

# staff development priorities for the seventies

The highly competent and creative staff members who provide leadership, develop quality programs, and encourage community participation are key figures in the community junior college.

Because of their value to the institution, special effort should be made to design appealing inservice programs that utilize and enhance their productivity. Master teachers need renewal and reward or they will tend to grow dull and cynical; what is worse, they may become clock punchers rather than exemplars for other staff members.

Inservice programs should take precedence over preservice training because the latter will not graduate enough staff to meet the needs of community-junior college employment. These people need inservice education to develop the necessary attitudes, skills, and understanding.

Inservice education deserves strong support because it provides the best opportunity for community junior colleges to renew and expand their programs. Unless staff members are supported in their professional development the needs of students cannot be met.

Inservice education is particularly helpful for those who do not have talent to be master teachers but who can make valuable contributions. Too many two-year college staff members possess values, attitudes, and beliefs that are directly contrary to the community colleges' philosophy. Many, too, lack even the basic skills of good teaching.





Primary responsibility for inservice programs should be assumed by the college. Staff development would be viewed as a priority activity; otherwise, it will remain outside the college, a service of the university. The community junior college should define its own requirements, and be the designer of its own programs.

This commentary is typical of programs across the country. Some colleges provide no inservice opportunities, though most have at least an orientation program before the start of fall classes.

Some even provide for periodic programs during the year and allow staff members to attend off-campus programs. But too few provide a well-designed, strongly supported, institution-wide inservice program.

Poor programs abound for a variety of reasons. The lack of leadership at the top is a primary one. Many presidents assume an avuncular role and see inservice education as a one-day orientation session. Some programs are organized by the academic dean and department heads to relay information.

#### A POOR SUBSTITUTE

A consultant may be invited to speak about the mission of the two-year college, or the nature of the college's students. Then, inservice education is ignored until the following year.

Administrators perpetuate poor programs by supporting blind salary schedules which reward only the quantity not the quality of accumulated graduate course hours.

Staff members take all kinds of university evening and extension courses because 15 additional credits will add a certain number of dollars to their salaries.

A hodgepodge of university courses should not be rewarded more than coordinated inservice experience. University courses that are part of a well-designed, individualized, college approved, continuing education program are certainly appropriate for staff and salary advancement.

If staff development is to be effective, someone must assume responsibility for coordination—an assistant

to the president, the academic dean, a special committee from the faculty council, or a staff development officer.

The program should continue throughout the year, and support the long-range improvement of the college. Many group activities may be available, but each staff member should have a program for his personal development.

As Rupert Evans has said, "It should be the responsibility of every administrator to build, in cooperation with each staff member, an individualized staff development plan covering at least five years."<sup>1</sup>

Staff development will enhance student development. When the climate of learning for staff is open, flexible, affirming, challenging, the climate of learning for students is likely to be similar.

Programs should include evaluation processes, allowing the individual and the college to determine progress. They must not be "seek and destroy" missions, but should focus on improvement. Arthur Cohen has said, "I don't see instructor evaluation or training as some kind of reward-punishment cycle. It's all reward. It has to be. You're not setting up evaluation schemes or training schemes in order to gather evidence on which to punish people or fire people."<sup>2</sup>

The aim is to develop a program that is so well integrated with the fabric of the college that staff accept as normal the opportunity to plan goals and carry out activities that help them improve their teaching, administering, and counseling. When the rewards are clear, and the opportunities are provided, staff members will choose to be innovative and creative. When staff members begin to grow and develop, the college will become a more potent force.

#### OVERLOOKED IN BUDGETS

During the present period of high competition for budget dollars, inservice training has maintained a consistently low status, with little financial backing. One important exception to this rule, however, has occurred in Florida. That state's legislature has allocated special funds for staff development programs in community and junior colleges.

Every state in the nation has a community junior college, and each of these colleges should have an inservice training program for staff. State departments of education should develop comprehensive, statewide plans to coordinate the efforts of state colleges and universities, state professional associations, regional laboratories and agencies, and individual community junior colleges.

State universities often duplicate inservice efforts; this duplication could be avoided in a coordinated state plan.

The Comprehensive Community College Act of 1969 placed high priority on state plans for staff development. The Act called for a master plan for development in each state:

The master plans will be developed jointly at the state level with all post-secondary education agencies within that state. They will set forth a state-wide plan for the improvement, development, and construction of comprehensive community colleges, including first, the development and implementation of comprehensive curriculum programs that have a special emphasis on the needs of the educationally and economically disadvantaged; second, the training and development of faculty and staff. . . .<sup>3</sup>

#### THE FLORIDA PLAN

The Florida plan could serve as a model for other states. During the 1968 Special Session of the Florida Legislature, a bill was enacted providing funds for staff and program support. A statewide committee organized and implemented guidelines, and every college was required to formulate a long-range plan for development in keeping with the college's philosophy and objectives. Goals for staff and program development were to be specified, and projects and activities for achieving them described in detail. Each college had to submit procedures for evaluating its achievements, and for choosing alternatives when it submitted its budget.

<sup>1</sup>Evans, Rupert. *Seminar on Graduate Education Programs*, edited by Joseph P. Arnold. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University, 1970.

<sup>2</sup>Cohen, Arthur. "Recorded Interview with Gregory Goodwin." University of California at Los Angeles, November 19, 1971.

<sup>3</sup>Williams, Harrison. "Introduction of Comprehensive Community College Act of 1969, S. 1033." *Congressional Record: Senate*, February 17, 1969, 3435.

The full report of the National Advisory Council on Education Professions Development on the training and development of educational personnel for community and junior colleges (report title: "People for the People's College") is being carried forward into paperback book form by the University of Arizona Press, and will be released in October under the title *TEACHERS FOR TOMORROW: Staff Development in the Community-Junior College*, by Terry O'Banion. Copies of the 190-page paperback book are \$2.75, with a twenty percent discount (net \$2.20) granted by the Press on bulk orders for 25 or more copies. Write: The University of Arizona Press, Box 3398, Tucson, Arizona 85722.