had "no chance" of success, he enrolled in the local junior college. After completing two years there, he transferred to the local university branch in a program that provided special funding for non-traditional career majors. Eventually he earned a master's degree, and worked his way through the administrative ranks from the position of librarian through chair of information technology, and on to Chief Academic Officer. The junior college that told him he was bound for failure is now the community college for which he is Chief Academic Officer. Vice-President Burns offers interesting insights from the perspective of a developmental student throughout this study.

Burns' college, Purple Community College, is a medium sized college in a somewhat blighted urban setting. Purple offers extensive workforce development as well as the traditional transfer courses, and it is closely aligned with the local branch of a large state university.

Figure 1 provides a list of Chief Academic Officers who participated in this study and the college at which they work.

Figure 1: Vice-Presidents and the Colleges at Which They Work

Vice-President	College
Hibbert	Red Community College
Simpson	Blue Community College
Wiggam	Yellow Community College
Syslak	Black Community College
Lovejoy	Pink Community College
Flanders	Brown Community College
Smithers	Orange Community College
Burns	Purple Community College

Themes

The thematic organization of perspectives represents three ways of considering the

information provided during the course of the interviews. Specifically, some themes

represent common perspectives, shared by all or most of the Chief Academic Officers,

while other themes are issues that elicit wide variation of perspectives and for which

there is little agreement. Within each theme, a near-consensus may represent a

commonality of perspective, but one CAO may hold a dissenting opinion. Despite a lack

of agreement, these situations also represent themes.

Four major themes emerged from discussions with the Chief Academic Officers:

- Workforce development's many different definitions and its integral part of the comprehensive community college.
- Workforce development as education.
- Workforce development as training.
- The multiple factors, both intrinsic and extrinsic to the institution, that influence perspectives of on workforce development.

Among the themes presented, some were more pronounced than others, and some

hold more significance in that they form a window through which we can observe the

practice of administration. These themes with the most significance are described in

detail in the sections that follow.

The Definition, Meaning, and Role of Workforce Development Within The

Comprehensive Community College

The Community Colleges as Comprehensive

Prior to jumping into a description of specific perspectives of workforce development within each of the community colleges, it was important to gain an understand in a general way, how each Chief Academic Officer perceived his college.

All of the individuals interviewed for this study characterized their college as *comprehensive* in nature, and they defined comprehensive in the traditional sense of offering courses in occupational or work-focused education, general education or transfer, and community enrichment.

Vice-President Syslak offers the following perspective on his college's mission:

> "Well, there's three basic areas. One is, well, four actually. Transfer education, career education, continuing education, and business and development education. Those are the four areas."

Vice-President Flanders has a similar perspective:

> "We (are) pretty clear in defining (that) we weren't going to do everything, but we were going to be comprehensive. Our core mission was really going to be about the entities of education, that is developmental education, (and) what we call general education (or) transfer, the workforce development entity, (which includes) the career, employment and contracted training entity, and responding to community and personal interests."

This triad of course offerings forms the foundation for the mission of many community colleges, but has special significance in this study. In particular, as each CAO attempts to balance initiatives that constantly compete for finite resources, the admiration of the community, and his or her attention, workforce development may or may not be of highest priority to either the individual or the institution.

Vice-President Simpson indicates that he is comfortable in calling his college a comprehensive community college, and the fact that it offers programs and courses in each of the three major areas does indeed allow him to label the college that way. However, the emphasis is clearly on the transfer function.

Vice-President Smithers has a similar perspective:

> "The leaders of Orange Community College have always recognized the transfer function as the most important of the various college initiatives, so much so that when board members talk about the college's accomplishments, it is always in regard to "this attorney", "that physician", or the "business executive", who spent the first two years of their post-secondary education at Orange Community College. It is not important to the local leaders that the person transferred someplace else to complete their education, they are still identified as a product of Orange."

This is likely a direct reflection of the view of higher education held by the board and the community, and it is manifest in the credit hours generated, physical facilities, and the way in which resources were allocated in the past. Both Vice-Presidents Smithers and Simpson suggest that they are working to change the emphasis, not necessarily to build workforce development to a greater level than the transfer function, but to equalize the allocation of resources.

The Meaning of Workforce Development

Recognizing that workforce development is a fundamental aspect of the mission of each of community colleges represented, the CAOs were engaged in a discussion regarding the meaning of workforce development. There was commonality among responses in that workforce development is a broad, difficult to define concept.

Vice-President Wiggam considers workforce development in the most broad sense:

> "See, (in) my philosophy, it comes back to definition of what is workforce development. To me, everything we teach has an impact on workforce development. In an employment situation, every course we teach

augments and makes you a better employee and makes you more marketable. Everything has value, and I can give you specific examples (of) how you would use any one of (our) courses to not only improve your life in general, but to make you a better employee. So I've got a very broad based definition of workforce development."

Vice-President Simpson provides a comprehensive and more detailed definition:

"To me workforce development is a very complicated phrase. I'm not sure I know what it means. Let me just give you some initial sense of some of the facets that in my mind fall into workforce development. The simplest one would be the fairly straightforward credit granting role that the community college traditionally plays of preparing people to go right into the workforce once they finish their community college experience. That is a very traditional base point, but even that's not simple. Everywhere else it is muddier and more confusing. We have people getting what I would call traditional occupational certification in terms of degrees and diplomas and certificates (and some) who will come specifically to pick up a course or two. (But also), because their employer is paying for a course or two, or because they think they want to become a welder, (or because) they have lack of personal self-esteem or academic self-esteem or (because of) low financial conditions, they'll dip into (the college) for a short time. Those are workforce development issues as well. Another thing employers will do is look to the college as a training/ retraining venue. That is another variation. A lot of customized training, grant funded training, all of that to me falls under the same rubric. You have at the other end of the employer scene, someone whose plant has been closed. Those people need to find work. They'll turn to the community college for training and retraining for those people. So, it is a huge range of complex needs that to me fits into what (I call) workforce development."

While this paragraph is indicative of the perceived complexities of workforce development, Vice-President Lovejoy is conversely succinct in the two forms of workforce development he perceives:

"I see workforce development in two ways. I see it as learning a skill set and I see it as making yourself employable and making yourself mobile."

Based upon a shared perspective, workforce development is partially comprised of those courses that can more specifically be associated with *career and technical education, work-focused education, occupational education,* or in some older lexicons,

vocational education. These are the credit earning and often degree or certificate earning courses and programs within the traditional college structure. These are also the programs of study that lead to degrees or certificates in, for example, skilled trades such as welding, machining or construction, plus those programs in allied health and nursing that have similar characteristics. Note that in this perception of workforce development, the term education is clearly associated with skill acquisition.

The other component of workforce development are the courses of short duration that are skill specific and perhaps employer specific, and that are offered outside of the traditional academic structure. They are usually not credit earning, and they are often termed *contracted training*, because these courses are provided for a specific set of employees through a contract with the college. Vice-President Smithers defines this aspect of workforce development:

> "We have an entire division that's devoted to what we call Lifelong Learning. Within that is an area for contract training or short-term course work that is not credit bearing, and that is very specific."

Note the designation of training, and its differentiation from education.

For the purpose of this study, the term *workforce development* will be defined as an the umbrella under which a wide variety of specific activities, including work-focused education, contracted training, outreach, and a number of other work-related activities will be housed.

Education Versus Training

Underlying the CAO's perceptions of workforce development are strong and significant perspectives regarding the difference between education and training. The

differentiation of these two entities, while not perfectly clear, is a major point of administrative perspectives of workforce development.

Each of the CAOs involved in this study indicated strong support for the acquisition of general education or foundational skills in language arts, math, and the social sciences as part of occupational or workforce development programs. This combination of general education skills along with work-focused, technical skills is defined as *education*. This is different from *training* in the perspective of those interviewed, as training involves only those technical skills that are needed for short-term, limited job performance. Not that training lies outside of the influence of the community college. Indeed, each of the Chief Academic Officers involved maintain a strong training unit within their institution. Rather, training is often separated, both physically and functionally from the traditional college environment. CAO perspectives on training as part of workforce development are provided later in chapter four.

Vice-President Wiggam provides a perspective on the difference between education and training that reflects that of the other CAOs:

> "I think what we have to be careful of is that there's still recognition of the value of courses that employers often don't initially recognize as being valuable. I'll give you a specific example. I will hear from an employer, 'I just need somebody who can come in and do 'X'. Don't give me anything else. Just give me these very selected occupational courses.' Our response to them is that students can choose that, but we are going to tell (the student) to also take English, math, the other (general) courses, because what's going to happen is within six months, you're going to be complaining to us, 'why can't this person write? I need this person to be able to talk better, either to other employees, my customers. Why can't they do some critical thinking?' You're going to come back and say, 'Now you didn't prepare this person appropriately.' That will be a continuing tension as people want employees instantly, and at the same time, six weeks **training** doesn't give you what they really want, which is an **educated** person, but they often don't recognize it."

Within this quote, Vice-President Wiggam highlights a tension between short-term workforce development needs that are addressed through training, and long-term needs, which are better addressed through education.

Vice-President Smithers punctuates this perspective with this thought:

> "I think that what's going to work in many cases, is a longer term type of involvement on the part of students in an educational activity that would not be so focused on a particular skill. This is what differentiates education and training. You know, anyone can put together a course that in twenty hours will show somebody how to use a product like Excel, but that's such a transient piece of information, because Excel, as well as all other software, continues to evolve. I think in the long run, you'd be better off teaching someone from a conceptual point of view what spreadsheet software does. I don't think you can do that in twenty hours, and I don't think you can do it in a way or manner that is so specific to a product like Microsoft Excel. So again, I think if you were to create academic opportunities for students that would be of a longer term, less focused on a particular product, less specific to certain organizations and problems that they're having, I think in the larger context you're going to do more in terms of workforce development, and you're going to be more effective."

This description differentiates short-term, skill-specific training from more comprehensive education, and it clearly exposes Smithers' perspective on the value of education in workforce development. Further, this delineation between training and education highlights the way in which education takes a broad and deep view that includes the acquisition of knowledge and skills in both a contextual and an acontextural sense, while training is a short term, narrowly defined, skill and context specific experience.

Vice-President Simpson says:

> "(Our) Business and Industrial Training Institute (is) highly active. It is on the non-credit side, and I think (this) is fairly typical for community colleges."

As evidenced by Simpson, the message is clear, training belongs as a non-credit function, while education in a more traditional sense, is the academic function of the college.

General education as part of workforce development

Simpson holds a perspective regarding the role of general education within workforce development that is shared by Hibbert and Lovejoy and is similar to the others.

> "There is an oversimplification to think that the welder only takes welding courses. You've heard the stereotyping about employers (that they) want employees who know how to communicate with each other. So a welding student taking an interpersonal communications course, a liberal arts course, is getting workforce education."

Smithers echoes that feeling, citing employer surveys that indicate it doesn't matter what technical expertise the student leaves his community college with, he or she must have basic ability to communicate both by written and oral language, do basic math, and work effectively with co-workers to solve problems and meet customer needs. These skills, often termed *employability* or *soft skills*, become a basic part of any work-focused education program because the requirements cut across technical lines. The acquisition of these soft skills is the role general education plays within any degree and most certificate programs.

Vice-President Flanders offers a third perspective in support:

> "I believe that a strong workforce development program (has) a strong general (education) component within it. So within the whole notion of designing workforce development programs, I believe that the goal for those students when they get out, is really the same as the transfer student. It is just that their knowledge may be more applied. I believe that students will get better critical thinking, problem solving, writing skills from some integration of very tough general education programs."

And Vice-President Hibbert provides the most powerful message of the intimate relationship between workforce development and academic preparation:

"I've always treated the occupational areas as academic programs. When people say (we have) the academics and you've got the occupational courses, I always correct them and say, no, the occupational courses are academic. They are all college courses. What we need to do is to break out of this mind-set that (only) the liberal arts are the real college courses. The drafting and design class is just as valid as the English class or the math class. They are just (different), they do different things. (But either way), they are all academics."

Curricular and Organizational Implications of Work-Focused Education

In recognition of the components suggested above, Chief Academic Officers uniformly embraced the infusion of workforce programs with general education. This occurs both in organizational structure and in the ways curriculum and course content is constructed.

From the structural perspective, Vice-President Wiggam has expended significant effort, and had significant success, at blending workforce development with the transfer function such that former divisions and differences are no longer apparent. No longer does Yellow Community College maintain a structure that has transfer functions reporting to a "Dean of Arts and Sciences" and work-focused programs under an "Occupational Programs Dean". Instead, there are eight departments in the college, each offering both general or transfer education as well as workforce development. As an example, Wiggam cites his department of communication. Until the reorganization, this department held the traditional transfer English language arts courses and speech, while in a different department, housed in a different division, there were programs in graphic arts, radio and TV broadcasting, and computer aided design. With the re-alignment, all programs and credit generating coursework associated with the communication of ideas, data, or information are gathered into a single department of communication. The result is that faculty generally associated with the transfer realm are physically and

philosophically grouped with those teaching career-focused courses. Career-focused education now holds prominence in the college equal to the transfer function. The point here, is that in Yellow Community College, there is no divisional separation of work-focused and transfer education:

> "There are eight departments here, and each department has within it what would be your classic transfer courses and programs, as well as occupational programs. So there's an intentional blending. Rather than having, 'here is academic transfer, here is occupational', We have very consciously tried to blend those concepts, those divisions at the school."

Vice-President Hibbert is attempting to accomplish a similar breakdown of structural barriers between traditionally separate divisions and his perspective offers a strong testimonial to his commitment:

> "One of the goals that I'm trying to develop is to bring about more integration of the faculty, not only physical integration, but in terms of curriculum integration. And trying to encourage more liberal arts in the occupational programs and more real world examples in the liberal arts. Part of this is going to be accomplished through actually physically integrating faculty, as you can see out here, we have a new science and health laboratory building that's being built. And as a result, we are going to be physically integrating all the science and mathematics faculty with the health occupations faculty at the end of this building. Likewise, communications has been in their own separate building for a couple of decades and they are going to be integrated with the social scientists and humanities folks. (This is) all in an attempt to try to get folks out of their silo and get them more integrated. So, to that extent, I'd like to get them physically integrated and also curricularly (integrated) with learning communities and linked and teamed classes (that) are all an attempt to do that."

As evidence of this perspective, Red Community College has re-located several departments, placing, math and science in the same building as allied health, and computer technology with writing and communications.

Vice-Presidents Flanders and Burns approach integration as a curricular problem, making changes within programs, but maintaining the administrative structures already in

place. Flanders has recently completed the difficult task of integrating general math into occupational curricula:

> "In fact, we have just resolved math and put together a combination of courses that our tech math folks can accept. It has taken a long time (to decide) what we are going to do relative to math."

Purple Community College, under the leadership of Vice-President Burns, recently went through a lengthy process of evaluating general education requirements within work-focused programs, and came away with a new understanding of what it means to acquire the employability skills necessary to be effective on the job. He used the example of a student in his heating and air-conditioning program, who traditionally left Purple Community College highly skilled in the technical aspects of his career field, but struggling to communicate effectively with customers, unable to provide written assessments of customer problems, and often incorrectly adding-up the bill at the end of a service call. This was cause to re-assess then bolster the general education requirements of the heating and air conditioning as well as other occupational programs.

Successful efforts in integrating curricula have not come easily. For Vice-President Flanders, the integration of communication and math skills into work-focused programs has been an arduous task, taking several years and having mixed results. Flanders feels strongly about the role of general education in occupational programs, but he characterizes his occupational faculty as more like those found in a technical college; so focused upon offering the highest level of technical skills within a career area, that they see general education requirements as roadblocks to providing all of the technical competencies they desire to teach.

> "(Our technical faculty) are so aligned with delivering students that meet the technical requirements of the job market, if they have it the way they

want it, we would not require their students to have any general education courses at all."

Further citing the problems associated with integration, Flanders describes early efforts:

"There has been a tension for many, many, many years and I think we are moving closer and closer and closer together, but it has been hard work. I've gone into (integration) sessions when we have oh, 80, 90 faculty there and people were crying, they are that passionate about their beliefs. They believe there have been students who have not graduated because they couldn't complete a math course. And on the other side, the transfer folks are equally passionate that general skills are needed to be a well-educated person, to have the critical thinking and problem solving skills, to have the skills that employers need. And so, I think we've gotten closer together now than we've ever been. (But it has been hard work.)"

The palpable tension induced by Brown Community College's desire to provide a well-rounded education with a strong foundation in general education as opposed to a faculty dedicated to focusing on technical skills has been somewhat diminished through compromise. One aspect is that math teachers, specifically assigned to the occupational division, have been charged with assembling math courses that meet all of the college general math requirements, yet whose examples are contextualized in the general career area of the students who are participating in the course. The result is a contextualized, integrated math course that meets occupational faculty and college requirements alike.

For Vice-President Hibbert, efforts to infuse occupational curricula with general education competencies has paid dividends in a reverse way. Not only have faculty in work-focused courses become better at providing communication, math and interpersonal skills, but many of the transfer courses now offer more workplace examples for the application of otherwise theoretical or disconnected coursework. The result is an integrated approach to providing employability skills that benefits both the occupation and the transfer student.

In dealing with curriculum integration, both Flanders and Burns identified

professional and staff development as the key component to their success. Vice-

President Flanders puts it this way:

> "I think it is real important (to integration efforts) for you (to) have professional development opportunities that both help faculty come to a common understanding of what (integration) means and to get grounding in what they believe."

Vice-President Burns also points to successful staff development as the key to

successful integration:

> "(We intend to) follow-up on ongoing professional development regimes (that helped our) initiative be successful. I'm hoping (what) we've done will be able to (be) sustained here (as we start) this fall."

Yet despite struggles, integration projects have largely been successful. Vice-

President Burns shares his perspective on one of the successes of his efforts:

> "They do real well, all the faculty do a very good job in the curriculum, so I think the occupational technical people have created a reputation for themselves within the community college academic community that is getting to be pretty good. The modern tech disciplines are pretty demanding, and I think those faculty that (do a fine job), so I think there is less of the dichotomy than there really ever has been."

Vice-President Wiggam shares similar success:

> "I think they (the faculty) would give you a very positive overall perception (of the integration efforts). We're here to meet student needs, teach them at the highest level that we possibly can. Whether they think their students are primarily transfer, or are they AAS which degree they're going for, I think, would be less important to the faculty member, as compared to, is their course being taught at the best level it can be taught? I don't see so much tension as, 'Is your program occupational?' versus, 'Is it a transfer?' I see very little tension related to that anymore, but its taken a lot of years to get past that."

The bottom line for general education and workforce development is that

administrative perceptions of workforce development as education are positive,

with occupational programs enjoying a regard at least equal to that of transfer programs in most colleges. Strengthening workforce development through infusion of rigorous general education requirements not only provides for a better educated student, but also a better prepared employee.

The Role of Training in Workforce Development

Despite the need to integrate curricula and provide work-focused education, other forms of workforce development may be attractive for community colleges. Throughout the course of discussions, each of the eight Chief Academic Officers addressed non-traditional course offerings as a viable and desirable option for meeting certain needs within their community. Skill-specific, outside of the traditional course structure, and not bearing college credit, were the attributes closely associated with this service. Most often, this skill-specific training was termed *contracted training,* because it is associated with a specific employer who contracts with the college to provide it.

The relationship of this function to workforce development within each college is clear, as the need for narrowly defined, skill-specific training for specific employers is growing. For many community colleges, contracted training is perceived as a financially sound way to meet community needs while leaving the traditional academic requirements intact. Administratively, some colleges include contracted training in a division of life-long learning, while others established specific departments outside of the academic mainstream to provide services. The Continuing Education Services Division, Business and Community Institute, Business Education Services, and Industry and Business Training Institute are some of the departmental names given to the college function.

Vice-President Syslak was particularly active in the contracted training arena, indicating that Black Community College was well positioned, both geographically and culturally, to offer major employers the specific skills training they desire.

> "As you drove in, you saw this large building we're building next door (for business and industry services), we spent an awful lot of resources on business and industry. What we basically have done is that we set up this new building so that we could have short-term courses for business and industry. There are fifteen classrooms over there that are very high tech, and very movable, so that you can go from fifteen to ten or twenty classrooms, and consequently, that will allow us to bring in all the contract education and training programs that we do. We now have a place, for contracted training that does not compete with our academic division."

Vice-President Simpson highlighted a similar function within his college:

> "This institution has an extremely powerful, for its size, business and industrial training institute. Highly, highly active. It is on the non-credit side for the most part and I think is fairly typical for community colleges. This is where the Industrial Business Training Institute activity comes to bear. A lot of customized training, grant funded training, all of that falls under this (department)."

Vice-President Flanders outlines the role of his contracted training department:

> "Well, the other end (of our services) in terms of employers is our (contracted training institute). It's looking at delivering the training that (local employers) need. We are finding that some employers want training online, so we are looking at that. So for us, it is a big case (load) working with employers in delivering the kind of training that they need."

Other colleges maintain similar not-for-credit training institutes. Red Community College calls it their Business and Community Institute. Like Brown, Orange CC terms the non-credit division "Life-long Learning", and each of the other colleges have similar names for similar functions. Purple Community College assigned the operation of the non-credit, contracted training division to an individual other than the Chief Academic Officer at the Vice-President level. In this way, Purple separates the credit generating

portion of the college from the non-credit far up the administrative ladder and the CAO concentrates on education not training.

Yet despite the effort invested and the benefits enjoyed, the Chief Academic Officers were not in agreement whether contracted training constituted workforce development or just training.

Curricular and Organizational Implications of Training

The distinction between training and education was echoed by others. Vice-President Syslak was quick to differentiate the two, not as much from a philosophical perspective, but more from an operational one. Specifically, Black Community College maintains a proportionately large division devoted specifically to short-term courses that are often provided specifically to employees of companies who have contracted with the college. This division operates outside of the traditional college, and Vice-President Syslak wants it that way. He is clear in his desire to maintain this contracted training division as non-credit generating, as this keeps those courses out of the control of the faculty union.

> "The faculty union has the responsibility of all the credit classes. They would like to have first choice in continuing education, (contracted training), and the business and development classes. We'll never let that happen, simply because we'd like to choose the faculty (involved)."

His point is clear. The faculty union holds the contract for credit granting courses (education), but the administration holds reign over the non-credit generating (training) offerings. Within this structure, unionized faculty members can be hired to teach in the training institute, and part of their full-time load may be assigned there, but the union is not allowed input into the assignment of faculty in the training institute as they are in the credit side of the college. Workforce development at Black Community College can broadly be defined as training, or education for college credit, yet the actual label defines

certain aspects of the operation of the franchise and causes tension between administration and faculty.

In order to facilitate efforts in contracted training, several states have provided significant support through Job Training Programs (JTP) or the funding of Technical Education Centers (TEC). Further specifics regarding these two initiatives will be presented later in this chapter, but for now, it is sufficient to state that government support for contracted training has had a major effect upon skill-specific, non-credit generating offerings through community colleges.

Influences on Perspectives of Workforce Development

As evidenced to this point, CAOs hold a variety of perspectives on the role and nature of workforce development within their institution. Informing and shaping these perspectives are forces that are the major influences that reside outside of the college.

Governmental Programs

Governmental programs regarding workforce development hold a mixed influence upon the perspectives of CAOs, ranging from a largely positive influence to a clearly negative one. Government programs come from two sources, state government and the federal government. Vice-President Syslak holds strong feelings against the influence of state government programs, especially those that interfere with his independent and entrepreneurial perspectives on workforce development.

> "We're not big fans of our state department of education. One of our problems is that it almost looks like it's an attempt to take away (our) autonomy. Every time the department comes up with an idea, we look at it very closely. Money has come out of the department with too many strings on it, so we've kind of turned down a lot of the funds from them."

The high cost of workforce development programs combined with problems with funding formulas for state aid to community colleges are perceived as a major problem by Vice-Presidents Hibbert, Simpson, Syslak, Wiggam and Smithers with all providing similar information. They each described that their state has statute formulas in place that allocates money to the colleges based upon a combination of credits generated and the category of courses offered. By formula, courses in work-focused or occupational education are to be supported at a rate higher than general education, which is a reflection of the higher cost associated with providing them. For over 20 years and for a number of reasons, legislatures have chosen not to fund community colleges based on the formula, nor do the CAOs expect that the formulas will actually be used at any time in the foreseeable future. As best described by Vice-President Hibbert, the perception is that colleges that invest heavily in more expensive workforce developmental offerings will be penalized financially by the states.

> "Because of the way we are funded, the state aid formula should work so that students that are in occupational programs are funded at a higher level than our liberal arts students. That is taking into consideration the high capitalization of occupational programs. Unfortunately, because they haven't funded to the formula, the school who invests greatly in occupational programs will be hurt in the long run unless the state really either enforces their formula or makes accommodations."

He, and others, believe that this situation becomes an enabling mechanism allowing the colleges to maintain an emphasis on higher margin general education rather than increase work-focused options. Simpson offers a similar perspective:

> "The state community college formula, it was created in the late 70s, was never fully funded and it has zero prospect of ever being fully funded to the best of my understanding. My personal perception is that the state funding of community colleges is a highly politicized realm. And like it or not, that's the way it is."

The CAOs believe that funding of colleges along with other state initiatives have been an attempt by the bureaucracy to provide additional support, yet channel efforts toward a statewide rather than local agenda.

A specific example of a way in which CAOs perceive the state has attempted to engage community colleges in statewide initiatives and which was mentioned by each of the CAOs is their individual Technical Education Center (TEC) program.

As foundational information, TEC programs offer community colleges opportunities to receive several million dollars, on a competitive basis, to construct buildings (called (TEC centers) specifically for specialized education and training in a number of high tech industries. States provide funds for about half the cost of construction, but require each local community to fund the other half, plus cover all of the equipment, curriculum and operations cost. In many ways, the buildings were provided in specific support of the contracted training efforts by each college.

Each state's attempt to aid colleges and economic development within community college service districts through the building of TECs has met with a mixed feeling. Only one of the CAOs interviewed embraces his TEC, while Vice-President Simpson sums up the feelings of the rest:

> "I think TECs (are) highly political beasts. They were buildings funded by the state with great generosity, largess and fanfare, the operations of which are, I think at this point, a disaster. They are struggling desperately to find a role. The people who run them are working very, very hard. The schools that have them are trying desperately to figure out a way to pay the bills that the Governor didn't choose to pay for. And more than once I've had people here express with great relief the fact that we did not succeed in our petition to have one."

Vice-President Hibbert, who's college has a TEC, holds a similar view:

> "(In regard to) the TEC, Blue Community College is a case in point. They (the state) contributed $4.4 million to the building. The building (cost

was) maybe twice as much, so it is not a case where (it was free). I mean of course, we are grateful for the funds, but it (the building) is not going to help the sustainability of our occupational programs which is one of our greatest challenges. How do you sustain the continued support for occupational programs when we know that the courses (in the TEC) are going to be small courses, because of the nature of the (education and training required)?"

The single CAO who embraces the TEC Center concept does so not because it is a boon to the overall academic mission of his college, but rather because it puts a focus on a specific community need. In Vice-President Lovejoy's thinking, meeting this need is balanced by the reality of successfully running a Center, so that when his college failed in its bid to be awarded one, is was not a major loss:

> "The idea on the concept of an TEC Center I wholeheartedly support, but (if we would have) developed one of those, we did not want to be in a position of not being able to maintain it. Again, it is not that we were afraid to take on new concepts, but as I indicated, it came at a time (for us) institutionally where the timing may have been a little bit off to the point where (we let it) just die."

Clearly, the Chief Academic Officers appreciate, and in many ways depend upon, governmental support, yet when that support comes with narrow application guidelines that are outside of the action plan each college has formulated, the government money is perceived to be of little use. Lovejoy provides the single most pointed comment in this regard:

> "We were not in the state formula for funding (for a long time) because (we) wanted to develop as a true community college and (we) didn't want to be mandated on how to spend the money that they were getting from the state. (Government programs) mostly don't (have a big influence on our college). Our mission is to be responsive to our culturally diverse population and to the communities which we serve. That's the driving force."

Federal government programs are perceived as having the same mixed success in the eyes of the Chief Academic Officers. *Perkins* funding, or the money provided by the

federal government to help offset the high cost of workforce development, is enjoyed by

everyone. In fact Vice-Presidents Lovejoy, Wiggam and Smithers depend upon Perkins

funds to purchase equipment, hire additional student support personnel, and provide

programs that meet the community's needs. Some of the CAOs, however, don't perceive

additional government programs as all that beneficial. Vice-President Syslak has a

disdain for federal programs in the same way he has for state initiatives:

> "From the federal perspective, we're spending more time collecting data
> than (implementing programs), if we could use the money (for teaching)
> that we use for collecting data, we might be able to teach people more
> things. The other thing that ticks us off about national policy is that they
> need to get off this thing about making females do male jobs and males do
> female jobs. That's absolutely ridiculous. I mean, it's not the
> responsibility of legislation to change society. They have to get over
> that."

Vice-President Burns adds:

> "A lot of the effort here is to get the faculty to think strategically about
> their curriculum, and be able to represent the strategic value of their
> curriculum to the rest of the institution. I think if they can do that, then
> when the federal government comes in with a plan, we can say well, oh
> yeah, this does meet our (needs, or maybe it doesn't). Then, we will be in
> a much better position to either work with the government and use the
> resources or explain why we have another priority or (that) we have a
> (different) need. But unfortunately, for a lot of the folks, if the government
> strings a little bit of money out in front of them, they'll change the whole
> damn program to get it. So they wind up with no direction and really in
> the long term, not much value."

He goes on to say:

> "It's probably not something I actually say out loud, but I try not to be
> distracted by federal programs and state programs. To me it is just
> somebody else's agenda."

This evidence supports a fairly negative view of governmental programs for a

specific purpose, especially when these programs fail to support clearly defined

local needs.

Meeting Community Needs

Service to the community, meeting community needs, making sure the community is provided what they want, are all comments provided by the Chief Academic Officers that indicate their perception that the single most important force affecting the community college is the community. It is important to note that community needs come in many more specific forms, but for the CAOs who must operationalize the college plan, those aspects that do not address specific needs within the community are of less importance than those that clearly do.

A well-stated example of the influence of community needs on the actions of the college was provided by Vice-President Lovejoy. He was speaking in specific regard to the goal of increasing workforce development from 30% to 70% of the total credits generated and when asked why this was important his reply was clear:

> "The community, community needs, local workforce needs and the job market."

In addition, Vice-President Simpson speaks of helping with the immediate needs of the local citizenry, both as individuals and as organizations.

> "If we can't provide direct benefit to our customers who are the local citizens, they'll say no in the next millage election."

There is little doubt that the perspective of the CAO is that the local community drives the college operations.

An aspect of influences upon workforce development that falls under the umbrella of meeting community needs is the perceived importance of *strategic partnerships.* By partnering with area employers and community groups, CAOs perceive that they can implement expanded workforce development offerings by investing not only their own

resources, but also community or private resources, plus enjoy a significantly lower risk factor. Often, programs are designed to address a specific employer need, with the employer guaranteeing a certain enrollment, or employers might make a capital purchase on behalf of the college so that a specific course of study using specific equipment might be offered. Note that in this context, the partnerships highlighted by the CAOs are not of the same nature as those presented as contracted training. Rather, these partnerships are for the formation of mainstream, credit granting/degree earning, academic programs within the workforce development arena.

For Red Community College, the district's largest employer is the local hospital. Red was able to successfully implement a new degree program in a health care related field based on community needs, but with a guarantee from the hospital that a majority of the space available would be filled by current hospital employees. In this way, the hospital gains the skill set and degree holding employees it needs, the college offers a new program, and other community members are able to enroll, thus benefiting everyone.

Pink Community College recognizes a similar benefit. Within the large urban district it serves, a major medical center is the single largest employer. Recognizing an acute shortage of nurses brought the medical center to the college where a strategic partnership was formed. This relationship allowed the college to increase the number of students enrolled in the nursing program, added nursing at a satellite campus, and provided the employer with more nurses at no additional cost to the college. Due to the way the partnership was structured, several additional seats were made available to the community at large.

Other colleges have established unique degree granting programs that transcend the narrow skill acquisition offered by contracted training. Black Community College's world-class culinary institute has a new agreement with a major international food service group to formulate and test new recipes, while Orange Community College has instituted a degree program in the installation, repair and service of complex high throughput welding equipment. Brown Community College enjoys a partnership with an area employer that takes general education as well as work-focused courses directly into a number of local manufacturing plants so that employees can earn a complete associate's degree in their place of employment, and without ever setting foot on campus. Purple Community College considers its comprehensive nature from yet another perspective, one that is different from the rest, and that has two major components. Vice-President Burns recently analyzed the student population within the college, and to his surprise, the most neglected group of students appears to be those attending Purple Community College for the purpose of transfer. Vice-President Burns sees a relative lack of second-year students as a failure to support the true transfer function:

> "Typically community colleges are so preoccupied with jobs, with their occupational stuff, with the developmental stuff, that the transfer students are on their own. We are trying to change (that) here. We are going to start a focus on the sophomore student, because (if) you look at the stats, we basically spend all our time (on everybody) else."

Vice-President Burns presents another problem associated with workforce development as it is embedded in the comprehensive nature of the community colleges represented. That is the high cost of education for work. VP Burns is the most pointed in his analysis, as he considers his student population and their needs. Purple Community College, like many, has a math problem. All new students at Purple are required to take

part in a mathematics skills assessment, and in the previous fall, 67% placed in what

Purple calls *remedial math*, a course that is equivalent to 7th grade arithmetic. An

additional 16% of the incoming students placed in *beginning algebra,* which is equivalent

to 9th grade algebra in most public K-12 school systems. This means that 73% of

incoming students are in acute need of intensive help with math, yet some of the faculty

and most of the employer community cry out for programs that might train six or seven

people in, for example, computer aided drafting. The competition for resources to

address these multiple needs is a major challenge within the comprehensive college and it

was mentioned not only by Vice-President Burns but also by Vice-Presidents Lovejoy,

Smithers and Syslak.

Unfortunately, not all of the community relationships are the Nirvana enjoyed by

those cited above. Vice-Presidents Simpson and Smithers share a deep and troublesome

perspective that their college is still not embraced by the community as the resource they

feel it actually is. Smithers says it this way:

> "I could probably walk with you on the streets of Orangetown, and ask
> any person you see 'do you know that Orange Community College offers
> blank?.' Your choice; fill in the blank, and I bet you probably ninety
> percent of the people would say, 'no, I had no idea.' Pick (anything we
> offer). Pick nursing. Pick, you know, any type of particular subject or
> curriculum area that you want. So that's an interesting sort of paradox,
> that people know (about us), but yet they don't know (what we really are).
> I guess that's our job, to try to communicate better with the community in
> terms of what we do and what we have."

Simpson echoes this perspective, in that "we have a lot of work to do" in

communicating to the community and especially business, all the college has to offer.

Despite significant differences in these various factors, there appeared to be no clear

pattern to the perspectives expressed by each individual. There was consensus on

perceptions associated with the themes, and little difference of perspective on anything else. No correlation between these factors and the perspectives expressed was apparent.

Summary

The data resulting from an analysis of the interviews provides the answers to the research questions fundamental to this study.

1. Chief Academic Officers make sense of workforce development through a number of ways including defining it in terms of education or training and considering implications for practice. Within the definitions there are inherent inconsistencies that bring about tensions that are yet to be resolved.

2. Contextual factors, including governmental programs, community needs, curricular aspects or the internal environment of the colleges had significant influence on workforce development, but each Chief Academic Officer agreed that those effects were minimal compared to the well thought out mission of the college. While factors such as government programs were perceived as positive if they came without significant guidelines, many programs are ignored because they do not fit the mission of the college. Conversely, community needs were a significant contextual factor, shaping perceptions of workforce development for most all of those interviewed.

Chapter Five

Interpretation, Implications, and Further Research

The Chief Academic Officers participating in this study demonstrate a perspective on workforce development that reflects a view of the community college largely responsive to perceived needs arising within the various contexts in which it operates. This perspective is shaped and informed largely by the contexts of their practices, especially in meeting the needs of the local community. There is little evidence that this perspective is informed by epistemic considerations regarding education for work..

These community college executives see virtually everything that the community college offers as a form of workforce development. Although they draw distinctions between training and education, they clearly see the educational aspect as more in line with the overall mission of the community college. This view suggests a full curricular and structural integration of academic and occupational education, blurring the traditional tripartite mission of the community college. They suggest a restructuring of occupational and academic education to the extent that they are organizationally integrated within the college. Although this perspective may suggest a progressive reorientation of the college, the data suggest that this perspective arises more from consideration of the various social, political, and economic contexts in which their college operates than it does from a critical analysis of current pedagogical practices. This view of this perspective on workforce development in the community college is further developed in what follows.

Training and Education as Workforce Development

The Chief Academic Officers interviewed as part of this study struggled to place a clear definition on the term workforce development, but one common aspect of their perspective is the differentiation of education and training. CAOs were quick to point out that there are significant differences between the two. Specifically, training is identified as focused on short-term, skill-specific knowledge that is usually applied to a specific work setting, while education is less contextual and usually more comprehensive in nature. Workforce education incorporates the general education aspects of communications, teamwork, science, and various other traditionally academic content to provide a "well-rounded" experience that transcends basic skill acquisition. In this study, it became apparent that skill acquisition without general education was considered training, while occupational programs that include strong general education requirements were considered workforce education. While both have a place within workforce development, the perspective of the CAOs involved was that workforce education was more highly valued.

Even with its critics, training holds a place along with education under the workforce development umbrella, and despite statements that work-focused education is more highly valued, evidence provided by the shared perspective of those Chief Academic Officers interviewed indicates that for a variety of reasons, training has become an integral part of community college operations.

Workforce Development as Training

Within the training milieu there lies distinctions that specify this aspect of workforce development as contract training or customized training. Dougherty and Bakia (2000, p. 2) provide a concise overview of this differentiation along with substantial discourse on the benefits, both to the college and community, to participation in this activity. The American Association of Community Colleges (Day, 1996) and the National Council for Occupational Education (Hamm, 1995) provide further support for continued and increased engagement in contract or customized training by community colleges.

Support from government sources as well as the community have provided colleges with the impetus to build substantial contract training departments, many of which generate substantial revenue streams that not only pay for the training venture, but supplement other programs. This finding is commensurate with findings of Bailey and Averianova (1998) and Dougherty and Bakia (2000) that suggest new roles such as contracted training actually increase resources available for core or traditional activities. This finding diffuses one of the primary sources of tension around the education and training issue, that of resources being diverted away from traditional academic functions.

The perspective of the Chief Academic Officers echoes the call of the literature for support of training initiatives, with most having invested in the administrative and building structures necessary to support the training function. Beneath the surface, however, there arises questions regarding the epistemological underpinnings of becoming involved. Specifically, the CAOs interviewed offered little reasoning to support their perspective in favor of the training function other than economics, that is, that the training function is very rewarding both financially and in regard to the overall image of the

college. Vice-President Syslak was particularly proud of the ability of his college to generate huge sums of money through the training franchise, yet he never mentioned benefits to other aspects of the college. Further, Smithers, Simpson and Hibbert provided evidence of the way in which contracted training addressed a community need and was supported by a state government program, but never indicated that it was anything other than simply a way of enhancing the college image by participating in a program that addressed a need. As suggested by Bailey and Averianova (1998), image enhancement, especially that which is directed at the local business community, pays substantial dividends when the college seeks additional public funding by way of increased taxes or state aid. This way, training addresses an economic need indirectly, but likely in a more substantial way than though the direct "selling" of the training function. Imbedded in the perspective of the training function as workforce development is the idea that training is transactional in its economic benefit. Colleges have the facilities, expertise, and experience necessary to offer training, employers have a need and are willing to pay for services, and government subsidizes the process through grants and direct support. Many colleges employ account executives who generate sales of training, instructional designers who develop product, and a cadre of trainers that deliver the finished goods. In this way training becomes much more identified as a business than the education usually associated with a community college. By engaging in this business function, the perspective of the CAOs in regard to training becomes a product of the environment or context in which they practice their craft of administration.

It comes as no surprise that community colleges would engage in training for workforce development considering the economic benefit derived through direct

transaction, the support generated within the community, or the subsidies from state government. But beyond the direct benefit of increased revenue, the more simplistic aspect of meeting an identified community need is implicit in the perspectives offered in regard to training. Throughout this study, CAOs have provided evidence that they take great pride in meeting community needs, and in fact it appears that this is the factor that makes the most significant impact on their perspective. Even though it is not specifically stated, it is suspected that the ability to meet a community need is of equal importance to increasing revenue within the positive perspectives CAOs hold in regard to training.

Workforce Development as Education

Modern as well as historical literature provides a chronology of a struggle within community colleges of nearly epic proportions; that of the role of occupational versus academic education. As indicated in chapter one, authors such as Dougherty (1994), and Brint & Karabel (1989) argue that community colleges engaged in workforce education "demoralize" academic programs by shifting resources away from the traditional transfer function, or by limiting opportunities for the lower and middle classes. Others, including Blocker, Plummer and Richardson (1965), and most notably Grubb (1996) advocate for an increased emphasis on workforce, vocational and economic development roles of the college, indicating that community colleges are best suited among all of the available alternatives to offer efficient and appropriate workforce education. As a result of bifurcated views of the educational franchise, colleges have traditionally been configured with the transfer or general academic function placed administratively in a division different from occupational education (Cohen and Brawer, 1989). The result is a college that encounters tensions between divisions, with transfer and occupational divisions

competing for money, facilities, the attention of policy-makers, and in many circumstances, actual students (Eaton, 1994). The CAOs involved with this study indicated that the transfer function seems to hold the higher ground, with Smithers and Simpson indicating that their policy-making board continues to identify their college as primarily a transfer institution.

This information provides the departure point for a significant finding in this study. The Chief Academic Officers no longer see a need for separate divisions housing the transfer and occupational functions within their colleges. In fact, major efforts directed at the integration of divisions, both administratively and in terms of curricular functions were either well on their way to completion or complete in each of the colleges.

The melding of traditionally separate functions within the college comes in two parts. Curriculum integration is the crossing over of technical and general education course content that was originally designed to bolster the academic rigor of occupational courses (Grubb, Davis and Lum, 1990). This allows for technical courses to employ essential elements of communications, teamwork, and problem solving while general education courses draw examples from technical and work-focused contexts. From an administrative perspective, re-organization serves as the mechanism to physically locate faculty from different disciplines more closely together plus change lines of administrative responsibility to gather related academic and occupational programs under one umbrella.

Like many of their colleagues, the Chief Academic Officers involved with this study are actively engaged in integration. What differs from the literature is the perspective that takes the integration of transfer and occupational education and adds the element of re-

organization such that differences between occupational and transfer education are not merely diminished, but obliterated. Vice-President Simpson's quote is worth restating here as an appropriate indication of the perspective of those interviewed:

> "I've always treated the occupational areas as academic programs. When people say (we have) the academics and you've got the occupational courses, I always correct them and say, no, the occupational courses are academic. They are all college courses. What we need to do is to break out of this mind-set that (only) the liberal arts are the real college courses. The drafting and design class is just as valid as the English class or the math class. They are just (different), they do different things. (But either way), they are all academics."

Simpson has made several decisions that diminish the separation of academic and occupational education, and he endeavors to further obscure differences with additional administrative and facility reorganization.

Taking this perspective to the next level is Vice-President Wiggam who has reconfigured each of his departments so that all courses are integrated, and all administrative divisions re-configured. Now each department houses programs that could previously be called academic or occupational. Wiggam indicates that as a result of this two-part blending, differences between academic and occupational offerings no longer exist at Yellow Community College. According to those interviewed, what is happening is not just integration of academic and occupational education, but a fusing such that all courses offered within the academic realm have characteristics including strong general education components, lessons contextualized in workplace examples, and content that provides an opportunity to ladder the coursework to four-year institutions.

A synthesized characterization of this perspective of academic and occupational education is that of a continuum instead of a bifurcated divisional setup. Fundamental to the concept is a time or life-stage dependent axis that stretches from the beginning of

postsecondary education, through the community college and on toward baccalaureate, graduate, and professional education. Along the continuum are various jumping-off points that indicate certificate, associate's, bachelor's or higher degrees. This continuum offers a representation that captures the current perspective of the CAOs in that there is only one line representing higher education, not two representing occupational and transfer as would be found in the traditional model. Figure 2A provides a representation of the traditional model and 2B, the perspectives of the CAOs in this study.

This diagram illustrates how an individual can progress through the stages of higher education, jumping off to engage in employment at any stage, but it also illustrates the elimination of one aspect of the comprehensive mission. Note also that this continuum does not make epistemological assumptions nor is it based upon theory. Instead, the perspective conceptualized by the diagram reflects the context associated with the fusing of the occupational and transfer functions.

While the literature provides little to support the notion of re-organization, there is ample support for integration. Perin (1998) provides an extensive list of benefits to integration, many of which favor not only the student, but the faculty members involved as well as the college and area employers. Among the benefits to students are increased retention, higher levels of motivation, and a sense that intense academic preparation is palatable when contextualized in an occupational pursuit. Much the same as students, faculty members enjoy the opportunity to expand their teaching influence through the integration of subject matter, and they gain a heightened sense of the ability to reach students on a number of levels beyond the technical content of an occupational course. Institutions benefit by engaging employers in the integration process, ensuring that the

Figure 2: The continuum of education

A. The traditional model of community college education
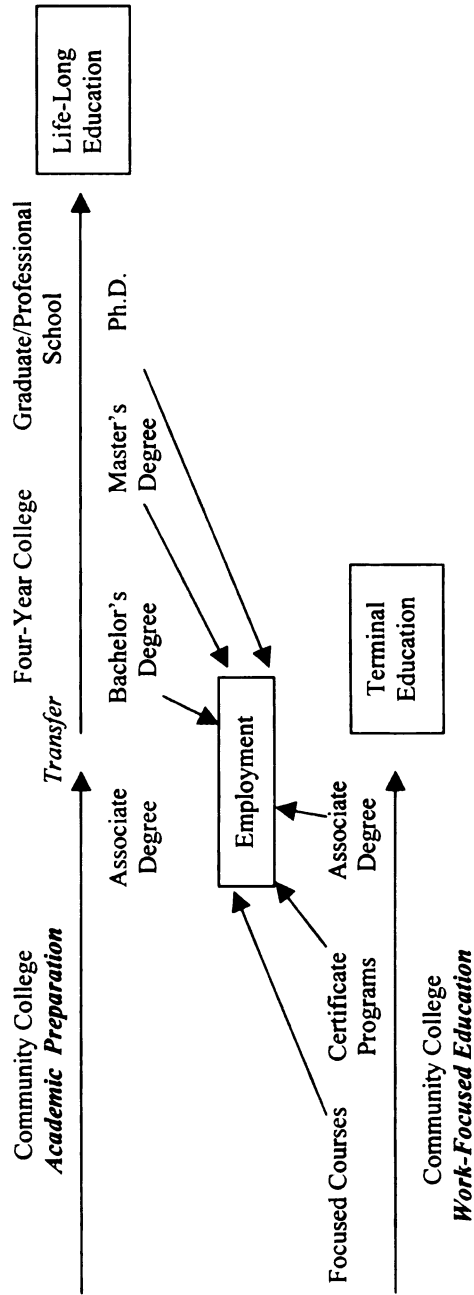
B. The Chief Academic Officer's perspective of an integrated community college education
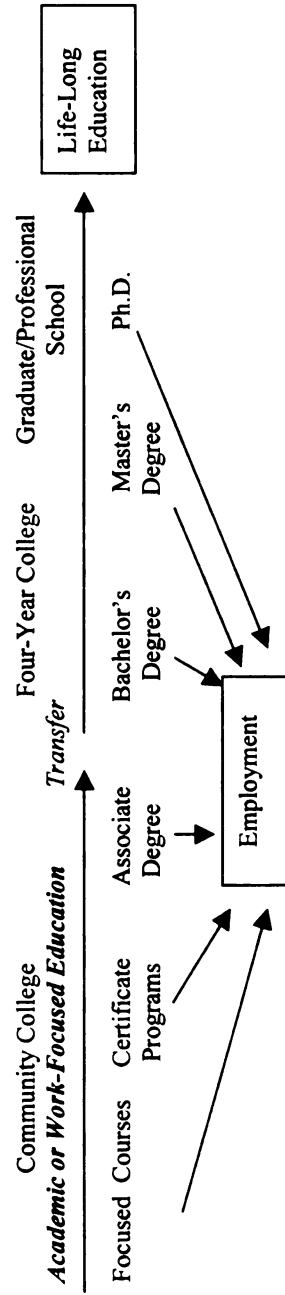
skills provided in each integrated course, whether academic or technical, were the skills that area employers were seeking. As an additional un-intended product, Perin's study indicated that employers reaped benefit from integration efforts as graduates of integrated programs demonstrated a better ability to communicate, work in teams, solve problems and contribute to the workplace than did those who learned in traditional community college environments.

The need to continue an infusion of general education into work-focused education is documented in other places as well. The U.S. Department of Labor (1991) SCANS report specifically identifies communication, teamwork, problem solving and interpersonal skills, along with general education skills in math, social studies, English language arts and science as being of equal importance as technical skills for success in the modern workplace. The Michigan Virtual Automotive College (Morrish, 1998) provides a Michigan and manufacturing industry specific analysis that supports the SCANS report.

The relative value of education, or specifically, work-focused education to community college leaders is a well articulated aspect of the literature and reflective of the perspective offered by those interviewed. Kincheloe (1995) in particular advocates for a well educated worker, able to perform highly technical procedures under a variety of conditions, but also possessing an understanding of the connections among economics, education and work (p. 30). He argues that only when a student is provided with an education that encompasses all of these aspects is a truly democratic workplace possible. He continues by pointing out that educators in particular, but also policy-makers and business people lack awareness of the value of the democratic workplace and that they

are so engrossed with the competitive aspects of the workplace that a comprehensive education is given no notice.

While the benefits of fusing occupational and transfer education are apparent in direct regard to students, faculty, and employers it is suspected that there remains an unstated, but non-the-less important benefit associated with this effort; that of reducing cost. It appears that those CAOs who collapse administrative structures through structural reorganization would likely do so through the elimination of several individual positions if not a whole layer of the institutional hierarchy. Within the fused structure, there is no longer a need for separate deans in occupational and academic divisions, just department heads that would exist in both the new and old structures. The elimination of administrative positions provides significant cost savings to the college. This factor may well contribute in a more hidden way, to the impetus for integration and reorganization.

Perceptions of Contextual Factors

Chapter four provided evidence of several contextual factors that shape administrative practice and as shown above, these same factors influence the perspectives of Chief Academic Officers on workforce development. Among the contextual factors influencing administrative perspectives are the needs of the community, government programs, and the formation of strategic partnerships. Within these factors are aspects that place them in direct conflict with the mission of the college, thoughtful administrative practice, or with one another. Each of these factors is addressed separately in the text that follows.

Meeting community needs, at first glance, seems implicit in the function of any community college, so it may be illogical to try to understand ways in which this factor

specifically influences the perspective of a Chief Academic Officer. Meeting community need is, however, identified by all of the CAOs as a major factor in their decision-making. As an example, the reason Pink Community College plans to make major investments designed to increase the credits generated in work-focused education from 30 to 70% of the total within the next few years is a change in the needs of the community in which Pink Community College resides. Additional specific references from this study range from the need to assist in local economic development mentioned by Vice-President Simpson, through the participation of Brown Community College in welfare-to-work and Work First programs for the education of under prepared workers for initial employment. The importance of this factor was echoed in the literature by Mezack (1994) among others.

The importance to a community college of meeting community needs cannot be overemphasized, yet the ways in which this is accomplished are points of contention. An expanded mission that addresses a plethora of new programs is likely not in the best interest of the college, yet when a local community is clamoring for a program to address a problem, assistance with economic development, or help in addressing a local workforce issue, how is the college to walk away without jeopardizing its long-term relationship? An example of this situation is provided by Vice-President Burns:

> "We have like 600 students take remedial math courses in the fall semester (and) about 500 in the winter semester, so probably between the two of them, we have 1100 students in those classes getting wiped out (of the academic main stream). I'd like to have some money to take care of this problem, but I'm competing with some guy from a machine shop (in the community) who wants six people trained on CAD. I see that as a tension inside (the) community college."

This situation is an illustration of the power brought to bear by a contextual factor upon the perspective of the Chief Academic Officer. His recognition of the need to address a serious student centered problem is in conflict with a need to meet a community need.

Dealing with situations of conflicting contextual factors is not an unusual circumstance for the Chief Academic Officers. Those interviewed suggested a number of new and changing factors, and the literature is filled with suggestions for promoting adaptability, cultural shifts, a customer service focus, and strategies that allow an institution to embrace change. Parilla (1993) suggests that:

> Colleges must be prepared to adapt curricula and support services to the changing marketplace and to the changing student body, not only offering traditional transfer, technical and developmental programs but also marketing responsive packages of training and skill development. (p. 24)

Again, the role of the marketplace or context is highlighted as important to the success of the community college of the future. To accept this role, the perspectives of college administrators must accommodate shifting contextual factors as major influences upon administrative actions.

The Chief Academic Officers in this study recognize the need for responsiveness, but they also recognize the risks involved with working in a competitive environment. As a means to address this risk, the formulation of strategic partnerships was highlighted as a primary force behind the success of new endeavors by the college, especially those associated with workforce development. Local employers, community groups and to some extent, government entities, foster partnerships that further the support of local needs, but also relieve some of the risk for the college. This is especially important considering the perceived higher cost associated with providing work-focused education. Each of the colleges suggested some level of strategic partnerships as important in its

future success. Again, however, the partnership role lends support to an economic perspective of academic decision-makers.

Taking a step back from the role of the college in meeting community needs through formation of partnerships brings about images of a highly responsive college bound to relationships with community partners, but later finding the relationship to be primarily one-way. Business makes demands upon the college, and as a publicly funded entity, the college responds. Whether it is for direct economic benefit or for the hidden benefits associated with an enhanced image within the business community, the result is a college going in many different directions, balancing competing priorities, and attempting to be "all things to all people" (Eaton, 1994).

Further evidence of contextual factors playing a primary role in shaping the workforce development perspectives of Chief Academic Officers comes from the role of government programs. Tension surrounding the role of government programs in community college administration, especially in the area of workforce development was palpable. While the CAOs shared a perspective that favored those programs that allowed considerable latitude and creativity in their implementation, those that were narrowly focused or had implementation directed by government funding sources were scorned. This tension is evident in regard to the ways in which some states have provided new money to colleges under the guise of economic development, specifically for building facilities for the purpose of training current employees of local business.

As noted, those CAOs that have a state funded Technical Education Center (TEC), or that are in the building process, are struggling to find appropriate and adequate offerings to pay the cost of operations. In most of the states in which the CAOs in this study

worked, state grants for each TEC center were designed to pay for approximately half the building cost, but no money was provided for equipment, curricula, staff, or building operation. In addition, each TEC is required to provide instruction and training in high skill areas specific to each state, but usually including construction technology, advanced manufacturing, and information technology. In addition, most states required that the centers utilize open-entry/open-exit delivery systems or similar pedagogy. The centers are generally located at a site apart from the current college campus. The narrowly defined requirements built into the TEC process in most of the states participating created the points of ongoing tension.

While not explicit in the grant requirements, it is a generally accepted perception that the states require TECs to be built away from the main college campus specifically to block faculty unions from exercising influence over curricula, staffing, instructor load, or course offerings. Each state's wish was to make the centers as entrepreneurial as possible, allowing (or forcing) administrations to enact work rules that departed from the traditional community college mainstream. Conversely, the publicly stated reason for locating the centers away from current campus facilities was to provide easier access to a non-traditional student population of working adults.

Center location, use of specialized delivery models, and the whole notion of TECs is designed to make them more aligned with training centers for business rather than community colleges. While this approach may be appropriate for the stated purpose in some states, traditional faculty have been slow to embrace the longer working hours, night or weekend instructional duty, or the alternative delivery systems imbedded in the new concept. So what the CAOs may be observing when they sense tension around the

TECs is what Bailey and Averianova (1998) describe as a "clash of institutional

cultures".

> Critics of (certain) activities in community colleges point out that officials
> in these colleges often state that they are trying to serve their customers as
> businesses do, rather than as educators. The interests of businesses are not
> the same as society's interest in having a broadly educated population. The
> culture of education presumably promotes inquiry, imagination,
> skepticism, and a search for a deeper understanding of society, while a
> business culture emphasizes skills necessary to achieve results. These
> may not be the same. (p. 20)

Indeed, the focus of TECs on meeting the needs of employers within the prescribed areas

of employment skills is likely contrary not only to traditional faculty who are used to

operating in the education paradigm, but potentially to the needs of the local community.

In the case of the centers, the state's agenda to bolster skills in areas such as construction,

manufacturing and information technology may not be the priorities of local employers.

The result is that TECs are placed in local communities not specifically to serve local

needs, but to serve statewide needs. Many states have adopted policies that change the

role of community colleges, the building of TEC centers allow colleges to "grow beyond

the community role to fulfill a statewide role" (Bailey and Averianova, 1998, p. 17).

Candid responses to questions regarding TEC centers said a lot about the true feelings

of CAOs on this topic. Like most of his colleagues, Vice-President Simpson invested

considerable time and resources in writing for a TEC center to be built by his college, so

his retrospective comment indicating that he is glad that "he was not awarded one" might

be construed as "sour-grapes", but it might also be a rare flash of reflective thought on

the role of government programs within his college. When asked about his TEC, Burns

shook his head, chuckled, and replied in a dead-pan way "we have two". This was

perceived as less than a ringing endorsement of the concept. Vice-President Syslak's

observation of the ways in which federal programs conflict with local needs adds an additional perspective on the role of the government in community colleges. While his comments regarding gender equity issues may not be popular within higher education circles, they serve as a metaphor for the overriding concerns regarding the role of government in community colleges and the role of colleges within their community, plus it mirrors the perspectives of others.

Implications of the Educational and Training Functions

The purposeful blending or integration of general academic education with workforce development has profound implication for the theoretical foundation of the comprehensive community college. The elimination of separate occupational and academic functions calls for the reformulation or at least restatement of the comprehensive community college mission. If, as suggested by the Chief Academic Officers involved in this study, workforce development and transfer functions are no longer to be considered different operations, the three-part mission of the community college must become two-part, with a dual focus on community education and academic education whether contextualized in work-focused examples or in traditional academic disciplines. The result is a college where instead of different structural or curricular divisions, students gain their academic education using real-world, work-focused situations and then take their knowledge either to more education or directly to the workplace. There is no difference in the academic content, just the short-term application of the knowledge acquired. Further, the integration of workforce development and general education becomes a recognition of that fact that no matter what level of

education is the goal of the student, eventually that education must be applied to a work setting.

Consider the paradox associated with the fusing of general and work-focused academics inherent in the findings associated with this study. When asked about the mission of their community college, each of the eight Chief Academic Officers suggested three main areas of emphasis, occupational or work-focused education, general or transfer education, and community education. This is consistent with the literature as evidenced by Bailey and Averianova (1998) and Brewer (2000). Later in the interviews, perspectives that combined the occupational and transfer education entities and that challenge the way in which mission was articulated earlier, were outlined. This conflict in perspectives, as stated by those interviewed, provides an example of the way in which decision-making in regard to workforce development appears to be utilitarian in nature, formulated more directly in response to the context of administrative practice associated with the job of Chief Academic Officer than through epistemologically grounded reasoning.

An implication and potential source of problems for the college engaged in training functions is suggested by Dougherty and Bakia (2000) as they consider the business aspects of the transactional nature of training. As suggested earlier, one of the major reasons colleges are engaged in training for workforce development is the economic benefit realized through payments for services to customers in the community. At some point it is expected that competition from other higher education entities, private business, or other public funded service providers may arrive. This competition could

quickly erode profits and easily jeopardize not only the training function its self, but also those programs within the college that are subsidized by training profits.

As another threat to training, the future of government subsidies in the form of Job Training grants is suspect. Once subsidies come to an end as they likely will, the competitive edge held by colleges will evaporate leaving the community college even more susceptible to the realities of competition.

The implication of a strategy founded upon an economic perspective is sound only as long as the economic factors that provide utility stay intact. Once those factors change, the strategy crumbles. Conversely, the epistemological underpinnings of the education function, whether work-focused or traditionally academic, are well grounded such that they are less likely exposed to the contextual factors and able to endure changes in context or the environment.

Practical Implications and Suggestions for Further Research

An analysis of the data suggests strongly that the perspective of Chief Academic Officers on workforce development is fluid in nature, shaped almost exclusively by the economic and political realties of the context in which they work. These perspectives can be described as adaptive, with little epistemic critique included in their formulation. Further, the context which informs perspectives is constantly changing and through the application of appropriate theory, so are the actions taken by CAOs.

In specific regard to workforce development and expansion into the training and integration functions, many community college advocates hail the comprehensiveness brought about by these additions and the willingness of the colleges to address community needs. Critics suggest that colleges have lost their way, abandoning missions

that should form the foundation of a democratic society, and choosing to be shaped by the environment rather than actively shape it. The result is that colleges have been allowed to attempt to become "all things to all people" (Bailey and Averianova, 1998), reacting to, instead of shaping, the communities in which they reside.

Research questions that remain unanswered but that might expand the utility of this study include:

- How does socialization, professionalization or biography influence the perspectives on workforce development by Chief Academic Officers or other community college administrators?

- In what ways can current theory, including adult learning theory, help to diminish the level of contradiction and conflict within community colleges?

- What specific needs in the area of administrative training and professional development might assist Chief Academic Officers in performing their job?

APPENDICIES

APPENDIX A

AN UNANSWERED QUESTION

Appendix A

An Unanswered Question

In the original conceptualization of this study there was an additional research question: what aspects of the chief academic officer's background, history, socialization, career path, education, upbringing or other experiences have helped to shape beliefs regarding workforce education and how? Unfortunately, interviews with the Chief Academic Officers along with follow up questioning failed to provided insight into this aspect of the formation of their perspective.

The ways in which life experiences, personal history, education, upbringing or demographic factors such as age, race or gender influence an individual's perception of issues is well documented as part of the *theory of significant adult learning* typified by the work of Mezirow (1991). Germane to this portion of the study was Mezirow's notion of a starting place from which to engage in significant learning. Specifically, he indicates that one's perspective, or as he terms it, "meaning perspective", acquired throughout life, provides the frame through which an individual "makes meaning". This perspective in turn, provides the comprehension and context which begets the perception that governs or influences actions toward a specific set of circumstances when presented.

In the case of this study, use of Mezirow's theory was intended to allow the examination of the connection of the factors suggested above to the stated perception of issues related to workforce development in the community college. In this way, it was to become a study of the ways in which Chief Academic Officers gain an understanding of their own meaning perspectives and how they bring these perspectives to bear on workforce education issues. Furthermore, this piece of the study sought to identify how

meaning perspectives regarding workforce education come to be. As a more specific explanation; how does one's education, career path, gender, age, race, or life experience provide an individual a meaning perspective. It is with this perspective that the individual then judges the issue of his or her institution's involvement with workforce development. This study attempted to identify those aspects or factors that have influenced the meaning perspective such that the perception of workforce issues is articulated in a specific way, either positively or negatively.

Merriam and Caffarella (1999) provided further explanation of how adult learning theory supports this part of the project plus they provide an opportunity for this study to fill a void in Mezirow's theory by highlighting an aspect of his thinking often criticized. In support, Merriam and Caffarella offer their interpretation of meaning perspectives as the "lens through which each person filters, engages and interprets the world" (pg. 320). This interpretation supports the notion that chief academic officer's meaning perspectives, accumulated through experience and other life factors, frame their actions and interpretation of issues such as workforce education.

As for the theory of Mezirow, Merriam and Caffarella cite the work of Clark and Wilson (1991) among others, as pointing out that Mezirow's theory appears to be "acontextual", that is, failing to take into account the context or external factors in which one makes meaning of events or occurrences. Stated another way, it is likely that it is not only the personal accumulation of attributes and experiences that shape one's meaning perspective, but also external environmental factors such as other people's perspective, values, mores, networks, institutional culture and relationships that provide a context for action. By considering both the individual Chief Academic Officer and the context in

which he or she operates, this study sought to construct a holistic view of the factors that influence administrative perspectives on the issues. Considering the effect of interpretation on action, and the connection between broadly defined life experience, context and meaning perspectives, there begins to develop a clear relationship between an individual's accumulated history, the current context and their perception of events or conditions. It is this theoretical relationship that provided the foundation for specific aspects of the study.

Findings and Interpretation

Throughout the early part of this study there had been an attempt to provide insight into the perspectives of Chief Academic Officers on workforce development, the factors that influence these perspectives and their implications for practice. In developing an understanding germane to this study it became apparent that Chief Academic Officers consider the context within which they practice to be the area that informs their perspective almost exclusively. Except for one CAO interviewed, background, history, socialization, career path, education, or upbringing were not mentioned as being of significance.

In addition to illuminating perspectives, there was an attempt at constructing a description of the assumptions that inform, shape and influence the meaning perspectives of CAOs in regard to workforce development. Mezirow's (1991, p. 43) classification of the assumptions that influence meaning perspectives has application here. Assumptions that are epistemic in origin are those that are shaped and influenced by cognitive and learning styles, reification, and concrete versus abstract thinking among other factors. Psychological assumptions that shape perspectives are formed by images of self,

inhibitions, neurotic needs and those factors that make up the very essence of the individual. Sociolinguistic assumptions that inform perspectives are those acquired through social norms and roles, cultural norms, common sense, and secondary (adult) socialization. There is little evidence in the data that the perspectives of the CAOs are influenced by epistemic or psychic assumptions. Their descriptions of workforce development within the community college are most closely aligned with social and cultural norms and common sense, so their meaning perspectives can be considered to be influenced by sociolinguistic factors.

The fact that the perspective of workforce development seems to be largely acquired through the contexts in which these administrators work provides strong support for contextual learning and situated cognition. Situated cognition involves learning from real-world experiences in a way in which the learning process cannot be separated from the situation in which the learning takes place. Stated another way, the knowledge gained (learning) is a product of the experience as well as the context and culture in which the experience took place (Brown, Collins and Duguid, 1989). For the Chief Academic Officers, learning on the job is inextricably situated with the job itself such that learning how to act and think on the job is more a product of the context of work (sociolinguist perspective) than it is a product of who the CAO actually is (psychological perspective) or how he came to know (epistemological perspective). As such, contextual factors including government programs or community needs constantly shape the meaning perspective through sociolinguistic channels, and the meaning scheme that is the manifestation of these perspectives is shaped by the very factors for which the scheme is preparing action.

The following diagram illustrates these relationships:

Figure 3: The Cyclical Influence of Experience on Action

```
   ┌─────────┐                                            ┌─────────┐
  (  Situated  )─────▶ ┌──────────────┐           ─────▶ (  Meaning  )
  ( Cognition  )        │   Meaning    │──────────        ( Schemes   )
   └─────────┘          │ Perspectives │                   └─────────┘
        ▲          Informs └──────────┘  Sociolinguistic        │
        │                                                        ▼
   ┌───────────┐                                        ┌──────────────┐
   │ Experience │◀──────────────────────────────────────│   Actions    │
   └───────────┘              That influence             └──────────────┘
        ▲
        │
   ┌──────────┐
   │ Context  │
   └──────────┘
```
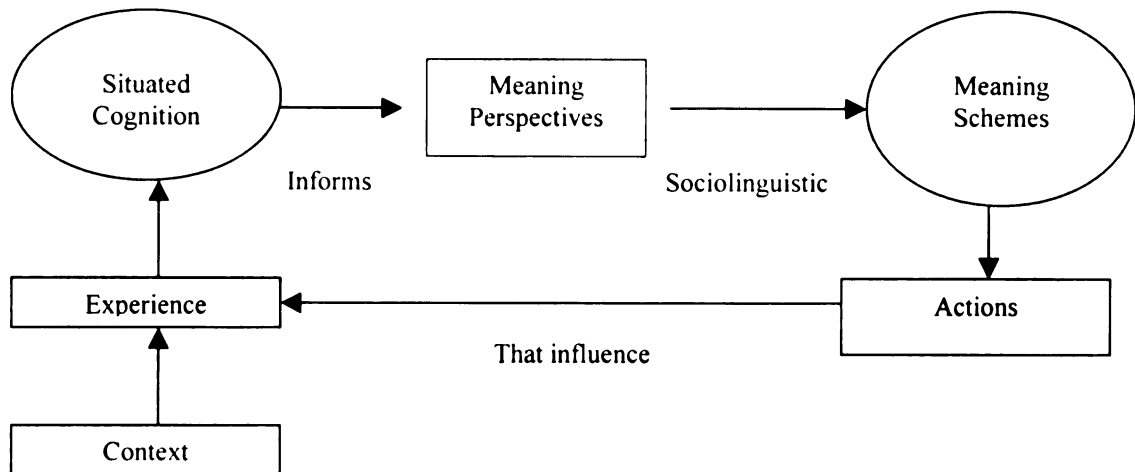
Experience within a context provides for situated cognition, or learning that is tied

directly to the context in which it takes place. This new knowledge and the associated

assumptions influences and shapes meaning perspectives and these are sociolinguistic in

their characteristics. These perspectives then inform meaning schemes, which by

definition are the concrete manifestations of perspectives that prepare one for action.

Actions translate into experiences, which in turn cycles the process once again.

The cycle depicted is allowed to continue because of a lack of epistemologically or

psychologically informed meaning perspectives that might otherwise inform or shape

meaning schemes. Stated another way, the study showed that context much more than

anything else informs and shapes perspectives in regard to workforce development.

Considering the suggestion that the contextual influences on perspectives are often

paradoxical, ambiguous, and a source of tension, it follows that the perspectives built

upon these influences suffer the same problems. The implication of building a

perspective on conflicting and ambiguous contextual factors through experience and

without critical analysis and reflective thinking to temper the impact of changing context

is significant. A constantly changing context provides for a constantly changing

perspective the result of which is leadership that attempts to have the college meet every

need suggested by the community such that the college tries to become "all things to all

people."

An additional note on theoretical implications is necessary here. In the case of the

CAOs in this study, they appeared to limit their identification of significant past

experiences to those that were associated with their professional work. With one

exception, no mention was made of experiences specific to biographical factors such as

their education, family background, or parents' work, as having had influence upon their

current way of perceiving workforce development. The exception is Vice-President

Burns, who cited his own struggles as a developmental student as contributing to his "soft

spot" for students currently in a similar situation within his college. Beyond the fact that

those interviewed did not mention biographical factors as influential, no difference could

be found among the perspectives of those in the group, even though their biographies

seemed significantly different. This is contrary to an assumption made at the beginning

of this project that was based upon common sense and the suggestions of both the

"learning from life experiences" literature beginning with Dewey (1938) and the

sociocultural literature of adult learning of which Merriam and Caffarella (1999) provide

an overview. Specifically, it was assumed that a Chief Academic Officer who was

educated as a traditional academician or who came from a household of professional

parents would not hold workforce development in as high a regard as he would hold

transfer education. Conversely, it was assumed that CAOs from working-class families, or who themselves ascended through the working ranks to their current position, would value workforce development more fully. This was clearly not the case. Note that this study does not take issue with current literature whether sociocultural, socialization, or professionalization in focus. Rather, it should be recognized that further exploration of the sociocultural and socialization aspects of the perspective of workforce development by Chief Academic Officers is beyond the intent of this project, and therefore a limitation. Additional investigation of this notion would be a highly recommended topic for additional research.

Why wasn't this information considered part of the study?

For two reasons, the information contained in this appendix was not included in the study. First, it is illogical that an individual's past experience, education upbringing, or family history not have a major influence upon their perspective, especially a perspective on an area of professional practice so significant as workforce development. The lack of findings in regard to this research question is potentially attributed to any of several factors including inadequate probing during interviews, the inability of the interviewer to notice or correctly interpret interview data, or the possibility that appropriate questions in this regard were simply not asked. In addition, Chief Academic Officers may have been unknowingly guarded in their responses, seeking to provide the information they thought the interviewer was after rather than answering questions directly and accurately. No matter what the reason, for the purpose of this study, results that do not make sense and that cannot be investigated in a timely fashion are chosen to be set aside for further review and follow-up.

APPENDIX B
UCRIHS AUTHORIZATION

MICHIGAN STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y

May 23, 2002

TO: John DIRKX
        408 Erickson Hall
        MSU

RE: **IRB# 02-366** CATEGORY: EXPEDITED 2-6

       APPROVAL DATE: May 23, 2002

TITLE: THE PERSPECTIVES OF CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICERS ON
         WORKFORCE-RELATED EDUCATION IN THEIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects' (UCRIHS) review of this project is complete and I am pleased to advise that the rights and welfare of the human subjects appear to be adequately protected and methods to obtain informed consent are appropriate. Therefore, the **UCRIHS approved this project.**

RENEWALS: UCRIHS approval is valid for one calendar year, beginning with the approval date shown above. Projects continuing beyond one year must be renewed with the green renewal form. A maximum of four such expedited renewals possible. Investigators wishing to continue a project beyond that time need to submit it again for a complete review.

REVISIONS: UCRIHS must review any changes in procedures involving human subjects, prior to initiation of the change. If this is done at the time of renewal, please use the green renewal form. To revise an approved protocol at any other time during the year, send your written request to the UCRIHS Chair, requesting revised approval and referencing the project's IRB# and title. Include in your request a description of the change and any revised instruments, consent forms or advertisements that are applicable.

PROBLEMS/CHANGES: Should either of the following arise during the course of the work, notify UCRIHS promptly: 1) problems (unexpected side effects, complaints, etc.) involving human subjects or 2) changes in the research environment or new information indicating greater risk to the human subjects than existed when the protocol was previously reviewed and approved.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at (517) 355-2180 or via email: UCRIHS@msu.edu. Please note that all UCRIHS forms are located on the web: http://www.msu.edu/user/ucrihs

Sincerely,

Ashir Kumar, M.D.
UCRIHS Chair

AK: kj

cc: Timothy Jackson
     B-15 Manly Miles Building
     405 S.Harrison, E.Lansing, MI 48823

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APPENDIX C
INFORMED CONSENT AND INTERVIEW PROTOCALS

Informed Consent

Statement of Consent Form

The Perspectives of Chief Academic Officers on Workforce-related Education in Their Community College

You are invited to be a participant in a research study about the perspectives of chief academic officers on workforce related education at their community college. You were identified in the *Michigan Education Directory* as holding the office of chief academic officer in your college, and each of the officers in Michigan are being asked to participate. This study is being done by Timothy M. Jackson, a doctoral student in the Higher, Adult and Lifelong Education Program in Educational Administration at Michigan State University, under the supervision of Dr. John Dirkx, Associate Professor in the College of Education.

Background Information.

This study proposes to learn more about the perspectives held by chief academic officers in selected Michigan community colleges in order to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which they make sense of issues related to workforce-related education.

Procedures.

If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to do the following:

- Participate in one or two interview sessions at a site of your choosing. These will last approximately one hour each and they will be tape recorded.
- Review a transcript from each interview to insure that it portrays your responses accurately.
- Respond to telephone calls seeking clarification of responses provided in the interview sessions.

Confidentiality.

Every effort will be made to protect the confidentiality of participants and their privacy will be protected to the maximum extent of the law. Prior to beginning the interviews, you will be assigned a code that will be used throughout this study as the ONLY identifier on audio tapes or notes. Only the code will appear on data collection materials. To ensure confidentiality, the list of codes and all data collected will be kept in locked file drawers accessible only to the primary and secondary investigator. Only the primary and secondary investigator will be able to associate data with individual subjects. Further, to guarantee confidentiality in reports of research findings, pseudonyms will replace the codes in all reports. Any research data stored electronically will in password protected files, the and the pass word will be known only to the primary and secondary researcher.

If you withdraw or are withdrawn from this study, tapes from the interviews, all notes and any other materials will be destroyed and not used in any form of data analysis.

Risks and Benefits of the Study.

There are no obvious risks to participation in this study. You identity will be kept confidential.

There are no obvious benefits to individuals participating in the study, though participation may contribute to an understanding of the issues and roles of the chief academic officer.

Voluntary Nature of Participation.

Your decision to participate in this study is purely voluntary, and it will not in any way affect your current or future relations with Michigan State University. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time, and all records associated with your participation will be destroyed.

Contacts and Questions.

The researcher conducting this study is Timothy M. Jackson. Please feel free to ask any question regarding this study.

Timothy M. Jackson
Michigan Center for Career and Technical Education
B-15 Manly Miles Building
1405 S. Harrison
East Lansing, MI 48823
517-432-4388
e-mail: jackso12@msu.edu

The supervisor for this study is Dr. John Dirkx; 517-353-8927.

If you have questions concerning your rights and treatment as a human participant in research, contact Ashir Kumar, M.D., Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, email: ucrihs@msu.edu or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

You will given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of consent.

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study

_____   _____

Name   Date

_____

Signature

The Perspectives of Chief Academic Officers on Workforce-related Education in Their Community College

Interview Guide, part I

Opening (may be paraphrased as appropriate): This interview is being done as a way of finding out about your perspectives on workforce-related education. We have already discussed the purpose and use of the information, and you have provided me with a signed consent form. I'll take this opportunity to remind you that if at any time you feel uncomfortable with the questions I am asking, you may decline to answer. You may also terminate our discussion or withdraw your consent at any time.

Regarding tape recording (may be paraphrased): I'd like to tape record what you have to say so that I don't miss any of it. I don't want to take the chance of relying on my notes and thereby miss something that you say or inadvertently change your words somehow. So, if you don't mind, I'd like to use the recorder. If at any time during the interview you would like to turn the tape recorder off, all you have to do is tell me, and I will turn it off.

Do you have any questions?

1. To start, can you tell me a little about yourself - your educational background and the kinds of work that you have done

   a. How did you get started in work world?
   b. What did you think you would become?
   c. What do you think has had the biggest influence on your success, especially in your current job?

2. I'm interested in knowing how you got to be the chief academic officer of _____ community college.

   a. How did you learn about the position?
   b. What was your sense of what the position involved?
   c. What interested you in the position?

3. I would like to know a little more about your college. Could you describe the mission of your college?

   a. How would you describe the major areas of emphasis for your college?
   b. Give an example or two.
   c. When areas of emphasis compete for resources, how are issues resolved?

4. How would you describe your board's view of the college's role in the community?

   a. What does your board seem to value, what gets celebrated at the board level?
   b. What is your impression of the major influences on board policy, who and how?

5. How would you describe the relationship between your board and your president?

   a. From your perspective, what is the president's perception of the college mission?
   b. How about the rest of the senior administration?

6. What about the rest of the staff, especially the faculty. What is your sense of their perception of the college mission?

7. Tell me about work force education, what does that term mean to you?

8. Describe the relationship between your college and the local employer community.

9. In what ways does the college attempt to meet the needs of local employers? Would you provide some examples of the ways in which your college addresses the needs of the local workforce?

   a. What things are making it possible to maintain or grow your relationships with employers?
   b. What about the other side, what things are making it hard to maintain or grow your relationships?

10. If I could ask you to step out of your role for a minute as chief academic officer, how would you describe your personal beliefs about workforce development?

    a. What about the role of the community college in workforce education?
    b. If the community, your board or your boss were different, would you still feel this way? What do you think has influenced your thoughts on this issue, and how?
    c. (If appropriate): What keeps you from closing the gap between the way the college acts and your personal beliefs on this issue?
    d. Any other thoughts, specific to the issues, that you would like to share?

We have covered a lot of ground. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about how any of these things relate to the perspectives you hold about workforce education?

The Perspectives of Chief Academic Officers on Workforce-related Education in Their Community College

Interview Guide, part II

Opening (may be paraphrased as appropriate): This interview is being done as a way of finding out about your perspectives on workforce-related education. We have already discussed the purpose and use of the information, and you have provided me with a signed consent form. I'll take this opportunity to remind you that if at any time you feel uncomfortable with the questions I am asking, you may decline to answer. You may also terminate our discussion or withdraw your consent at any time.

Regarding tape recording (may be paraphrased): The situation with the tape recorder is the same as last time. If at any time during the interview you would like to turn the tape recorder off, all you have to do is tell me, and I will turn it off.

During our last conversation…..provide brief overview of what was discussed last time. Seek clarification of necessary points, ask if there are additional thoughts the interviewee would like to share.

1. Let's shift gears: I'm interested in learning a little bit about you when you were growing up.

   a. Where did you live? Was it Rural/urban/suburban?   Geography?
   b. What did your parents do?
   c. What did your friends parents do?
   d. When you were in high school, what kinds of jobs were kids "expected" to get after their schooling was over?
   e. Tell me about what most influenced your career choice or choices

2. What experiences in your life - growing up and in your career - have influenced you the most in terms of your beliefs about workforce education?

3. As you consider your personal history along with the information about your college that we discussed last time, how does each contribute to your perspectives on work force education?

   a. Which is the bigger influence on your perspective, your college or your history? Why?

We have covered a lot of ground. Is there anything else can you tell me about your experience, work history, up-bringing or environment, that might have influenced your perspective on workforce education in the community college?

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