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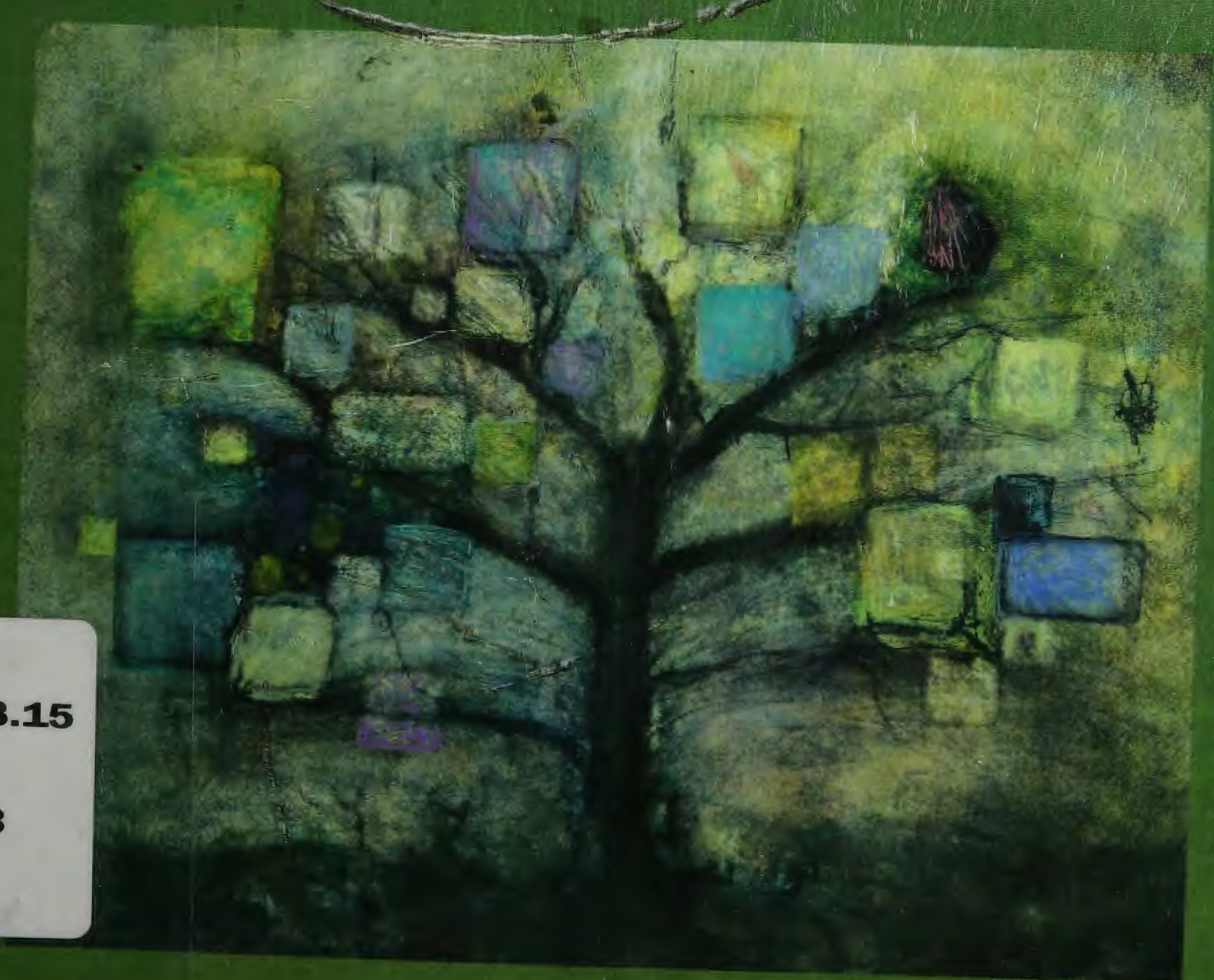
Managing today's community colleges: A new era?

Pamela L. Eddy
College of William and Mary, pamela.eddy@wm.edu

CONCEPTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY COLLEGES



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John S. Levin and Susan T. Kater

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MANAGING TODAY'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES

A New Era?

PAMELA L. EDDY

This chapter provides an historical perspective of the evolution of management within community colleges. The social and financial context of the community college, as well as the educational aims of these institutions, creates a distinct environment that influences both the ways in which individuals manage and what issues are most salient for institutional managers. Moreover, cultures of community colleges maintain fewer of the traditions typical of universities. Programming that covers only two years of postsecondary education results in a shorter time on campus for students, providing students with a limited window to advocate for change and ultimately creates weaker alumni ties. Teaching staff consist predominantly of adjunct or temporary faculty members who have no or limited focus on research and, as a collective, may not have a major influence on campus management, in spite of the espoused practice of shared governance (Kater & Levin, 2005). Campus administrative leaders are typically not scholars, nor do they share a professional identity with faculty: rather they are managers who respond to demands from the local community, boards of trustees, and state legislatures and policy-makers. The context of the community college itself (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Levin, 2007)—employment status of its principal labor force, community orientation, governed by state legislation, and comprised of diverse students—influences managerial practices that range from bureaucratic operations to organizational effectiveness.

Initial ideals of management in community colleges formed around the concepts of the institution as a bureaucratic organization (Levin, 1998; Twombly, 1995) that mirrored the management forms of public schools from which a large proportion of community colleges emerged (Brick, 1994). Over time, increased complexity of operations due to expanded mission, demands for accountability, and shifts in faculty personnel and unionization resulted in a different perspective of pressing management issues and conceptions of effective processes (Peterson, 1997). By 2012, research on community college management issues moved the focus to the role of unionization (Linville, Antony, & Hayden, 2011), shifting faculty work (Cejda & Murray, 2010), development of midlevel leadership (Ebbers, Conover, & Samuels, 2010), and the effects of state oversight of the colleges (Ewell, 2011), thus altering the traditional conceptions of management and leadership in the community college.

A topology of leadership eras serves as a template to consider for corresponding management eras (Twombly, 1995). The four eras of leadership include: (1) The Early Years of 1900s–1930s—Great Man Theory; (2) Independence 1940s–1950s; (3) Maturation 1960s–1970s; and (4) Resource Retrenchments and Stabilization 1980s–1990s. A fifth era may be considered for the first decades of the 21st century, namely as leadership in transition that requires multidimensional orientations (Eddy, 2010). The concepts of leadership and management are interconnected, with Twombly's (1995) timeframes of leadership eras complementary to eras of higher education management (Eells, 1931; Kater & Levin, 2002; Koos, 1925; Myran, 1983; Ratcliff, 1994; Richardson, 1972; Richardson, Bracco, Callan, & Finney, 1998). Table 8.1 provides a comparison between the focus of leaders during the various eras relative to management issues that have affected the operations of community colleges. As with any summary, the predominant focus of the eras is presented while recognizing that the lines of demarcation between the periods are not hard and fast. Thus, depending on the culture and context of a community college, the type of management employed may not align precisely with the predominant management practices currently in place.

Management does not occur in a vacuum, as there are other institutional conditions that shape management and affect outcomes. For example, there are considerable differences in an organization dominated by a bureaucratic structure than in one where a political arena is prevalent (Baldridge, Curtis, Ecker, & Riley, 1977). Employee–employer relationships take on formal characteristics—rules, regulations, roles—in a bureaucratic environment and illegitimate and conflict behaviors in a political one (Mintzberg, 1989).

Another perspective, a post-modern one, illuminates the influence of underlying structures on management options and can offer new considerations of approaches to management (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006; Hickman, 2010). In particular, this perspective allows for a critique of the underlying structures of community colleges that shape actions. Central to post-modernism is the role of power (Foucault, 1982). Power becomes manifested in the organizational structures and roles of institutions, as well as in communication and the value placed on expertise and products. By recognizing the sources of power within their institutions, managers can adjust dysfunctional or deleterious operations, particularly those with imbalances in power, which typically are not addressed when power remains unquestioned.

Table 8.1 Leadership eras and management eras in community colleges

Era	Leadership	Management
1900s–1930s	Great Man leadership—charismatic	Bureaucratic operations
1940s–1950s	Independence—hierarchical	Patriarchic
1960s–1970s	Maturation—building capacity, human resources	Unionization—entrenchment of roles
1980s–1990s	Focus of resource constraints—strategic planning	Shared governance
2000–present	Leadership in transition: multi-dimensional leadership—framing change	Collaboration

MANAGEMENT ERAS

Management practices shifted over time in reaction to changes in the community college. During the establishment of the early junior colleges, the precursors of the community college, bureaucratic management was the prominent framework (Ratcliff, 1994). Bureaucratic forms of management rely on a hierarchy, division of labor, and rules and procedures (Weber, 1946). Emerging from this first management era was a shift to paternalistic management (Maslow, 1943). The founding leaders of the community colleges in the mid-20th century followed the pattern of the "great" leaders that built the first junior colleges, exerting a patriarchal form of leadership and hence management of operations (Brick, 1994). Following this timeframe was the explosive growth of community colleges in the 1960s and early 1970s. This management era is noted for the increased presence of unionization on community college campuses (Hutcheson, 2002) that resulted in a shift of management operations (Richardson, 1972). Instead of a single manager dictating practices, unionized faculty began to assert their voice into management decisions (Chandler & Julius, 1985; Mortimer, 1978). In the 1980s and 1990s, the stabilization of the community college sector and the shift to maintenance of programs during times of fiscal exigency altered roles again. Forms of shared governance gained momentum as a mechanism to address external challenges and to leverage the expertise of the faculty and mid-level leadership (Myran, 1983; Wirth, 1991). Finally, the current era marks a shift in management orientation from a strict top-down approach to collaborative operations (Amey, Jessup-Anger, & Jessup-Anger, 2010). Collaborative management creates different roles for managers, faculty, and leaders (Hickman, 2010).

BUREAUCRATIC ERA—1900s–1930s

The establishment of U.S. community colleges occurred to address particular educational needs and respond to social pressures (Harper, 1903; Ratcliff, 1994). Brick (1994) identified four basic social and economic forces leading to the development of the junior college: "(1) equality of opportunity, (2) use of education to achieve social mobility, (3) technological progress, and (4) acceptance of the concept that education is the producer of social capital" (p. 44). On the one hand, the conception and practices of junior colleges helped meet demands of four-year colleges to provide the first two years of a general liberal arts program (The Changing Role, 2002/2003; Rudolf, 1990). What is commonly considered the nation's first junior college, Joliet Community College, southwest of Chicago, developed in 1901 as a fifth- and sixth-year extension to the established high school curriculum (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

Yet, on the other hand, this frequently cited rationale for the establishment of the junior college sector relies on a simplistic dependence on the prevalent leadership theory of the day that attributes educational changes to "great men" (Frye, 1992). A major contributing factor in the establishment of junior colleges was the cultural context and local community interactions that created the right environment for establishing this type of college (Ratcliff, 1994). It is the confluence of educational reform efforts, local needs, prevalent political trends, and a certain amount of serendipity that propelled the larger movement of establishing junior colleges.

The utility of bureaucratic management rests on assumptions of rational behaviors and predictability (Gergen, 1992). Yet, a constructivist analytical framework (Hatch &

Cunliffe, 2006) suggests that the establishment and management of the junior college occurred through didactic interactions among the press, community members, and educational leaders (Frye, 1992; Ratcliff, 1994) that were not necessarily rational in practice. The influence of the context and culture of each locale in which a college opened underscores unique histories that are lost in generalizations about the era of formation of community colleges.

The concurrent influences of the burgeoning high school organizational structure and that of four-year colleges contributed to the organization and management of the first junior colleges. Management practices during the early decades of the 1900s adopted elements of classical management theory (Morgan, 2006). Defined roles placed decision-making firmly with top-level college leaders. As a result of the emergence of a centralized workforce as a consequence of industrialization, classical theorists explained how to increase operational efficiencies. Early theorists, such as Fayol, Mooney, and Urwick (as cited in Morgan, 2006), viewed management as a linear process in which rational planning would improve efficiencies. Typically, these theories contained a list of best practices that relied on the chain of command, the division of work, and centralization of authority. The relatively small size of the early junior colleges made this form of management easier to employ as low staff numbers meant simpler tracking and control of employees. Rudolf (1990) identified a more distinct role for college presidents that focused on leadership in contrast to the dual roles colonial presidents maintained in which they were also college faculty. The move to a focus on college leadership vested power in the position of the presidency.

The aftermath of World War I and the booming economy in the 1920s created more rapid expansion of the junior college. Eells (1941) reported the opening of 100 junior colleges between 1901 and 1920, whereas 450 were in operation by 1930 (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Three states, however, captured 51% of enrollments, specifically California, Texas, and Illinois. The roots of centralized management of the systems in these states, which emerged more fully in the next era, led to structures that facilitated the establishment of colleges in each state system (Yarrington, 1969). More colleges and greater population bases accounted for the higher student numbers in colleges in these three states.

PATRIARCHIC ERA—1940s–1950s

A pivotal moment for community colleges occurred with the release of the report of the President's Commission on Higher Education (1947) that suggested education for students up to grade 14. Another key factor influencing community college development in this era was the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (commonly referred to as the G.I. Bill). The combination of these two events provided the momentum that expanded access to higher education for previously excluded populations of students. The Commission report also planted the seeds for a name change from junior colleges to community colleges (Vaughan, 1997) and with the open-access mission, symbolically, these colleges became known as "democracy's college" (Diekhoff, 1950). The 1940s and 1950s set the stage and foundation for the growth period of community colleges in the subsequent decades (Deegan, Tillery, & Associates, 1985).

Colleges became more established in communities as a result, with a growth rate of 57% occurring for public community colleges between 1940 and 1960 (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). The roots of bureaucratic operations shifted to a paternalistic management style in this era. Colleges conformed to management theory that focused on the needs of human resources, with recognition of the need to help employees realize their potential (Maslow, 1943). Organizational leaders were viewed as benevolent and protective of employees, yet they did not share power. Instead, they retained control of decision-making and vision-setting for the college (Nevarez & Wood, 2010). The hierarchy maintained its place in the organization, but employees were no longer viewed as mere cogs in the operation.

During this era community colleges shifted in alignment from high school districts to autonomy.

> [I]n states where statutory provisions existed, except in a few states such as New York, Texas, Mississippi, and California, two-year colleges were legally a part of the public school system as an extension of the high school. One-half had enrollments of under 300 headcount students. (Young, 2002, p. 560)

Community college autonomy and alliance with higher education meant that managers were no longer tethered to the forms of operation utilized at public schools. Furthermore, the increasing size of the institutions meant a change in scale for management, ultimately adding layers to the organizational chart and affecting forms of communication within the colleges and more importantly with newly formed state organizations.

Not only did federal legislation support the need for educational opportunities in local communities (President's Commission on Higher Education, 1947) but also state legislation established an organizational structure for community colleges as separate from public school systems. Legislation also provided opportunities for financial support through taxation (Young, 1951) and financing and managing the financing of community colleges became more central institutional issues.

UNIONIZATION—1960s–1970s

The issue of unionization became prominent on community college campuses beginning in the 1960s as campus faculty flexed their organizing strength. Issues driving unionization efforts included "faculty fear of administration policies, the need for recognition, the size and complexity of the school organization, and job security" (Nelson, 1974, p. 1). Unions in academic settings are situated in a markedly different context relative to industry unions due to the overlapping interests of faculty members and college administrators (Chandler & Julius, 1985).

The fast pace of growth in the community college sector during this era meant that leadership operated with more authoritarian style in order to make decisions rapidly (Chandler & Julius, 1985). Management, in turn, was highly reactive to demands made of it by leaders and state administers (Dill, 1984; Richardson, 1972). Yet, a push back against this directive style of management began as unions and faculty started to advocate a participatory form of governance involving representatives from administration, faculty, and students (Richardson, 1972). During this era, the expansion of unions contributed to managerial behaviors. Among the first community college to unionize was Milwaukee Technical Institute (Hutcheson, 2002). By 1974, of the 212 authorized bargaining agents, 150 were located on community college campuses (Nelson, 1974). A decade later, 35% of all community college faculty members across the country were in a union (Chandler & Julius, 1985) and by 2005, 43% of community college full-time faculty worked on unionized campuses (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). The bulk of unionized community college faculty (60%) work in one of five states: California, Illinois, Washington, New York, and Michigan (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). California and Illinois represent states with the longest, most substantive history with community colleges and also represent states with early state systems of community colleges (Bender, 1975).

Unionization did not occur uniformly across the country, and the prominence of faculty unions in particular states underscores the influence of regional influences. Where prevalent, the onset of collective bargaining at community colleges changed management from a format of paternalistic oversight to negotiation among parties (Ernst, 1975; Lombardi, 1979; Marsee, 1981). Power often shifted in these negotiations, with some research noting how power collected in top leadership positions (Moore, 1981); other research concluding that more power was vested with faculty (Chandler & Julius, 1985); and still others pointing to the power of middle management (Marsee, 1981). These different perspectives highlight that organizational complexity and context matter in governance and management. Here, a political model underscores the role of negotiation among coalitions and highlights how power may collect in any number of locations based on the union contract and internal organizational context (Baldridge et al., 1977). Ultimately, both the rhetoric and presence of unionization and discussion and codification of roles and responsibilities opened the way for conversations regarding shared governance.

Against this backdrop of unionizing efforts on community college campuses, two seminal works on management were published: Mintzberg's (1979) research on patterns in managerial work and Peterson's (1974) review of research regarding the organization and management of higher education. Mintzberg's (1979) work, while not focused upon higher education, provided a means for analyzing the type of management in practice, with his five prototypes ranging from a simple bureaucracy to a professional bureaucracy to adhocracy. Peterson's (1974) review of research found that even though there was an increase in research on organizational issues, the theoretical models were limited, much of the research merely reported descriptive statistics or provided exploratory case studies, and there was not a ready conduit regarding scholarship from different disciplines.

Investigation into the nature of administrative behaviors in higher education (Dill, 1984) concluded that managers spend a great deal of time reacting to issues and rely heavily on verbal skills in interactions with others. Interpersonal skills were noted as critical to the motivation of others. Yet, a reliance on hierarchy in making decisions indicated that bureaucratic management practices continued to exert a stronghold over college operations.

A dilemma for academic administrators was the inability to clearly separate profession-related behavior from the activities of teaching and administration. Given that mid-level leaders at community colleges can and sometimes do have teaching duties, this separation is made more difficult. Dill (1984) concluded that: (1) informal influence and use of networks were important parts of academic administration; (2) academic management was highly intuitive, with less use of data to inform decision-making; and (3) the disciplinary background of the individual influenced the approach a manager took to practice. Community college managers of this era arose largely from the teaching ranks, which could mean K-12 experiences as well. An implication of this orientation to management was a reliance on structure and rules in guiding decision-making (Morgan, 2006).

In the 1960s, community colleges expanded rapidly with a new college opening its doors every two weeks. There were 405 public community colleges in 1960, but by 1980 this number had grown to 1,049 (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). This era expanded the practice of more state control over community colleges (Bender, 1975). Wattenbarger and Bender (1972) advocated for more interaction between individual colleges and state agencies to jointly address issues for community college education. The addition of state-controlling structures meant that local management issues had to take into consideration a check and balance from the overarching state-controlling agency. This level of power over local decision-making created sources of conflict when local goals and aspirations did not match state objectives (Bender, 1976; Morgan, 2006; Richardson, 1972).

Federal legislation also led to changes occurring on community college campuses. The Vocational Education Act of 1963 and the Higher Education Act of 1965 helped to expand the occupational mission of community colleges and opened access to a wider swathe of students. Increased size of operations meant that managers were pushed to address employee issues as well as state and federal requirements dictated by the new legislation. Managerial roles became more complex (Bender, 1975; Richardson, 1972).

The high rate of growth and expansion of community colleges in this timeframe also meant that campuses were involved in establishing facilities of operation. Bender (1977) suggested the evolution of three prototypes of community colleges: the traditional campus-oriented college, the community college without walls, and the contract community college. The evolution of multiple models of community college orientation underscores the attempts by community colleges to meet a wide variety of community needs. Yet, each of these models of operations involves a different focus for management.

The sheer growth of the community college enterprise meant that leaders were younger and had less experience than in the past (Vaughan, 2006). Often, public schools provided many of the founding leaders as community colleges continued to separate themselves from their public education roots. Emerging university programs began to focus attention on training needs for management and leadership (Young, 2002). The structures established under union contracts or due to new campus openings created frameworks of operation that often went unquestioned. In some cases, union contracts articulated broad faculty roles and levels of participation (Chandler & Julius, 1985), whereas in other instances leadership retained authority in most decision-making (Moore, 1981). How campus members made sense (Weick, 1995) of roles and the decision-making process and how leaders framed (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996) the context of campus plans set the stage for who held power and sway on campus (Foucault, 1982).

SHARED GOVERNANCE—1980s–1990s

The environment of higher education in the decades preceding the millennium was marked with resource constraints, shifting needs by employers of graduates, and less mobility of faculty (Twombly, 1995). The stage was set for a shift from top-down management to notions of shared governance. In this era, shared governance underscored the need for managers and faculty to work together to address institutional problems. Central to this conversation, however, is the use of language (Scott, 1992) and meaning ascribed to the concept of shared governance. On the one hand, shared governance involves investment in joint decision-making and representation of voices of staff and faculty in designing direction of the college (Kater & Levin, 2005). On the other hand, sharing in the creation of a vision and strategy for the college allows not only for the participation of campus members, but also for the sharing of authority (Baker & Associates, 1995; Roueche, 1995). According to Alfred and Carter (1993), successful colleges focused leadership on accountability, involvement, and integration over controlling management practices.

Two significant organizational theories became prominent during this period. Institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) points to the ways that institutions compete for resources, prestige, and legitimacy. Underlying this competition are pressures of conformity, referred to as coercive, normative, and mimetic isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). These pressures include institutional rules and regulations as well as cultural expectations leading to norms and aspirational goals to mimic more prestigious institutions. Resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salanick, 1978), in some contrast, focuses more narrowly on the power associated with control of resources, given that institutions such as community colleges are highly dependent upon resources, particularly public resources, for their functioning.

Shared governance occurred against a backdrop of unionization on campus, making the type of decision-making bounded by the ways in which the union contracts were implemented (Bender, 1975; Chandler & Julius, 1985). The coercive institutional pressures (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) created by roles dictated by union contracts influenced shared governance, with individual faculty losing agency in their roles as campus participants. Faculty passivity enabled authority for decision-making to be more firmly vested in chief executive officers, whether presidents or chancellors (Lucey, 2002). As well, external standards such as state control over funding the institutions contributed to a managerial culture (Levin, 2001).

The last decades of the 20th century were marked again with resource constraints in higher education. As a result, strategic planning strategies borrowed from business were now employed in college settings (Keller, 1983; Leslie & Fretwell, 1996). Myron (1983) advocated for a strategic planning approach for community colleges, noting the need to manage relationships within the community and state governance structures. The change here involved building relationships and framing the issues that were challenging community colleges.

The rhetoric of shared governance also bore witness to an increase in attention to faculty and administrator development (Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy, & Beach, 2006). The development of employees extends the human resource approach to management and aids in group participation in and acceptance of shared governance systems (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Yet, faculty efforts to participate in shared governance was not an assurance that they would be rewarded for their views; as well, the efficiency of the outcomes of shared governance was questioned (Gilmour, 1991).

COLLABORATION: 2000–PRESENT

As with previous eras, the current century finds community colleges facing a restrictive fiscal environment at the same time that demand for services is on the increase (Boggs, 2004). Shifts in student demographics, combined with a focus on access, push the boundaries of what can be accomplished. As a result, community colleges placed caps or restrictions on enrollment numbers (Boggs, 2004; Phillippe & Mullin, 2011); as well, colleges eliminated programs of study. Although these constraints on community colleges are reminiscent of previous periods of exigency (Twombly, 1995), the national pressures on community colleges to produce more graduates were considerable (Obama, 2009) and community colleges were viewed increasingly as inexpensive alternatives to expensive four-year institutions (Phillippe & Sullivan, 2006).

The multiple demands on community colleges required leaders to rely more on mid-level managers for support (Ebbers et al., 2010). Yet, Fugazzotto (2009) argues that middle-level managers are underutilized in helping institutions develop strategies for improvements. Others have noted that faculty have lost authority as a result of the empowering of managers through union contracts (Rhoades, 1998); and others have lamented the loss of control that community college faculty have over the educational direction of their institutions (Levin, 2007).

Discussions of distributed or collaborative leadership are rooted in assumptions of who holds power and controls resources, and thus decision-making processes. The rhetoric and promotion of collaborative forms of leadership (Hickman, 2010) create implications for managers regarding their views of roles and responsibilities within the institution. A central component of this form of leadership includes relationship building (Wood & Gray, 1991) and communication strategies (Kezar & Lester, 2009). The benefit of creating collaboration in institutions ensures that campus members make localized decisions and contribute to overall planning efforts. Sharing leadership requires trust and transparency of information (Harris, 1995). Research on three sites that use collective leadership (Denis, Lamothe, & Langley, 2001) showed that planned change occurred when the various levels of leadership were connected, but also noted that fragile leadership constellations made sustainability questionable.

Currently, issues facing managers include dealing with multiple demands and organizational oversight that require different managerial approaches. The shift to collaborative decision-making requires agreement on decision-making as well as the recrafting of traditional managerial roles to include different institutional responsibilities. However, the traditional reliance on leader-centered organizations impedes progress due to resistance for sharing authority, largely as a result of lack of trust in, and disregard for the capabilities of, followers (Yukl, 2006). Indeed, California's attempt in 1988 to legislate shared governance did not assure the creation of collegiality, rather the mandate highlighted the political nature of the process and showed that institutional location and culture influenced how governance operated (White, 1998).

CONCLUSIONS

As community colleges grew in both number and size over the last century, they became more complex organizations. Management practices, based upon theories-in-use, adapted to the complexity of the organization, as well as to environmental conditions, such as unionization and state coordination. Of particular note, the role of managers changed in line with both contemporary management practices and societal norms. For example, there was diminution of the role of presidents as authoritarian managers.

Currently, there are several significant pressures on the institution that affect the management of community colleges, most prominently due to state financing trends, which include budget constraints. The decline in funding, coupled with the historically low funding levels for community colleges (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007), serves as a context that requires a markedly different approach to management. Compared to previous periods of financial strain there are low levels of state and local support that have not improved or rebounded to previous levels and to the increased student and public demands for community college response.

Resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) points out that power emanates from the control of institutional resources. College tuition and state funding are the core resources for community colleges (Romano, in press). The lack of management control over these sources of funds creates a constrained context for operations and requires new thinking to move beyond traditional modes of managing. There is little evidence to suggest that funding from the state will increase; colleges' willingness or ability to increase tuition is limited; and faculty members are not poised to obtain external funding. Although there are calls for community colleges to become entrepreneurial (Roueche & Jones, 2005), the effects of these recommendations have yet to be investigated, and it is unclear the extent to which colleges have followed this path. There is recognition both among scholars and practitioners that the financial environment for community colleges is considerably different than it was in the 20th century.

Management now requires planning to address numerous external demands, including increasing college completion (*Achieving the Dream,* 2011; Virginia Higher Education Act, 2011), dealing with a changing faculty base (McCormack, 2008), and meeting compliance requirements emanating from state and federal policy-makers. As noted, management occurs within a particular institutional culture, making it critical for managers to have heightened competency to negotiate among competing players (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) and to communicate goals and objectives clearly (Fairhurst & Sarr, 1996).

A major area of management involves oversight of faculty work. The trend toward considering education as a commodity versus a public good (Marginson, 2007) alters how faculty look at their work on campus (Levin, 2007). This market-driven perspective gives less power and influence in internal decision-making processes to faculty. With this shift in power relationships, there are different demands on managers.

An approach to address the current conditions of fiscal constraint and altered power relationships builds on using more collaboration and focuses on organizational learning, all in a context of adaptive change. In this scenario, those in management take on leadership roles and greater responsibilities, but at the same time encourage collaboration. Thus, relationships become more central to operations (Beatty & Brew, 2004). Hickman (2010) posits that change in times of chaos and complexity requires collective leadership because this form of leadership creates the adaptive space required for change (Heifetz, 1994). Managers are linchpins in collective leadership as they sit at the nexus of positions between staff and leadership and move most freely between multiple levels of the organization.

Successful managers have the potential to become facilitators and relationship builders as organizations move toward more collaborative forms of operation, calling on the talents of the full range of employees within the college (Peterson, 1997). A movement to collaborative leadership (Denis et al., 2001; Hickman, 2010) shifts roles and expectations of managers and conceptions of management in community colleges. This form of adaptive change requires a break from past practice, including the questioning of the power basis behind organizational decision-making. The demands and complexity of community colleges require that practitioners ask different questions and organize institutions in new ways.

This approach of the questioning of underlying assumptions and structures should be employed by scholars as well. Research on community colleges is more limited than four-year colleges and universities and often takes the form of "show-and-tell" types of articles that showcase best practices on campus. Community college scholars need to focus on critiques of underlying causes that contribute to organizational outcomes and recognize the sources of power and control. Practitioners could then address these issues and achieve greater change.

Yet, the historical roots of bureaucratic management in community colleges create a strong legacy and entrenched perspective on operations. In spite of the rhetoric of changes in practice over time toward shared governance and collaboration, the notion of top-down management continues to maintain a strong foothold in community colleges. Change will occur when accepted practice is questioned, assumptions brought to light and deconstructed, and power shared in more levels of the organization. The changing of the guard of many long-serving college presidents and chief academic officers provides an opportunity to recast the management of community colleges (McNair, Duree, & Ebbers, 2011). On the one hand, an optimistic perspective is that new blood in the leadership and management ranks will bring about change. On the other hand, a look through the various management eras indicates that in spite of changes in management practices, power remains firmly rooted in top-level leaders. The current crisis in higher education, however, may provide just the motivation to break away from old management patterns, suggesting that there may indeed be a new era for community colleges.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What theories of power and politics apply to community college leadership?
2. What components of power behaviors contribute to organizational outcomes?
3. How is adaptive change related to theories of power?
4. In what ways has unionization affected community college management?

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