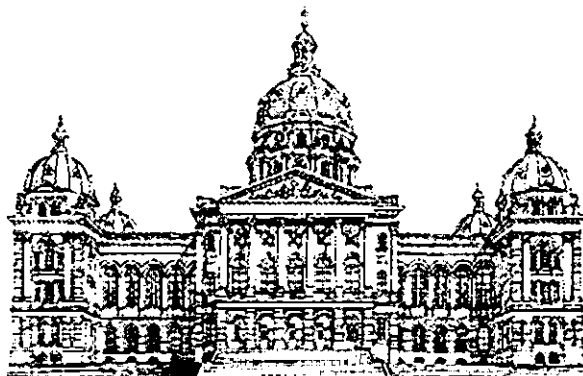


**FINAL REPORT**

**COMMUNITY COLLEGE GOVERNANCE  
SYSTEM STUDY COMMITTEE**



Presented to the  
**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**  
and the  
**IOWA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
January 2000

Prepared by the  
**LEGISLATIVE SERVICE BUREAU**



# FINAL REPORT

## Community College Governance System Study Committee

January 2000

### MEMBERS

Senator Jeff Angelo,  
Co-chairperson  
Senator Mike Connolly  
Senator John Kibbie  
Senator Kitty Rehberg  
Senator Maggie Tinsman

Representative Beverly Nelson-Forbes,  
Co-chairperson  
Representative Carmine Boal  
Representative Lance Horbach  
Representative Don Shoultz  
Representative Greg Stevens

### AUTHORIZATION AND CHARGE

The Legislative Council established the Community College Governance System Study Committee and authorized the Committee to meet for three days during the 1999 Legislative Interim. The Council's charge to the Committee read as follows:

This committee shall identify and study options for restructuring the community college governance system. The goal is to develop a plan for community colleges to operate more cooperatively, effectively, and efficiently as a state system while recognizing the strong local character of the community colleges. The committee shall review the following aspects of the current system: current governance system; ongoing collaborative efforts; relationships with local K-12 schools, other accredited postsecondary institutions, and the Department of Education; and changes necessary to enhance accountability. The committee may consult with the Office of the Governor, Iowa Association of Community College Trustees, Iowa Association of Community College Presidents, Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation of the Department of Education, and other parties interested in community college governance.

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### I. Administrative Information.

The Committee met on Wednesday, October 13, 1999, elected Senator Jeff Angelo and Representative Beverly Nelson-Forbes Co-chairpersons, and adopted rules. The Committee also met on November 3 and November 10. The Legislative Council approved an extension of the December 3 deadline for completion of deliberations. Members authorized the Co-chairpersons to develop a list of recommendations, which were mailed to Committee members for their consideration. Recommendations approved by the members on December 6, 1999, are attached to this report.

### II. October 13, 1999, Meeting.

A. **Presenters.** Presenters at the first meeting of the Committee included the following:

- Dr. Katherine Boswell, Director, Center of Community College Policy, Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colorado.
- Ted Stilwill, Director, Department of Education.
- Dr. Janice Friedel, Administrator, Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation, Department of Education.
- Dr. Evelyn Anderson, Chief of the Bureau of Community Colleges, Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation, Department of Education.
- Dr. Larry Ebbers, Associate Dean, College of Education, and Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Iowa State University.
- Frank Stork, Executive Director, State Board of Regents.

B. **Community College Governance Nationally.** Dr. Boswell addressed the Committee concerning national trends and observations about community colleges and their governance. She indicated that community college governance is a timely issue since nine states are currently examining the governance of their community college system. She suggested that legislators should consider offering incentives to K-16 institutions to encourage the institutions to partner in order to share the costs of providing vocational-technical programs. Her remarks encompassed the following topics: governance and coordination; state policy, culture, and tradition; statewide coordination functions; factors resulting in increased statewide coordination; fundamental rethinking of state functions; guidelines for states considering reorganization; lessons learned from exemplary community college systems; and state governance models. In conclusion, she noted the following:

- State-level coordinating or governing boards serve several functions but are of little value if the boards do not take community colleges seriously.
- State governance structures are not changed unless some perceived problem exists necessitating some modification.
- There is no single best governance structure for community colleges.

C. **State Board of Education Perspective.** Mr. Stilwill noted that Iowa has a strong, comprehensive community college system that serves a variety of functions, provides



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access to lowans through low cost and expedient locations, provides quality, and is very responsive to the educational needs of employers in the market. However, financial concerns are increasing. Most increases in community college revenue are the result of tuition increases. Enrollment is increasing faster than at four-year regents institutions, yet state dollars go primarily to the regents institutions. The state is also experiencing an increasing demand for workers with technical skills. An advantage of a local control community college system is that each individual college has the ability to start and develop new programs on their own that, if successful, can be used by the other colleges. Systems with increased statewide coordination may tend to blunt local initiatives by individual community colleges because of a more centralized approach to community college programs and curriculum.

**D. Accountability.** Dr. Anderson described the community college accreditation system that the Legislature directed the State Board of Education to establish in 1990. She observed that some institutions may consider using the Baldrige Award as an alternative to North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) accreditation and this might necessitate legislative action. The state accreditation process seeks to provide accountability for certain stated legislative goals of the community college, measures the college's progress, and tries to identify those areas where the state board can provide additional assistance and leadership.

**E. The Management Information System (MIS).** Dr. Friedel, Administrator of the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation at the Department of Education, provided an overview of the Department's development of an MIS for receipt of information from the 15 community colleges in the state. The MIS is an attempt to establish a standardized means of providing information about each community college to the Department regarding credit and noncredit student characteristics, financial and human resources, and program information. The hope is that the information will assist the Department in developing policy, conducting research and evaluation studies, and providing documentation and reporting on quality issues. It is also the intent of the bureau to engage community colleges for needs-driven strategic planning as part of the budget process.

**F. Collaboration and Leadership Efforts.** Dr. Ebbers discouraged the creation of a superboard overseeing all postsecondary education, placing community colleges under the purview of the Board of Regents, or any other change in Iowa's system of governing community colleges, because local control enhances the connection between the local boards, community colleges, and their communities. The current structure permits collaborative efforts amongst all community colleges and regents institutions, such as the Vision 2020 project. If the state wishes to tweak the system, it could create within the Department of Education the position of Director of Community Colleges and hire an expert in funding, curriculum, and human resources. The state could also establish a blue ribbon commission for community college planning.



**G. State Board of Regents Governance Model.** Mr. Stork described the duties and responsibilities of the State Board of Regents, emphasizing the accountability processes established by the board. The board, he stated, has shown no interest in governing the community colleges.

### III. November 3, 1999, Meeting.

**A. Presenters.** Presenters for the second meeting of the Committee included the following:

- Blayne Johnson, Northwest Iowa Community College Board Member and Chairperson of the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees.
- Dr. Gene Gardner, Executive Director, Iowa Association of Community College Trustees.
- Linda Upmeyer, North Iowa Area Community College Board Member and Immediate Past Chairperson of the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees.
- Wayne Newton, Chairperson, Kirkwood Community College; Past Chairperson of the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees; and Past Chairperson of the American Association of Community College Trustees.
- Dr. Robert Paxton, Chairperson, Iowa Association of Community College Presidents and President of Iowa Central Community College.
- Ted Stilwill, Director, Department of Education.
- John C. White, Community College Council and State Board of Education.
- Dr. Martin C. Jischke, President of Iowa State University and Chair of the Iowa Coordinating Council for Post-High School Education.

**B. Community College Trustees and Presidents.** Individuals representing Iowa's community college trustees and presidents and their professional organizations spoke to the Committee about the following:

- The efforts of the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees in facilitating collaborative efforts among community colleges and with local school districts.
- The history of community colleges in Iowa and an overview of the community college system.
- The ways in which the state's current community college governance system fulfills the statewide coordination functions identified by Dr. Boswell during the first meeting.
- The range of disparity in tuition.
- A funding system that prevents community colleges from raising any more from property tax now than 30 years ago, nearly nonexistent federal funding, and state funding that has not kept pace with the needs of the community colleges.



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- The concept of locally elected boards of trustees as the best method for maximizing accountability and providing for representation by a cross-section of the community.
- The advisability of maintaining the status quo with regard to Iowa's community college governance system.

Mr. Newton noted the difficulties of certifying community college budgets prior to the completion of the legislative appropriation process and recommended that the statutory budget deadline be pushed back to a date that follows the Legislature's appropriations process. Mr. Newton also suggested that the Legislature consider amending the Iowa Code to provide for appointment of the Director of Education by the State Board of Education, rather than by the Governor.

**C. Strengthening Linkages/Recommendations From the Department and State Board of Education.** Mr. Stilwill reviewed the history and impact of the Department's 1990 publication, "Strengthening Community College Linkages." Several recommendations were made as a result of the report and Mr. Stilwill detailed the progress of the Department and community colleges in meeting the recommendations identified in the report. He indicated that legislation may be needed to direct the Board of Education to do more strategic planning about community colleges to complement local community college planning. He noted that the balance between the liberal arts and vocational-technical programs in the state's comprehensive community college system positions the system well to answer the state's economic development needs.

Mr. White presented the state board's recommendations concerning community college governance, including a recommendation that Code responsibilities assigned to the board be modified to assign specific responsibility to the board for developing monitoring, and evaluating a statewide strategic planning process for Iowa's system of community colleges. To facilitate this strategic planning process, the board recognizes that the addition of statewide community college strategic planning responsibilities to the Department of Education and the board would necessitate a review of the Department's staffing needs to support these planning and operational functions. Community colleges would be accountable for following the strategic plan through the accreditation process.

**D. Iowa Coordinating Council for Post-High School Education.** Dr. Jischke described the work of the council, a voluntary, self-regulatory effort participated in by the regents universities, the independent colleges, and the community colleges. He discouraged any change in the council's voluntary nature. Instead, he recommended that the Legislature consider offering rewards or incentives to encourage postsecondary institutions to construct cooperative programs to meet the state's needs.

### IV. November 10, 1999, Meeting.

**A. Presenters.** Presenters for the third meeting of the Committee included the following:



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- Dr. Janice Friedel, Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation.
- Paige Piper/Bach, Legislative Analyst, Legislative Fiscal Bureau.
- Mary Shipman, Senior Legislative Analyst, Legislative Fiscal Bureau.
- Dr. Ernest Pascarella, Mary Louise Petersen Professor of Higher Education, College of Education, University of Iowa.

**B. The Budgetary Process and the Management Information System (MIS).** Dr. Friedel and Doren Hulet, a fiscal consultant in the division's Bureau of Community Colleges, presented a time line that described the monthly budget activities performed by the community colleges and the Department. Dr. Friedel indicated that the management information system (MIS) is an important component in assisting the Department in developing budget requests and said it should be fully implemented by January 2000.

Ms. Shipman and Mr. Piper-Bach presented an issue review of the MIS. The MIS was originally conceived as a centralized electronic database that could be used for decision making relative to community college management, planning, and evaluation, but according to Ms. Shipman, the Legislative Fiscal Bureau has concerns about the current implementation of the system, and identified alternatives the General Assembly may consider to enhance the implementation of the MIS system.

**C. Community College Effects on Students.** Dr. Pascarella summarized the findings in his report, "Community College Effects on Students: A Review of Recent Evidence."

### **V. Recommendations.**

During the final meeting the members agreed to authorize the Co-chairpersons to develop a list of recommendations, which upon completion were mailed to Committee members for their consideration. By December 6 the Committee approved the following recommendations:

The Community College Governance System Study Committee recommends that the General Assembly do the following:

**A.** Direct the Community College Council to develop a statewide strategic plan for Iowa's community colleges. A working group of stakeholders shall be named to assist the council in formulating the plan. The plan shall be submitted to the State Board of Education for approval. Upon approval and adoption by rule of the statewide strategic plan, the state board shall recommend to the General Assembly a system of incentives and penalties for issuance to community colleges based upon the level of responsiveness displayed by a given community college. The plan shall be forwarded to the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Education for review by January 15, 2001, and shall be implemented by the Department of Education by July 1, 2001. Amendments to the plan shall be submitted to the State Board of Education for approval and adoption by rule and to the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Education for review prior to implementation.

**B.** Direct the Department of Education to do the following:



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1. Provide a comparison of the data collected by the Basic Educational Data Survey for K-12 schools to the data being collected by the management information system for community colleges to the chairpersons and ranking members of the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Education by January 15, 2000.
2. Submit an update on the progress toward implementation of the management information system to the chairpersons and ranking members of the House and Senate standing education committees and the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Education by January 15, 2000. The information included in the update shall include, but shall not be limited to, information on how much has been appropriated and expended for purposes of the system, the amount needed to complete the system, the hardware and software involved, and a description of the information the complete system is capable of providing.
3. Provide, from the most recent fiscal year, data collected by the management information service to the House and Senate standing education committees and the Joint Appropriations Subcommittee on Education by December 1 of each year.
4. Set data criteria uniformly for submission by the community colleges via the management information system.
5. Develop and implement a certified annual report to be submitted by the community colleges. The data shall be submitted in a uniform and consistent manner and by a specific date.
6. Reconcile, with the assistance of the community colleges, audited financial statements with the financial data submitted to the Department. The data shall be broken down by fund.

C. Consider offering incentives to K-16 institutions to encourage the institutions to partner in order to share the costs of providing vocational-technical programs.

D. Push statutory budgetary deadlines for community colleges back to a date that follows the final decision making of the General Assembly's appropriations process.

### **VI. Materials on File With the Legislative Service Bureau.**

The following materials were distributed during the Committee's meetings and a copy of each is on file with the Legislative Service Bureau:

- A. Background memorandum submitted by the Legislative Service Bureau.
- B. "Community College Effects on Students: A Review of Recent Evidence," by Dr. Pascarella.





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- C. Draft copy of a Legislative Fiscal Bureau issue review of the community college management information system.
- D. Handout providing a background of the Board of Regents and its institutions.
- E. Letter dated September 13, 1999, from Governor Vilsack regarding the Accelerated Career Education Program (ACE) Act, S.F. 465, 1999 Session.
- F. Memorandum to the Legislative Task Force by Dr. Paxton.
- G. Outline of presentation by Ms. Boswell.
- H. Outline of presentation, with pamphlets concerning various programs for community college leaders and a packet of information concerning Vision 2020, distributed by Dr. Ebbers.
- I. State Department of Education materials, including the following:
  - 1. "Community College Linkages Report - January 1990," submitted by Mr. Stilwill, Director, Iowa Department of Education.
  - 2. Document detailing the available FTE positions within the Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation.
  - 3. "Budget Development and Submission Process of Iowa's Community Colleges," submitted by Dr. Friedel.
  - 4. "Iowa Community Colleges - Tuition and Fees, 1999-2000 Academic Year," prepared by the Department, dated August 1999.
  - 5. Handouts providing information on the statutory role of the Department in regards to community colleges, community college accreditation, and the development of the management information system.
  - 6. Iowa State Board of Education Position Statement on Community College Governance.
  - 7. Legislative Subcommittee Hearing/Community College Governance System, submitted by Mr. White, member of the Iowa State Board of Education.
  - 8. Responses to the recommendations included in the "Strengthening Iowa Coordinating Council for Post-High School Education - Bylaws. "
- J. Testimony given to the interim committee by Mr. Newton.

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