

Update

ON RESEARCH AND LEADERSHIP

Office of Community College Research and Leadership

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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To our readers

This issue of *Update* focuses on innovations in teaching and learning in the community college. Darleen Jackson of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) describes a statewide project to create seven postsecondary Tech Prep demonstration sites in Illinois. Three of the articles in this issue focus on Illinois' postsecondary sites. Debra Mills presents the professional development and Tech Prep youth apprenticeship efforts occurring at Danville Area Community College. Anne Hubbard Norton of Illinois Central College describes curriculum integration, new course development, and team teaching occurring in the Peoria area. The Tech Prep initiative at Kennedy-King College in Chicago is presented by Earl Bryant and Andrew Lanum, focusing especially on the nursing program. The final article offers ideas to improve teaching and learning from graduate students and faculty at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC).

The forthcoming Winter Issue of *Update* will present information about the postsecondary Tech Prep demonstration sites at John A Logan College, McHenry County College, Rock Valley College, and South Suburban College. Watch for it!

Who we are

The Office of Community College Research and Leadership was established in 1989 at UIUC. Our mission is to provide research, leadership, and service to community college leaders and assist in improving the quality of vocational-technical education in the Illinois community college system. The Office is supported by the Illinois State Board of Education with funding from the Carl. D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990.

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Illinois Strengthens Commitment to Tech Prep in the Community College

Darleen Jackson, Illinois State Board of Education

In 1995, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) launched a new project focused on strengthening Tech Prep in the community colleges. With the support of the Illinois Community College Board, ISBE has selected seven community colleges as postsecondary Tech Prep demonstration sites. The sites are located at:

- Danville Area Comm. College
- Illinois Central College
- John A. Logan College
- Kennedy-King College
- McHenry County College
- Rock Valley College
- South Suburban College

The demonstration sites these community colleges will showcase the required components of Tech Prep. They also experiment with new ideas, such as finding more effective ways for students to transfer from a secondary Tech Prep program to the postsecondary level and active citizenship. The colleges are also experimenting with more creative scheduling and they are expanding worksite experiences for students.

Demo Expectations

Illinois has identified 10 essential elements for Tech Prep. To reinforce and supplement these elements, the demo sites conduct the following activities:

- Sequencing education to ensure students attain industry-identified academic skills and occupational competencies leading toward employment, an associate's degree, or a baccalaureate degree.
- Integrating academic and technical content.
- Implementing instructional methods that satisfy learning styles, problem solving, and higher-level thinking skills.

- Expanding workplace skills and worksite experiences.
- Conducting staff development to help restructure postsecondary curriculum content and instructional delivery.
- Providing flexible scheduling and innovative instruction.
- Developing full participation by commerce, labor, and industry in planning and implementation and further support.
- Guaranteeing that completers have transportable certificates.

The sites will develop recruitment and selection criteria to provide opportunities for all students to participate in Tech Prep, including special population students. They are also finding new methods to support and retain students as they move from secondary to postsecondary education.

Summer Retreat

During July, 1995, teams of faculty from each postsecondary site participated in a Tech Prep retreat. This event provided the opportunity for faculty to reflect on local project goals and to focus on improving aspects of Tech Prep through a benchmarking process. Sites also shared activities at the 1995 Connections Conferences, the National Tech Prep Network (NTPN) annual conference, and other meetings inside and outside of the state. Along with the state project, the demonstration projects of Danville Area Community College, Rock Valley College, and South Suburban College were featured at the annual conference of the National Council for Occupational Education (NCOE) meeting held in Phoenix, AZ in October, 1995.

Tech Prep is . . . a multifaceted educational program that:

- integrates college prep course work with rigorous technical education
- involves all faculty and staff
- includes a partnership with commerce, industry, and labor
- provides a smooth transition from secondary to post-secondary education
- provides work-based learning

Future Plans

During the current year, activities are planned to assist the colleges in reaching their Tech Prep goals. Future plans include:

- A showcase at each of the Connections Conferences on April, 22-24 and June 9-11, 1996 in St. Charles and Effingham, respectively. Some of the sites also plan to hold a showcase of their own. A local showcase is planned by Kennedy-King College on May, 17, 1996.
- A community college partner to assist in spreading good Tech Prep practices across the state.
- State-sponsored staff development inservices and conferences to promote the growth of outstanding programs.

For more information about the postsecondary Tech Prep demonstration sites, contact the Illinois State Board of Education at 217/782-4620.

DACC Integrates Tech Prep into the Curriculum

Debra Mills, Danville Area Community College

Danville Area Community College (DACC) has concentrated its Tech Prep demonstration project on staff development, curriculum development, and work-based learning. A Tech Prep Staff Development Kickoff was held May 30 to June 2, 1995. Fifty-two members of the DACC faculty and staff, along with twelve secondary counterparts participated in this event.

On August 18, 1995, DACC faculty participated in a professional development workshop entitled "Developing a Common Vision: Tech Prep Curriculum Integration." Ken Brown of Sonoma State University led a discussion on issues that need to be addressed if students are to be prepared for a changing world. Faculty also reviewed curriculum models and focused on integrating curriculum.

A staff development activity was held for the Part-time Faculty Academy on August 17 where Ken Brown presented 'Strategies for Active Learners.'

Worksite Training

A collaborative effort between DACC and Vermilion Vocational Education Delivery System (VVEDS) has resulted in 44 Tech Prep Youth Apprentices in the manufacturing cluster for the 1995-96 school year. Eleven firms provide paid work experiences and/or postsecondary tuition reimbursement.

Plans are developing to expand into other occupational areas. As more firms commit to apprenticeships, the College sees a need to train the worksite trainer (i.e., meister or mentor) who works with the youth apprentices.

Currently, most business/industry representatives who train students (apprentices) are chosen based on three primary factors:

- Depth of their technical knowledge
- Quality of the work ethic
- Interest in working with people

These characteristics alone, however, do not ensure the worksite trainers are adequately prepared to advise, instruct, and supervise students. Workers assigned to the role of trainer or meister frequently have no experience aligning training plans with a student's academic work and often have never instructed outside the technical domain.

DACC believes the formal training of worksite trainers of apprentices is necessary if Tech Prep and School to Work is to attain the level of quality needed for a world-class workforce. Therefore, a nationally recognized three-day training program was offered at DACC during the month of September. This program--the National Worksite Supervisor Certification, Level 1--was developed by Jobs for the Future, Maine's Center for Career Development, and Siemens Corp. Fifteen participants attended this workshop which focused on:

- Tech Prep/School-To-Work
- Quality
- The psychology of youth and learning
- Job analysis
- Communication and instruction, Conflict resolution
- Legal considerations
- Worker safety
- Student orientation

DACC is committed to the Tech Prep Youth Apprenticeship movement and providing training to business partners. Two more DACC instructors have attended a week long Train-the-Trainer session in Maine to be certified trainers in this worksite supervisor certification.

Tech Prep Youth Apprentices in Business

Recently DACC's Business Division and VVEDS embarked on a Tech Prep Youth Apprenticeship with the Palmer Bank. This program recruits high school students during the Spring semester of the Sophomore year. Criteria for eligibility include attendance, math and reading skills, and no discipline problems. The program will begin four weeks prior to the junior year when apprentices go through a structured shadowing program. The apprentices will develop a portfolio of reports and receive up to \$300 as a portfolio incentive. The paid work experience will begin the junior year and will continue throughout the program. During high school, a portion of wages in excess of minimum wage will be set aside through a savings deduction plan to be used for college expenses.

Upon graduation apprentices can elect either of two options: 1) full-time employee and part-time student or 2) part-time employee and full-time student. All apprentices are expected to continue in their education until they complete the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree.

A specific curriculum pathway has been designed by the Palmer Bank and local educators, both at the secondary and postsecondary levels. Work-based learning experiences will coordinate with school-based learning and provide a meaningful and unique educational experience for the students.

For more information contact Debra Mills, DACC Tech Prep Director, 217/443-8582; Larry Hinkle, DACC Business Division, 217/443-8819 or Kay Smoot, VVEDS Director, 217/442-0461.

Curriculum Integration at Illinois Central College

Anne Hubbard Norton, Illinois Central College

The developers of the Postsecondary Tech Prep Demonstration Project at Illinois Central College (ICC) of East Peoria and Peoria are dedicated to the idea of integrating academic and vocational education. The focus of ICC's project is to recognize faculty contributions to students' education through the integration of various academic and career components.

One of ICC's primary planning phase objectives is to coordinate and fund the development of nine cross-curricular, team-taught courses, each bringing together faculty members from both sides of the postsecondary "fence". Recommended by their department chairs, nineteen experienced full-time faculty members (representing every division of the college except Fine Arts) spent the spring and summer of 1995 co-designing courses; developing new syllabi, course materials, evaluation instruments, textbook applications, and teaching methods; and exploring and acquiring classroom resources. During the 1995-96 academic year, the faculty teams are co-teaching the classes they designed.

The experimental innovations for existing ICC courses, which will serve as models for future college-wide curriculum change, include:

- Technical Mathematics convening faculty from the Departments of Math and Physics
- Advanced Technical Math (Calculus for Engineers) taught by Math and Engineering faculty
- Technical Writing (English and electronics instructors)
- Business Ethics (Business and Philosophy instructors)
- Agricultural Computations (Math and Agriculture faculty)

- Business Communications (Office Occupations and English instructors)
- Agricultural Communications (Horticulture and English faculty)
- Medical Ethics (Nursing/Health Occupations and Philosophy instructors)

In addition, a three-person team representing Basic Skills, Mathematics, and Industrial Technology, designed a new course, Orientation to the Workplace, that focuses on helping career-bound students acquire entry-level competencies in math, reading, writing, critical and analytical thinking, problem solving, group dynamics, and computer proficiencies. It also gives students telephone and time management skills, resume preparation, job interviewing tips, and other career-readiness basics.

“Hands-on learning has been the mainstay of . . . technical education for more than four decades. . . . Contextual learning methods can be far more effective in teaching the majority of learners than the abstract methods traditionally employed in postsecondary education,” says Dan Hull in *Opening Minds, Opening Doors: The Rebirth of American Education* (1993).

All of the courses developed at ICC are focused on the learning needs of Tech Prep students, but none of the courses is limited to Tech Prep and all have anticipated enrollments of a wide variety of students, including transfer students and returning adults in both degree and non-degree programs. Part of the ICC

experiment will be to test Dan Hull's hypothesis that all students benefit from the type of teaching methodologies that traditionally have been reserved to younger vocational students.

Faculty Training

At the heart of this experiment is the need to provide training to postsecondary instructors in alternative pedagogical approaches. At ICC, intensive inservice training was provided in May, 1995 in the areas of:

- Curriculum Integration
- Team Building
- Critical Thinking Skills
- Learning Styles
- Cooperative Contextual Learning
- Authentic/Alternative Assessments

Faculty teams attended three afternoon-long workshops together. Many career instructors already were well-versed in these skills, but they attended with their partners to provide support and examples.

Thus, the inservice itself took on the atmosphere of the hands-on contextual Tech Prep lab. ICC was fortunate to have Susan Goodale, nationally recognized Tech Prep expert and faculty member at Illinois State University, to conduct these in-service workshops.

Hull warns that postsecondary instructors may be resistant to methodology changes in their classrooms, in part because of their historical independence from supervisory "rules" (pp. 147-148). ICC's Demonstration Project sidestepped this potential resistance by respecting academic freedom and mandating only a few basic guidelines that stemmed from grant objectives. These guidelines

requested that faculty apply the skills learned in their inservice training to accommodate various learning styles, that a true team teaching plan be in place, and that technology be used to help achieve the goals of each course.

Beyond that, the teams were left to their own initiatives, free to be as creative (based on their dreams of the ideal class) and as cautious (based upon their experience with real classes) as they liked.

How It Works

Audience members at the 1995 Connections Conference predicted that difficulties with instituting postsecondary Tech-Prep-style integration would include disinterest or even hostility from older faculty members "set in their ways," and confusion among students over who was "captain of the ship" in a team-taught class.

Three of these experimental classes have gotten underway this fall and instructors are finding that the student confusion simply does not exist. And the age range among the ICC faculty teams--all enthusiastic volunteers--runs from mid-twenties to retirement age. If anything, youth seems somewhat under-represented in the project.

Business instructor, Pam Gasper, a member of the Business Ethics team, labels the process of course creation "interesting and beneficial." She was not acquainted with her partner prior to the project, and a Learning Styles Inventory conducted at the inservice showed the two of them to be as far apart in terms of personality as it was possible to be. Yet as a working team, they proved highly compatible, agreeing upon topic choice, a team-teaching style, and evaluation methods.

Brooks McDaniel, the Philosophy department "half" of the Medical Ethics team, also values team compatibility. He treasures the diverse knowledge and experiences each partner contributes to the other. The Medical Ethics class is

based upon a case-study approach, each case geared to illustrate a particular ethical principle. Teammate Sharon Rose, a nursing professor and clinical supervisor, brings real-life 'what-ifs' and 'yes-buts' to each discussion. This team approach permits students to move back and forth fluidly between philosophical investigation, analysis and evaluation, and practical application and solution.

Rather than teach in isolated or abstract ways, curriculum integration should be "a crucial component of successful [Tech Prep] programs" according to the Tech Prep Roundtable of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). Academic instructors should connect their courses to real-world experiences and occupational teachers should recognize and "support the importance of academic education" (AACC, 1993, p. 9-10).

Extension of cross-curriculum integration throughout the college is still a dream, but two faculty are working to expand the idea. Mary Matthews, who has extensive experience in using innovative methodologies to teach philosophy to agriculture and agriculture mechanics students, is now working with Agriculture/Horticulture faculty to provide course work in Environmental Ethics. Meanwhile, Brooks McDaniel is exploring ways to utilize some of the successful methods of the Medical Ethics course in his Introduction to Philosophy course.

Guidelines for Successful Integration

Faculty and staff at ICC stress a very crucial component of a curriculum integration program is clear communication between the Tech

Prep staff and all other parties. The groundwork and clear expectations must be established by the Project Director and Coordinator(s) in advance of seeking faculty commitment. Everything must be communicated clearly to participants at an orientation meeting, so there are no surprises as things progress. Delineating expectations is particularly important when designing a completely new course such as ICC's Orientation to the Workplace, according to Pat Pusey, Basic Skills instructor and Director of the college's HELP tutorial lab.

Administrators must be able to supply information about estimated size and type of target population, the number of credit hours and weeks of class, and whether the course should meet days or evenings.

Faculty Advice

Pam Gasper suggests that any faculty team planning a curriculum integration project should schedule regular meetings with a concrete goal set for each. The task is large, she warns, and must be methodically "dissected," via both team and independent work. You cannot wait until the last few weeks of the funding period.

Pat Pusey, and Business Occupations instructor Janice David, who is team teaching Business Communications, both appreciated having access to the grant's fairly sizable software and supplies budget that permitted their teams to invest in videos, CD-ROMs, and other classroom resources. Both said they learned a great deal attending the Postsecondary Tech Prep Demonstration Retreat in Lisle in July, 1995.

Other conferences and workshops, such as Connections Conferences and the regional Tech Prep Inservice were made available to all participants through the grant's travel budget. ICC faculty suggest that team attendance at such conferences, if not mandated,

(continued on page 10)

Tech Prep Initiatives at Kennedy-King College

Earl Bryant and Andrew Lanum, Kennedy-King College

Kennedy-King College (KKC) has been a fully accredited comprehensive community college since 1966. The College serves a student population with diverse economic, educational, and ethnic backgrounds. Kennedy-King College is the only City College of Chicago that offers degree programs in Air Conditioning, Automotive Technology, Radio & TV Broadcasting and Graphic Communications. In total, the college offers 27 degree programs, 80 certificate programs, and 30 majors in baccalaureate transfer programs.

Targeted Career Programs

KKC has targeted eight career programs for enhancing and integrating curriculum, establishing work-based learning opportunities for students, and supporting and retaining students coming from Tech Prep secondary programs. The eight (8) targeted programs are:

- Automotive Technology
- Broadcasting
- Computer Information Systems
- Early Childhood Education
- Food Management
- Graphic Communications
- Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration (HVAC/R)
- Nursing

All eight career programs that are involved with the Tech Prep initiative take the lead in the 'how-to's' of academics and vocational integration and articulation with several of Chicago's high schools and some four-year colleges, eliminating redundancy in achieving goals more efficiently and effectively. KKC is committed to implementing a process for

articulating a technical and career preparation project across the secondary and postsecondary levels. Each program has an advisory board of business partnerships with companies and corporations to establish formal school-to-work agreements.

Each career program is at a different stage of implementing Tech Prep initiatives. However, each has distinguished itself as outstanding among other programs of its type in the Midwest and/or in the nation. Each program provides qualified candidates to join the labor pool in careers where there is continued growth and many viable job opportunities.

KKC's plan is to enhance the educational environment across disciplines, bringing students up to nationally recognized industry standards. Showcasing the successes of these programs provides an excellent model for other Illinois community colleges who have a goal of preparing students for entry into technical and service occupations geared toward the year 2000. Using the programs at KKC as a guide, community colleges will be able to establish the appropriate combination of technical, academic, and occupational skills which enabling students to meet the demands of the changing workplace and/or to continue to a four-year college or university.

Graphic Communications

KKC is the only City College of Chicago where an Associate in Applied Science Degree may be earned as well as three Basic Certificates:

- Electronic Prepress Publishing
- General Technical
- Offset Pressman in Graphic Communications

It is one of the few community colleges in Illinois offering electronic prepress and color separation courses. Graphic Communications has been involved in Tech Prep initiatives the longest and has successfully established itself as a "model" program.

Nursing

The Nurses Program at KKC prepares students to enter a career for which there is a labor market demand driven by opportunities for viable employment. The educational content is based upon industry defined standards that include academics, occupational and workplace competencies that are taught in an integrated and applied manner. It is one of the eight programs KKC has targeted for enhancing and integrating curriculum.

The nurses program at KKC demonstrates how the appropriate combination of technical, academic and occupational skills can enable students to meet the demands of today's changing workplace or to prepare for continued growth at a four-year college or university.

The Nurses Program at KKC has a reputation for competence and excellence. For the past two years, 92-100% of the students taking the Registered Nurse (NCLEX-RN) license examinations have passed on the first attempt. Normally 85% of them have job offers prior to graduation. KKC offers an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) Degree in Nursing. It is a full-time, daytime program. Sixty-seven credit hours are required for completion.

The curriculum includes the study of nursing theory and patient care techniques. Clinical experience in Chicago area hospitals and clinics is appropriately integrated with course work.

Registered Nurses (RN's) are licensed professionals who care for the sick and promote health and well-being. Nurses are typically concerned with the "whole person," and they deal with the physical and psycho-social functioning of patients.

Technological advances are providing new career opportunities and very attractive employment prospects for registered nurses and other health professionals. Significant changes in technology are contributing to the wide range of sophisticated health care services offered to patients as well as to the rise in complex procedures being performed by nurses in various health care settings.

Health-Care Affiliations

KKC is a valuable resource to health care institutions. It collaborates with industry in coordinating educational and work experiences and refers candidates for available job opportunities.

Students completing the degree in Nursing will gain the skills needed to become employed as registered professional nurses in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, private homes, physician offices, schools, public health and home agencies, government, the military or industry.

In addition, as a National League of Nurses (NLN) accredited program, the students at this college are eligible to pursue advanced degrees in nursing. KKC is presently in the process of developing articulation agreements with the University of Illinois at Chicago, St. Xavier University, Governors State University, and Chicago State University.

Currently, the Nurses Program is involved in the development of the articulation model designed by the Illinois Articulation Initiative in Nursing Education, Illinois Community College Board, and The Nursing Panel of the Illinois Health Articulation Project. This project will facilitate an articulated nursing curriculum that will extend through the student's education from that of nurse assistants, License Practical Nurse, Associate Degree, and the Baccalaureate Degree Nurse.

Kennedy-King College's plan is to enhance the educational environment across disciplines, bringing students up to nationally recognized industry standards.

Entrance Requirements

Students entering the Nurses program must be graduates from an accredited high school or have earned a General Education Development (GED) certificate. They must be 18 years of age and meet the minimum entrance requirements. They are required to take a general placement test and achieve the minimum required score in math and a 12th grade reading level.

They are also required to achieve satisfactory scores on the Nurse Entrance Test (NET) and successfully complete Chemistry 121 and 100, along with Math 110 with a grade of "C" or better.

Job Opportunities

It is anticipated that the employment of Registered Nurses will rise swiftly through the year 2000 in response to health care needs of a growing aging population. As cited in the Occupational Outlook Handbook, 1992-93 Ed., U.S. Department of Labor, "Job opportunities in nursing should be very good...(through the year 2000, especially) in specialty areas

including intensive care, medical-surgical, rehabilitation, geriatrics and long-term care."

Students completing the degree in nursing at KKC are gaining the skills needed to become employed and address these job opportunities. Our students will become the registered Nurses in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and in private, governmental and industrial concerns. Entry level salaries for full time registered nurses are attractive and can range up to \$35,000 or more per year.

There are numerous benefits from the Nursing Program. Some of the benefits students receive are:

- Marketable skills
- A broader view of nursing and other health related career opportunities
- A curriculum designed to meet academic and vocational needs
- Structured involvement and mentoring from faculty
- Updated computer software in the Nursing Assessment Center to augment and enhance classroom learning
- Course work relevant to today's industry needs
- Clinical experience in all aspects of nursing
- Practicums offered by many hospitals in the Chicago Area

KKC plans to showcase the key features of the nurses program and other aspects of Tech Prep on May, 17, 1996. The public is invited to attend.

For further information about the Nursing Program or other Health Career Programs at Kennedy-King College, Contact Stephanie Lanfair, Chairperson of the Nursing Department, 312-602-5222

For general information about Kennedy-King College's postsecondary Tech Prep demonstration site, contact Earl Bryant at 312/602-5238.

Improving Teaching and Learning in the Community College

*Students and Faculty of "The Community College" Course
at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

During the fall semester of 1995, the students and faculty of *The Community College* course at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) gave their full attention to the need to improve teaching and learning in the community college. *The Community College* course is a core requirement in the Community College Leadership graduate specialization at UIUC, and most of the students in the program are employed full-time as faculty or administrators in one of the Illinois community colleges.

To enrich the class project, the students and faculty read an extensive amount of literature, providing a rich historical and contemporary perspective on community college education. Four key texts read and discussed were:

- *Strengthening the Collegiate Function in Community Colleges* by J. Eaton (1994)
- *In the Words of the Faculty* by E. Seidman (1985)
- *Literacy in the Open Access Classroom* by R. Richardson, E. Fiske, and M. Okun (1983)
- *The Academic Crisis of the Community College* by D. McGrath and M. Spear (1991)

Extensive discussions by the class, taking on the role of a "blue ribbon panel," resulted in identifying eight core themes focusing on improving community college teaching and learning. This article discusses key concepts associated with the eight themes. This discussion attempts to capture what students learned in the course as well as what they think should be done to enhance the core business of the community college: teaching and learning.

A Clear Mission

A clearly stated and widely agreed-upon mission is essential for establishing an environment that is

conducive to excellence in community college teaching and learning. The mission of the community college should communicate the core values and beliefs of individuals within the organization in relationship to the community or region served. The mission should not only be stated, but backed up with *action*. All community college mission statements should specify:

- key purposes, goals, and offerings of the college
- who should be served and how
- unique qualities of the college and community
- how the college will ensure high quality teaching and learning is provided continually

Faculty-Student Relationships

Central to improving community college teaching and learning is understanding the complex interactions between faculty and students. Faculty-student interactions are influenced by the fact that students possess a wide range of academic abilities and needs. Some students are highly motivated to learn in a traditional academic sense. Others look to the college for a very individualized and practical education--a place to prepare for a job or career, for example. Often these students are not as academically inclined, although they are highly motivated to develop job skills to obtain employment. Like students, faculty vary in their ability to provide instruction that offers traditional or alternative content and methods. The intensity of the relationship to traditional academic disciplines and to practice also vary for faculty. To make improvements, these gaps must be addressed. Both faculty and students must become more skilled and knowledgeable about each others' needs to make advancements in the future.

Disciplinary Focus

This theme considers the relationship faculty have to their discipline, their professional orientation, and their varied commitment to teaching, research, and service. This core theme endorses faculty members' involvement in all of these activities as a means of keeping knowledge--the heart and sole of higher education--alive. This theme also acknowledges that much of what happens in the area of teaching, research, and service is highly influenced by the academic culture. Some colleges encourage faculty to be well connected to their disciplines and involved in scholarly activity. Others do not.

To be excellent instructors, we believe community college faculty must have a commitment to continuous learning of their disciplines and up-to-date teaching methods. Improvements in teaching and learning can be enhanced with action research and the sharing of best practices. New pedagogical skills and knowledge need to be disseminated through professional development (service) activities delivered via the colleges themselves, state agencies, universities, disciplinary groups, professional associations, and other qualified entities.

Funding

We are convinced that some improvements in teaching and learning will come about only with new funding. This is particularly evident where faculty are using new (often expensive) educational technologies. Today, the dollars available to maintain existing educational services (let alone new and/or improved ones) are limited. Community colleges are constrained by state laws that govern the rate at which student tuition and fees are set. Therefore, to improve teaching and learning, state and local laws,

financial structures, and funding formulas need to be re-examined. New mechanisms for funding community college education should be evaluated and adopted, whenever appropriate.

Open Access

This theme is very important because of the community college's historic commitment to open access. We believe that open access must remain a top priority. We also recognize that open access places special demands on the teaching and learning process. If community colleges do not acknowledge these demands on an institutional basis, faculty will be forced to deal with them individually. Therefore, community colleges as a whole must develop clear policies concerning open access and, at the same time, clearly address how standards of teaching and learning will be maintained in this unique collegiate environment. The faculty should reach consensus concerning how standards will be maintained, how instruction will be delivered, and how student progress will be assessed. To be most effective, these standards must clearly recognize the wide ranging academic abilities and educational needs of all students of the community college.

Presidential Leadership

Primary leadership for campus mission regarding teaching and learning should come from the presidential and faculty levels. In any community college committed to excellence in teaching and learning, the president must take the lead in ensuring the entire college is dedicated to that same goal. Community college presidents, in conjunction with all other personnel, have a particularly important role to play in clearly communicating the mission of the institution to various constituency groups. Inside the college, presidents must be highly visible and genuine in their efforts to support and encourage faculty and staff in their pursuit of excellence in teaching and learning. Outside of the college, they play an important role in encouraging local boards of

trustees, and community, state, and national leaders to accept and support the idea of continually improving teaching and learning.

Support Services

Community college administrators and student services personnel can have a significant influence on student success in areas primarily related to out-of-classroom experiences. Services such as advising, counseling, career services, and adult support can impact the ability of students to successfully interpret the educational system. Recognizing and utilizing the contributions from all personnel at the community college is imperative if the goal of serving the needs of all students is to be realized.

External Forces

Although some scholars suggest community colleges operate outside the traditional pipeline, they certainly do not operate in isolation. What happens in community colleges is influenced greatly by other parts of the educational system, especially secondary schools and universities. Other organizations that influence community college education are plentiful. They include federal, state, and local agencies, accrediting organizations, employers, labor groups, community-based organizations, parent and student groups, and taxpayers. Without question, these groups impact teaching and learning, either directly or indirectly. Sometimes the influence of these groups is complimentary to one another. Other times it is conflicting. The key is recognizing these external forces and understanding how they can assist in improving the teaching and learning function of the community college.

To summarize, our "blue ribbon panel" recommends that eight core themes be considered to improve community college teaching and learning. They are:

- A mission clearly focused on excellence in teaching and learning

- Understanding faculty-student relationships
- Strong disciplinary focus
- Increased funding
- Academic standards sensitive to the open access mission
- Presidential leadership of the teaching and learning function
- Support services linked to teaching and learning
- Political savvy in using external forces

This statement evolved from an academic exercise; however, it has potential for generating debate on a wider scale. We invite you to share it with colleagues on your campus. If you would like to engage in a dialogue regarding the statement or if you have other thoughts regarding community college teaching and learning, please offer them via e-mail to: dbragg@ux1.cso.uiuc.edu.

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should be very strongly encouraged. It helps answer the question, "Just what is Tech Prep?", which remains a major communications hurdle that all of us in Tech Prep face.

Faculty participating in the planning/design phase of the project received a stipend of \$1000, payable upon the delivery of the final product. They are expected to participate fully in all inservice sessions, and a part of the stipend compensates for time devoted to that.

The Demonstration grant will continue to fund the implementation phase of the project--the actual team-teaching of these team-designed classes--by providing the salary of one half of each team. The college pays the other half since the courses themselves would have been offered in a traditional format anyway.

Future Plans

All courses will be evaluated and modified as needed by the team teachers, the Postsecondary Tech Prep staff and department heads at the close of the academic year. We plan then to teach them a second time, using the same teams, before presenting them to the college curriculum committee for consideration for permanent inclusion and using them as models for further curriculum integration throughout the college.

The institutional reform of teaching via the integration of traditional academics and vocational education was the very first of eleven recommendations made by the Tech Prep Roundtable in 1994. The lively conversations that often ensued at the inservice workshops revealed one fact that perhaps would surprise some people. "Vocational" faculty truly want their students to be well-rounded, traditionally-educated individuals and "academic" faculty truly want to see their students prepared for lucrative careers. Cross-curriculum integration using "hands-on" learning, all agree, is one way that ICC can achieve this, its common goal.

Suggested Resources

Hull, D. (1993). *Opening minds, opening doors: the rebirth of American education*. Waco, TX: CORD Communications.

American Association of Community Colleges. (1994). *The Tech Prep associate degree challenge: a report of the Tech Prep Roundtable*. Washington, D. C: Author.

For more information about the postsecondary Tech Prep demonstration project at Illinois Central College, contact Anne Hubbard Norton, Coordinator, at 309/694-5152.

Watch for the next
issue of *Update* to
learn more about the
Postsecondary
Tech Prep
Demonstration Sites
in Illinois

Our next issue of
Update will feature
innovations in
teaching and
learning at:

John A. Logan College

McHenry Cty College

Rock Valley College

South Suburban College

**Mark your calendar now
and plan to attend the**

Spring Showcase

of

Postsecondary Tech Prep

Demonstration sites

Held in conjunction with the
“Connections” Conferences
April 22-24, 1996 - St. Charles, IL
June 9-11, 1996 - Effingham, IL

To register or receive more info,
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