

CCAP Module 2 - History of the U.S. Community College System

1 - Welcome

Welcome to *A Brief History of the United States Community College System*, a professional training module from the U.S. Department of State's Community College Administrator Program.

2 - An Evolving System

[Video clip 1]

Dr. Paul Parker: "When you look at the development of the community college in America, it was not one system. It was not created as some sort of national system, and there was no national model. It evolved. It just evolved over a period of virtually a hundred years. The beginnings of the community college concept in America was really back to late nineteenth century."

[End video clip]

In the early 1920's, junior colleges were defined as "institutions offering two years of instruction of strictly collegiate grade." But within 5 years, this definition was modified to state that the curriculum of the college may adapt to the "larger and ever-changing civic, social, religious and vocational needs of the entire community." In addition to this change, courses would be developed for high school graduates instead of college-level students.

After World War II, community colleges continued to evolve to meet the needs of returning veterans and a changing job market.

[Video clip 2]

Dr. Lou Bender: "One of the forces that brought that about was, they did not expect as many WWII veterans to seek education as they did. That put pressure on the post-secondary level. But it was during a time as well when we were going to a technological society and consequently there was this tremendous pressure by employers for those who had some kind of vocational technical background. So you had these things coming together."

[End video clip 2]

Community colleges developed from two educational systems in the U.S. - the kindergarten through high school system and the vocational school system. And students went to community college for many reasons.

[Video clip 3]

Dr. Paul Parker: "In the beginning I think there was the idea that students graduating from high school maybe didn't want to go to universities they wanted to get something beyond high school and stay closer to home right and be cheaper, and you know a lot of the same you find these same themes, these streams feeding into eventually the creation of the community college concept and, and system."



“The students would go to a junior college, with a mix of objectives: one to stay closer to home. Some people looked at it as a finishing school that for girls that they could go and get home economics and get married and get further education, be a little more educated than a high school graduate. Some wanted to go to get some practical studies because they needed a job. But that was probably not the, the early junior colleges was not the dominant purpose for them. They started out mostly as private, they were not public, they were not funded by tax funds by states and they, they were relatively small. Some of them were municipal. I think the one in Joliet Illinois which is one of the I think is the oldest goes back to 1904,. And so you know this is over one hundred years ago we had the, sort of the progenitor of what becomes the community colleges later on.”

[End Video clip S02-04]

Countries like India and Indonesia are experiencing a transformation similar to the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They are emerging out of an agricultural economy, and their traditional education systems cannot accommodate or respond quickly enough to the needs of the huge youth population. The community college in the U.S. emerged in response to similar pressures and serves as an excellent model.

VIDEO CREDIT: Learning Systems Institute, Florida State University

3 - 19th Century to the 1920s

[Video clip 01]

Dr. Paul Parker: “For the beginning idea for community colleges you really got to go back to the land grant colleges of the mid-nineteenth century. Because the land grant colleges were set up in 1863, well over 100 years ago in the American, primarily in the American Midwest, and some in the South but primarily in the American Midwest, to create universities that were more practical, more vocationally oriented. And they were very much in contrast to the elitist Eastern universities like Harvard and Yale and so forth who were really for a more elite class, and so the American land grant universities were created to meet a different population and were to provide a different kind of education than classical traditional education.”

[End video clip 01]

Land grant colleges and universities have continued into modern times, offering programs including agriculture, forestry and veterinary medicine.

But a movement emerged to develop “junior” colleges to provide the first two years of a general, liberal arts education, identical to that offered in universities.

In 1901, the first public “community college,” Joliet Junior College, was established in Joliet, Illinois, about 50 miles from Chicago.

The principal of Joliet Township High School, J. Stanley Brown, was concerned that many of his students could not attend college after graduation. He consulted with William Rainey Harper, his friend and the President of the University of Chicago, and they created Joliet Junior College.

The result of this project, was a junior college that academically paralleled the first two years of a four-year college or university. It was designed to accommodate students who wished to remain within the community yet still pursue a college education.



BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

By December 1902, the two-year, general education and liberal arts college made postgraduate high school courses available tuition-free.

From that time until the 1920's, two-year colleges remained the same. This could not be said of the rest of America.

During the 1920's, the first World War had ended and large numbers of rural citizens were moving to the cities. Cars were introduced to the American people, and there was a general sense of prosperity. This was the time of the "roaring 20's."

But in 1929, the U.S. and much of the world plunged into the "Great Depression." The stock market crashed, devaluing savings and investments and stifling trade at home and abroad. A massive drought known as "the Dust Bowl" struck America's heartland, devastating the agricultural system. Against this backdrop of massive unemployment, food shortages, and eroded confidence, the community college concept was forced to evolve as dramatically as the lives of the American people.

VIDEO CREDIT: Learning Systems Institute, Florida State University

4 - 1930s - 1950s

As you just learned, prior to the Great Depression, junior colleges were uncommon, and their focus on replicating the first two years of a four-year university wasn't a good fit for most young adults.

During the Great Depression, some two-year colleges began offering job-training programs to address the problem of widespread unemployment.

World War Two changed everything. Most college-aged men served in the military, and many young women worked to support the war effort.

In 1944, President Roosevelt signed the G.I. Bill of Rights, which promised veterans a number of benefits after the war, including. A major concern in the late 1940s and early 1950s was how to accommodate the large number of potential students.

After the war, returning soldiers faced a new social and economic landscape. Manufacturing businesses converted from the war effort to producing consumer goods, which increased the need for skilled workers in these new industries.

The burgeoning number of students, many of whom were veterans, wanted a post-secondary education, but not necessarily a traditional four-year degree.

In 1946, President Harry Truman appointed the Commission on Higher Education to make recommendations. In its 1947 report, The Truman Commission recognized the non-traditional nature of these students by stating,

"Many young people have abilities of a different kind, and they cannot receive 'education commensurate with their native capacities' in colleges and universities that recognize only one kind of educable intelligence

"We cannot continue to concentrate on students with one type of intelligence to the neglect of youth with other talents."

Among the commission's recommendations were extending free education through the first



BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

two years of college for "all youth who can profit from such education" and establishing a system of public, two-year community colleges.

During the 1950s, community colleges proliferated as states and local communities used supplementary funding from the federal government to create a highly diverse system of locally-controlled institutions.

[Video clip]

Dr. Lou Bender: "Here we had all 50 states with their own philosophy and their own pressures that brought it about.

...

"Let me divert one minute and give you an illustration. There were five (sic) plans in different bills for the Pennsylvania community college movement. One was pushed by the high school principals to add grades 13 and 14, one was by the vocational technical schools to have it done that way, one was by Penn State to convert what they had as their commonwealth campuses become the community college, and fourth was the comprehensive community college, which ultimately it became. So yes, you had these configurations because it was not something that was a single concept that was looked at by all the states."

[End video clip]

Despite the unique nature of each school, nearly all were based on a common community college concept: Identify the unique strengths and needs of local students and prepare them for the economic opportunities and social challenges in the local community.

VIDEO CREDIT: Learning Systems Institute, Florida State University

5 - 1950s to Present

Since the 1950s, access to a community college education has greatly increased as a result of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and additional amendments, reauthorizations, laws, and private grants.

According to the American Association of Community Colleges, as of 2012, nearly 13 million students were being served by over 1100 community colleges. And each institution is still guided by the Community College mission.

Community colleges now offer students associate degrees, post-secondary certificates, high school diplomas, and industry certifications. And some community colleges, in Florida and beyond, now offer bachelor's degrees.

Why has the community college concept been such a success in Florida and the United States? And why should it be considered in other countries?

[Video clip 01 transcript]

Dr. Jeff Milligan: "And the community college emerges as an efficient, nimble, focused institutional response to those changes, to meet..."

Dr. Paul Parker: "more easily, to make more easily designed and structures that make the change. Teachers are not burdened by research."



Milligan: “The institutions are not burdened by traditions and other missions. They’re free to be responsive and creative.”

Parker: “What is at the essence and the basis and fundamental to this is some of the things you've just said. We were free to be creative, to be flexible, to be relevant, and all those things that have made this system different. Other systems have not had that benefit of having rapid growth then all of those things. The last, and I think it's a better model for the developing world, and that was the reason why if you go back and look at development literature in the sixties, People like Hansen at Michigan State, they were trying to tell the newly independent countries from colonial control in Africa, particularly some in South America, but mostly Africa, and in some places in Asia - your model should not be Oxford or Cambridge, your model should be a land grant more like a land grant model Because it is organic and instrumental for development. It is by definition it's egalitarian.”

VIDEO CREDIT: Learning Systems Institute, Florida State University

6 - Challenges

As the community college system looks to the future, it faces a number of serious challenges

Most community college programs in Florida are open access, which means that anyone with a high school diploma can attend. This leads to two major challenges.

College and career readiness is a challenge because colleges across the nation are finding that students are not prepared for the demands of a college education or career training.

Disappointingly, the problem of readiness is found among all types of students, but the causes of the issue may quite different. For young adults, the challenge is to solve the disconnect between high school graduation requirements and college requirements. For older adults, the challenge is how to ensure that they are ready for college classes when they’ve been out of high school for quite some time.

A closely related challenge is college retention and completion. Because students are not ready for a college education their success rate is not very good, leading many to drop out before completing their degrees or certification program. Florida is one of the best in the country at addressing these issues, but the system is continuously focused on doing better.

In the past, cultural and legal prejudices limited access to a community college education. Today, the biggest barrier to access is the cost of higher education. With the exception of healthcare, the cost of higher education has increased faster than almost any other cost in American society. Politicians in both parties have proposed competing solutions, and President Obama echoed the G.I. Bill when he called for free community college for all Americans. But, the high cost of such proposals combined with a lack of legislative compromise in recent years makes a meaningful change unlikely.

7 - Thank You!

Thanks for learning about the History of the United States Community College System. In the next module, Governance, you’ll learn how government bodies, at the national and state levels, operate community colleges.



BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

CREDITS

Background:

- Saint Petersburg Junior College - Saint Petersburg, Florida. 1946. Black & white photoprint. State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory. Accessed 8 Nov. 2016.<<https://www.floridamemory.com/items/show/66159>>.

Slide 1:

- United States Department of State headquarters, by AgnosticPreachersKid (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/59United_States_Department_of_State_headquarters.jpg
- U.S. Department of State seal, By U.S. Government [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7b/Seal_of_the_United_States_Department_of_State.svg

Slide 3:

- Land Grant College painting: By USCapitol - Land Grant College, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=21977433>
- Land Grant Colleges map: By Wikideas1 (talk) (Uploads) - https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource/lgu_map_6_25_2014_0.pdf, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=49782714>
- Joliet Township High School: <http://jolietlibrary.org/local-history/joliet-remembers-1900s-joliet-township-high-school>. Fair Use.
- Depression Era Mother with children: By Dorothea Lange, Farm Security Administration / Office of War Information / Office of Emergency Management / Resettlement Administration - This image is available from the United States Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs division under the digital ID fsa.8b29516. This tag does not indicate the copyright status of the attached work. (cropped to removed negative frame, mild retouching to remove worst dust and scratches from scan);, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=52734>
- Dust Bowl buried farm: By Sloan (?) - United States Department of Agriculture; Image Number: 00di0971 (original link now dead), Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2246882>
- "Jobless Men Keep Going": <http://newdeal.feri.org/library/ab32.htm>
- Bank run: Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=374093>
- New York Broadway 1920: By American Studio, N.Y. - This image is available from the United States Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs division under the digital ID cph.3b14105.-, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6387239>

Slide 4



- Roosevelt portrait: By FDR Presidential Library & Museum - CT 09-109(1), CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=47600299>
- Harry Truman portrait: By Unknown or not provided - U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=16579066>
- War Ends: By Unknown, but in Office of the Chief Signal Officer collection - Picturing the Century: One Hundred Years of Photography from the National Archives, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2564553>
- World War II Soldiers: By Photographer: Wall. ARC-Identifier: SC189902. Post-work: User:W.wolny - www.army.mil, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=174797>
- Woman working on ordnance: Women move into the wartime labor force; 1944; Records of the Office of the Chief of Ordnance, Record Group 156. [Online Version, <https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/women-move-into-the-wartime-labor-force>, November 3, 2016]
- G.I. Bill page 1: Full Citation: Act of June 22, 1944 [Servicemen's Readjustment Act [G.I. Bill of Rights]]; 6/22/1944; General Records of the United States Government, Record Group 11. [Online Version, [https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/act-of-june-22-1944-\[servicemens-readjustment-act-\[gi-bill-of-rights\]\]](https://www.docsteach.org/documents/document/act-of-june-22-1944-[servicemens-readjustment-act-[gi-bill-of-rights]]), November 3, 2016]
- Shall I Go Back to School? pamphlet: <https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/gi-roundtable-series/pamphlets/shall-i-go-back-to-school>
- GI Bill Signing: By Not provided - FDR Library <https://fdrlibrary.wordpress.com/tag/g-i-bill-of-rights/>, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=40882962>
- Women being trained to weld: By M. Marshall - U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=17945721>

Slide 6

- Community college locations: American Association of Community Colleges <http://www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC/history/Pages/ccmap.aspx>
- President Obama's 2015 State of the Union Address: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cse5cCGuHmE>
- Vivian Malone Jones arrives to register for classes at the University of Alabama's Foster Auditorium. By Warren K. Leffler, U.S. News & World Report Magazine Restored by Adam Cuerden - Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division. U.S. News & World Report Magazine Collection. This image is available from the United States Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs division under the digital ID ppsca.05542. This tag does not indicate the copyright status of the attached work. A normal copyright tag is still required. See Commons:Licensing for more information., Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1596903>



8 - USDOS - CCAP

The Community College Administrator Program (CCAP) is a program of the U.S. Department of State, administered by Florida State University

For more information, visit eca.state.gov or lsi.fsu.edu/ccap



BUREAU OF EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS