

The Evolving Ideas/Impact of Terry O'Banion on the Community College Through His Publications, Projects, and Service

In a survey of 11,000 higher education leaders reported in *Change* magazine in January 1998, Terry O'Banion was named one of eleven "Idea Champions" who set the agenda for all of higher education—and the only community college leader on the list.

Student Services

- My first interests were in the general field of student services with first articles on academic advising.
- I received a master's in counseling from the University of Florida and completed all the course work for a doctorate in psychotherapy with Arthur Combs.
- My first book with April O'Connell was *The Shared Journey: An Introduction to Encounter* which was used in over 200 colleges and universities. I did a great many encounter groups as a consultant all over the U. S. and Canada.
- I was particularly interested in creating a human development curriculum (BE 100 at Santa Fe) to embed affective education into the curriculum so it would last. My first grant was with the State of Kentucky to train 16 community college faculty members from 8 Kentucky community colleges through the encounter group process to teach a human development course.
- With Alice Thurston I wrote the first text for community college student service leaders *Student Development in the Community Junior College*.
- I was commissioned by the Student Personnel Commission of AACC to create a model of student development which had considerable impact on student development programs. I also consulted in 50 or more CC on student development programs and wrote many articles on this topic.
- All of my work in student services was couched in the framework of Humanistic Education which could be an overarching category for much of my work.
- My next (and hopefully last) book to be published in January of 2020 is on *Academic Advising in the Community College* which cycles back to my beginning interests. The O'Banion Model of Academic Advising was recognized by the National Association of Academic Advising as one of the two all-time classic models in the field. Google the O'Banion Model of Academic Advising; it is still alive!!

Staff Development

- I did a great deal of work consulting for staff development programs in community colleges throughout the 1960s and 70s, and one president who brought me to his college was on Nixon's National Advisory Committee on Staff Development. The committee decided to focus on staff development in the community college and asked me to prepare

a study and a book on the issue. I wrote *Teachers for Tomorrow: Staff Development in the Community College* which became the Bible for staff development.

- States added funds for staff development, my work became the hub of a national effort by AACC to encourage staff development with support by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, we started a national staff development association, my doctoral students at Illinois did some of the first dissertations on this topic, and I taught the first course ever on Staff Development in the CC as a Visiting Professor at Berkeley.
- Wrote many articles in this arena.
- In 2020 Rowman & Littlefield published my edited book *Academic Advising in the Community College*.

Leadership Development

- From the time I went to the University of Illinois in 1967 as an Assistant Professor I was engaged in teaching leadership to aspiring community college leaders and am still deeply engaged in that effort.
- There is a difference for me in staff development and leadership development. Staff development is for everyone in the institution and usually focused on helping teachers become better teachers. Leadership development focuses solely on leadership for folks who are administrators. And there are 40 or more higher education leadership programs in universities in the country. I taught leadership development at Illinois, Nova, The Union Graduate School, University of Toronto, University of California Berkeley, National American University, and now at Kansas State University. I had a long association as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Texas where I worked for decades, and still do, with my best friend, John Roueche on leadership development.
- In addition to the university work I created programs through the League for Innovation for week-long and year-long leadership institutes including the Executive Leadership Institute that has trained almost 1,000 aspiring leaders interested in the CEO and other top positions, the National Institute for Leadership Development which trained over 6,000 women in leadership; we launched the program in 1980 when there were only 50 women cc presidents; today there are over 400, many of whom went through this program, the Expanding Leadership Diversity program in which we prepared 30 aspiring minority leaders for a year. (John Roueche was my partner in all of these except NILD.) In addition, under my leadership at the League we sponsored annual institutes for League presidents and for CEOs and Chairs of Boards of Trustees.
- I was honored in April 16 by *Diverse Magazine* on the cover for my work as a Thought Leader in preparing minority leaders and earlier by NILD for my work preparing women leaders. I created the program for NILD and monitored it for decades; it is the most important work I have done in the community college world.
- 7 years ago, I worked with John Roueche to create the most innovative program in CC leadership ever. I have excellent materials on this which you need to review. At 83

(August 19) I am still in the business as a Senior Professor of Practice for this program sponsored by Kansas State University.

Innovation

- My interest in innovation is a theme that runs through much of my work rather than a stage. I have always been an innovator even in my English classes in a rural school in Hendry County Florida where I invented a hunting license so my students could bag the parts of speech in a sentence along with many other practices.
- I wrote a book on Innovation in the Community College, completed a national study with support from the MetLife Foundation, and served as President of the League for Innovation in the Community College for 23 years.
- We created a national conference on innovation and awarded faculty staff for their work as Innovators of the Year.
- I was one of the first to solicit sponsors for our work in the League for Innovation---an innovative move. At one point we had 150 sponsors paying us annual dues of \$5,000 to \$25,000 to sponsor our national conferences; we also secured millions to support projects in innovation. We really were the first; now every organization does it.

The Learning College

- This is probably my most important contribution to community colleges. My friend George Boggs (President Emeritus of AACCC) was the first person I know who articulated the idea of a learning paradigm and an instructional paradigm, and I have always given him credit in my writings for the original idea. The year before I heard George on this issue, I had published a book on Teaching and Learning that was receiving attention, but then I realized it was the learning, stupid. (As Jaime Merisotis, President of the Lumina Foundation, said in a speech and article 10 years later.)
- With a good idea I never stop with just one publication. Following this book, I wrote 3 monographs (with funds from Peoplesoft) to help market the idea—one monograph was the entire issue of the Trustees Quarterly. I also secured over one million from Atlantic Philanthropies to support the 3-year long project on The Vanguard Learning College Project. (For impact, two of the 16 colleges in that project---Valencia and Santa Fe—have since won that Aspen Institute Award for Excellence---Sandy Shugart said Valencia’s participation in the project was partially responsible for the Aspen Award.) We also secured funds from the Pew Charitable Trusts for a million dollar project on learning outcomes headed by Cynthia Wilson and Cindy Miles.
- At the League we created Learning Abstracts and an annual conference on the Learning Summit both of which are featured projects of the League.
- We also did 3 national PBS specials on the Learning College in which I was the lead consultant and presenter.

- For my work on helping institutions become more learning centered PBS created the Terry O'Banion Prize for Teaching and Learning which was later sponsored by Educational Testing Service when I served there as a Thought Leader.

Student Success

- Student success has been one of those other themes that thread through my work (student success, humanistic education, and innovation) which in some ways are overarching themes informing my work in the various stages.
- I have written many articles on student success which are distributed in a bundled program to many colleges. I consulted for years on these issues as a consultant and speaker at hundreds of community colleges.
- I was a consultant for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for two years to help them create and organize their multi-million dollar project on Completion by Design.
- I wrote the monograph on Access, Success, and Completion: A Primer for Community College Faculty, Staff, Administrators, and Trustees which has had considerable impact on the field, so I have been told.

Curmudgeons & Rogues

- These two topics are not as comprehensive as the other stages I have listed, but I list them because they are quite unique. No one had ever (to my knowledge) identified these two groups of community college folks in the way I did. And I did do some very sound research on these two groups.
- The Rogue Trustee: The Elephant in the Room created quite a dust up. ACCT would not publish anything on it and actually tried to get me not to write it. It immediately became an underground favorite of presidents, and I have interacted with dozens of presidents and trustees about rogue trustees as well as some school principals and superintendents. I made several important national speeches on rogues. Most importantly, I wrote 10 or more articles on the rogue trustee that have been widely distributed.
- Same thing with the curmudgeon monograph but not as widespread and not as many articles.

General and Liberal Education

- As a student at the University of Florida 1954—58, I was fortunate to take the required general education program C-courses---everyone of which I can still cite the titles and course numbers. For an uneducated redneck from LaBelle, Florida who had never driven a car out of his county until his senior prom, the general education program at Florida opened my eyes to a totally new world for which I have ever been thankful.
- Years later, Joe Fordyce and I had a rare opportunity to create a brand new college at Santa Fe, where, under Joe' leadership, we created a model of general education that is

one of the best ever created; it was all Joe's idea, but I had responsibility for most of the implementation and for creating the core course *The Individual in a Changing Environment*.

- I pursued my interest in general education by continuing to champion the core course focused on the self: who am I? Where am I going? What difference does it make anyway?
- Later I became interested in liberal education when I saw the emerging push to have community colleges place a priority on career and technical education. I was for some time a member of the editorial board of AAC&U's *Journal of Liberal Education*.
- As my interest in liberal education emerged, I did not forsake my interest in career and technical education but began thinking about the need for community colleges to bridge the gap.
- I started writing about an Essential Education for All and produced what I consider one of my best works since the *Learning College—Bread and Roses: Helping Students Make a Good Living and Live a Good Life*. I think the second part of this title says it all, and I have tried to embed it in the culture of community colleges with not much luck.
- I strongly believe that community colleges would be wise to try and create a program that would bridge the divide; it could begin with a focus on creating an Essential Education around the soft skills which bridge workforce and liberal education: Communication, Problem Solving, Collaboration and Teamwork, and Critical Thinking to be required of all students.
- As I move into the last phase of my career, I am not hopeful for either general education or for my concept of an Essential Education for All---but I plan to keep championing this idea, and probably others, until I return to dust as Shakespeare promised.
- In 2023 I began working with Jerry Gaff, Senior Fellow at AAC&U, who has written more about general education in higher education than any other person. We have agreed to send a proposal to the CEO of AAC&U on how to promote general education in community colleges—a project we would jointly herd if approved.