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**Language Minority Students and California
Community Colleges:
Current Issues and Future Directions**

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It has been argued that the United States is in the midst of a “perfect storm,” precipitated by immigration and other demographic changes, an increasing disparity in literacy and numeracy rates, and “seismic changes” in the globalized and technology-driven labor market (Kirsch, Braun, Yamamoto, & Sum, 2007). If this is true, then California is in the center of that storm, and the state’s community colleges are charged with helping to weather it. One-quarter of current Californians, 9.6 million children and adults, were born outside of the United States. This represents the highest proportion of foreign-born population in the state since 1890 and a fivefold increase in immigration since 1970 (Public Policy Institute of California, 2007). In California’s public K-12 schools, over 40% of students (2.6 million) come from households where a language other than English is spoken (Rumberger, 2007). One in four of all schoolchildren in the state, 1.6 million, are classified as English learners (EL’s), the designation for students that the school system believes are not yet able to do grade-level work in English in mainstream classrooms without interventions.

Community colleges play a crucial role in educating California’s linguistically diverse population. They are responsible for serving both young adults transitioning from California high schools to postsecondary education, as well as adults of various ages pursuing a wide variety of education goals, including English language development and job training. In fact, students from immigrant and language minority

backgrounds rely on all of community colleges’ traditional functions: vocational and technical training, remedial and developmental education, community and continuing education, English language development, completion of associate’s degrees, and academic preparation for transfer to four-year colleges and universities (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).¹

Community colleges’ historical “collegiate function” (Cohen & Brawer, 1987, 2003) plays a particularly crucial role in the educational aspirations of California’s postsecondary students. The state’s Master Plan allows only the top one-third of high school students initial access to public four-year institutions, designating community colleges for the education of the remaining population interested in pursuing higher education (Hill, 2006). Given the length of time it takes to develop the English language proficiency necessary to succeed in mainstream academic settings (Hakuta, Goto Butler, & Witt, 2000), as well as the inequitable educational conditions English learners face in the state’s K-12 public school system (Callahan, 2005; Gándara, Rumberger, Maxwell-Jolly, & Callahan, 2003; Valdés, 1998, 2001), the importance of community colleges is magnified for those students still in the process of learning English. Therefore, while recent reports have focused on the vital role that community colleges play in teaching adult immigrants English as a Second Language in mostly non-credit programs focused on language skills for daily life and employment (Chisman & Crandall, 2007; Condelli, 2002; Crandall & Sheppard, 2004), in this paper I focus on the role that community colleges play in preparing language minority students academically for Associate’s degrees or transfer to four-year institutions. I use the term language minority students to refer to individuals who speak languages other than English and who have been identified as in need of English language development support at some point in their schooling in the United States, whether in K-12 or higher education. As I use it, the term includes both immigrants and children of immigrants whose English language skills are considered “suspect,” whether these students are currently enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes or not.

¹ Indeed, many or all of these functions may be encountered by a single student. For example, a student may seek transfer to a four-year institution yet be referred to English as a Second Language (ESL) program, or may begin in a vocation program and decide later to seek transfer.

There is a striking lack of statewide information regarding language minority students in California community colleges and little agreement surrounding how to respond to their language development needs. In this paper, beginning with the difficulty of defining the language minority student population in community college contexts, I discuss related challenges in identification of these students, language testing, and academic placement; instructional options; and means of tracking student progress. I highlight the promises and limitations of current research efforts designed to inform these issues. I argue that while more and better data collection is part of the solution, such efforts must be informed by larger discussions surrounding the nature of the English language skills required to succeed in academic settings (Bunch, 2006; Valdés, 2004), how best to measure these skills (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Valdés & Figueroa, 1994), how to decide who is in need of what kind of language interventions, and how these interventions can be designed to facilitate rather than sideline students' progress toward their academic goals (Valdés, 2004).

The Language Minority Population in California Community Colleges

Students from racial and ethnic minorities, many of whom come from language minority backgrounds, rely on community colleges in particularly high numbers, both nationwide and in California. Nationally, two-thirds of Latino postsecondary students begin their higher education career in community colleges (Solórzano, Rivas, & Velez, 2005), and community colleges enroll over half of the total U.S. Latino college population (Saenz, 2002). In California, close to 75% of Latino first-time college students enroll in community college (Woodlief, Thomas, & Orozco, 2003), and almost half of California's community colleges have student bodies that are over 50% students of color. Meanwhile, over 40% of all Asian Pacific American (APA) postsecondary students in the U.S. attend community college (Lew, Chang, & Wang, 2005).

Obviously, not all ethnic minority students are immigrants or language minority students. Yet there is evidence that, nationwide, immigrant populations are more likely to use community colleges than their U.S.-born counterparts (Vernez & Abrahamse, 1996). In California, it has been estimated that students from immigrant backgrounds comprise close to one quarter of all community college students (Woodlief et al., 2003). There is widespread agreement that many students from immigrant

backgrounds enter higher education with English language needs. Gray, Rolph, and Melamid (1996), in case studies of both community colleges and four-year institutions across the U.S., report that their respondents believe that immigrants' difficulty with written and verbal English represented the most "serious and widespread" obstacle to their retention and success (p. xi). These reports documented the common perception that while many immigrant students' language skills were adequate for their high school courses, these same skills were not sufficient for college-level work. In California, the ESL Task Force of the Intersegmental Committee of Academic Senates (ICAS) (2006), representing the three main systems of higher education in California (community colleges, the California State University, and the University of California) concurred, stating that "many ESL learners have ESL problems that lead to special challenges when they need to use academic English in college and university classes" (p. 3).

Defining and Identifying the Language Minority Population

Despite the likely size of the language minority student population in California community colleges and widespread agreement regarding the need for English language support, there are currently no statewide data available on the number of students in community colleges who speak home languages other than English, students' English language proficiency, or how many current community college students were identified as English learners in the K-12 system. In the past, the Chancellor's Office Management Information System (COMIS) collected information on students' primary language, defined as "the language the student speaks and writes most frequently" (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2006, p. 3.011). Due in part to concerns about reliability of the data, which were mostly collected via student self-reporting, the decision was made in 2002 to stop requiring colleges to report this information.²

One of the reasons that it is difficult to gather information on the language minority population is that notions such as "primary language" are problematic, especially for those language minority students who have lived in the U.S. for a number of years and completed much of

²Terrence Willett, personal communication, May 23, 2007. While the primary language data element has therefore been deleted from COMIS, such information may still be collected by local colleges for their own purposes.

their formal education in U.S. K-12 schools. Many of these students are “circumstantial” bilinguals who have learned more than one language by living under conditions which require its use, as opposed to those who have “elected” to learn a second or foreign language primarily through formal instruction (Valdés, 1992; Valdés & Figueroa, 1994). These students, sometimes called “Generation 1.5” (Blumenthal, 2002; Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999; Roberge, 2002), may be more proficient in one language for certain kinds of tasks and more proficient in another for different tasks. Another issue, as articulated by the ICAS ESL Task Force (2006), is the time needed to become labeled as “proficient”:

Does a person remain a second language learner of English for his/her entire life? If no, what is the demarcation that indicates one no longer needs to retain that label? In a college or university setting, is a student still a second language learner of English once he/she is no longer enrolled in an ESL course? (p. 23).

Without statewide information on the linguistic backgrounds of community college students, demographic information from California’s K-12 public school system can provide at least some clues to the range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds from which community college students come. For example, drawing California Department of Education data and other datasets, Gershberg, Danenberg, and Sanchez (2004) report on languages spoken by K-12 students designated as English learners (EL), the majority of whom were born in the United States to immigrant families. In the 1999-2000 school year, over 80% of all EL’s in California public schools spoke Spanish as a primary language, 4.6% spoke Southeast Asian Languages, 2.8% spoke Chinese languages; and between 1% and 2% spoke each of a wide number of other languages. Gershberg et al. also report on the country of origin for recent immigrants, defined as those in California schools for less than three years. Almost 70% of these students arrived from Mexico; between 3% and 4% from each of the Philippines, Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, South Asia, and Eastern Europe; and smaller numbers from other Latin American countries, the Middle East, Africa, the Pacific Islands, and the Caribbean.

California’s K-12 system also has a testing and identification process that could

potentially provide information to community colleges on students’ language proficiency. All students entering California’s public K-12 schools are administered a home language survey upon initial enrollment, and students who indicate that a primary language other than English is spoken at home are required to take the California English Language Development Test (CELDT). The CELDT, which measures English language skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing, is the assessment used by California to meet the requirements set forth in the federal No Child Left Behind Act to measure students’ annual progress in acquiring English language proficiency. Based in part on initial CELDT scores, students are either designated as “Fluent English Proficient” (FEP) and referred to the regular instructional program or as an English learner (EL) and placed in EL programs and services. Students who are initially designated as EL take the CELDT test annually until they are reclassified as fluent English proficient.³

Whether it is because California community colleges do not have access to the information or choose not to use it, there is little or no use of K-12 language designations or CELDT test scores at the community college level (Bunch & Panayotova, 2008). Nor is there a language designation that travels with language minority students in California community colleges beyond their enrollment semester by semester in particular ESL courses. This has the potential advantage of reducing the negative effects of curricular tracking (Callahan, 2005; Harklau, 1994; Roberge, 2001; Valdés, 2004), but it also makes it difficult to follow the progress of students who have exited ESL courses or have avoided ESL courses altogether (ICAS ESL Task Force, 2006).

One way to begin to understand the varying linguistic backgrounds and needs of language minority students in community colleges is to think of them as members of one of three general categories (ICAS ESL Task Force, 2006, p. 3): (1) adult immigrant ESL students who have recently arrived in the U.S. and may or may not have had formal education either in the U.S. or their countries of origin; (2) students who have completed much, if not all, of their education in the United States but whose non-standard features of oral or written English are perceived to be an impediment to their learning; and (3) international students, who typically have had formal education

³ Reclassification is based upon CELDT test scores, academic achievement tests, and teacher evaluation of the student’s academic performance (California Department of Education, 2007).

in their home country, have studied English as a foreign language in classroom settings before arriving to the U.S., and plan to return to their countries of origin upon completion of their studies.

Members of the second group, those often referred to as Generation 1.5, are likely to avoid ESL due to the perceived stigma associated with the term (ICAS ESL Task Force, 2006). According to Blumenthal (2002), by the time they enter community colleges, these students “are often very fluent in and comfortable with informal spoken English” and their “spoken language usually flows easily, without the pauses and discomfort that second-language learners often exhibit, and often includes idiomatic expressions that are common to native speakers” (p. 49). On the other hand, their grammar and pronunciation often contain what are perceived to be “second-language errors” (p. 49). Meanwhile, Blumenthal describes Generation 1.5 students as “often ill prepared for college courses” because their “academic skills, including reading, writing, critical thinking, and general knowledge, are often weak” (pp. 49-50). Therefore, although they exhibit similarities with remedial students from monolingual English-speaking backgrounds, these students’ second-language issues require specialized attention that remedial English teachers are often not trained to provide.

The Generation 1.5 label has been helpful in focusing needed attention to the fact that U.S.-educated language minority students do not fit the linguistic or academic profiles of either monolingual English-speaking students in need of remediation, nor of recently-arrived adult immigrants or international students. The term also highlights the fact that the language attention these students might profit from may be different than traditional ESL coursework. As with all labels, however, the Generation 1.5 label is not without problems (Bunch & Panayotova, 2008; Matsuda, Canagarajah, Harklau, Hyland, & Warschauer, 2003). At times, the term is used to imply that students are lacking any fully developed language, a characterization that contradicts fundamental tenets of human language acquisition and use (MacSwan, 2000; MacSwan, Rolstad, & Glass, 2002). While it may indeed be the case that these students struggle to read and write in both languages, their oral language is often consistent with the normal and expected linguistic development of circumstantial bilinguals (Valdés, 1992; Valdés & Figueroa, 1994). It may even be unclear whether these students should be considered second language learners at all, or whether instead they are more appropriately

considered bilingual “users” of English whose language “errors” are the result of the acquisition contact-varieties of English (Cook, 2002). Meanwhile, while monolingual English-speaking students’ efforts to acquire foreign languages are “accorded the status of major disciplines,” simultaneously “bilingual students’ considerably more sophisticated skills in two or more languages are often defined only in terms of perceived deficiencies in English” (Harklau, Siegal, & Losey, 1999, p. 11).

Identification, Testing, and Placement of Language Minority Students

Students who seek access to higher education at the community college level confront language assessments and other-language-related policies even before they enter a college classroom for the first time. These policies are enacted as students take placement exams, talk with guidance counselors, read information provided to them by the colleges, and informally assess their own English language proficiency. Effective testing and placement processes have the potential to identify what students are able to do in English and refer them to the instructional environments that hold the most promise for completing their goals. For language minority students, depending on their linguistic and educational backgrounds and needs, effective instruction could conceivably be provided in ESL courses; developmental courses in the regular English department; regular, credit-bearing courses required for degrees and transfer; or in other settings such as through lab time or tutoring. In practice, however, the options are usually more limited. For example, Patthey-Chavez, Dillon, and Thomas-Spiegel (2005) describe three different pre-collegiate composition starting points for students in a regional consortium of fourteen California community colleges: (1) beginning ESL writing (sequences ranged from one to four semesters at each college); (2) advanced or academic ESL writing (ranging from one to three semesters); and (3) non-ESL precollegiate writing instruction (ranging from one to two semesters).

Identification, testing, and placement of language minority students represent high stakes decisions (Crusan, 2002). If students with low levels of English language proficiency are inappropriately placed in regular courses that feature no understanding or support for their language needs, the result may be little opportunity for them to improve their English and the likelihood of failing the course. On the other hand, students inappropriately placed in ESL classrooms may delay their progress toward a degree or transfer and separate them from the environments

in which they might have greater opportunity to improve their English and academic skills.

Despite these high stakes, the identification of language minority students is “complicated and inconsistent” (ICAS ESL Task Force, 2006, p. 5). One of the first decisions facing language minority students upon enrolling in community colleges is whether to take an ESL placement exam or a regular English test. This decision, before students’ test results are even considered, is itself a high stakes one (Bunch & Panayotova, 2008). Rather than determining into which program the student might more appropriately be placed, ESL tests generally place students into ESL courses, and English tests place them into English courses. Because ESL tests and English tests are designed for different purposes and normed on different populations, students typically are not advised to take both tests (California Community College Assessment Association, 2005). Colleges may “advise” students regarding “appropriateness of the English and ESL assessments, but students must be free to choose which assessment they wish to take” (California Community College Assessment Association, 2005, p. 15). Yet, as documented by Bunch and Panayotova (2008), colleges vary widely in how they advise students as to which test to take. Guidance offered to students on community college websites regarding this decision are often either not relevant for U.S.-educated language minority students or signal misconceptions about the nature of bilingualism and the characteristics and needs of these students.

In addition to issues regarding the most appropriate test to steer language minority students toward, “significant problems” have been identified with other aspects of the assessment process at California community colleges, including the validation process of placement tests and the validity of the additional measures used (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, 2004, p. 5). Part of the issue revolves around the training and resources available to local college or district personnel responsible for selecting or developing assessments and measuring their validity. These problems are exacerbated by recent budget cuts for research and development on assessment issues (ICAS ESL Task Force, 2006). In case studies of both four-year and community colleges nationwide, Gray et al. (1996) found that most ESL programs, especially in California, spent significant time developing their own assessments. Concluding that commercially available curricular materials were not suitable for each institution’s unique ESL program, faculty and staff developed and monitored their own tests,

“often without much formal training or experience in assessment or curriculum development” (p. 77). Grey et al. highlight the tension between local control and expertise in language testing and measurement:

[V]alid and reliable assessment instruments are essential. Yet the need for quality control and equity in assessment often conflicts with the need for local control over curriculum, pedagogy, course structures, and assessment” (Gray et al., 1996, p. 82).

Even when colleges do choose commercially available tests, however, there is no guarantee that the test chosen is one that is appropriate for use by language minority students transitioning from U.S. high schools to pursue academic goals (Bunch & Panayotova, 2008). Bunch and Panayotova (2008) found that while a wide variety of institutionally developed and commercially available ESL placement tests are used at the sixteen colleges they studied, the most commonly used ESL assessment, the Combined English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA), was not originally designed for use in academic ESL programs. An exploration of the test format and content raised questions about the tests’ ability to appropriately measure aspects of English language proficiency relevant to pursuing academic goals, raising questions about the correspondence between the language called for on the test and the language needed for academic success (Bachman & Palmer, 1996).

While colleges are required to do local studies of the predictive validity of placement tests, such research rarely extends beyond the immediate course into which the student has been placed, leaving questions unanswered about the result of initial testing and placement on students’ long-term academic progress.

Another concern is how language minority students’ writing is tested. The ICAS ESL Task Force (2006) survey found that only 40% of California community colleges ask students for an actual writing sample as part of the assessment process, in part due to the expense and time required to do direct assessments of writing. While multiple choice “writing” tests are more frequently employed, such tests have been criticized for testing discrete knowledge of grammar and written conventions rather than students’ ability to actually write (Crusan, 2002). The Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC Committee on Assessment, 2006) argues that “best assessment practice” calls for “contextualized,

meaningful writing,” “direct assessment by human readers,” and the use of multiple measures (see also Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, 2004). There are also problems with some direct writing tests, which are often given in community colleges under testing conditions that do not reproduce real world social, academic, or professional contexts (Curry, 2004). According to Curry, students may encounter unfamiliar topics and may have anxiety due to limited time. Furthermore, students are often allowed only one draft, cannot use dictionaries or other resources, and are often assessed on surface-level features of writing rather than how students organize their essay or render an effective argument.

The number of students assigned to basic skills and/or pre-collegiate coursework is as high as 75% of all students in some California community colleges (Office of Research Planning and Grants, 2004), and some of the issues facing language minority students are similar to those facing their native English-speaking counterparts. As Kirst and Bracco (2004) have pointed out, all students face a “confusing array” of exams as they transition from high school to college. Students receive mixed “signals,” with assessments and policies that at one level of the educational pathway are misaligned with, or even contradictory to, those at another level (Kirst & Bracco, 2004). Bueschel (2004), documenting case studies of community colleges in California and several other states, reports that students were often surprised to find that they were required to take placement tests and were upset when they realized that they are not allowed to enroll in courses that carry college-level credit.

The ICAS ESL task force (2006, pp. 9-10) has recommended that California community colleges, the CSU system, and the UC system “should work . . . toward a statewide system for identifying ESL learners and tracking their progress through the higher educational segments” and that “campuses should review current assessment and placement instruments and, where needed, develop more accurate instruments and appropriate placement procedures for ESL students. The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges (2007) recently passed a resolution directing the Chancellor “to begin the process of evaluating the implementation of a system-wide uniform, common assessment with multiple measures of all community college students.”

However, the Consultation Council Task Force charged with responding to the Board of Governors’ directive has expressed concern with mandating a statewide uniform assessment,

especially given college’s traditional local control over their curriculum (Consultation Council Task Force on ESL Assessment, 2007). While alignment and consistency are often discussed as the answer to problems regarding assessment in California community colleges, these efforts alone will have limited utility if the assessments and policies themselves remain flawed.

Instructional Options for Language Minority Students

English as a Second Language

Improving the identification, testing, and placement of students from language minority backgrounds will only make a difference in relationship to the quality and appropriateness of the program and course options into which students are placed. ESL programs, the most common way in which community colleges respond to the needs of language minority students (Gray et al., 1996; Szelényi & Chang, 2002), are central to the mission of California community colleges. The Education Code states that one of “the essential and important functions of the community colleges” is to provide ESL instruction when necessary to facilitate students’ postsecondary educational success (ICAS ESL Task Force, 2006, p. 16), and ESL is one of the service areas authorized for adults seeking noncredit instruction in the California community colleges (ICAS ESL Task Force, 2006, p. 16).⁴

ESL courses provide many potential benefits for immigrant students, including the development of language skills through an instructional focus on formal and informal English, opportunities for interaction among students who may be going through similar experiences, and peer support and informal counseling that may help foster confidence among students (Szelényi & Chang, 2002). In case studies conducted by Gray et al. (1996), “ESL instructors showed an unusual dedication to their students and often were advocates and informal counselors

⁴ Non-credit, adult ESL programs are centered around English skills for basic functional tasks for employment and daily life, including shopping, completing job applications and rental agreements, and seeking care in the health care system (Blumenthal, 2002). While non-credit/adult ESL and academic ESL programs are often separated into different departments, divisions, or even different campuses, ideally students are able to transition from non-credit programs to ESL academic programs (Chisman & Crandall, 2007; Crandall & Sheppard, 2004).

for immigrants (and foreign students) within their college or university” (p. 77).

On the other hand, ESL courses may be marked by high attrition rates, vast heterogeneity in student needs, lack of full-time ESL faculty, and low levels of funding (Szelényi & Chang, 2002). Furthermore, while ESL faculty often strongly reject the suggestion that ESL is “remedial,” (Gray et al., 1996, p. 77), debates surrounding whether ESL courses should merit credit have been longstanding (Van Meter, 1990). Academic ESL courses offer institutional credit but, depending on the level, these credits may or may not count toward graduation, degree requirements, or transferable credit to four-year institutions (Blumenthal, 2002; Curry, 2004; ICAS ESL Task Force, 2006; Kuo, 1999, 2000).

Resistance to ESL courses is commonly reported among U.S.-educated immigrant students, both in California and nationwide (Bers, 1994; Blumenthal, 2002; Harklau, 2000; Harklau, Losey et al., 1999; ICAS ESL Task Force, 2006; Roberge, 2002). Because community college ESL programs serve a wide variety of students with vastly different goals, interests, prior educational experiences, and linguistic backgrounds (Crandall & Sheppard, 2004), U.S.-educated language minority students may not see themselves as fitting into ESL courses with learners from such different backgrounds. ESL programs have been described as primarily serving students who have “unfamiliarity with the English language and American culture” (Kuo, 2000, p. 1), yet U.S.-educated language minority students often have a strong command of many aspects of English and may be intimately familiar with “American culture” (Harklau, 2000; Harklau, Siegal et al., 1999; Roberge, 2002). In one survey of former students in developmental ESL writing courses at City University of New York, students described themselves as underchallenged and underprepared by the courses (Smoke, 1988, cited in Curry, 2004). Curry (2004) reports that in a qualitative study at one Midwestern community college, an ESL “pedagogy consisting of decontextualized grammar, vocabulary activities, and writing assignments about personal topics left many students feeling stultified” (p. 55). The stigma of ESL and resistance to it by some students has also been raised as an issue for ESL programs in California community colleges (ICAS ESL Task Force, 2006; Woodlief et al., 2003).

A central issue is whether ESL is seen as a pre-requisite to academic work in English or a supplement to that work. Woodlief et al. (2003), in interviews with students and faculty at nine California community colleges, concluded that

“college staff tend to have a mistaken view that immigrants master English before crossing over into the academic or vocational coursework” and, as a result, campuses pay “little attention to helping immigrant students fulfill both tasks simultaneously” (p. 17). The authors found few instances of “bridge” courses or programs designed to integrate English language skills and content knowledge.⁵ In California, students are allowed to enroll in most credit-bearing content-area courses regardless of their language proficiency levels (ICAS ESL Task Force, 2006). Nonetheless, there is a wide range of ways in which students may be discouraged from instructors or counselors to take these courses (Gray et al., 1996).

Furthermore, immigrant students often face financial and time constraints that may lead students to abandon their initial academic goals, especially if students are assigned ESL prerequisites that do not carry credit toward an associate degree, a vocational certificate, or transfer to a four-year university. While ESL course sequencing varies widely among community colleges, with some colleges allowing students to choose their own sequence of ESL courses and others offering a more structured format and sequence (Gray et al., 1996; Kuo, 1999), ESL programs may involve enrolling in multiple classes in any one semester and may take multiple semesters to complete. ESL instructors often argue that by bypassing ESL coursework, students “suffer and fail the college-level courses and become disheartened” (Kuo, 1999). On the other hand, students who are interested in pursuing transfer, once “discovering that most ESL courses cannot be counted toward general education requirements, can experience decreased levels of persistence and motivation” (Kuo, 1999). Woodlief et al (2003) reported that many immigrant students in their study attempted to skip part or all of the ESL sequence.

Alternatives to ESL

At most community colleges, the alternative to ESL coursework for language minority students is pre-collegiate, developmental, or remedial writing or reading courses designed primarily for monolingual English-speaking students. Due to an historic “disciplinary division of labor,” (Matsuda, 1999), basic writing teachers “are typically prepared to teach inexperienced and/or educationally disadvantaged native English speakers and may not have . . . insight into the

⁵ Some colleges do have ESL “learning communities” that offer paired ESL and content courses.

characteristics and needs of ESL writers” (Silva, 1994, quoted in Smoke, 2001, p. 208). These faculty members must therefore confront “complex and baffling language problems” (Smoke, 2001). In their study of California community colleges, Woodlief et al. (2003) report that immigrant students noted that many of their non-ESL instructors had not been trained to work effectively with immigrant students.

It is possible to argue, therefore, that neither ESL programs nor developmental English programs in regular English departments as currently constituted are particularly well-suited to assess the needs of U.S.-educated language minority students (Harklau, Losey et al., 1999; Roberge, 2001). For this reason, some community college ESL programs, similar to those at four-year institutions (Holten, 2002), are becoming increasingly aware of U.S.-educated students and in some cases provide special courses designed for the Generation 1.5 population (Blumenthal, 2002; Miele, 2003). Meanwhile, adjunct models (Brinton, Snow, & Wesche, 1989) that involve ESL instructors and/or courses linked to regular disciplinary courses and instructors are a promising but under-researched option.

Tracking Student Progress

National research tracking the progress of the general student population from high school through all postsecondary options to bachelor’s degree completion has indicated the importance of immediate enrollment after high school, full-time and continuous enrollment, and earning credits early (Adelman, 2006). Focusing specifically on California community colleges, Shulock and Moore (2007) found that both completion of a certificate or degree and transfer to a four-year institution were more likely among students who attended full time and enrolled continuously. Yet students from underrepresented backgrounds are least likely to follow these enrollment and course-taking patterns. Sengupta and Jepsen (2006) found that in California community colleges, Latinos were the lowest group (38%) in terms of taking a majority of their coursework at the transfer level during their first year. In contrast, Latinos were over-represented among students in basic skills and ESL courses (26%). This pattern is important because the majority of first-year basic skills and ESL course takers (52%) left community college after their first year. Only 7% of these students took a majority of their courses at the transfer level their second year. Yet transfer rates were highest for those who took a majority of courses at the transfer level in their first year.

There is little published research to help clarify the role of ESL placement and coursework in the academic trajectories of U.S.-educated language minority students. As Bers (1994) has pointed out, identifying language minority students and obtaining basic demographic data are challenging tasks in open-enrollment institutions. The lack of baseline information available on the language minority population, discussed earlier in this paper, makes tracking student progress extremely difficult and often makes examining the impact of policies related to assessment, placement, and course registration virtually impossible. There are, nonetheless, important efforts underway to learn more about the progress of language minority students in California community colleges. In this section, I discuss several of these efforts. My purpose is not to present the results of these efforts in depth, nor to attempt to integrate the findings, but rather to highlight the range of efforts underway and to discuss the promise and limitations of each approach.

Longitudinal Student Tracking

Patthey-Chavez et al. (2005) and her colleagues have attempted to measure the success of ESL students in several California community colleges. In one study, using data available as part of the Intersegmental Project to Assure Student Success (IPASS), a regional research and data-sharing consortium that included fourteen California community colleges and two state universities, the researchers tracked the academic progress of 238,032 students at nine community colleges. Among these students, 8% ultimately transferred to one of the two four-year universities in the consortium. The students were tagged by the researchers according to their starting points in composition classes (precollegiate writing instruction, beginning ESL writing, advanced/academic ESL, or one of three “college-level” composition courses) and tracked longitudinally for a minimum of five semesters. The authors assessed the progress of each group of students on a number of measures, including initial success in their composition course, highest composition course completed, GPA, community college unit completion, and, for those who transferred, several college success measures. The research found that while some students who started at basic levels in their coursework progressed to college-level coursework, they performed noticeably less well once there and therefore never quite caught up to other students. In fact, the researchers argue that for many developmental students, “the first course functions

more like a hurdle than an opening into higher education” (p. 268). The authors conclude that a large segment of ESL students, especially the group starting at the beginning levels, “begins and ends community college in the ESL program” (p. 271). On the other hand, those who begin in the advanced ESL composition courses “consistently distinguish themselves,” outperforming students who started in remedial writing. The authors argue that students’ initial placement into the English or ESL curriculum therefore “functions almost like a proxy for his or her academic literacy overall” (p. 275):

Students who are less prepared, students who arrive at the college with an English competency inadequate for the reading and writing demands of college coursework, have greater failure rates. Conversely, students coming into the institution with better academic literacy, even in another language, are more likely to acquire the written communication skills they need and succeed in college coursework (p. 275).

The researchers’ conclude that “the fundamental objective of developmental programs, helping students overcome gaps in their academic preparation and acquire academic literacy, is only partly being met” (p. 175).

Several limitations of the study should be highlighted, because they represent more general limitations with efforts to trace students’ progress. It is important to note that, similar to most research on community college student outcomes (Bailey & Alfonso, 2005), the study was not designed to measure causal relationships. Furthermore, the authors’ conclusions assume (a) that students’ placement into the initial composition class represented a valid measure of their initial writing proficiency level and that (b) it was students’ initial language proficiency and academic skills, rather than the result of the placement itself, that led to students’ differential success later on. It is not clear whether students who initially placed in the beginning ESL course might have done better had they been placed in the advanced ESL course. Furthermore, it is also difficult to determine what, if any, are the particular implications for U.S.-educated language minority students, since the data were not disaggregated for this group. Nonetheless, the research represents an important attempt to follow

students’ progress longitudinally, one that can be built on for future research.

Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC)

A new accountability reporting system required by the California state legislature includes the mandate to report community college “ESL improvement rates.” The goal is to calculate improvement rates by tracking all students in a particular academic year cohort who complete their first ESL course, if that course was considered to be “two or more levels below college level/transfer level” (p. 706). Students in each cohort are then followed for three academic years (including the year and term during which the initial course was taken). The ESL improvement rate represents the percentage of students in a particular cohort who have completed a higher-level ESL course or college level English course within this time period. However, due to a number of problems with the data, to date these efforts are only in a pilot stage. In fact, the first Accountability Reporting for the California Community Colleges (California Community Colleges System Office, 2007) reports ESL improvement rates for numerous individual colleges but encourages readers not to consider them. The data on students’ progress through ESL programs lack reliability, according to the report, due to “different methods of ESL course coding across colleges and anomalies in the existing ESL data” (p. 26). The ESL improvement rates, missing entirely for several of the colleges, are only included in the report in order to “illustrate how future tables will appear” (p. 26).

According to the report, “planned data quality checks and future coding changes should improve this metric for analysis and inclusion in future ARCC reports” (p. 26). System-wide efforts to create unique identifiers for each course in the community college system, plus common identifiers for courses that are similar across individual community colleges, will help provide important information needed to track the progress of many language minority students.⁶ Even when improved, however, reporting will continue to include only those students who have enrolled in ESL courses, and only those students who begin at least two levels below college-level English. Information will be missing about the progress of students from language minority backgrounds who enter ESL programs at higher levels and those who may have skipped ESL altogether and enrolled instead in regular remedial

⁶ Mark Lieu, personal communication, May 30, 2007

or college-level English courses. While the progress of all basic skills students are traced in the “Improvement Rate for Credit Basic Skills Courses” and the “Annual Successful Course Completion Rate for Credit Basic Skills Courses,” these data are not disaggregated by language minority status, and thus it is impossible to gauge how well colleges are meeting the needs of this particular population.

College and District Research and Planning Offices

Some community college institutional research offices conduct their own studies focusing on the success of students who were designated as English learners in high school and/or who attend ESL courses in community colleges. For example, the Office of Research, Planning, and Grants at City College of San Francisco (CCSF) publishes annually a “High School Report,” tracking the placement, performance, and persistence of new CCSF students from San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) high schools. The report compares this information with data on other new high school graduates at CCSF, including those from private San Francisco high schools as well as other California, national, and foreign high schools. The report disaggregates ESL, English, and mathematics placement levels by ethnicity as well as by individual high school. For example, the most recent report (Spurling & Lopez, 2006), focusing on the 2005-2006 school year, concludes that SFUSD graduates received lower English placements and ESL placements than other new high school graduates. Of those taking placement tests, a majority of all new SFUSD graduates (59%) placed into basic skills English and 29% into basic skills ESL, defined as courses at the lower end of the pre-collegiate sequences. The annual report allows for year-to-year comparisons and evaluations of the college’s success, such as the return in 2005-2006 to a “general uptrend in performance and placement of SFUSD students that had continued from 1998 to 2003” (p. 3). The report also articulates causes for concern, finding that “most SFUSD graduates (59%) placed at basic skills level in English, no improvement over the prior year” (p. 3) and that “students from certain ethnic groups or certain high schools do not place, perform or persist as well [as others]” (p. 3).

In response to a request from the college’s chancellor and its board of trustees, CCSF also has published a Pre-Collegiate Basic Skills Accountability Report. The report (Office of Research Planning and Grants, 2004) indicates that over 75% of all first-time credit students at CCSF

need pre-collegiate classes, which in turn represent a large number of the College’s English, mathematics, and ESL courses. Among other findings, the report indicates that initial course placement for basic skills students predicts the likelihood of achieving CSU course requirements in English and mathematics, but initial ESL placement did not predict initial course success. Initial ESL placement did predict the percentage of students eventually reaching CSU requirements, with 22.1% of the students initially placed in the lowest level of ESL reaching such courses compared to 25.8% and 37.6% of students initially placed in the higher ESL levels reaching these courses. Notably, few students reached a UC-level course within the five-year period studied.

Institutional reports such as those conducted by CCSF allow individual colleges and districts to address the questions they see as most pressing, and they are designed to provide timely information directly to administrators and other stakeholders. Nevertheless, there are a number of limitations. Funding for research functions have often been some of the first cuts as colleges have had to trim their budgets (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, 2004). Furthermore, as with the ARCC reporting, institutional research is bound by ESL course enrollment data, making it difficult to track the progress of language minority students not enrolled in ESL courses. Finally, as with the study done by Patthey-Chavez et al (2005), it is not clear whether initial ESL placement predicts future academic success because of student potential, the success or failure of instructional interventions at the various levels, or other factors.

Cal-PASS

One statewide initiative allows relevant data regarding students from language minority backgrounds to be analyzed and shared across educational levels at the local and regional level, with the advantage of being able to use K-12 language designations as well as community college ESL course enrollments. The California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (Cal-PASS) enables local consortia of participating K-12, community college, and four-year institutions to collect, analyze, and share student data “in order to track performance and improve success from elementary school through university” (Cal-PASS, 2007b). Currently, over 2,000 individual institutions from over twenty-five California counties are participating in one or more of the consortia. Each consortium includes institutions across two or more educational levels, e.g. local high school districts, the community college(s) into

which these districts feed, and the closest CSU or UC campus. Participating institutions enter into data sharing agreements and, along with other consortium members, articulate research questions. The overarching purpose of Cal-PASS consortia is “to align curriculum and improve instruction by having faculty from the different educational segments work together utilizing data rather than relying on anecdotal experience” (Cal-PASS, 2007a). In addition, Cal-PASS is designed for “program review purposes, cohort tracking, identifying successful course-taking patterns, and for intersegmental staff development efforts.” Some regions use Intersegmental Curriculum Councils for collaboration among faculty from secondary schools, community colleges, and universities who use Cal-PASS reports to contribute to efforts to align curriculum and promote student success across educational levels (Cal-PASS, 2007a).

Among the questions that participating Cal-PASS members have addressed are those relevant to language minority students. For example, one study (Stern & Willett, 2007) investigated what courses 3,092 students completed at the high school level in one consortium before enrolling in a particular ESL course (ESL III) in the local community college district. The study found that the local high school students were demographically different from other students, with fewer Asian-Pacific Islanders, fewer non-Hispanic whites, and younger students. The report also found that the high school district cohort was less likely to be successful in the ESL III course than were other students, with variation in success rates by ethnicity and whether they were receiving Board of Governor grants. An exploratory quantitative model showed that the most important variable was student experience as measured by cumulative number of units attempted, and that students for whom ESL III was their first class were the least likely to succeed. Citizenship status, ethnicity, and gender were also important variables.

Other studies undertaken by Cal-PASS have explored a wide variety of other issues relevant to language minority students. One report (Dahlstrom, 2007b) considered data from the 2001 to 2005 academic years to ascertain what percent of students transitioning from consortium high schools take ESL “A” versus regular English “B” at the local community college, finding that the vast majority of students enrolled in ESL A. In addition to disaggregating by gender, ethnicity, and home language the students enrolled in ESL A, the study also found that local high school students had slightly lower success rates than others

enrolled in both ESL A and English B, and that these students withdrew from both courses at higher rates than the general population at the college. Another study (Dahlstrom, 2007a) asked “how do English learner high school students perform in community college English and English as a Second Language courses?” 1,005 consortium high school students were identified as participating in a local community colleges English composition/reading course or ESL writing course. Among other findings, the report concluded that consortium high school students in both English and ESL courses earned lower grades than their classmates not from consortium high schools, although in the case of the ESL course the differences were not statistically significant. In a final example, one Cal-PASS consortium investigated the degree of alignment between high school and college ESL and English course-taking patterns by 3,220 students who enrolled in high school in one region and the local community college between 1999-2005 (Willett, 2006). Half of ELD high school students attempted low beginning level of ESL at Beta College while about 6% attempted some level of English for native speakers. The majority of students passed some level of regular high school English with 5% transitioning into ESL at Beta.

The Cal-PASS studies, because they are commissioned by local consortia participants in order to answer specific questions relevant to their local contexts, make no claims to represent findings generalizable to other settings. Also, because of their primarily local use, the reports do not include information often helpful to “outsiders” such as a detailed description of the context or of the variables themselves, all of which are presumably well-known by the institutions requesting the report. Nor do the reports discuss the implications of the results, because the studies are designed to provide data that will be used to foster conversations by practitioners in the local consortia. Nonetheless, the Cal-PASS data and research reports are an important potential resource for researchers partnering with local institutions, and the studies reviewed here suggest the kinds of questions that might be able to be addressed were there a similar statewide database available to researchers and policy makers.

Conclusion

California’s community colleges serve students who have traditionally faced the most significant barriers to higher education, including students of color, immigrants, poor students, and those who are in the first generation in their families to attend college (Olsen, 2003). As Olsen

(2003) has argued, the “remarkable” California community college system serves as “the main gateway to higher education” and “opens doors to knowledge, skills, credentials, and entry into four-year universities—in short, brighter futures” (p. 7). Yet, as has been highlighted in this paper, there also are a wide variety of challenges facing community colleges in meeting the needs of the students they are responsible for serving (Olsen, 2003; Woodlief et al., 2003), especially for language minority students transitioning to community colleges from U.S. high schools.

Given the importance of community colleges to the education of California’s linguistically diverse population and the relative lack of research that has been conducted addressing the issues raised in this paper, there are multiple areas for future research. Better data and data sharing within and across institutions to explore the impact of different placement and course-taking patterns on students’ academic success are obviously necessary. As demonstrated by the limitations of the new Accountability and Reporting system (ARCC) to report California systemwide accountability data for ESL, there are clearly a number of obstacles to statewide efforts to make data available in a useful way. The ICAS ESL Task Force survey (2006), which had as one of its goals “to determine the types of data on ESL learners that are collected and reported, and the ways in which they are gathered, both while the students are enrolled in ESL courses and after they complete ESL coursework” (p. 13), found impossible even this modest effort to ascertain what data was used by colleges: “Available data were too difficult to obtain across campuses, which was a finding in itself” (p. 21).

Until reliable statewide data are available, more efforts are needed at the local and regional level to collect new data or use existing data to answer questions about the academic success of language minority students taking different kinds of courses as they move into, through, and beyond community colleges. Future research can build on efforts such as the Patthey-Chavez et al. (2005) study, the work done by institutional research offices such as those at City College of San Francisco, and the studies undertaken by Cal-PASS. Particularly important are studies that address the efficacy of ESL programs. While the prevailing assumption is often that language minority students will benefit from taking ESL courses, Roberge (2001) has pointed out that very little research has been conducted on the problems associated with students’ being placed in ESL for long periods of time at the college level, even though such tracking has been found to be

detrimental to students’ opportunities for content learning and language development at middle and high school levels (Callahan, 2005; Harklau, 1994; Valdés, 2001). These are empirical questions that should be addressed.

However, efforts to collect and analyze data on student progress must be informed by simultaneous efforts to address more fundamental questions. A better understanding is needed of how community colleges test and place language minority students, who is responsible for these decisions, and how notions of language proficiency are constructed at both community colleges and high schools (Bunch & Panayotova, 2008). More research is also needed on the actual language and literacy demands of higher education in general and community colleges in particular, and how assessments can provide a better match between the language skills measured on the assessment and those actually needed by students to be successful academically (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). While there is widespread consensus that “academic language” is a requirement for student success, there is less agreement surrounding how to define that language (A. L. Bailey, 2007; Bunch, 2006; Rolstad, Forthcoming; Valdés, 2004). Meanwhile, there are a number of ways to articulate the language demands of higher education (Benesch, 2001; Biber, Conrad, Reppen, Byrd, & Helt, 2002; Intersegmental Committee of the Academic Senates, 2002). Yet conversations surrounding community college ESL instruction and assessment often seem strangely disconnected from a focus on what it is that students need to do with language to succeed in academic settings once they have exited ESL courses.

Given the stigma associated with the ESL label and the widespread resistance of U.S.-educated students to ESL assessments and ESL courses, research is also needed on innovative practices that foster linguistic support without academic marginalization (Valdés, 2004). Such practices may do one or more of the following:

- modify, replace, or augment the traditional model of placing language-minority students into an ESL course sequence that is a prerequisite for regular English courses;
- address the unique characteristics and needs of U.S.-educated language-minority students, distinguishing them from both monolingual English-speaking students and more recently arrived adult ESL students;
- align community college placement, testing, or instructional goals with those of the K-12 system; and,
- integrate language support and instruction with access to authentic and challenging

academic contexts that allow students to move more effectively toward academic goals, such as innovative ESL course offerings and/or sequencing, collaboration between ESL and English faculty, collaboration between ESL and content area faculty, and learning communities that integrate language support and academic progress through credit-bearing courses.

Also needed is a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of the language and literacy experiences of U.S.-educated language minority students themselves as they transition from U.S. high schools and attempt to navigate higher educational institutions, as well as the ways in which those institutions respond to students' needs. Helpful here would be case studies of individual students, such as those done by Harklau (2000, 2001) and Leki (1999), as well as institutional ethnographies of community colleges, similar to Roberge's case study (2001) of a four-year university responding to U.S.-educated language minority students.

Finally, future research cannot ignore the fact that all of the issues explored in this paper unfold in a socio-political context that involve issues of access, equity, and power (Pennycook, 2000, 2001; Shohamy, 2001; Valdés, 1999). Calls to rethink discourses of deficit surrounding English learners (Gutiérrez & Orellana, 2006; Orellana & Gutierrez, 2006) have important implications for research, as do efforts to incorporate a critical perspective in approaching academic language development in community colleges (Davis & Skarin, 2007). In short, there is much work to be done, and contributions are needed from a wide variety of research approaches and foci in order to address questions that can foster the improvement of community college education for language minority students.

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Plus Ça Change: Toward a Professional Identity for Community College Faculty in the 21st Century

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In the spring of 2007 the Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy at California State University Sacramento released a publication that spurred heated debate in California among policy makers, community college administrators, community college faculty groups, and scholars. As indicated by its title, *Rules of the Game: How State Policy Creates Barriers to Degree Completion and Impedes Student Success in the California Community Colleges* (Shulock & Moore, 2007), the report argued that the level and quality of student success, especially in relation to degree attainment, at California colleges is deficient and changes need to be implemented. The title also explicitly states that state policies, not community colleges or their faculty and staff, create the barriers. Regardless of this focus on state policy, many colleges and particularly their faculty interpreted the report as an attack on the effectiveness of colleges regarding students' educational outcomes. In a presentation in the fall of 2007, Nancy Shulock, one of the paper's co-authors, expressed shock that college administrators and faculty members responded negatively, often in a visceral manner (Smith, 2007), to a report that was intended to change state policies that constrained their goal of quality education for their students, not to place blame on colleges or their faculty and staff (Shulock, Boilard, & Townsend, 2007). While not intended as a condemnation of community college faculty, the report and the response to it (discussed in more detail below) offer a view into a more than 40 year process in California regarding community college faculty issues that resonate nationally in practice and in the scholarly literature.

Regardless of the position or motivation of any commentator on community colleges, one fact is never in question: community colleges are teaching institutions. Instruction is paramount at all institutions (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). As such the role faculty play at community colleges is central to say the least. No other stratum of the

higher education system in the United States is more bound to and dependent upon instruction for its survival. This fact alone is enough to indicate the significance of an analysis of the extant literature on community college faculty, including literature focused entirely on California produced by various government agencies and interest groups. In addition community colleges are the entry point into higher education for approximately one half of all undergraduates in the United States; any discussion of higher education access should address the critical role of community colleges. Therefore, if colleges are the entry point for a majority of higher education students and instruction is the center of all activity at those colleges, the significance of community college faculty, the work they do, and the positions they inhabit is crucial to any comprehensive understanding and analysis of community colleges in California and across America.

The paper's title, *Plus Ça Change*, warrants explanation. When reviewing the historical discourse regarding community college faculty, one is struck by the fact that the same themes, descriptions, problems, and remedies continually repeat themselves, over decades, sometimes with new vocabulary, sometimes not, regardless of the changes that colleges themselves, their missions and purposes, and their students might experience. Thus, it is accurate to characterize faculty issues as unchanged even though the institutions and students they serve have changed rather dramatically during the past 40 years—a point particularly true in California.

What, then, are the repeating themes? Taken as a whole the literature can be described as focused on one overarching theme that is supported by two essential sub-themes: faculty as professionals, effective teaching, and the enigma of part-time faculty. While findings and conclusions from these three related themes are ambiguous, the three create a focal point for nearly all community college faculty literature. For the last 40 years scholars have been examining the professional status of community college faculty and coming to generally the same conclusion: the faculty are not particularly a professional body. In this line of research the assumption is that community college faculty should conduct themselves and be recognized as professionals, an assumption that is reinforced by how faculty, administrators, and policy makers describe the faculty role in policy documents, but one that is frequently contradicted in research relating to actual practices—administrative and instructional—at colleges. The dissonance between these two types of literature demonstrates the

ambiguous nature of this theme and its two sub-themes.

Teaching is the core process of community colleges and the first sub-theme related to the professional identity of faculty. If faculty are to be recognized and respected as professionals, their instructional effectiveness will be central to that recognition. That is, any recognition that faculty might receive as autonomous experts who possess highly specialized knowledge and skill will be predicated on their success related to teaching effectiveness and student learning and outcomes. As with the theme of professional identity, the literature on instructional effectiveness is ambiguous: official documents frequently praise the skill and dedication of faculty, while most empirical studies tend to describe instructional effectiveness as marginal at best.

Entwined with both of these themes is the enigma of part-time faculty. As with the two themes above, the literature on part-time faculty and their place at community colleges is contradictory. On the one hand, there is frequent agreement that colleges could not deliver all of the academic programs they do without part-time faculty. On the other hand, as a whole they are not viewed as academic professionals and are unable to behave as such, leading to constant question about their educative effectiveness. Implicit in the general discussion to this point is that organizationally community colleges are open systems in continual response and adaptation to an environment populated by multiple and often conflicting interests.

The idea of colleges as open systems was captured in a recent symposium focused on the changing nature of the community college as an institutional type (Townsend, Wagoner, Twombly, Bragg, & Morpew, 2006). In brief the symposium presented four facets of the nature of that change, while rooting the discussion in the larger history of community colleges in the United States. The continuing shift in institutional mission realized because of the movement of an increasing number of colleges across the country in offering baccalaureate degrees (Floyd, Skolnik, & Walker, 2005; Levin, 2004) was presented as the first mission and programmatic change to community colleges. At the opposite end of that particular continuum colleges were also discussed as transforming into a type of hybrid high school, updating and reformalizing a traditional institutional connection. *New World College* (Levin, 2007; Levin, Kater, & Wagoner, 2006), an institutional conceptualization capable of incorporating both of the previous missions, emphasizing the increasing influence of neoliberal

ideology, globalization, and the New Economy, presented a third facet of the changing nature of the community college as an institutional type. Finally, the role that isomorphic pressure plays in transforming institutions (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) offered a means to interpret and analyze the three other facets, while simultaneously offering a fourth capable of standing on its own.

Each of these four institutional shifts contextualize community colleges as open systems that respond to outside forces. The baccalaureate college has developed in part because of the demand of local populations for access to a four-year degree and the demands of businesses for an educated workforce, combined with the desire of government at the local and state level to seek efficiencies while expanding educational access (Floyd, Skolnik, & Walker, 2005; Levin, 2004). Similarly, the transformation of colleges to a form of hybrid high school, demonstrated in remedial programs on the one hand and early college high schools on the other, is best understood in terms of responding to the needs and demands of local students and businesses, and the desire of local and state governments to achieve economic efficiencies while attempting to meet those demands. *New World College* (Levin, 2007; Levin, Kater, & Wagoner, 2006) is perhaps the most explicit of these conceptualizations in terms of considering the transformative power of outside pressures on colleges. Specifically, *New World College* addresses the influence and impact that neoliberal ideology, globalization, and the New Economy have had on the programs and missions of colleges. This perspective is particularly interested in the nexus of private business interests and motivations and public policy designed to satisfy interests and how those policies are manifested at colleges (Ayers, 2005; Levin, Kater, & Wagoner, 2006).

Temporally, *New World College* can be viewed as the development of community colleges from the 1980s to the present. In this sense, *New World College* describes the development of colleges after Brint and Karabel's (1989) history. Simultaneously, *New World College* presents an alternate discourse on the development of community colleges in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. That is, *New World College* conceptualizes colleges with an emphasis on external forces that shape their missions and purposes, not internal forces.

Ultimately, then, to interpret and analyze the literature focused on the demographics, practices, and status of community college faculty, one must tie that literature to the greater political economy and the influence it wields on colleges

and their programs and students. Community colleges and their faculty do not exist in a vacuum; this analysis acknowledges that and allows for a critique of the literature which accounts for some of the outside forces colleges encounter on a regular basis.

Theme One: Professional Status

Explicit within any analysis of a higher education faculty labor market is the question of professionalization and the perception of faculty as professionals—that is, professional identity. Here, professionalization refers to any process that leads to the perception of a group as a profession as opposed to an occupation. A profession is defined as a group of autonomous experts who possess highly specialized knowledge and skill in their field and as such control certification and entrance into its ranks. As experts, professionals are the only people capable of evaluating, maintaining, regulating required knowledge and standards of practice for their group, and one's identity as a professional then depends on membership in an acknowledged autonomous group of experts. As early as the 1970s Arthur Cohen and Florence Brawer (1972, 1977) conducted research that questioned whether community college faculty could be described as professionals. While the psychological nature of identity played a part in this research, the seeming lack of ability and desire of faculty to regulate themselves and maintain their own distinct set of professional standards was critical in Cohen and Brawer's assessment of a lack of professionalism in community college faculty. The primacy of instruction, both pedagogy and course content, as the central means for faculty to establish their identity as professionals was also introduced in the decade (Cohen, 1973). Interestingly, *Toward a Professional Faculty* was the title of the inaugural volume of the New Directions for Community Colleges series (Cohen, 1973). The New Directions series has been a constant source of scholarship calling for an improvement in the identity of faculty as professionals. In 1992 Jim Palmer was particularly pointed in his critique of the continuing problem of a lack of professional identity for faculty, suggesting that the institutional mission of colleges, scholarship, classroom research, and pedagogy should all be used as frames of reference to not only define professional identity for faculty but also to indicate a path to improve that identity. In the same volume, it was suggested that improved instructional practice and a strengthened professional identity could be achieved through a formalized training program for community college faculty (Tsunoda, 1992). Unfortunately, the

proposition was discussed as pre-service teaching, a term most often associated with k-12 education, a sector that has never been able to create an unambiguous professional identity for its faculty. In many ways the problem had not changed by 2002. In his concluding chapter to a volume of New Directions for Community Colleges focused on faculty Charles Outcalt suggested, as had been done more than once in the past, that community college faculty were still not recognized as professionals, basing his conclusions on a national survey that updated similar studies conducted and reported by Cohen and Brawer in the 1970s (Outcalt, 2002a). *Plus ça change* indeed.

Faculty in California community colleges have struggled to be recognized as professionals over the past 40 years as well. In 1968 the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) was formed after the state legislature had officially recognized the role of local academic senates five years previously (ASCCC, 2002a). The founding of this organization demonstrates a particular complexity regarding faculty status in California community colleges: to gain recognition, the academic senate was dependent on the state legislature. That is, faculty status and recognition literally plays out in a political arena in California, a time consuming and convoluted process that always must involve various interest groups with their own motivations. The nature of this political process which plays out at both the state and local level is clearly articulated by White (1998) in his descriptive case study of how shared governance was implemented in California community colleges after the passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 1725 in 1988. While the state legislature had mandated that college faculty, through the academic senate, should be involved in the governance of colleges, the process leading to the implementation of that goal at individual colleges was not uniform, nor were the resulting shared governance procedures (White, 1998). Of particular importance from this study is the idea that state-level policy adoption does not equal local implementation in California colleges as the tradition of local control remains a primary and powerful force.

The power of local control of colleges notwithstanding, the ASCCC has made numerous statements about faculty autonomy and professionalism. At the same time that AB 1725 was debated in the state legislature, the ASCCC published a report on professional standards for college faculty (ASCCC, 1987). This document is focused exclusively on hiring, transfer, professional development, and evaluation of college faculty.

Within all of these categories, except for professional development, the faculty senate seeks to take responsibility for the standards for entry into and for continuing recognition in the profession and with professional development seeks to control how a faculty member matures within the profession. With the passage of AB 1725 these procedures had a vehicle for implementation through shared governance, but as White (1998) indicates the mechanisms and procedures for shared governance did not have consistency throughout the state; therefore, execution of these professional standards by the academic senate, while unified at the state level, were fragmented and frequently disorganized at the local level and tended to remain more in the control of college administrators (White, 1998). What the literature reveals is that even with statewide recognition and clearly articulated goals for professional standards, the professional status of California faculty was indefinite as the faculty senate continued to publish similar position papers over time (ASCCC, 1991; ASCCC, 2002b; ASCCC, 2002c).

Hiring new faculty, as well as transfer of faculty from other divisions within the same college, is an area of concern for the Academic Senate of California Community Colleges (ASCCC, 1987; 2002b). Clearly if faculty are unable to control who enters their ranks, their professional status will be diminished. While faculty are actively involved in hiring, the fact that the ASCCC continues to reinforce this position in publications indicates that local political processes within colleges related to administrative control (White, 1998) threaten to encroach on faculty control of hiring. Twombly, 2004 uses the faculty search process at three colleges as a means to assess faculty professionalism. Employing the framework of eight elements of faculty professionalism developed by Clark (1987), Twombly finds that the community college faculty search process reinforces findings from previous studies that community college faculty professionalism is tenuous at best. That is, faculty do not completely control the process, nor are candidates always held to the highest professional standards—standards that can vary widely across even a single college campus.

An examination of the community college faculty labor market reinforces the lack of professional identity introduced above and offers a view of why developing a concrete identity is illusive. Gahn and Twombly (2001) indicate that community college faculty are recruited from multiple sectors of the larger labor market, including not only higher education but also

secondary education, business and industry, and various professions. The varied backgrounds that members of these sectors bring to the faculty labor market confound establishing a unified professional identity as each individual sector the faculty are drawn from possesses its own norms, norms which frequently clash with each other. Thus, from an historical perspective, community college faculty are challenged in establishing their professional identity. The multiple sets of professional norms brought to the college are certainly important contributors to the difficulty faculty have in policing or regulating themselves. With no clear or agreed upon set of norms, how can faculty monitor and evaluate the actions and competencies of fellow members? Adding to this already complicated problem is the general status of teaching itself. Particularly in a higher education setting, teaching is not a highly valued practice (Clark, 1987). Hence, not only are faculty challenged to reach consensus on the norms they should enforce, their core function within colleges is not generally associated with that of a professional. One other factor that adds to this difficulty is the open admissions policy of colleges. With open admissions, faculty are unable to control access to their services, a trait usually associated with professionals and certainly the case for selective higher education institutions, particularly graduate schools. That is, because of open admissions faculty are unable to select their clients (Garrison, 1967 cited in Outcalt, 2002a).

The tensions between an instructor's discipline and the sector of the economy from which it rises and the inability of faculty to select their students is evidenced in several seminal works focused on faculty. Locating the different tensions, priorities, practices, and frustrations of faculty at the level of the broad traditional missions of the community college—university transfer and vocational training, London (1978) describes in detail the differing views faculty members from these two areas espouse. Faculty from the traditional liberal arts view themselves as being on the bottom rung of a career ladder that leads to a tenured position at a research university, or at the very least at a 4-year institution. As such, the practice of these faculty members is reminiscent of the training they received in graduate school and is dependent on highly motivated students who will work hard in their studies. Yet, for these faculty the majority of the students they encounter do not meet this general expectation. Faculty from the vocational training programs, which London terms "Human Services" programs, have a near diametrically opposed perspective. In order to qualify for a teaching

position in a human services program, fire fighting, for instance, a faculty member is required to have multiple years of experience in the area and to have obtained a position of leadership in the field, without necessarily having received an advanced degree. These faculty members, then, can be described as having achieved high professional standing in their sector before being hired at the community college; they certainly do not view themselves as on the bottom rung of their career ladder. As leaders in their fields who have been responsible for training neophyte practitioners, many of these faculty are more comfortable and accustomed to the level and type of motivation of their college students. While that may be a source of frustration for these faculty members as well, it is one they experience in their professional lives outside the college. Clearly there is a glaring difference in expectations between these two faculty groups that affects their practice in the classroom. Faculty from the liberal arts programs see themselves as lacking status and their students as unmotivated and underachieving, while human services faculty see themselves as having attained a high status position and their students as typical of their profession. In both cases, the professional norms faculty from each group bring to the college affect their perceptions and practices at the college, frequently in a manner that does not leave much common ground.

Similar differences are amplified and added to in the research of Earl Seidman and Norton Grubb. Seidman (1985) reaffirms the tensions between liberal arts and vocational faculty described by London (1978), but goes on to add new tensions reflected in the experience of minority faculty and college counselors. While the experience and perceptions minority faculty bring to the institution are not dependent on professional norms, those of counselors do. Seidman (1985) describes counselors as lacking morale and status at colleges. Their lack of morale and professional identity stem from their professional training and, therefore, the values and norms they bring from the outside to the colleges at which they serve. Grubb (1999) approximates the pure dichotomy of London (1978) and Seidman (1985) while also supporting the idea that differing professional values and norms do affect the practice of college faculty. In Grubb's (1999) view faculty from any program can be disaffected and ineffective in the classroom, but their poor practice is related, at least in part, to their view of themselves as professionals. Those faculty members who view themselves primarily as community college teaching professionals tend to be more engaged and effective, while those faculty

who have a differing primary professional identity—either academic or vocational—tend to be less effective. In this research there is evidence once again for the destabilizing effects of outside professional values and norms discussed by Gahn and Twombly (2001).

Bayer and Braxton (1998) offer one example of how community college faculty exhibit professionalism: normative structure related to teaching practices. While they clearly define and measure normative structure, the specific practices they identify as normative at best suggest the absolute minimum requirement for professional behavior—do not come to class intoxicated, do not have sex with students, do not change class meeting time or location without consulting and informing students—and they do not identify any practice that might be considered an advanced pedagogical practice or evidence of outstanding disciplinary knowledge. These are findings that might add to the argument that community college faculty are not professionals as much as they might negate it.

In numerous fields professional development activities and initiatives offer a means of increasing professionalism and professional identity. Reasonably this might also be expected for community college faculty. Yet the literature on faculty development is mixed in its assessment of its effectiveness. Recent analysis of the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty surveys of 1993 and 1999 indicate that while some forms of professional development did increase during the 1990s, gains were shown only for full-time faculty, while part-time faculty support decreased (Wagoner, 2004; Levin, Kater, & Wagoner, 2006). These findings display variable and somewhat indifferent support for professional development, a theme reflected in other faculty development studies. Murray (1999), relying upon a survey of professional development officers at 130 community college campuses nationwide, presents a mixed bag of efforts based on six components of effective professional development. While teaching excellence was valued at most colleges and more than 90% had some form of development activities, there was scant evidence to indicate that there was specific leadership for the programs, a condition that resulted in programs that were neither formalized nor structured. That is, while there is lip service to such programs and some resources dedicated to them, almost no program seeks to be innovative or to unambiguously tie itself to the mission and operations of colleges. In a study of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) community colleges, Murray (2002) found much the same results as his 1999

work. Specifically, programs are not structured, lack leadership and not based on activities that are proven by empirical testing, negating the impact that programs might potentially bring to instruction. The added note of interest in this piece is that with increased calls for accountability regarding student outcomes, this type of program could be used by faculty to determine the effectiveness of instruction on outcomes, action that faculty oppose (Murray, 1999; 2002). Ironically, outcomes effectiveness and assessment are areas where faculty could institutionalize their control and professional identity as instructional experts (Wagoner, Levin, & Kater, forthcoming).

One aspect of faculty development that is particularly important in this discussion is the notion of who controls the professional development activities. If faculty professional development is controlled by non-faculty administrators and/or it is not readily available to all members of the faculty, it is difficult to characterize it as evidence of professional status. Both of these problems are present in California. In a recent survey the Academic Senate of California Community Colleges (ASCCC, 2002c) determined that professional development activities at California colleges are incredibly varied. Even with the intention of AB 1725 to strengthen instruction through faculty development and the fact that the legislation defines faculty development as one of the academic and professional matters on which collegial consultation is required, results from the survey indicate several crucial problems, including lack of funding, lack of coordination, lack of faculty involvement in designing the programs, and, related to each of these, a lack of release time for faculty charged with organizing programs. In addition, professional development activities are not as available for part-time faculty members as they are for full-timers (ASCCC, 2002a) reflecting a national trend (Levin, Kater, & Wagoner, 2006; Wagoner, 2004).

Theme Two: Instruction

Regardless of their status as full- or part-time, all community college faculty members are expected both by scholars and practitioners to be concerned with instruction, which I define as the combination of pedagogy and content. Grubb (1999) offers a thorough investigation of the pedagogical practices of community college faculty. Succinctly, the practices Grubb and his associates describe are bleak, due in part to the conflicting professional norms discussed above, but rising from a dependence on what can be described as mind-numbing lecture and discussion

that does not fit the needs of a large percentage of community college students. Similarly, non-engaging classroom practices are factors important to the analysis of London (1978) and Seidman (1985). While both studies do differ in their analysis of why such practices are prevalent, they agree that faculty members from all programs frequently rely on lecture and discussion although this approach can produce discouraging results. Teaching and student interactions are also one focus of a recent volume of *New Directions for Community Colleges* (Outcalt, 2002b), which suggests a lack of instructional innovation and engagement.

This branch of literature indicates that faculty consistently fall short in the primary and essential aspect of their profession: teaching. Recent policy documents and studies in California appear to agree with the assessment, but with a twist. The documents that trace the ineffectiveness of instruction do so in a discussion of student success—a lack of student success. The most recent strategic plan for California community colleges (California Community Colleges System Strategic Plan Steering Committee, 2006) does mention faculty directly in its policy recommendations and acknowledges their primacy in instructional success, particularly full-time faculty.

In order to provide students with the highest quality instruction available, Community College faculty members and counselors should be able to meaningfully interact with students both inside and outside of class. Student success can increase with more full-time faculty positions, facility improvements, and funding for program innovation and professional development. (p. 40)

While this particular strategic goal is focused on the faculty role in student success, other goals highlight the importance of business and industry and the need for colleges to be responsive to their needs, including training students for specific jobs. While this focus is understandable, it frequently refers to business practices and priorities that are contrary to traditional academic values, an emphasis highlighted in several other recent publications that have less positive references to faculty, or none at all (Hayward, Jones, McGuinness, Jr., & Timar, 2004; Moore & Shulock, 2007; Shulock & Moore, 2007).

The first of these reports was prepared for The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education (Hayward, Jones, McGuinness, Jr., & Timar, 2004) and begins a course of thinking that is mirrored in the two more recent reports from

the Higher Education Leadership and Policy at California State University Sacramento (Moore & Shulock, 2007; Shulock & Moore, 2007). While a complete analysis of the content of these reports is too lengthy for this discussion, an overview of some of their major themes suggests that powerful perceptions are currently in play in California. At the center of the argument of all three publications is a belief that certain state policies unduly constrain colleges and impede student success. Two of these policies pertain directly to college faculty: the 50% law and the 75/25 rule. Tracing back to 1961 and Section 84362 of the California Education Code, the 50% law requires colleges/districts to dedicate 50% of their current educational expenses on salaries for classroom instructors (California State Auditor, 2000). With this law the legislature aimed to make classes smaller and improve classroom instruction in California colleges (California State Auditor, 2000). The 75/25 rule is an essential element of AB 1725 and requires that 75% of credit instruction be delivered by full-time faculty and only 25% by part-timers. All three of these reports argue that these two policies are too constraining for colleges and do not allow them the flexibility to meet student needs. Inherent in each of the three reports is a notion that full-time faculty are economically inefficient and detrimental to managerial authority, indicating an implicit devaluing (one could argue disdain) of faculty. If both of these policies are undue constraints, faculty are the problem, an autonomous faculty even more so, not a part of an effective solution to increasing student success.

While all three reports discuss the importance of modern business practices as a part of the solution to the problem of student success, the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education report (Hayward, Jones, McGuinness, Jr., & Timar, 2004) suggests an external commission to study legislative constraints on community colleges and noted that the commission should have “considerable representation from business leaders.” In this recommendation the open nature of colleges as organizations is evident as outside interests would comprise a committee dedicated to crafting reform policies for colleges. From this perspective the concept of *New World College* comes into focus, as business leaders are sought to offer suggestions of how to increase managerial and instructional flexibility—a form of managerialism that has become common in higher education (Deem, 1998). Each of these three reports is focused on effective solutions to increase the success of students, but none gives much emphasis to faculty.

In that sense faculty are not present in the discussion of academic success. The final recommendations of Moore and Shulock (2007) demonstrate this lack of faculty presence. Only one section of the twelve recommendations focuses on faculty roles, stating that learning communities and other innovations that integrate academics with intensive student support services should be emphasized. Even in this recommendation “intensive student services” appear to be as important as instruction. Taken from this vantage point it would appear that faculty are not connected to student success in California community colleges.

One form of innovation that has been touted as the means of increasing success and engagement is the use of computer-based technology, and technological solutions to instructional inefficiency is another primary focus of the three policy reports discussed above (Hayward, Jones, McGuinness, Jr., & Timar, 2004; Moore & Shulock, 2007; Shulock & Moore, 2007). While some studies (Levin, Kater, & Wagoner, 2006; Roe, 2002) have shown that technology has certainly increased expectations and workloads for college faculty, an increase in student engagement and learning is not readily apparent (Roe, 2002). All three of the policy reports, however, indicate that computer technology can be a means of increasing student engagement and success. In his preface to the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education report (Hayward, Jones, McGuinness, Jr., & Timar, 2004), Pat Callan presents a basic stance to all three reports.

Information technology on and off the campus can play a significant role in addressing challenges of access, quality, and cost. Community colleges should be encouraged and assisted in designing approaches to instruction that will achieve savings and enhance quality. High-quality course materials should be designed around cost effective electronic technology. Adapted for use by multiple community colleges, these materials could be a major component of a strategy to increase capacity. (p. ix)

Again what is particularly striking here is the absence of faculty from a discussion of course planning, implementation, and delivery. The absence of faculty in deliberations on educational technology is similar in all three reports. The most pronounced mention of faculty comes in the main body of the same report when the authors do suggest that courses with computer based delivery should have “the imprint of the faculty from the involved institution without requiring that they do

all the development” (Hayward, Jones, McGuinness, Jr., & Timar, 2004, p. 42). While this statement indicates concern about overburdening any faculty members involved on the development process, this is the only time that faculty are directly mentioned in this particular discussion. California faculty are in a similar position to other faculty portrayed in the literature: classroom instruction appears to be lacking, but faculty are not always considered in alleviating the problem. This might be due in large part to the fact that two-thirds of faculty nationwide are part-time.

Theme Three: The Enigma of Part-time faculty

Of all of the developments over the past 40 years concerning the community college faculty labor market, including instruction at colleges and the identity and status of faculty as professionals, the most pronounced has been the considerable rise in the number and percentage of part-time faculty in the college academic labor force. It is understandable, then, that this topic is central to much of the college faculty literature. The literature concerning part-time faculty also serves to illustrate the differences between studies that account for the larger political economy and those that do not. For example, two well regarded works whose focus deals particularly with colleges, and only marginally refer to larger social pressures, tend to accept the fact that institutions will maintain a high percentage of part-time faculty and seek to illuminate best practices that will integrate part-timers into the culture of colleges (Roueche, Roueche, & Milliron, 1995; Wallin, 2005). Ashburn (2006) presents a perspective of administrators at one college who do account for larger pressures that lead to the use of a large portion of part-time faculty, but the response of these administrators is to interpret those pressures as business opportunities—markets to be exploited—that benefit the institution. Other scholars (Levin, Kater, & Wagoner, 2006; Wagoner, 2004; Wagoner, Metcalfe, & Olaore, 2005) are explicit in accounting for external pressures on colleges and question the current practice of relying on such a large workforce of part-time faculty.

Whenever suggestions are made to improve faculty practice, and for that matter professional identity, most of the suggestions ignore the presence of part-timers, constituting two-thirds of the faculty nationally. The historical development of community colleges offers a useful perspective to understand this phenomena. Originally, colleges were extensions of high schools and many of their faculty were high school instructors who worked part-time for the college

in addition to their responsibilities at the high school (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). As vocational programs developed experts from the local community were also recruited in a part-time capacity. As vocational programs became more prominent and their faculty more numerous the needs, desires, and motivations of this group as well as the varied teaching methods and content in their courses created the professional dichotomy described by London (1978) and Seidman (1985). After World War II, mass higher education began to produce large numbers of highly educated persons and to encourage academic careers (Cohen, 1998; Thelin, 2003), leading to an emphasis on higher education institutions, not high schools, to supply college faculty, particularly because of the dramatic increase in the number of community colleges founded in the 1960s and 70s (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). By the 1980s business practices related to the concept of *New World College* (Levin, 2007) begin to emphasize efficiency, flexibility, and control on the part of managers at community colleges, thus increasing the number of missions and programs at colleges, including English as a second language, contract training, and collegiate work beyond the associate’s degree. Given this historical development it is now possible to conceptualize community college faculty, both full-time and part-time, as new economy labor (Levin, Kater, & Wagoner, 2006; Wagoner, 2007). This conceptualization is grounded in several points. First, all faculty are pressured to respond to changing student demands, with students viewed as customers. As with other new economy labor markets, employment opportunities outside of higher education and one’s ties to them significantly affect total income and satisfaction of community college faculty (Wagoner, 2007). Part-time faculty are used strategically to satisfy management’s need for efficiency, flexibility, and control of program offerings as colleges have no long term contractual commitments to part-timers and can expand or contract their numbers at will (Wagoner, Metcalfe, & Olaore, 2005). Finally, because faculty come from numerous fields and economic sectors and there is such a high percentage of faculty teaching part-time, there is no clear internal labor market or career path. The result for part-timers is that while there are consistent calls to better integrate part-timers into the culture of colleges (Roueche, Roueche, & Milliron, 1995; Wallin, 2005), they remain marginalized.

A similar process has occurred in California related to the use of part-time faculty in

community colleges.⁷ The history of part-time faculty in California community colleges over the past 40 years can be charted by examining state legislation (Yoshioka, 2007). The 1967 Section 13337.5 of the California Education Code both allowed for the use of part-time faculty in community colleges and stipulated that these faculty must work less than 60% of a full-time workload. Before this, the use of part-timers was strictly limited to evening programs for adult learners and also provided occasional short-term substitutions for full-time faculty (ASCCC, 2002a)—a phenomena that would change dramatically in a short period of time. By 1977 the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges issued a statement recommending that credit instruction from part-time faculty should be limited to 25% of a college's total instruction, laying the foundation for the next significant piece of legislation. Passed in 1988, Assembly Bill 1725 codified the early recommendation of the Board of Governors, mandating that 75% of credit instruction be provided by full-time faculty. It should be noted that this legislation addressed to a presumed future problem but instead was attempting to change a situation that already existed in the state. By 1981 62% of the total community college faculty statewide was classified as part-time, accounting for 31% of all credit instruction (ASCCC, 2002a), statistics that have not decreased over the intervening years. By 1998, sensing that AB 1725 had had little effect, the legislature enacted AB 420 with the intention of improving the status, working conditions and livelihoods of part-time faculty.

As originally drafted AB 420 is oftentimes referred to as the "Part-time Faculty Bill of Rights" because it called for equal pay for equal work, paid office hours, health benefits, and seniority based on rehiring rights for all part-time faculty. This draft version of the bill, however, was not the final form the bill took, disappointing and frustrating many part-time faculty to this day as those rights have not been realized (Yoshioka, 2007). AB 420 did spur several reports regarding the status of part-time faculty, all of which were unanimous in their agreement that part-timers were underpaid and had little status at colleges, which had the potential to decrease academic quality (California State Auditor, 2000a; 2000b; California Postsecondary Education Commission,

2001). Since 1998 other studies and reports have been published, but the use of part-time faculty and the unequal nature of their positions compared to full-time faculty have not changed. As witnessed by the discussion about instruction from the previous section, several recent policy reports have called for lifting the legislation the constrains the expansion of the use of part-time faculty (Hayward, Jones, McGuinness, Jr., & Timar, 2004; Moore & Shulock, 2007; Shulock & Moore, 2007), all of which employ language and rationalizations that describe faculty as a form of New Economy labor.

Connecting the Pieces

As mentioned in the introduction, two publications and the debate they sparked in the spring of 2007 demonstrate how these three themes are currently playing out in California. *Rules of the game: How state policy creates barriers to degree completion and impedes student success in the California community colleges* (Shulock & Moore, 2007) was the study that began the exchange. As evidenced from its title and discussed earlier the study focused on California state policies that in the view of its authors inhibit student success and degree completion. In all the study identifies five problem policies, two of them directly related to college faculty. The first is the hiring policy mandated by state law: Assembly Bill 1725 requires that 75% of all course credit must be delivered by full-time faculty (generally referred to as the 75/25 rule). The original intention of AB 1725 was to restrict the increased use of part-time faculty. Shulock and Moore (2007) argue that the 75/25 rule interferes with college administrators' ability to be flexible and innovative in the number and type of programs that colleges can offer because some of these programs do not warrant full-time faculty. Beyond flexibility and innovation, hiring more part-time faculty could also allow reallocation of funds that might better meet the needs of colleges, an option that AB 1725 restricts.

The second policy identified by Shulock and Moore (2007) relates directly to institutional budgets. Commonly referred to as the 50% law, Education Code Section 84362(d) mandates that a minimum of 50% of a college's budget must be dedicated to direct instructional costs. Generally speaking the majority of these funds would be used for faculty salary. Again Shulock and Moore argue that managers should not be bound by arbitrary limits and should have the flexibility to use financial resources in the manner they deem best to achieve student success. That is, managers should be held accountable for outcomes (various measures of student success) but should be

⁷ While I will outline this 40 year process here, any reader interested in a complete accounting of the history of part-time faculty in California community colleges should refer to *Part-time Faculty: A Principled Perspective* (ASCCC, 2002a).

allowed to employ college resources without restriction to achieve those outcomes. In discussing both of these policies Shulock and Moore do not hold faculty responsible, but they also argue for managerial flexibility and indirectly suggest that power or resources should not be made available to the faculty to further student attainment. At one level then faculty status and professional identity are diminished, increased use of part-timers is advocated, and student success is relegated to actors other than faculty.

Needless to say the Faculty Association of California Community Colleges (FACCC) responded to what it saw as an attack on faculty authority. In its response (Smith, 2007) FACCC emphasized three points. First, regarding AB 1725 the 75/25 rule has never been met statewide in the nearly 20 years the bill has existed. While some colleges and districts do meet the criteria, many do not, and therefore the policy is already regularly superseded by college managers. Beyond that there is a general consensus that the use of part-time faculty serves to decrease expenses, not to increase the type or amount of course offerings. Secondly, as with AB 1725, the 50% law is not uniformly enforced. Again, managers find means to avoid these guidelines, yet student success continues to suffer. Finally, FACCC argues that there is a logical inconsistency in lowering instructional expenditures, both with more part-time faculty and increased spending in others areas, in order to increase academic success.

While it is understandable that the California college faculty body believes that lifting of constraints suggested by Shulock and Moore are unreasonable and serve to denigrate faculty. Shulock and Moore's recommendations rise, at least in part, from earlier research that involved interviews with college administrators to ascertain what public mandates from their perspective constrained student success and degree attainment (Hayward, Jones, McGuinness, Jr., & Timar, 2004). In those interviews college administrators insisted that the 50% law and the 75/25 rule clearly inhibited their ability to create and maintain innovative programs dedicated to increasing student learning outcomes.⁸ In the initial report

⁸ At the California Community College Collaborative symposium where this paper was first presented, several college administrators argued that resources could be used to increase counseling and other student support services that are not currently considered instructional expenses and that have demonstrated positive results in relation to student success, echoing the findings of the earlier study. I accept those arguments and

(Shulock & Moore, 2007) faculty, and certainly policies that support faculty positions and a level of faculty autonomy, are held accountable for poor student performance. Yet, faculty professional expertise is not suggested as a means for reversing the trend. That is, the study degrades faculty professional status even while it focuses on statewide policies, not faculty work.

Conclusions, Questions, Collaboration

Twombly (2004) asks pointed questions and makes informed comments that help to frame what type of professional a community college faculty might be and how that might be realized: "The pressing question facing community colleges and their faculty seems to be how they can take individuals with teaching potential from diverse professional backgrounds and orient them to the specific history, mission, and culture of the community college. That is, what does it mean to be a professional within the community college, and how is a sense of professional necessary for effective mission fulfillment developed?" (38). The three themes from the literature discussed in the paper combine together to help answer these questions. Community college faculty must base their professional identity on the craftsmanship of teaching and that craft and identity must include all faculty including part-timers (Wagoner, Levin, & Kater, forthcoming). Scholarship and support networks offer two possibilities for achieving this goal. Numerous scholars have identified research or scholarship as the basis of professional identity in higher education (Clark, 1987; Bayer & Braxton, 1998; Twombly, 2004). Boyer (1990) among others has presented the argument that not all research need be the research of discovery valued by universities. Three of the four forms of scholarship suggested by Boyer (1990) are directly relevant to community college faculty and can be used to establish their authority and expertise.

The first of these three is the scholarship of integration (of knowledge), which is a multidisciplinary approach that seeks to put "isolated facts into perspective." While integration can be an outgrowth of one's own original research (Boyer's research of discovery, generally not associated with community college faculty), it can also be an interpretation of others' work, putting that work into larger intellectual patterns. The scholarship of integration is intellectual scholarship that synthesizes, orders, and expands through thought the meaning and importance of

certainly do not question the integrity and motivation of college leaders.

the research of others. All community college faculty can employ integration in the course development process when they create syllabi, reading lists, lectures, and class notes for courses. Instructors in vocational and technical courses could also feature integration with an emphasis on the connections of those courses to society at large.

In reflecting the service aspect of faculty work, the scholarship of application insists that service must be tied directly to one's academic specialty. Application seeks to create useful connections of knowledge generation (research) and everyday life. For academic faculty this could be an outgrowth of integration, that is finding relevant real world connections based on integration. In fact this may be a particular type of synthesis, one that integrates knowledge in service of a particular problem in society. In my own field research I have witnessed that some vocational faculty view their teaching at colleges as a form of service related to their full-time professional position outside the college ("a feather in my cap" to quote one part-timer). In this sense the vocational faculty are synthesizing knowledge gained through professional experience (and training) into better courses and more relevant preparation for their students. This is a useful example of how different programs/missions can have separate expectations, policies, and practices for faculty (not one size fits all) thus fostering faculty identity and autonomy.

The scholarship of teaching marks the obvious heart of community college faculty practice. No matter their position or program all faculty members can create a craftsmanlike professional identity through the scholarship of teaching. As always there needs to be a clear distinction between the two broad areas of teaching: content knowledge and pedagogy. That is, what you are going to teach and how are you going to engage the class with that content? Faculty have to be willing to achieve these three interrelated forms of scholarship as a part of their positions. Palmer (1992) offers a similar view based on Boyer's four forms of scholarship. More recently these ideas have also been described as the scholarship of teaching and learning (Tinberg, Duffy, & Mino, 2007).

Nonetheless, these calls to action must be considered in the context of faculty working environments as they currently exist. Therefore, one of the goals of this paper is to root its analysis in the larger political economy to better contextualize the extant literature on community college faculty. Levin, Kater, and Wagoner (2006) offer the strength of such a framework. In their

book they not only illuminate the work faculty on campuses are doing but also offer an analysis of the external pressures that affect that work. The conflicting pressures that faculty currently face are numerous. These include the different educational and public/social service missions of the comprehensive community college; each faculty member's own career path to the community college, particularly how those paths create particular definitions of professional practice and, in turn, quality instruction; the continuing marginalization of part-time faculty, coupled with colleges' increasing dependence on their labor; and the influence the neo-liberal consensus continues to exert on colleges through partnerships and programs developed between colleges, private business and industry, and government agencies.

Brave New World—into the future with four key directions

I offer four specific directions or guidelines that can help address the problems examined in this paper. First, college faculty should be actively involved in defining and defending their professional identity, an identity that should emphasize their unique role as higher education professionals with research based instruction, both teaching methods and content, as the heart of the definition. Second, all interested parties should put forth a consistent effort to envision new administrative practices, labor organizations, and government policies that support all academic labor in community colleges. Third, it is too simple to say that faculty should take control of these endeavors for themselves as they will require resources for achievement. Finally, all policies considered and implemented must acknowledge and include provisions for part-time faculty. It is unrealistic to believe that colleges will eliminate the use of part-timers, while their continued marginalization and lack of acknowledgment in policies are equally untenable.

Throughout this paper I have referred to external forces—professional norms, business practices, globalization—that act upon community colleges and their faculty. My colleagues and I (Levin, 2007; Wagoner, Levin, & Kater, forthcoming) have conceptualized this institutional form as *New World College*. While it is possible to interpret this conception as fatalistic or negative, I would argue that it does not have to be that way. Globalization does not need to take only one form. It can and should be negotiated with voice given to constituencies beyond the corporate-government nexus usually ascribed to it (Rhoads & Torres, 2006). In the case of *New World College* this should certainly include faculty as active

participants dedicated to positive student outcomes. In higher education we have seen a rising interest in how institutions serve the public good (Kezar, Chambers, & Burkhardt, 2005), and, since their inception, community colleges have had a zeal for serving their students and the particular needs of the members of their local communities. *New World College*, as an institutional type, could be a means of lifting local human constituencies within the global community by allowing their interests to be as well represented as those of business, industry, and governmental agencies. I believe that this negotiable reality is represented in the term *New World* itself and the two literary references it contains. Huxley's *Brave New World* is a distopia where individuals have little, if any, agency; Shakespeare's "brave new world" from Act V of *The Tempest* presents a world full of possibility and inhabited by individuals—imperfect, yes, but also responsible for themselves.

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Increasing Baccalaureate Attainment Rates Using California Community College Transfers: An Exploration of Cost- Effectiveness

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Introduction

Efforts to provide access for students on the one hand and outcomes on the other are complex. Increasingly, the community college serves as a principal point of access⁹ but there is considerable discussion about the outcomes for students and whether these are equitable. In fact, students enroll in colleges more than ever before. Increasingly, the higher percentage of all students enrolling are minorities (Government Accountability Office [GAO], 2007). Moreover, the GAO notes that as college tuition, fees, and associated costs continue to rise, more minority students are concentrated in the community college sector. By academic year 2006-2007, nearly 60 percent of all Hispanic students and 50 percent of Asian/Pacific Islander, Alaskan Native and Black students were enrolled in community colleges and other two-year institutions. In contrast, 43 percent of white/non-Hispanic students attended community colleges (GAO, 2007).

California is the largest community college system in the country, enrolling approximately 1.6 million students each year in one of the 109 community colleges located throughout the state. The California Community College system (CCC) serves four times more students than the California State University system (CSU) and eight times more students than the University of California (UC) system. Regarding state appropriations, the most recent budget projection for the CCC in the 2007-08 budget cycle stands at 8.6 billion dollars of the 14 billion dollars projected for the entire state's higher education system (Legislative Analyst Office [LAO], 2007). The CCCs share of the entire higher education appropriations budget is almost two thirds. Despite having a multi-billion dollar budget,

California has one of the lowest full time equivalent (FTE)¹⁰ expenditures for community college students in the country (ECS, 2000). The relatively low expenditure per FTE is one result of the large number of students who attend community colleges in the state. State appropriations per full-time student at the CCC are less than 60 percent of that for students at the CSU and less than one-third that of students at the UC (Shulock & Moore, 2007). Given the relatively low expenditures per FTE, it is not surprising that the state is not faring particularly well in terms of yearly college persistence and completion of certificates, associate degrees, and baccalaureate degrees. According to the most recent national report card on higher education, (Measuring Up, 2006), California received a grade of "B" in the completion category (The National Center for Public Policy, 2006). The state lagged slightly behind in first-year community college persistence, as well as six year completion rates. In spite of substantial progress in the past 15 years, the percentage of first year community college students in California who return for their next year of instruction is 57 percent compared to 62 percent for the top performing states. Moreover, the first-time full-time students completing a bachelor's degree within six years of college entrance was 62 percent, slightly below top performing states at 64 percent.

Although the state is slightly lagging behind these student outcomes relative to the top performing states, one would expect that the community college route represents a cost-effective pathway both at the individual and state levels. In short, it is generally expected that individuals who first attend a community college, transfer to a four-year college, and attain a baccalaureate degree should pay much less than individuals who first matriculate at a four-year college. Similarly, given the relatively low expenditures per FTE for community college students, it should be less expensive for the state if students first enroll in community colleges for their first years of college level coursework and transfer as juniors to a four-year college.

It has been widely asserted that community colleges have multiple and sometimes contradictory missions (Bailey & Morest, 2004; Dougherty, 1987). Here, however, we focus on the transfer function of community colleges in the

⁹ Similar to the retail industry where the first contact they have with a consumer is at the point of sale, so too has the community college become a vital first contact with an increasingly growing number of students.

¹⁰ The definition of full time enrollment in California is 15 student instructional contact hours per week over 35 weeks or 525 hours = one annualized FTE equivalent student (ECS, 2000, p. 17).

state of California. Since the establishment of the Master Plan in the 1960s, one of the main functions of community colleges has been to provide the academic preparation and college level courses necessary for students to transfer to a public or private four- year institution in order to pursue a baccalaureate degree. In theory, attendance at a community college should be a cost-effective way of attaining the first two years of education for an individual given the lower tuition and fee costs associated with matriculating at community colleges. Similarly, given the relatively low expenditures per FTE it is presumed a cost-effective way for the state to provide the first two years of college level courses. However, in reality students enter the community college with poor high school academic preparation and high remediation needs (Sengupta & Jepsen, 2006). Moreover, if the community colleges cannot provide the institutional infrastructure necessary for transfer (i.e., clarity in the transfer curriculum and informed advisors and counselors) then there is considerable difficulty for students to follow a seamless transfer pathway.

A principal mission of community colleges has been to guarantee access to postsecondary education (Levin, 2001). But, is such access cost effective and is this mission misdirected in the case of students who are prepared to enter 4 year colleges and universities directly from high school? We want to test whether it is indeed more cost-effective to the state to encourage students to enroll for the first two years at the community college and transfer instead of entering a four-year college directly. If students have the academic preparation necessary to enter directly into the college level courses and they receive the necessary advising and support, then one would expect that they would transfer on time, making it a cost-effective path. However, as was noted earlier community colleges are open admissions institutions that open their doors to all students regardless of academic preparation or educational aspirations. In addition, community colleges have relatively small budgets, and little autonomy in how to allocate the funds (Shulock & Moore, 2007), making it difficult for them to focus on the programs and activities that support the transfer process.

Conceptual and Policy Framework

We examine the CCC from a narrow micro economic perspective and focus upon whether or not publicly allocated state resources are used in a cost-effective manner to achieve higher levels of baccalaureate attainment through the state's investment in community colleges to

perform this function compared to baccalaureate attainment through the CSU and UC systems, *ceteris paribus*. That is, we approach this undertaking from the view of the state while recognizing that baccalaureate attainment is not a linear approach, and that producing baccalaureates is much more complex than our conceptual framing and analysis might suggest.

Human Capital Theory is a useful theoretical lens through which to examine a set of policies that aim to invest in a state's human capital endowment. In employing this framework, it is generally assumed that individual actors decide to enroll in higher education and persist to degree attainment based on a comparison of the expected benefits and costs associated with all of the set of alternatives (Becker, 1962; Becker, 1993; Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1989; Paulsen, 2001). And as a result, it is generally viewed that the attainment of a degree yields private returns to that investment and socially desirable benefits (Bowen, 1977; Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2004). This theory proves to be especially useful for examining policies at the various levels that strive to meet human capital investment objectives. Moreover, this theory allows for the structuring of a conversation centered on how the state invests in students' baccalaureate attainment.

The state through its various arms of government has a keen interest in making sure that scarce public dollars are allocated in such a way that the state's key activities remain functioning at certain levels and that such levels increase or decrease based on allocation formulae. In the case of higher education as a funded activity of the state, it is the state's responsibility to ensure that its policies, particularly finance policies, are presumably invested wisely to achieve a desirable set of outcomes that will maximize the state's set of preferences. Within the conceptual framework proposed for baccalaureate attainment, a reasonable question emerges for the state regarding its human capital investments in people at various types of higher education institutions. In short, if we presume that the state seeks to maximize its baccalaureate attainment (output) then the state given its financial investment should know what is a cost-effective way to achieve this outcome.

Purpose

The main objective of this paper is to examine data derived from a cohort of transfer students to identify whether the community college to four-year college path is a more cost-effective way for the state to increase baccalaureate attainment rates, compared to direct enrollment at

a four-year institution. Although it is equally important to understand whether the community college represents a cost-effective path for the individual, this question falls outside the scope of the present analysis (See Melguizo, Hagedorn, & Cypers, 2007 who present an initial attempt to quantify the cost of community college attendance at the individual level for a sample of transfers from community colleges from the Los Angeles Community College District). The present study primarily focuses on the cost-effectiveness for the state. As a result, the two main research questions that guide this undertaking are: 1) How much did the state invest in producing current community college educational outcomes? 2) Is the community college transfer pathway a more cost-effective option for the state to increase the percentage of students who completed a baccalaureate degree? To the best of our knowledge, no other study has tried to quantify and compare the state level costs for individuals following these two different paths. This study represents the first exploration of costs and is limited in the sense that it is restricted to a single cohort in a single state. Even though the methodology developed to estimate and compare the costs can be implemented in other states, the results of this study only apply to the state of California, and cannot be generalized to the rest of the country.

Method

In order to address our research questions, we needed to explore several secondary data sources in order to estimate the educational outcomes of first-time freshmen (FTF) or entrants in the community college. Since this is a theoretical and exploratory analysis heavily centered on methodology, what follows is a brief discussion of how we went about deciding on an appropriate dataset for this undertaking and the development of our models to derive the estimates.

In order to estimate the educational outcomes of FTF, we needed to estimate the baccalaureate attainment rates (i.e., four- or five-year graduation rates). The California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) has a rich set of data that describes the enrollment rates, number of transfers, and degrees awarded by public institutions in the state since the early 1990s; however, this information is not disaggregated by FTF. Consequently, it is difficult to identify the five-year attainment rates in terms of number of associate degrees and transfer rates of FTF community college students. In other words, the number of degrees attained refers to individuals who could have attended more than

one community college, and the sample is not restricted to FTF. That is, students in this group might have been individuals who were enrolled for a couple of months, attended for two years under full-time status, and/or enrolled for a period over a decade. In addition, they could have been students who switched colleges and/or alternated between full- and part-time statuses.

In contrast, the California Community College Chancellor's Office (CCCC) followed a cohort of students who enrolled as FTF in 2000 for five years (CPEC, 2007). The sample was composed of 52,622 FTF students. After five years of first enrollment, approximately 29 percent of the students had either earned a degree/certificate or transferred; 50 percent had left the system and 20 percent were still enrolled. We used this total number of FTF in 2000 as well as their estimates in terms of outcomes in our calculations. To estimate the cost of transferring and baccalaureate attainment for FTF students who began their education at a community college as it is applied to the various sectors of higher education—CCC, CSU and the UC systems—we employ the General Method.

General Method to Estimate the Cost of Transferring and Baccalaureate Attainment

In order to address the question of how much the state paid for individuals who either received a baccalaureate degree and/or who transferred to a four-year college and attained the degree, five years after their first time enrollment in a community college, we derive an estimate that captures the cost for the state of producing a specific number of transfers in a given year. One way to arrive at this estimate is to multiply the number of individuals who attained these outcomes by the full-time equivalent (FTE) cost of the number of years that they were enrolled in the community college. This estimate can be represented in its general form as follows:

$$C = N \sum_{i=1}^5 (F_i)$$

Eq. (1)

where,

C = State Cost Estimate for producing an outcome (certificate and transfer)

F_i = Full-Time Equivalent Cost for a given year

N = Number of individuals who attained the outcome

The General Form is useful in generating an estimate for the state's cost of producing a transfer but it does not answer the question of how much does the state pay to produce a

baccalaureate degree for community college transfers at either the CSU or UC system. To generate a cost estimate that helps us to answer this question we transform the general equation, and it can be represented as follows:

$$C_T = \left[N_T \left(\sum_{i=1}^5 (F_i) \right) + N_T (3G) \right]$$

Eq. (2)

where,

C_T = State Cost Estimate for producing an outcome (baccalaureate) from the CCC/CSU or CCC/UC transfer path

F_i = Full-Time Equivalent Cost for a given year

G = Full-Time Equivalent Cost for the year of graduation from either CSU or UC

N_T = Number of individuals who attained the outcome

Findings

In order to provide an estimate of the costs to the state to produce a specific number of transfers in a given year we multiply the number of individuals who transferred by the full-time equivalent (FTE) cost for the number of years that they were enrolled in the community college. According to CPEC (2007), of the 52,622 individuals who enrolled as FTE students in 2000, 15,053 attained a certificate or degree or transferred. Of these, 11,287 transferred to a four-year college or university; 10,084 were still enrolled in a post secondary institution; and 27,485 were not enrolled in a postsecondary institution five years later.

In what follows we provide some estimates of the educational outcomes of individuals who entered the community colleges as FTE. The most recent data for the state suggest that in 2005 of the 387,691 high school graduates only 51 percent enrolled as FTE. About 14 percent of these students matriculated in one of the colleges within the UC system, 23 percent in a CSU college, and 63 percent started in one of California's community colleges. In theory, any high school graduate without any need for remedial/developmental education should be able to take the college level transferable courses that will enable them to transfer to a CSU, UC or a private institution as a student at the junior level. However, the reality is that the majority of students who enter a community college require

remedial courses (Spann, 2000; U.S. DOE, 2003); they need to work at least part-time; and the majority has family responsibilities (Adelman, 2005; Hoachlander, Sidora & Horn, 2003). As a result, these students have to spend many years at the community college before transferring to a four-year college. Moreover, estimates from a sample of transfer students from the nine colleges of the Los Angeles community college district indicated that transfers spent on average four years at a community college, and that those with higher remediation needs spent more than five years before transferring (Melguizo, Hagedorn, & Cypers, 2007).

From our two central research questions regarding state investment in producing current community college educational outcomes and understanding whether the community college transfer pathway is a more cost-effective option for the state to increase the percentage of students who completed a baccalaureate degree we developed specific research questions that are the foundation of the structure of our analysis and the findings.

Research Question 1: How much did the state pay for individuals who transferred to a four-year college, two, three, and five years after their first time enrollment in a community college?

The state pays differential rates for individuals that attend different systems. For example, in real terms (2006 inflation adjusted dollars), the state paid \$25,209, \$55,879, and \$113,025 for an individual that attended a CCC, CSU, and UC for five years, respectively. (See Table 1).

Research Question 2: How much did the state pay for the baccalaureate attainment of community college transfers?

In order to estimate the cost of baccalaureate attainment for community college transfers, we simulate three pathway scenarios that are characterized by three transfer time points to either a CSU or UC. The first time point is constructed as the lower bound and it simulates an individual who transfers to either the CSU or UC in two years. The second time point is constructed as the middle point and it simulates a transfer time point of three years. The third time point is constructed as the upper bound and it simulates a transfer point of five years. The lower bound is

Table 1: FTE Costs (in 2006 Constant \$) by Various Pathways, AY 2000/01 to AY 2004/05

FTE Costs	Academic Year					Total
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	
CC	5,231	5,089	5,058	4,750	5,081	25,209
CSU Direct	11,901	11,156	11,129	10,694	10,999	55,879
UC Direct	25,602	22,455	21,700	21,296	21,972	113,025

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPI-U West Urban; Authors' Calculations

Table 2: Model 1 CCC/CSU Pathway Costs (2006 Constant \$s) at Various Transfer Points

FTE Costs	Two Years at CCC	Three Years at CCC	Five Years at CCC
	<i>Lower Bound</i>	<i>Middle Bound</i>	<i>Upper Bound</i>
CCC	116,481,840	173,571,486	284,533,983
CSU	370,461,914	369,051,039	372,606,444
Total	486,943,754	542,622,525	657,140,427
Σ (AY2002 /03,AY2004 /05)	32,822	32,697	33,012
Total Cost per Student	43,142	48,075	58,221

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPI-U West Urban; Authors' Calculations

Table 3: Model 2 CCC/UC Pathway Costs (2006 Constant \$s) at Various Transfer Points

FTE Costs	Two Years at CCC	Three Years at CCC	Five Years at CCC
	<i>Lower Bound</i>	<i>Middle Bound</i>	<i>Upper Bound</i>
CCC	116,481,840	173,571,486	284,533,983
UC	733,293,816	729,512,671	723,440,265
Total	849,775,656	903,084,157	1,007,974,248
Σ (AY2002 /03,AY2004 /05)	64,968	64,633	64,095
Total Cost per Student	75,288	80,011	89,304

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPI-U West Urban; Authors' Calculations

Table 4: Model 3 CSU Direct

	Year					
CSU FTE Costs	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	Total
Current \$	10,116	9,929	10,016	9,838	10,338	50,237
2006 Constant \$	11,901	11,156	11,129	10,694	10,999	55,879
				N (Assume 60% grad rate)		232,386
	Estimated Costs in 2006 Constant \$					2,985,497,294

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPI-U West Urban; Authors' Calculations

Table 5: Model 4 UC Direct

	Year					
UC FTE Costs	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	Total
Current \$	21,762	19,985	19,530	19,592	20,645	101,514
2006 Constant \$	25,602	22,455	21,700	21,296	21,972	113,025
				N (Assume 80% grad rate)		153,522
	Estimated Costs in 2006 Constant \$					17,351,824,050

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPI-U West Urban; Authors' Calculations

the ideal case whereby a community college student transfers after two years of matriculating and spends a minimum of two additional years at a four-year college. However, given the high and increasing needs for developmental courses, not all transfer students would have attained the maximum number of transferable courses. The middle bound allows for a reasonable deviation from the ideal because, on average, students spend a minimum of three additional years at a four-year college because the only available estimates suggest that students transfer with just over a year of transferable courses (Melguizo, Hagedorn & Cypers, 2007). The upper bound takes into account a longer time horizon for students who require additional remediation, appropriate curriculum for successful graduation, and structural impediments to the transfer process itself (Dougherty, 1994). We recognize that these are rough estimates; however, these estimates attempt to capture under- and overestimation by presenting the various bounds, and we suggest that they are reasonable approximations given the limitations of the available data. Thus, depending on the scenario, we added the cost of spending two, three, or five years at a CCC to the cost of spending additional years in either a CSU or UC institution.

We then calculate the costs that the state pays for baccalaureate attainment for the transfers who followed either a CCC/CSU or a CCC/UC path given the various scenarios, and compare them to the costs for those individuals who entered the CSU or UC systems directly as first time freshmen. By comparing these two sets of costs, we can assess whether either of these two pathways is a more cost-effective option for the state. Again, we rely on assumptions given the limitations of the data. In the first scenario (Model 1), we assumed that all of the transfers attended one of the 23 CSUs and estimate the cost associated with this path. The second scenario (Model 3) assumes that all of the transfers attended one of the 9 UCs, and estimates the cost associated with this path.

CCC/CSU Pathway

For the CCC/CSU pathway, the cost that the state paid for the 11,287 individuals who transferred within two years was \$116,481,840; three years was \$173,571,486; and five years was \$284,533,983. This estimate is derived by multiplying the 11,287 individuals who transferred

by either the two, three, or five year total FTE costs that the state contributed. The cost that was incurred by the state for individuals who attended a CSU for the lower bound was \$370,461,914; middle bound was \$369,051,039, or upper bound was \$372,606,444. (See Table 2)

The upper bound for Model 1 represents our derivation of the cost that the state paid for the 11,287 individuals who transferred to a CSU college within five years was \$657,140,427. This estimate results from multiplying the 11,287 individuals who transferred, by the five year FTE CCC cost per student, \$284,533,983, plus the additional cost of attending a CSU college for three years, \$372,606,444. The upper bound cost that the state paid for each individual who followed the CCC/CSU path was \$58,221. The lower bound offers a less costly scenario and suggests that the cost to the state for an individual who followed this path was \$43,142. (see Table 2).

CCC/UC Pathway

Similar to the CCC/CSU pathway, for the CCC/UC pathway the cost that the state paid for the 11,287 individuals who transferred within two, three, or five years was \$116,481,840 for the lower bound, \$173,571,486 for the middle bound, or \$284,533,983 for the upper bound, respectively. The cost that was incurred by the state for individuals who attended a UC was \$733,293,816 for the lower bound, \$729,512,671 for the middle bound, or \$723,440,265 for the upper bound. (See Table 3)

The upper bound for Model 2 represents our derivation of the cost that the state paid for the 11,287 individuals who transferred to a UC college within five years was \$1,007,974,248. This estimate results from multiplying the 11,287 individuals by the five year FTE CCC cost per student, \$284,533,983, plus the additional cost of attending a UC college for three years, \$723,440,265. The cost that the state paid for each individual who followed this path was \$89,304. The lower bound offers a less costly scenario and suggests that the cost to the state for an individual who followed this path was \$75,288. (See Table 3)

Research Question 3: How much did the state pay for the baccalaureate attainment of CSU first time freshmen?

According to the CPEC data, approximately 387,311 students started as FTF in one of the CSU institutions in academic year

2000/01. In order to estimate the total cost that the state paid for the individuals who attained a baccalaureate degree within five years, we assume a graduation rate of 60 percent. This graduation rate is slightly lower than the average six year graduation rate of the state (Measuring Up, 2006). The cost that the state paid for the 232,386 individuals who attained a baccalaureate degree within five years was \$12,985,497,294. This estimate results from multiplying the 232,386 individuals who attained a degree by the five year FTE CSU cost per student, \$55,879. According to the previous estimates of the CCC/CSU transfer pathway, the state paid an estimated \$58,221 for each student who followed this path. That is, the state paid \$2,342 more for a student who first attended a community college and then transferred than for a student who entered a CSU institution following high school. These results suggest that the CCC/CSU is not a cost-effective pathway given that the total cost per student for the CSU pathway is smaller (see Table 4).

Research Question 4: How much did the state pay for the baccalaureate attainment of UC first time freshmen?

Approximately 191,903 students started as FTF in one of the UC institutions in academic year 2000/01. In order to estimate the total cost that the state paid for the individuals who attained a baccalaureate degree within five years, we assume an overall graduation rate of 80 percent. We make this assumption because the college graduation rates of the students from the UC system are the highest in the state. The cost that the state paid for the 153,522 individuals who attained a baccalaureate degree within five years was \$17,351,824,050. This estimate results from multiplying the number of individuals who attained a degree by the five year FTE UC cost per student, \$113,025. According to the previous estimates of the CCC/UC transfer pathway, the state paid about \$89,304 for each student who followed this path. That is, the state paid \$23,721 less for a student who followed the CCC/UC transfer pathway. These results suggest that the CCC/UC is a cost-effective pathway given that the total cost per student for the UC pathway is much higher (see Table 5).

Conclusions

One of the central and guiding questions for this undertaking was whether community colleges were a cost-effective path towards increasing the state's educational outcomes. The results of these estimates reveal that the CCC/CSU transfer pathway is cost-effective for two and three year CCC transfers; however, it is

less unclear if this is an effective path when an individual transfers to the CSU after three years and less than five years at the CCC. When an individual transfers to the CSU as a two or three year transfer the state pays \$43,142 or \$48,075, respectively. However, when an individual transfers to the CSU after five years at the CCC the state incurs a cost of \$58,221. This figure exceeds the cost (\$55,879) the state would have paid if this individual would have matriculated to the CSU directly by \$2,342. The most straightforward policy implication is that it is cost effective for the state to invest in community college transfers who require just over three but less than five years to transfer to the CSU. It is within this crucial range that the state attains a cost-effective return on its investment. Thus, not only is this cost effective but it may also be efficient if we can assess the magnitude of the transfers who actually transfer at these various time points simulated within our models. When the comparison is made between the CCC/UC and UC direct pathway there is no question that it is cost effective to invest in transfer students even if it takes them five years to transfer.

The CCC could be a cost-effective path to the baccalaureate if the transfer time to degree is decreased or at least held to less than five years. As a result, a significant policy implication of this study rests with time to degree and its associated challenges in decreasing that time so as to minimize costs incurred by the state.

This undertaking is a first step in exploring whether the community college to four-year college path is a more cost-effective way for the state to increase baccalaureate attainment rates, compared to direct enrollment at a four-year institution. In this paper, we presented results that showed when and in what pathway it is cost effective. Future studies of this nature should take into account time to degree as determined by remedial education and the actual number of years it takes individuals to transfer to either the CSU or UC. That is, future research should be able to disaggregate our calculations by important factors such as whether the students were enrolled part- or full-time and their initial remediation needs.

We pursued this study with a state focus while recognizing the complexity and increasing needs of a highly diverse set of students concentrated at CCC. It is important to reiterate not only the complexity of both transfer students and the transfer process but also the fiscal conditions that face California. As of the completion of this study, the state faces a \$16 billion structural deficit that is growing. The governor has proposed an across the board

reduction budget-balancing approach to the tune of 10 percent while the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) (2008) has proposed an alternative approach that is targeted and makes strategic cuts in order to eliminate "non-effective" and "non-essential" programs. The projections are bleaker for the entire education system. The community college and UC/CSU systems face decreases in the projected 2008-09 budget of 2.2 and 3.1, respectively. Efficiency and effectiveness of baccalaureate production will become a more pressing concern in this fiscal climate and likely into the future.

Our findings suggest that the state can seek out concerted and thoughtful efforts, in keeping with the LAOs alternative budget management approach, that make wise, strategic investments in students that minimize their time to transfer. In the case of a direct community college transfer, the state can focus on making investments that ensure transfer within the ideal of two years. In the case of transfers to the CSU, the state can make investments that ensure transfer between three and five years as our findings suggest this is the optimal range of cost-effectiveness of transfer to the CSU.

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