



The professional preparation of community college faculty in the Northwest
by Robert Wayne Harsha

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF
EDUCATION

Montana State University

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Abstract:

In this study, the responses to 718 mailed questionnaires returned from faculty and administrators at 59 community colleges in eight states in the northwest were analyzed. The purpose of the study was to obtain and analyze data about the academic training and experience of respondents and to obtain data concerning the professional preparation and desired qualifications of community college faculty.

Five percent of the faculty had no degree, 26.8% had less than a masters, 56.5% had a masters, and 11.3% had a doctorate. Respondents had taken an average of 10.9 courses in education. Nearly half of the administrators and 38.1% of the faculty had taught in the secondary schools. Ten percent of the faculty teaching in terminal programs, 29.1% of the faculty teaching in transfer programs, and 26.7% of the administrators had taught in four—year colleges. Approximately one fourth of the respondents had non-teaching work experience. One administrator in ten and 18.4% of the faculty had no experience at any college or position other than the present one. Respondents had been at their present schools an average of eight years and in their present positions six and one half years. Nearly twenty percent of the respondents were currently taking courses which would lead to a higher degree, and another twenty-five percent planned to do so at a later date.

Over ninety percent of the respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with their present positions. Nearly three fourths of the respondents would choose their present school as a first choice of place of employment.

The training recommended for faculty was the same for faculty teaching in terminal and transfer programs. An in-service program was the recommended training for 26 of 37 skills. The five skills ranked as most important were: teaching techniques, motivating students, how to deal with students with weak academic preparation, learning theory and its application for adults, and teaching to community college students. These were all methods skills.

The desired qualifications were: a bachelors degree in a subject field for faculty teaching in terminal programs and a masters in a subject field for faculty teaching in transfer programs, professional or trade certification for all faculty, a teaching internship and teaching experience in a community college, and membership in professional organizations for all faculty.

Faculty and administrators all had similar views of the training needs of both types of faculty. Administrators were not hiring people with the training they suggested and in-service programs were not being provided to meet the training needs. Approximately half of the respondents had received training in each of the thirty-seven professional skill areas.

THE PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION OF COMMUNITY
COLLEGE FACULTY IN THE NORTHWEST

by

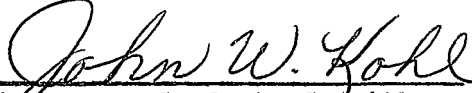
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ABSTRACT

In this study, the responses to 718 mailed questionnaires returned from faculty and administrators at 59 community colleges in eight states in the northwest were analyzed. The purpose of the study was to obtain and analyze data about the academic training and experience of respondents and to obtain data concerning the professional preparation and desired qualifications of community college faculty. Five percent of the faculty had no degree, 26.8% had less than a masters, 56.5% had a masters, and 11.3% had a doctorate. Respondents had taken an average of 10.9 courses in education. Nearly half of the administrators and 38.1% of the faculty had taught in the secondary schools. Ten percent of the faculty teaching in terminal programs, 29.1% of the faculty teaching in transfer programs, and 26.7% of the administrators had taught in four-year colleges. Approximately one fourth of the respondents had non-teaching work experience. One administrator in ten and 18.4% of the faculty had no experience at any college or position other than the present one. Respondents had been at their present schools an average of eight years and in their present positions six and one half years. Nearly twenty percent of the respondents were currently taking courses which would lead to a higher degree, and another twenty-five percent planned to do so at a later date. Over ninety percent of the respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with their present positions. Nearly three fourths of the respondents would choose their present school as a first choice of place of employment.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

SETTING

Though most of America's educational institutions were patterned after institutions in Europe, the junior college was an exception. It was a unique American invention.

The concept of a unit of higher education separate from the traditional college began to grow in the mid-1850's. Henry P. Tappan, president of the University of Michigan, in his inaugural address of 1852 predicted that the first two years of college work would soon be offered in the high schools in larger cities (Brick, 1964:19; Eells, 1936:193-195; Monroe, 1975:7-8). Tappan and other early leaders were aware of growing enrollment in the universities. As a means of easing this enrollment problem, they envisioned keeping the first two years of college as a part of the secondary school system. William Rainey Harper, president of the University of Chicago, gave this idea an acceptable status by referring to the new institution as a "junior college", giving it a separate and unique identity (Brubacker and Ruby, 1976: 253-254).

Harper's influence was instrumental in establishing what is generally accepted as the first public junior college in Joliet, Illinois in 1901 (Monroe, 1975:9; Brick, 1964:11).

From that meager beginning, the junior college grew to over 650

colleges (Gleazer, 1966:5) and 660,000 students by 1960 (Kumpf, 1974:11). By 1975, the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges listed 1211 colleges with 206,865 faculty and administrators and an enrollment of 4,031,621 (Drake, 1976:95).

The phenomenal growth of the junior college created an acute shortage of qualified junior college instructors. In 1949 the American Council on Education called for "immediate consideration of the establishment. . . of a program designed to develop the competencies of the teachers required in these institutions" (American Council on Education, 1949:13). It predicted that 30,000 new instructors would be needed. In 1963, Gleazer (1963:5) reported that 17,500 additional faculty would be required by 1975. O'Banion (1972:63) quoted a need of 78,000 to 118,000 additional faculty in community colleges by 1980.

The shortage of teachers focused attention on the need to expand programs designed especially for junior college teachers. A multitude of studies which attempted to answer questions about community college teacher preparation have been conducted.

The need for new faculty in the junior college was so great that it far exceeded the expectations of planners and the ability of preparation programs to produce enough qualified faculty. Graduates with traditional masters or doctors degrees were not prepared to teach in the two-year colleges. Unfortunately, most graduate schools prepared students to be researchers and not teachers. While four-year colleges

and universities were more interested in the research ability of their faculty than in their desire or ability to teach, the reverse was true of the junior colleges where teaching was the primary activity. Therefore, most graduates with advanced degrees sought and accepted positions in four-year institutions, rather than in the new and less respected junior college.

For over thirty years, the expanding role of the junior college went unnoticed or ignored by many university personnel. Hawk (1960) described the attitude of many college and university officials and faculty this way:

The junior college position in the educational scheme is in many respects similar to that of the American junior high school when it first appeared on the educational ladder. It was considered too sophisticated for elementary folks and too juvenile for the high school (p.340).

Many "senior" college staff did not care about the "junior" college. They did not understand or agree with the junior college philosophy and were insensitive to the factors which made the junior college unique. They ignored both the potential and the problems of the junior college. As Venuto (1972) stated, "the indifference of the four-year colleges and universities to the special needs and functions of the two-year institutions has led to feelings of hostility" (p.23).

A few colleges and universities did recognize the uniqueness of the two year colleges and established programs to prepare faculty for the junior college. However, by 1954, there were only twenty-three

schools which offered any preparation especially designed for the junior college faculty. By 1968, seventy-five colleges and universities offered complete preparation programs for the student planning to teach in a two-year college (Cohen and Brawer, 1972:149).

These few pre-service programs were faced with a nearly impossible task. They could not provide enough faculty to meet the demands of junior colleges. The faculty shortage occurred for three reasons: first, the number of junior colleges increased significantly; second, the few trained individuals who did join the community college faculty soon moved to administrative positions; and third, some faculty members who accepted positions with community colleges chose to continue their academic preparation. Medsker (1960:171) reported that ten percent of the community college faculty were working on the doctorate and nine percent on the masters degree. According to Principe (1972:113) approximately thirty-three percent of the science faculty of community colleges in the New York area planned to continue their graduate study through the doctoral level. Bushnell (1973:32-33) stated that fifty percent of vocational faculty were actively enrolled in an advanced degree program, thirty-three percent of the academic faculty were pursuing an advanced degree, and six percent were working on the doctorate.

With this proportion of teachers pursuing advanced degrees it seemed that the faculty of two-year colleges would improve its academic

qualifications as its members completed their advanced degrees. This did not prove to be the case. As faculty members completed their degrees, they accepted positions other than teaching in community colleges. Some went to the four-year colleges, some went to administrative positions, and some left the teaching profession completely. But, very few continued as community college faculty members.

The teacher shortage in higher education and the expanded role of community colleges resulted in very little change in the academic preparation of persons who actually taught in community colleges. It has been difficult for the relatively few programs designed to prepare community college faculty to demonstrate an impact on community colleges because so few of the graduates actually accepted teaching positions in community colleges.

Concurrent with the slow growth in programs of teacher preparation was an expansion of the role of the two-year college. Initially, the primary role of the junior college was that of a transfer or feeder school to four-year colleges and universities. Good's definition of the junior college typified this philosophy. The junior college is:

. . .generally, a 2-year institution of higher learning; a question has been raised about whether it should be classified as an extension of secondary education or as a part of higher education; sometimes regarded as a "feeder" for 4-year colleges or universities; grants an an associate in arts degree in most cases. (Good, 1973:321)

The broadening of the junior college role and an effort to

expand the number and type of students served brought a change in the name of many institutions. Thus, many junior colleges became community colleges. This move toward change which began after World War II and was given new impetus following Russia's launch of Sputnik, was reflected in the development of the community college concept. Good's definition of the community college demonstrated this expanded role. The community college is:

. . . a college typically set up to meet the educational needs of a particular community and offering 2-year training, either terminal or preparatory, in preprofessional and liberal arts fields; most community colleges are publicly controlled and are coeducational. (Good, 1973:114)

The role of the junior college broadened to include not only the transfer function, serving as a "feeder" facility, but also preprofessional and vocational training. These two roles were often in conflict with one another. Proponents of the two roles neither understood nor accepted the opposing role. This dual role has continued to cause conflict and dissention within the community college faculty and administration since each of these areas has traditionally called for instructors with unique teaching skills.

Strained relations between two-year and four-year colleges, absorption of many qualified community college teachers by the four-year colleges, the magnitude of the teacher shortage throughout higher education, and the dual role of the community college were all significant factors which hindered attempts to establish or expand preparation

programs for community college teachers.

Community college teacher candidates were often unwilling to continue their formal education because the positions to which they would be appointed were no different than those for which they were already academically qualified. Candidates who did continue their formal education were appointed to administrative positions or they accepted positions in four-year institutions. Faculty members who completed higher degrees also moved to administrative positions or to four-year institutions.

The upward movement of qualified faculty members has existed since the community college began and has caused the academic preparation of the community college faculty to remain nearly constant for many years. However, opportunities for selecting better prepared faculty in community colleges have begun to appear. Cheit (1971) studied the financial condition of forty-one colleges and universities and painted a rather gloomy picture of the 1970's for colleges and universities. He predicted that sizeable reductions in faculty would be required at many colleges and universities in order to meet budgets and compensate for declining enrollment.

This writer conducted a similar study in the state of Montana (Harsha and Boyle, 1977). Cutbacks in faculty have occurred in Montana and throughout the nation for the very reason that Cheit predicted. Faculty reductions at four-year institutions have increased the number

