

**Global Themes in VET –  
Observations from TDA  
delegation to USA and Canada**

**2008**

**TAFE Directors Australia  
mission to USA and Canada,  
May 2008**

**Occasional Paper Quarter Three 2008**

# ASSY OF AUSTRALIA



Welcome to the 2nd Occasional Paper from TAFE Directors Australia. This quarter we include a series of essays and thought pieces as a result of TDA's mission to Canada and the USA in May 2008.

10 member institutes took part in the mission that was centred around key events including the Association of Canadian Community College Annual Conference and a series of bilateral VET forums between the Australian delegation and colleagues in Vancouver, Los Angeles and Washington.

The goals of the mission were to :

- To position TAFE as a preferred partner for Canadian and USA community colleges
- To benchmark the performance and model of the community college system and its relevance to the Australian context (with a focus on governance, funding, student support, educational delivery strategies, industry alignment, regional and rural delivery)
- To develop strategic partnerships with key institutions with a view to two way exchange and cooperation
- Ensure sustainable and long term partnerships through the cooperation of TAFE Directors Australia and sister organisations, Association of Canadian Community Colleges and American Association of Community Colleges
- To profile the Australian VET system as a world class partner in global skilling

The papers are from mission members and are focused around their own interest areas and themes including

- > Leadership
- > Sustainability
- > International Marketing
- > Research and Innovation
- > Governance
- > Regional and remote delivery
- > Supporting indigenous learners
- > Workforce and Economic Development
- > Mobility (staff and students)

A number of our new found colleagues from both the USA and Canada have also contributed; we thank The College Board, Association of American Community Colleges, Association of Canadian Community Colleges, Association of Career and Technical Education and California Colleges for International Education for their contributions.



MARTIN RIORDAN

Chief Executive  
TAFE Directors Australia

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# Global Themes in VET – Observations from TDA delegation to USA and Canada

**Reports from  
Australian  
Participants**

## Future Directions for TAFE: can international benchmarking improve RTO performance by broadening our experiential and institutional gene pool?



Kevin Harris, CEO Northern Sydney Institute of TAFE

*The greatest thing in this world is not so much where we are, but in which direction we are moving.*

*Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr  
(1841–1935)*

International benchmarking has the potential to improve the performance of Australian vocational education and training institutions by bringing new ideas, directions and techniques into our approach to vocational education in Australia, providing we are comparing like with like.

Benchmarking is an approach to improving performance by observing and learning from others who are doing things well. There are potential gains for Australian VET providers in engaging in international benchmarking, however to do this productively is challenging. Benchmarking of institutions engaged in complex activities and in a complex environment is not only challenging but very expensive. The questions of whom to benchmark with and what to benchmark on is only part of the conundrum to address.

Australia's approach to driving up the performance of VET institutions is almost totally reliant on an ideal that maximising competition is the one way of improving provider performance. Most would agree that creating a competitive market is essential but many would also agree that it is not the silver bullet for ensuring our VET system will optimally deliver economic growth.

Demand should drive supply and those that have the gold should set the rules. Government and "industry" alike rightfully expect their dollars to optimally return what they require. The previous Australian Government established this fundamental approach and the current Australian Government is enhancing the same approach, i.e. more than more of the same. Given this, there is now little point in benchmarking our national system. Or is there? If we rely only on local market forces and a market design aimed at driving performance, the spectre of the depleted gene pool may loom high on a not too distant horizon.

## Benchmark with whom and benchmark what?

Benchmarking through paper based, on-line secondary research and through visiting overseas institutions can give us a favourable impression of our own approach and performance, particularly if we choose to do so with an institution that operates in an environment quite different to ours. But this may be all we gain – an impression. Exploring the environment in which prospective benchmarking partners operate is a critical step in the process. We need to consider the expectations of their stakeholders, funding regimes, market and governance systems before we rush to learn how they do things.

Benchmarking – as a means to improve the performance of institutions – requires careful selection of what and who to benchmark against. Exploring for innovative approaches for example, in analysing how vocational education and training institutions approach e-learning, can provide productive outcomes. However, how a very well funded university in the USA implements and offers e-programs based on a bells and whistles fully integrated virtual learning environment may offer little in learning to a TAFE Institute in Australia.

Searching for how to do things better offshore, *without matching like drivers and environments*, will result in mediocrity at best and (more likely) costly, unfortunate outcomes. If benchmarking is to help take us to ever greater heights of educational achievement, then we need to choose appropriate climbing partners. There's little sense in being roped to someone on a different journey who isn't coming from, or going to, the same place we're going.

In this sense, Australia may stand to gain most by benchmarking its performance against institutions

in Canada or Finland, or at least against institutions in a Euro-centred setting. We can stand to learn a lot by looking offshore provided we are looking to compare institution to institution in a like environment. "Like" is best defined in terms of what stakeholders are expecting. As a result, I would not go to the USA or Japan to benchmark my Institute in terms of approach and outcomes. USA VET institutions are focussed on pathways to higher education as their first mandate and are not expected to operate in a competitive market place.

The notion of "demand driven" (market force led) education, with funding being provided for or led by that demand, simply does not happen in the US. The US system is funded at a community level. If they don't have a "commercial" system and there is no direct connection between how it is funded – an enterprise requirement – then this fundamental difference in approach means it wouldn't be appropriate for us to benchmark ourselves against the American system institutions. Theirs is not a competency based system in the same way we define that term.

There would be no point benchmarking Australian VET providers against US institutions because the US does not ask its institutions to go into the marketplace to bid for work and to deliver services. It's a case of oranges and apples – despite the apparent similarities of our democratic systems and market economics, the way each country funds and grows its vocational education is significantly different enough that the approach, systems and even the way performance is measured can't be readily compared or, more importantly, our notions of why the environments that fostered the results can't be validly compared.

We have to carefully consider what we are trying to achieve. What are we benchmarking? Are we trying to improve the Australian system or are we already on the right path?

I think we have to put to rest the notion that if the Australian system is bloody good, then it can be attributed primarily, if not solely, to the notion of commercialisation. That market forces will carry us to the best of all possible brave new worlds. It would be as easy to say that the best possible future will always come from trimming new courses from an ever-smaller bolt of “educational resource cloth” as it is to say that the same course of action will drive towards a commercialisation-driven mediocrity if no-one is funding quality and excellence.

One way of continuing to know if our focus is right is by looking at what we can learn from offshore, as long as we are looking to compare institutions in like environments. The Australian market and community is diverse and complex. Australian VET institutions operate in a competitive market that is designed (in many ways) by government but is mainly determined by the high expectations of the individual and the enterprise. In this environment, for example, providing personalised services is not an option and therefore the drive for Australian VET providers to offer e-services is absolute.

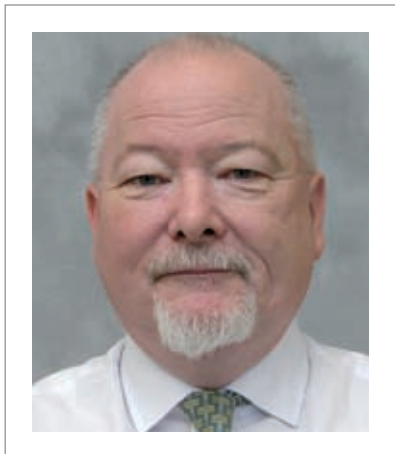
There is great temptation to eagerly study and implement offshore e-learning solutions and systems. But that’s not benchmarking. Training and assessment e-solutions are necessarily different from educational e-systems. Both require content creation and management, a “learning management system”, plus storage and communication tools. Both will do best to ensure that the wonderful collaboration enabler of WEB 2.0 is realised.

E-training and assessment solutions and e-education systems may both be derived using open source solutions such as SAKAI and MOODLE. However, Australian e-training and assessment solutions must provide for evidence-based competency outcomes. USA community college e-education solutions are driven by the mandate for providing the pathway to higher education. Exploring how a community college in Arizona does its e-business may bring little productive outcome for a VET provider in Melbourne.

Even by the logic of market forces, Australia deserves to test its direction, delivery systems and outcomes for vocational education in an international setting. Benchmarking comparable institutions operating in environments with similar expectations from stakeholders provides real opportunities to learn from each other’s experience and broaden our experiential and institutional gene pool. And that’s worth doing, because it will take us to places we hadn’t thought of being if we’d done all the planning alone.

The alternative to benchmarking is a kind of educational arrogance — a belief either that we know enough and are doing enough not to need any reference to others. Or, as I have said, a blind confidence (or at least a one-eyed assurance) that market forces alone represent a pure panacea to all the ills of vocational training — that the market “knows” where we are going, or at least the preferred way of getting there.

Vocational education deserves to thrive in the future, not just survive. For that, we need access to the widest gene pool of experience and ways to confidently assess that our chosen direction is, indeed, the best of all possible futures.



Adrian Marron, Executive Director  
Adelaide North Institute of TAFE  
South Australia

For the best part of the last 18 months I have been deeply involved in the construction, and now implementation, of a Skills Strategy for South Australia's Future, which has been endorsed by the SA cabinet.

In this involvement we in SA have grappled with a suite of questions associated with the central topic of this round table. We have also recognised the obvious, that although we have a national brand and national operating frameworks, our systems are state based, operate within state policy frameworks and thus have a quite different structure and governance.

This was brought home when considering the Skills for Victoria paper against our own SA Skills Strategy. We seemed to be covering much of the same territory and saying similar things. The difference was the starting point of each system and thus the end point promises to be different.

Recent inputs into a turbulent climate include the Higher Education review with its provocations in relation to VET, the Victorian Skills paper, the Commonwealth's view of contestability and competition allied to draft proposals for a National Market Design.

For some of us in TAFE, the questions and dilemmas surrounding competition, contestability and structure have been a focus for more than 12 years.

In 1996 Kaye Schofield, Des Fooks and Robin Ryan were proposing a new framework to enable TAFE to become a full competitor in the **market** and, at the same time, balance its roles and responsibilities as the major public provider of VET. Essentially

this dilemma is still front and centre in the TAFE experience in Australia.

While many of the challenges of that period remain unresolved, very few observers would argue that it, VET, has become less competitive in the ensuing period. What we have learned in the 12 years, is that markets are an important element of the TAFE environment and that they are multiple, multi-layered and complex.

Governments have described contestability as a key mechanism by which to reform public services and widen choice. They have argued that public services are prone to **“producer capture”**; essentially this where the goals and activity of an organisation reflect the interests and prejudices of its employees and that if this changed to a customer or consumer focus then workers will see their own interests served by serving the customer. Competition will, its proponents argue, avoid “producer capture” and drive cost reduction, service improvement and innovation.

For competition to occur there needs to be markets. The markets that we encounter, especially where they relate to contestable public funds are not however a simple construct. (Most TAFE Institutes are well skilled in competing in commercial markets.) The economic philosophy of the markets centres on the notion of economic efficiency being the prerequisite for improving society. Economic efficiency is achieved through the resource allocation decisions being made by unfettered markets in which competition prevails.

In line with market theory a parallel theme of this approach is to produce this factor of production in the most efficient way. This will ensure that resources are used efficiently where the forces of supply and demand determine they are needed

The assumption that markets will efficiently allocate resources within the VET sector needs to be put in a context. Markets theoretically left unfettered and characterised by a large number of buyers and sellers, no barriers to entry or exit and perfect knowledge, where no one buyer or seller is able to influence by their actions, price in the markets, will produce an equilibrium price and quantity of VET through the interaction of supply and demand.

In VET, however, the markets are complex and connected. In addition there is the irony of these markets being promoted by government with the deregulation of sellers but with regulation by government of price and quality. For VET there are clear limitations in the application of market concepts. These include the nature of demand for this service and who pays.

The notions of Demand in these contestable public funding markets particular are complex. The tensions between the demand of the individual, the employer and of the State have been around for some time but are nevertheless still real. There is also the complexity of the State’s role as a supplier and a demand agent simultaneously.

In the Australian context it is the taxpayer – through the actions and decisions of government – that bear the largest proportion of the direct cost. Students pay, in most cases, a nominal fee and industry, generally, wears the indirect cost of time off the job. Do the benefits of the purchase flow in relation to the investment sources and where is the weighting of market power? For some dimensions of the training market in Australia it is apparent that industry has achieved a level of demand power that is not matched by direct investment this distorts the marketplace.

The notion of markets in education generally is further complicated in that there are multiple outputs of learning which are not easily disaggregated. The community benefits from an educated citizenry in ways not always visible in market signals. Markets are a way of distributing scarce resources in education but they do not guarantee the national objectives or ensure quality required for future growth of employment. The self interest on which market behaviour is based may not necessarily be the best arbiter of resource allocation and investment in a VET system that is taking a longer view.

Some observers note that market-driven reforms, due to the continued involvement of the State, typically do not represent a true market. In recent economic commentary in the UK and Europe there is much discussion about quasi-markets that is, a **public sector** institutional structure that is designed to reap the **efficiency** gains of free markets without losing the **equity** benefits of traditional systems of public administration and financing. Since quasi-markets blur important roles, motivations, incentives that are present in “pure” market dynamics we ought to be realistic in our aspirations for them.

For us in VET in the 21st Century the omens are clear that greater contestability and greater competition are going to play a greater role in the world of TAFE. Therefore our challenge is to recognise the limitations and behave accordingly but also to accept the opportunities and to do so mindful of a continuing role as a public provider. There will be opportunities because the market gives as well as receives.

## Challenges in Competition and Contestability

It seems to me that that an element that distinguishes public sector organisations is a need to be responsive to the views and aspirations of the public (in their capacity as citizens and not just customers or users of individual services). TAFE Institutes have to become organisations which balance the demands of being public education providers with the imperative of being sustainable business organisations in their own right, which are able to operate in diverse competitive “markets”.

This is a difficult and demanding challenge and – to use a football analogy – one where it is essential not to take your eye off the ball, even for a second. Institutes must be able to respond to, and have knowledge of, different markets and the segments of these, they need to be able to differentiate their products and services and maintain an educational and functional integrity.

To be able to succeed in this, it is likely to require some radical changes to how we organise ourselves, how we deliver our service, how we control and develop our products and how we are able to promote market and differentiate ourselves in the marketplaces we operate in. We will face some tough challenges to be able to do this effectively and profitably.

This will bring in to sharp relief the question currently abroad with the Bradley review and likely to be a feature of the impending OECD comparative report, of where governance and policy comes from. Should VET become a Commonwealth responsibility? And if it does should it be differentiated from Higher Education?

In my view we are on the road to National governance, it is only a question of how long that road is.

There are many paradoxes in this convergence of political agendas and public provision and entrepreneurial activity, markets are not the only influencer in the public provision, but markets and our engagement with them are going to be extremely important to us and our mission. We will need to be clear about our competitive advantage, how to expand it, how to best sustain and develop that advantage and consider how we will get effective balance between the resources available (from government and the markets), our vehicles (TAFE) and the mission and aspirations that are given to us.



**Coralie Morrissey, Executive Director Trades and Innovation Victoria University**

*If time and tide wait for no-one, then it is certainly true that the time and tide of research and innovation, and their importance to vocational learning, is certainly critical.*

In our sector of education we try to integrate vocational and higher education with equal value, so there is a more seamless transition between sectors. Sadly, this does not seem to happen in North America. There was not the same collaboration and recognition of programs between community colleges, universities and across States. Recognition of learning was thru individual applications and determined by each educational centre. One college identified that transferability/portability of results or courses were non-existent on an automatic basis as each student had to provide a transcript of their achievements and this was addressed individually. Some colleges did identify that they had some agreements with local colleges and universities that made the transition a little easier, although not formalised.

Similarities existed with community colleges and TAFE colleges and private training providers in way of competitiveness. Pressure was constant to do something different, keeping up with changes was always a challenge and technology costs money! Differences amounted to the level of support provided, student services, currency and relevancy of technology, innovativeness, research centres, internationalisation and industry support - nothing different to the challenges facing our own vocational training providers in Australia.

Identifying specific areas of research within the North American training areas was difficult. The sites visited were primarily community colleges and there was minimal research identified within these colleges. The consensus seemed that this was university hallowed ground. A representative of one of the largest colleges in British Columbia identified that of the eleven universities located in BC four were research universities and seven were teaching universities. They then identified eleven colleges

and three institutes and outlined the differences between them and what each of them could and could not deliver. A very different model to Australia, taking into account universities, dual-sector organisations, TAFE colleges and private RTO's.

From a research perspective we did meet representatives from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) who are the primary advocacy organisation for America's community colleges and promote five strategic action areas – recognition and advocacy for community colleges; student access, learning, and success; community college leadership development; economic and workforce development; and global and intercultural education. Through grant funding the AACC, supported by the National Science Foundation, created an Advanced Technological Education (ATE) program which endeavours to strengthen the skills of technicians, whose work has been identified as vitally important to the nation's prosperity and security. These ATE Centres work with two-year colleges, universities, secondary schools, business and industry, and government agencies to design and carry out model workforce development initiatives.

Discussions with key staff members identified that these competitive grants not only supported innovative technician education programs, but supported professional development for the educators. Over 800 grants have been awarded since its inception and primarily focussed on improvement of particular technical education programs, curriculum or educational materials development, professional development for educators, or preparation of new secondary school teachers. Recent additions to the program now include targeted research areas. These grants showed distinct similarities between our own Government funded grants in Australia.

From the sites visited what I did find was that Australia seemed much more innovative, especially in the trades areas, with support and commitment of State and Federal governments. Here in Australia, we are working alongside industry to customise training programs to suit industry, so the skills base and technical and technological competencies are relevant to, and can find a market in, local industry. In the US and Canada generally I did not find that same base at all. There were a few exceptions.

The California Community Colleges Economic and Workforce Development Program is cited as one of the tools to increase innovation and opportunities within the system. The program is made up of 10 State-wide initiatives that provide a variety of flexible solutions for business development and workforce training needs by promoting education and enhancing employee skills.

1 program, 10 initiatives, and delivered over 100 centres

- Advanced transportation technologies
- Biotechnologies
- Business and workforce performance improvement
- Environmental technologies
- Health care
- Multimedia and entertainment
- Workplace learning resources
- Applied competition (manufacturing) technologies
- International trade
- Small business development

There are some similarities with this initiative that are similar to Centres of Excellence, Skill Centres/

Institutes, and Technical Trade Centres that have been set up in some TAFE Colleges across Australia.

From the viewpoint of technology, my observation was that in Australia we have far more advanced technology as an integral part of what we do in our teaching areas. As an example, we went to a community college in Santa Monica in California which clearly had very strong links to the automotive industry. However, I soon observed that the equipment was not the latest in the field. For example, I did not see examples of autotronic training systems, training simulators such as computer-assisted instruction equipment and programs to suit a more flexible learning system.

So, while the college was feted for its excellent training, it was not as up-to-the-minute as I would have anticipated seeing in American colleges. On the other hand the same college was in the process of raising funds for a new comprehensive training centre that was innovative in that it formed a unique partnership between the automotive industry, a two-year community college and a four-year private university. This college, with the help of auto industry partners, has launched a campaign to raise US\$ 4.8 million from the private sector to assist in the renovation and expansion of the current auto technology complex. This was additional to the new 10,000 sq ft Automotive Partners building. The college has a nonprofit charitable corporation as a Foundation, enabling gifts to be tax deductible to the full extent as determined by the US IRS. Donations were being accepted as sponsorship, partnerships, manufacturer logos, naming rights, equipment or just plain old cash.

From a research and innovation perspective what I did find in Los Angeles was a better understanding of “green” issues and this was demonstrated through their innovative Green College Initiative which was

being rolled out over nine Community Colleges. Three of these colleges have already achieved self-generation of power requirements with the remaining six to be self-sustaining by 2010. They have taken a strong stand on introducing green issues and highlighting to staff, students and industry the importance of embedding within their learning environments.

Overall, I would have to say that my impression was that the tenor of the educational delivery at Colleges I visited in North America were very similar to our secondary schools in Australia, rather than being pitched at a post-secondary level. I certainly saw no evidence of dual-sector training facilities.

In 2007 The Alliance of Sector Councils (TASC) commissioned consultants to complete research related to describing the current relationships between Canadian sector councils and universities, as well as research strategies to enhance such relationships. Sector Councils in Canada are very similar to our Industry Skills Councils in Australia.

The goal of the research was to develop a plan for how they could establish a successful relationship for the purpose of:

- Working towards a university curriculum that reflects industry needs
- Raising awareness among students about university programs relevant to career prospects in various sectors and
- Facilitating research projects to be jointly undertaken by universities and sector councils.

A key finding of the research is that nearly all councils expressed an interest in developing university-sector council partnerships in the future, but currently less than 50% of sector councils have had a relationship with universities in some

capacity. It was a key outcome that sector councils and universities relationships must be developed on an individual level and that there was a strong opportunity to form valuable partnerships. The research identified that relationships between sector councils and universities will be further developed to help to address the growing skills shortages in many sectors of the Canadian economy. This will be done through relationships that help universities to develop curriculum, research and learning outcomes that are reflective of employer and labour market needs.

There are some comparisons with vocational training providers in Australia, although I believe many are further down the track than the above example. My own employer, Victoria University, has a commitment to all students studying in courses of twelve month duration and above that 25% of their learning will be in the workforce or community. It aims to provide a context for student learning which enhances the learning experience, improves employment and career outcomes, provides students with opportunities to contribute to their communities and prepares students to be future ready. This is enhanced through the introduction of Cluster Coordinating Committees comprising Higher Education, Vocational Education and Further Education representatives to provide a total picture for student learning. Furthermore the University is also developing new relationships with industry and community organisations who will have a unique opportunity to contribute their opinions and knowledge to shaping the future of students, and their prospective employers.

Some new facilities in Canada were quoted as state of the art to support the training requirements to address potential skill shortages areas. We visited one of these new facilities but I found it to be a very

basic college, primarily aimed at the equivalent of our secondary school students. New buildings don't make for innovative delivery. I simply did not see the level of innovation in way of design of buildings, delivery methodologies or equipment – it was just a “normal community training college”. The facility catered primarily for automotive, engineering and construction industries. Considering that the construction industry in Canada has identified an ageing workforce and the potential for skill shortages as issues, there seemed to be an opportunity at this site to work closer with industry partners.

Organisations within Canada (Construction Sector Council and the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship) recently hosted a workshop with the construction industry to discuss issues related to recognising credentials and experience of foreign trained workers. The workshop looked at issues on how to connect foreign trained workers in to successful careers in the construction industry. They have released a six point Strategy Action Plan 2007–2008 to achieve their objectives in maximising the labour pool - assessment and recognition tools; information/education/awareness prior to entry; cultural awareness – industry and individual; training tools; communication; and clearinghouse and coordination. These strategies bear similarities to our own strategies for Skilled Migration Assessment in Australia's skill shortage trade areas.

Australia has much to do, but it currently has a lot to offer. I did not see the connection between research and educational innovation in Canada and the US – not at any venue we visited. Now this may be because I had a weather eye out for those innovations and developments which are central to industry-standard training and competency

in the trades areas (in particular manufacturing, engineering and building and construction), but innovation is innovation and if you don't have it installed and working for you, then it's easy to spot when it's missing.

In Canada we did receive a report in one of our discussions and briefings on "Expanding Opportunities – for postsecondary career and technical education and preparing tomorrow's workforce". This report identified their nation as facing a deficit in skilled workers and the need to get additional people in and through post-secondary education and training. It identified as vital to career success the need to obtain advanced skills including workplace skills, academic knowledge and continuous lifelong learning. Research had also identified for them pressures from increased global competition and an ageing workforce population (retiring baby boomers) that would increase significantly a growing shortage of skilled workers.

That educational institutions in Canada are interacting with industry bodies shows that they, like us, are aware of the implications of the changing profile of their workforce and what planning, preparation and retraining may be involved. Equally, they are concerned with ensuring that the skill sets they are providing to Canadian workers remain relevant to the emerging needs of Canadian industry.

We are well aware that in various parts of Australia we have a severe skills shortage of specific trades areas as well as a labour market shortage. Many industries are planning for the fact that our retiring baby boomers will also leave a severe gap in content expertise in many industries. Therefore similarities do exist between the North American and Australian key skilled workforce issues.

New initiatives across Australia are currently underway to address these issues. I'm sure we wouldn't pretend to have all the answers, but this visit to the USA and Canada pointed out that we are certainly offering some world-class exemplars in research and innovative education here in Australia.

## Leadership and Management Development Observations from TDA's North America



Angela Hutson, CEO East Gippsland Institute of TAFE

### Introduction

Informal discussions with a number of Presidents and Vice Presidents and ACCC/AACC personnel during the recent TDA Mission revealed that:

- A key focus of leadership and management development is around higher level qualifications – usually through a university
- There is a strong focus on mentoring arrangements as a way of addressing succession planning issues
- International partnerships for leadership and management development tend to be with UK/Europe
- There are a number of Community Colleges who have bilateral relationships with Australian TAFE Institutes, but the focus does not seem to be specifically on leadership and management.

### Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC)

The College Presidents' Network met at the ACCC Conference and regional reports were tabled and spoken to. The key issues for each of the regions to greater or lesser extent were:

- What's Government up to?
- Regional trends
- Highlights from individual colleges
- New initiatives
- Hot issues e.g. shortage of skilled trades and technology expertise, infrastructure, energy and mining boom, international student market
- Leadership changes and leadership challenges eg succession planning, remuneration, leadership competencies, rapidly changing economic, social and global environment.

The mission and the mandate of the ACCC place a clear priority on the leadership support and development role of the association.

In the 2006 to 2010 Strategic Directions under the specific focus of providing support services to members, it states: 'continue to maintain its strong commitment to assist member institutions with respect to leadership development and succession planning. ...'

There are a number of Institutes, academies and symposia which focus on the leadership development mandate specifically. In addition, there are capacity development symposia where members share knowledge among themselves and partner organisations.

The ACCC Annual Awards of Excellence and distinguished service are viewed as a core element in

recognising and showcasing leadership excellence in conjunction with the ACCC Annual Conference.

On occasion the ACCC collaborates with senior managers across the system as they undertake college/institute specific research as part of their graduate programs or their own interests.

Current leadership development activities include:

- National Executive Leadership Institute (NELI) for potential Presidents – a five day residential offered every second summer.
- NELI for potential Vice Presidents (VP NELI) – a five day residential offered every year in July.
- Presidents' Academy – a five day residential offered every second year in July alternated with a Vice Presidents Academy.
- A symposium for Board Chairs and Vice Chairs held every two years.
- A Vice Presidents' network which meets twice yearly, once in conjunction with symposia of interest to wider membership. The VP network has also completed a VP generic competency profile.
- NELI updaters.

There used to be regional Management Development Institutes in much of the country, but these have disappeared over time. Some regions have specialised professional development activities for mid level managers and other staff.

## American Association of Community Colleges (AACCC)

- The AACCC runs a President Academy similar to the ACCC.
- At the AACCC Annual Conference they have a *New CEO Institute*.

- They also run a five day residential Future Leaders Institute entitled 'Get Ready to Soar' aimed at Vice Presidents, Deans and Directors.
- The *League for Innovation in the Community College* in cooperation with AACCC runs Executive Leadership Institute (ELI) typically in December. The program is similar in nature to the ACCC NELI for potential Presidents.
- The Chairs Academy out of the Maricopa Community College (Texas) is international in scope and has developed into a series of leadership development programs targeted at mixed group of Deans, Directors, VPs and other middle level managers. The programs involve residential sessions at the beginning and end of the programs with mentoring, reflective practice and journaling. This program has been run through Victoria University (Vic) for a number of years for Victorian TAFE staff.

## Australian Context

- Leadership and management development in the main is left to individual TAFE Institutes to plan, customise, implement and evaluate.
- A number of TAFE Institutes have specific arrangements with universities to deliver Masters Programs in Leadership and/or Education to groups of staff.
- Many institutes support their staff on an individual basis to undertake post graduate qualifications.
- The largely autonomous, and often competitive, nature of the Australian TAFE system means that approaches to leadership and management development are seen as being a competitive edge and a core

competence for an individual institute. However there are examples of cooperation with State and Territory jurisdiction.

- The TAFE Development Centre (Vic) has a focus on leadership and management development as part of its Charter to develop the Victorian TAFE workforce. Again each TAFE institute approaches and customises this program in many different ways.
- DA has established a relationship with the LH Martin Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Management at The University of Melbourne.
- The LH Martin Institute was established in August 2007 and provides a sweet of tailored short and award programs focused on institutional management and leadership in Australia and New Zealand. One of its key objectives is 'to train the next generation of leaders of Australia's higher education and VET institutions in the strategic management of their institutions'<sup>1</sup>.
- There is a smaller informal Program Advisory Committee being established to give more 'grounded' and strategic advice to the institute. The Institute is rethinking the role of Program Advisory Committee and now making use of project specific working parties. There is currently a project being undertaken regarding leadership capabilities for Australian VET (in partnership with ACER).

## Potential Opportunities

- TDA and ACCC and AACC to progress international leadership development

<sup>1</sup> Marie Persson, Deputy Director General, NSW Department of Education and Training is the TAFE representative on this Board

opportunities including mentoring, workshops, exchange and study tours.

- TDA and LH Martin Institute to work with ACCC and AACC to globalise leadership and management development which can include the New Zealand connection with LH Martin.

Others . . . for discussion.

Leadership, and preserving corporate knowledge and skills, deserves an approach that takes a long view about the investments being made and how they will pay off within the vocational education system, even if they don't have a direct payoff within one institution. If it is a given that the resources we

manage will always be finite, then we deserve to encourage, train and retain the best leadership skills we can marshal to manage those challenges.

There is, therefore, immense potential for us to benefit from leadership and leadership development that transcends national boundaries. The issues that affect us, including tracking what government is up to, aging workforce issues and leadership development, are common to all of us whether we're in New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the UK or USA. At present, we continue to tackle the situation as nations individually and tend to look within our own resources and our own immediate horizons. Perhaps the time has come to find a more enduring way to deal with our common problems – all we need is to develop the framework to facilitate it.



### Norman Baker the General Manager for VET Delivery at West Coast TAFE

*Australia's trade in educational services has evolved from seminal policy directions as outlined in the Colombo Plan in 1950, which recommended that the Australian Government sponsor overseas students to study in Australia.*

Sponsorship numbers steadily increased after the endorsement of the Colombo Plan, until a review was undertaken in 1984 by the Goldring Committee. While this committee recommended that educational aid programs for developing countries be continued, a second review undertaken by the Jackson Committee (1984) recommended that Australia should develop a free market to offer educational services at the level of individual institutions. Since this time, history shows a steady decline in government funded scholarships and a significant growth in full fee paying students, recruited by individual institutions.

As a result of these early policy directions by the Federal government, Australian institutions have been very entrepreneurial in attracting international student enrolments. In fact, Australia has recently eclipsed the United States and Britain as the destination of choice among fee paying foreign students (Cohen 2005), reflected by significant increases in enrolments and commencements. While this growth has occurred across all sectors of education, it has been particularly strong in the Vocational Education & Training (VET) sector. In fact, recent figures for 2006 (Australian Education International 2007) indicate VET was the fastest growing sector for international students in Australia, representing an increase of 26% on 2005.

Australian TAFE institutes, however, face increasing rivalry from global competitors. The following discourse represents the author's observations and opinions regarding the strategies recently employed by Canada to increase their level of participation as a leading international education service provider.

### **The Canadian Approach**

On a recent (May 2008) TDA funded study tour to Canada, a Trade Commissioner of the International

Education and Youth Division of the Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) Ministry presented figures that showed that Canada is falling behind other countries in terms of its ability to attract foreign students. Education in Canada is a provincial and/or territorial responsibility, and as a result individual Colleges, Cégeps (post-secondary educational institutions exclusive to the province of Quebec) and Institutes of Technology vary in mandate, management and governance models, and policy frameworks. Indeed the Director stated that in her view, the absence of a Federal Education Ministry severely curtailed the Canadian system in strategically responding to international competition pressures.

In light of this void, the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) seeks to provide leadership at the national level by influencing policy and programs, with a specific focus on international education. Their objectives, on behalf of their members are:

- To market the national system of Colleges, Technical Institutes and Cégeps nationally and internationally, as a comprehensive and integrated training agent to business, industry, labour and governments.
- To identify mechanisms and resources that can assist members in gaining national and international contracts.
- To support, where appropriate, the development of consortia to bid on and then deliver national and international contracts. One example of this is ACCC's management of a \$12 million per annum program for college partnerships with Canada's aid partners.

Simultaneous to the ACCC providing a collaborative and strategic role at the national level, Citizenship

and Immigration Canada (CIC) is removing many obstacles to permanent resident status in order to attract students and skilled workers to the country. The CIC has involved Community Colleges as part of the discussion on the issue of skilled migration, skills shortages and the resources boom across the country.

The Department's response has come in the form of a relaxation of visas and work requirements for foreign students. The policy context affecting these changes include the need to shape immigration policy to meet current and emerging labour shortages and the need to attract and retain those likely to succeed in Canada.

A new class of immigration – the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) targets those who come to work or study in Canada and grants them permanent residency without having to leave the country. This will be tied to labour market shortages.

Changes are also being made to the Post-Graduate Work Permit Program (PGWPP). This now provides an open work permit with no restrictions on the type of employment. New graduates will no longer have to work in an area directly related to their studies. In addition, new graduates will not have to obtain a job offer prior to a work permit being offered. Work permits have now been extended up to three years and they can work anywhere across the country (both of these points have been significant barriers in the past).

These new initiatives (similar to Australia's Graduate Skilled Migration visa) make Canada a more appealing market for international students who are considering permanent residency.

The author's perception of these changes is that due to the significant labour shortages (predicted to get worse), Canadian immigration is responding

by 'opening up the doors' and then removing internal barriers to encourage immigrants to settle permanently in Canada.

The third and perhaps most important plank to this co-ordinated approach to attracting international students by Canada is work currently underway by DFAIT. In consultation with an international marketing agency have been engaged in a year long brand development program and are poised to launch a new brand representing Canadian training services.

After significant research, the EDU-Canada initiative was launched with four key pillars:

- Coordinate the promotion of educational services via the Canadian missions abroad.
- Facilitate relations between Provinces, NGOs, institutes and Canadian missions abroad.
- Coordinate the promotion of Canadian education at signature events.
- Coordinate a consistent brand and strategy.

The launch of the EDU-Canada brand is imminent. The new logo, style sheets and governance arrangements about how and where this can be used are being finalised. There is agreement from Federal parties and Provinces that the brand will be limited to accredited institutions only, thus insuring a degree of quality. The goals of this national branding strategy are threefold:

1. To provide immediate impact/recognition of EDU-Canada.
2. To provide differentiation from competitors.
3. To highlight the strengths of the Canadian educational system and Canada as a destination.

The Trade Commissioner was open about the expected medium term benefits of this re-branding approach; to provide a coordinated approach to attracting overseas students and thus replace Australia as the number one destination of choice by foreign students.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to describe the approach taken by Canada in implementing its strategy of becoming a lead player in the globally competitive field of the provision of educational services. The Association of Canadian Community Colleges has been taking a significant and increasing lead role at a national level in the provision of leadership in relation to international education. The Department of Citizenship & Immigration have been supporting this leadership by simultaneously encouraging potential overseas students to consider Canada as a study destination by removing barriers to entry and ongoing residency. Finally, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade have provided a national branding strategy that hopes to effectively advertise these changes to potential students.

Working collaboratively, this three-pronged strategy may well pose a significant threat to Australian institutes in years to come.

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## Reflections on first nation training in Canada



Lidia Rozlapa, Managing Director  
Great Southern TAFE, WA

In visiting Canada we recognised the similarities of issues facing Canada and the VET sector in Australia. These included the ageing workforce, skills and people shortages in key areas, lack of direct funding at a local level, a mining boom and the challenges of meeting the needs of industry in a rapidly changing global economy.

But there were also many strong lessons to learn and things to compare for Aboriginal or First Nation people.

The Association of Canadian Community Colleges Conference in Prince George gave us the greatest insight into the system of training for Aboriginal, or First Nation People, of British Columbia. The Aboriginal population was made up of Inuit, Matie and First Nation People.

The opening addresses of the conference was very moving. It was given by his Excellency, the Governor General of Canada, Steven Point, himself an Indian man and accomplished lawyer who spoke about past history. He was a deeply honourable man and spoke in a respectful way about those that have passed on. He used the words “in remembrance”, similar to the way that our Aboriginal people in Australia acknowledge the past and present traditional owners of the land on which we meet.

He spoke of the need for the First Nation people to have an equal voice in the National Affairs of Canada and that there is a need for a First Nation Leader to emerge from the communities of the First Nation People. Aboriginal Leadership in our own context is also at the forefront of the movement since the acknowledgement of the stolen generation.

He encouraged the conference to look forward. He spoke of the 1996 Indian Act and the return of land and territories. This in itself brought many challenges

to his people. Following this acknowledgement the traditional values are being returned and passed on to the children. Community Colleges are helping people to move back to understand and embrace their traditional past. As a comparison, the Australian Aboriginal people are also moving toward acknowledgement of the traditional values with training in Aboriginal Languages and Culture.

In Canada, educational difficulties were identified for Aboriginal students. In Sask, 67% of the Aboriginal population have less than a level three literacy level, while only 40% of the non-aboriginal population fall below this level. Level 3 is graded as being able to read well enough to cope with everyday ready tasks and to complete high school requirements.

The population breakdown and dynamic was also interesting. Try three comparative figure of the Aboriginal population. In Canada 3%; in Saskatchewan 14% and in Saskatoon 9%. Compared to the rest of the Canadian population, the Aboriginal population is relatively young and is increasing in numbers more rapidly. In Saskatchewan, approximately 60% of Aboriginal people who live off-reserve were under 25 years of age; 30% of non-aboriginal people in Sask are under 25 years of age. [Cultural Diversity. The Brown Baby-Boom – quote (Dr Lillian Eva (Quan) Dyck, PhD 2007 SK Aboriginal Literacy Network Inc).]

By 2017, it is estimated approximately 21% of the population in Saskatchewan will be Aboriginal, by 2045, 50% of the Saskatchewan population will be Aboriginal. It would be interesting to do a comparative analysis here in Australia for some of our larger cities.

It is estimated that it will take 26 years for First Nations people to catch up to non-Aboriginals in terms of literacy levels. I can only surmise that this is mirrored in our own nation.

I visited the College of New Caledonia in Prince George and spoke to Marlene Erickson the First National Education Support Services Officer, who outlined to me that all Aboriginal programs at this College were integrating the cultural significance of the First Nation People. However, there still remain some anomalies with regard to targeted employment of First Nation People. These barriers seemed to have been removed in our Public Sector employees by the introduction of the 50D positions. Marlene will be presenting at the World Indigenous Peoples' Conference in December in Melbourne and I would encourage all readers to attend her session.

Supporting indigenous learners and providing training to this important part of the Canadian community is a high priority for many colleges across the country. I spoke to Randall Morris, the President of Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies about this. This is their 32nd year of operation and he was very honoured to be selected as the 8th President. He is the President of Canada's largest First Nation controlled and governed technical institute.

Their issues are very similar to ours with low literacy and numeracy skills; social welfare issues and health issues in their Aboriginal people, plus social disconnection, through years of neglect. While our own Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, had said "sorry" in February, it was moving to visit Canada at a time when the Prime Minister of Canada, Stephen Harper; had made a "statement of apology to former students of Indian residential schools" on June 11, 2008.

In times of skills shortages in boom times the issue of preparing "job ready" Aboriginal workforce is the current focus of the Aboriginal Human Resource Council of Canada. There, 9 in 10 Aboriginal people

in Canada would like to relearn their Aboriginal Language (1996 Canada Census).

The context in the United States is so different to Australia that comparisons were very difficult to make aside from global issues of baby boomers, fuel shortages, third world poverty and consequential outcomes from the have and have not divide. Data collection at the college and subsequently at the provincial level is sporadic and superficial. There is a fear of sharing data between the colleges and benchmarking at all levels is extremely limited

Workplace based training is limited to commercial activity and commercial training is very limited. There appeared to be no mechanism to recognise prior learning as a valid pathway for the acquisition of qualifications.

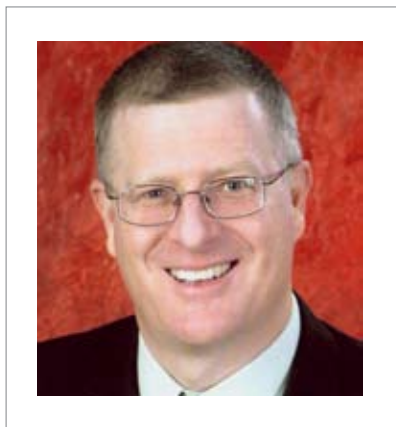
There appeared to be no standardised Quality Assurance framework for British Columbia.

I was told that as high as 95% of all incarcerations in Canada were of the First Nation People. So, of particular interest, was a discussion with two staff from the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAT) as they discussed the success of a program to train officers accessing a degree in Correctional Studies; this training strongly emphasised training in a culturally sensitive way.

They used an Aboriginal Student Retention Co-ordinator (as well as specialised trainers); who played a vital role in assisting staff to help identify student issues and implement strategies to access resources to help support students and empower the student to achieve academic success. Entering the programme, the students underwent a transition to requirements and expectations of the program/ curriculum, instructors, sponsoring agencies and the Indian Institution of Technology requirements.

This holistic training included: adequate housing, childcare, transportation, funding for tuition, books, living expenses, family issues, conflicting employment problems, learning challenges, disabilities, language barriers and urban versus rural people. When all the above were dealt with, the group understood what “Life Long Learning” was about. The course took three years to complete. They celebrated their achievements at the Aboriginal Activity Centre gathering place for ALL students with: Relay races; crafts; Soup and Bannock lunches, Sweats, Smudging, Pipe Ceremonies and Culture Camps and they celebrated their small achievements with Talking Circles, Full Moon Ceremonies, Feasts, Honour Ceremony, Aboriginal Awareness Days, Elder Services, Life Skills Coaching.

My observations were that both Australia and Canada are grappling with similar issues. Both Nations have now acknowledged injustices to their Indigenous people and are attempting to provide appropriate culturally sensitive training to their First Nation and Aboriginal people.



Ian Hall, Partner  
PriceWaterhouseCoopers

*The provision of vocational education services to students in rural and regional areas is becoming an increasing challenge for Community colleges in the US and Canada as students face higher travel costs, reduced funding and are demanding improved flexibility in the delivery of courses.*

Unlike Australia, both the US and Canada suffer from a lack of national co-ordination when it comes to implementing flexible education delivery. While more innovative institutions are embracing new delivery media such as the use of MP3 and video download, lecture streaming and online examinations, others are falling behind.

Community colleges must adapt to the new world for three principle reasons:

- There is an increasing level of competition from commercial online institutions,
- Student demographics and increasing commuting costs necessitate flexible delivery,
- Colleges have a community service obligation to provide an adequate standard of education to rural and regional students.

Vocational education in the US and Canada must modernise its delivery methods if it is to bridge the gap between rural and city students.

### **Increased competition and popularity of new delivery modes**

Institutions that fail to embrace flexible modes of delivery are facing declining student numbers due to the increasing popularity of commercial e-learning and online universities, such as the University of Phoenix (now claiming its position as the 16th-largest university in the world).

Many community colleges are therefore complementing their offerings with online courses to ward off competition from exclusively e-learning schools. Traditional colleges now have

to compete with more modern initiatives such as reciprocal distance learning arrangements between institutions. An example of such an initiative is the Virtual College of Texas (VCT). VCT allows students of any of the state's 51 community colleges to attend classes at any other college in the state or at the four Texas State Technical Colleges, paying a minor contribution to VCT in addition to local tuition fees.

Internet-based courses are the most prominent form of distance learning in community college vocational education and training programs, both in the United States and Canada. Other forms of distance learning delivery, such as correspondence courses conducted through regular mail, telecourses or radio broadcasts are being replaced by internet-based courses. Community colleges teach an average of 36 credit and 67 non credit vocational courses over the internet, which represents only one fifth of the total number of courses offered (Johnson et al, 2004).

Forms of distance education built on the internet are considered to be more promising, as they provide an interactive experience as well as "any time, any place" learning (Askov et al., 2003). More innovative institutions are embracing new, highly flexible delivery media such as MP3 players, PDAs and Smart Phones, which allow video downloading and lecture streaming. Some community colleges have been working with the US military and have developed technology to deliver entire course content onto a PDA to deployed personnel (DANTE, 2005).

While some colleges are creating their own online programs, many smaller institutions are partnering with external providers such as commercial vendors or other colleges and universities to deliver distance education courses (Johnson et al., 2004).

In some instances, community colleges partner with universities to allow students to progress to a university degree while remaining at the college campus and studying remotely. This type of flexible delivery allows community colleges to increase their service proposition and cater to the needs of a larger number of students.

## **Student demographics and the rising costs of attending colleges**

The demographics of students attending community colleges support the need for a flexible post-secondary educational delivery system, with facilities for remote delivery. Typically, community college students in the United States are 34 years old, which is significantly older than their counterparts attending four-year degree universities. They are employed, married and often have dependants. Fifty-three percent of students are female, and 81 percent are employed at the time of enrolment (DETC, 2007). This creates a need for flexibility of course delivery, both in terms of time and place (Johnson et al, 2004).

Remote delivery is also gaining significant popularity among students facing rising commuting expenses. At Bristol Community College in Fall River, Massachusetts, online enrolments increased by 114 percent over the previous year for the summer semester of 2007. Half the students interviewed also cited petrol costs or other transportation obstacles as a reason for signing up to study over the internet (Dillon, 2008). Overall, a flexible delivery model is much better suited to the needs of the modern student than conventional delivery.

## Vocational institutions have a community service obligation to deliver training to regional areas

Irrespective of any commercial argument for flexible delivery methods, vocational education institutions in the US have a social obligation to provide an adequate standard of education and training to rural communities.

Community colleges need to facilitate flexible modes of delivery to ensure that isolated communities are not at a major disadvantage to their urban counterparts. The demand for vocational education is increasing as many rural and small communities are in the process of evolving from a resource-based to a knowledge-based economy (Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2008).

However, many rural areas do not have the necessary infrastructure to deliver instruction electronically, including high-speed digital networks.

According to Stephen Katsinas, a professor at the University of Alabama, "rural America is where the digital divide is most dramatic" (Dillon, 2008).

Another problem is the limited selection of courses and programs offered for distance learning. Most colleges still only offer a fraction of their courses over the internet, thereby considerably limiting choices for regional students (Dillon, 2008). Only higher-income rural students are likely to have the financial resources to afford and maintain a personal vehicle to commute to a main community college campus to attend courses that are not offered remotely (CEPC, 2006). Furthermore, programs often lack relevance to local labour market or economic development (Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges

and Universities, 2008). Community colleges therefore need to increase the scope of their remote delivery practices to cater adequately to the needs of rural and regional students and their situations. Flexible delivery modes will also undoubtedly help in overcoming the financial problem in servicing low volume regional areas.

Both the US and Canada suffer from a lack of national co-ordination in implementing the flexible delivery of education. All American states and Canadian provinces have taken *individual approaches* to increase the availability of distance education to remote areas through online platforms. Government efforts in this regard, however, are more prominent in Canada than in the United States.

Despite the absence of a central policy body (Canada is the only OECD country that does not have a Ministry of Education), local governments in Canada have taken initiatives to provide online access to students in small and rural communities (McGreal and Anderson, 2007). For example, the *elearnnetwork.ca*, established by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in 2007, works in partnership with 18 community colleges and 14 universities to provide access to learning and training opportunities through distance education across Eastern and Southern Ontario. Nevertheless, only a nationally co-ordinated initiative will achieve the required standard of flexible delivery, in variety, quality and equal access, to all rural and regional areas.

## Conclusion

Overall, the current trends in vocational education and training are compelling community colleges in the United States and Canada to adopt flexible delivery modes, both in terms of time, price and

place. With advances in information technology and increased technological fluency, distance education is becoming more abundant and location independent, thereby allowing students to shop for education that meet their needs.

In response, community colleges are expanding their remote delivery offerings. However, the vocational education and training sector must develop teaching strategies and course management systems that specifically seek to overcome current problems and inadequacies in flexible delivery models. However, without a strategy that is nationally co-ordinated and funded, it is unlikely that the US and Canada will be able to provide adequate levels of flexible learning to meet the demands of rural and regional students.

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Rebecca Biazos,  
TAFE Directors Australia

One of the underlying goals of the mission to the USA and Canada was not only to identify common elements for benchmarking across our college systems, but certainly – from a TDA perspective – to investigate the future role of mobility programs, targeted at students, teachers and administrators in all our systems.

If we desire to be a world class VET system we need to maintain an understanding of the global approaches for VET. The best way to do this is through people-to-people links and exchanges.

In 2007 I completed the first Queensland VET sector Audit of Outward Mobility. The findings confirmed that while the Australian VET sector is increasingly training for a global workforce in global industries we do not encourage our students and teachers to undertake an international experience during their studies.

In fact, we have continued to experience phenomenal growth in our inbound student enrolments and have built international education as Australia's third largest export contributing over \$12.5 billion to the Australian economy, all the while remaining stagnant on our commitment to engage our domestic students and practitioners in an international work or study experience.

The Australian VET sector is developing a growing interest in mobility. In 2007, Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations funded the first VET Outward Mobility pilot programs that assisted 5 Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to develop mobility models. In 2008, two VET sector applications were successful in gaining support through the Australia EU Mobility Program. For 2009, the sector eagerly anticipates news from DEEWR about future and continuing funding to support the sector.

Both Canada and the USA appear to place a much higher premium on the value and importance of mobility for their community college students. Community College students from the USA and Canada have been coming to Australia for many years, undertaking a semester abroad within our universities.

New research out of the USA indicates that college-bound students demonstrate high levels of global awareness, and significant proportions anticipate international learning experiences in college.

The report released in 2008 entitled *College-Bound Students Interests in Study Abroad and Other International Learning Activities* noted that the experiences they seek is expansive, including

not only study abroad, but also internships, cultural immersion, and fluency in a foreign language.

Some key findings from the current research demonstrate the magnitude and scope of current student interest in international learning:

- Fifty-five percent indicated that they are certain or fairly certain they will participate in study abroad, with another 26 percent indicating a strong desire to study abroad.
- Thirty-five percent plan an international internship. Likewise, 37 percent responded that they were very interested in acquiring career-related work experience in another country.

The study findings, along with mounting evidence from many other sources, suggest that institutions that do not encourage and expand international learning experiences may find themselves increasingly at a disadvantage in enrolling the current generation of students and satisfying their strong desires for a truly global college education.

## **Mobility benefits – students, institutions, industry, economies**

Despite a growing recognition that mobility and exchange can contribute to the diversity and global outlook of the country, strengthen bilateral relationships and help sustain Australia's inbound student market, research suggests that Australian Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions have a low take up of outward student mobility programs.

**Study abroad offers so many life-changing and enduring academic, career, intercultural, personal and social benefits. Few other experiences in life net such a positive and sustainable impact. (Dwyer, Peters, EIS)**

With increased international trade and globalisation, Australia will need to continue to develop skills to effectively operate in the global economy and be internationally competitive. Any program of mobility opens up opportunities for Australian students and VET practitioners to gain global perspectives on industry trends, operations, helping the Australian labour market keep pace with global industry and ensure our international competitiveness.

Improved productivity through well educated globally focused and motivated individuals can also be an outcome of OM. In the 2007 Audit I argued that, particularly for VET students the mobility activity does not need to occur within the confines of the national course, but rather a post study experience of work or internship generates the

same outcomes, a more globally aware (technically and culturally) future Australian worker. In fact, the work of the Queensland Overseas Foundation that has now supported over 100 Queenslanders to undertake an international work experience post qualification is testament to this <[www.qof.org](http://www.qof.org)>.

**“Testing your skills in a new and challenging environment while seeing the world is an investment you just can’t put a dollar sign on.”**  
**Ryan Maslem QOF scholarship recipient 2004**

### **What might this look like?**

The traditional model is to start with individual intuition to institution agreements. Whilst these agreement are important, the Queensland Audit report suggested a focus on whole of industry approach as a means to develop more sustainable programs and to overcome some of the issues that providers may experience in resourcing and supporting a program. Industry-to-industry programs could be developed in a range of areas including tourism and hospitality, event management, health, logistics and business. The industry led model not only enables colleges and institutes to remove some of the resource and administration requirements it also enables a critical mass in a specific industry area that would drive more industry support and involvement as well.

Other existing models include the Global Education Network <<http://globaledunetwork.org/>> that has grown to include colleges from Australia, USA, Canada and Singapore. The mission of the Global Education Network is to provide skills-oriented industry-related international education and training

in selected areas by:

- enhancing the educational capacity of members
- increasing opportunities for students
- recognising member credentials
- creating joint credentials, and
- having global education network credentials recognised by industry.

The Global Education Network provides innovative, international learning opportunities for students enabling graduates to gain experience and ultimately employment on any continent of the world.

Funding is, and will continue to be, one of the biggest barriers (perceived or real) to mobility. I argue that it is no longer a “nice thing” to do but a necessity to remain competitive on the global stage. Although establishing programs may take some seed funding the returns will outstrip investment. A combination of industry associations, intuitions and individuals may be required to fund the program. Unlike the Columbo Plan, which aimed to train specialists in a wide range of nation-building specialities, this is not a hand-up to less developed nations but a recognition of comparable competencies between developed nations.

### **Why focus on Canada and USA?**

One of the greatest barriers to mobility has been identified as language. The USA and Canada do not present this issue. Moreover, the economies of Canada, USA and Australia are all dealing with common challenges of skills and labour shortages. The recent visit to both markets illustrated the commitment and highly professionalised teams

within the respective national associations (Association of Canadian Community Colleges <<http://www.accc.ca>> and America Association of Community Colleges <[www.aacc.nche.edu](http://www.aacc.nche.edu)>). TDA believes that the leadership and mentoring of the program would sit well within the respective capabilities and strategic goals of these organisations.

These are all supported by changes in visa conditions including the reciprocal working holiday (and work and holiday) programs now available with Australia and USA. Indeed, although outside of the scope of this paper, our colleagues and colleges in the United Kingdom may also be willing partners, through the new FE College grouping of TVET UK <<http://www.tvetuk.org>>.

With a model that transcends and supports institutional to institutional and people to people exchanges through a multilateral coordinated and industry led approach we will collectively:

- Produce more globally aware graduates, teachers and administrators
- Contribute to a more sustainable international education program in Australia (not just one way)
- Build world class and globally connected institutions
- Ensure a base of people-to-people links and commitment for continued partnership

A great education has always been the right passport to solid employment and a great future. What we're talking about here is literally allowing that education passport, or gaining it, to be transportable – and the resulting credentials recognised – across national boundaries.

# Global Themes in VET – Observations from TDA delegation to USA and Canada

**Reports from USA  
and Canadian  
Supporters**

## Expanding Opportunities: Postsecondary Career and Technical Education and Preparing Tomorrow's Workforce



The Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE) is America's largest not-for-profit education association dedicated to advancing education that prepares youth and adults for successful careers. The Association provides advocacy, public awareness and access to information, professional development and tools that enable members to be successful and effective leaders. Founded in 1926, ACTE has more than 29,000 members including teachers, counsellors and administrators at the middle school, high school and postsecondary levels.

The United States is facing a deficit of skilled workers and has a critical need to get additional people into, and through, postsecondary education and training. Obtaining advanced skills — which include workplace skills, academic knowledge and continuous lifelong learning — has become vital to career success for US workers.

Meanwhile, pressures resulting from increased global competition and retiring baby boomers signal a growing shortage of skilled workers, workers necessary to sustain our economy. Despite trends that increase the demand for a more educated citizenry, we are falling short. Education and training is provided by a series of disconnected parts of society with little incentive to work collaboratively. The result is too few people successfully completing postsecondary education.

ACTE recognises that America must create a system that enables people to access and complete postsecondary education and training, throughout their lives, that will enable them to secure high-skill, high-wage or high-demand jobs in current or emerging career fields. In order to increase successful transitions across the education continuum and world of work, every student (youth and adult) must understand how their learning connects with a career path and the possibilities for additional postsecondary education and training.

With nearly a third of all US students in for-credit postsecondary education enrolled in career and technical education (CTE) programs, and as many as 40 million adults engaged in short-term postsecondary occupational training, CTE is a valuable partner in moving reform efforts forward at the postsecondary level by providing leadership in pedagogy as well as systems building and economic development.

## What is Postsecondary Career and Technical Education?

*A Test of Leadership*, the report from the US Department of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education, recognises the current reality, "We acknowledge that not everyone needs to go to college. But everyone needs a postsecondary education." Postsecondary education comes in many forms, and what has traditionally been described as CTE is on the front lines of preparing a skilled workforce at the postsecondary level.

Postsecondary CTE is an intricate enterprise that does not fit neatly into a simple description. Ideally, it is seamlessly integrated coursework and credentials after high school oriented to workplace success. Yet it is delivered by a wide range of providers offering an array of credentials and coursework for a diverse group of learners.

Types of publicly supported institutions that offer postsecondary CTE can include community colleges, technical colleges, universities, adult career centers, and adult education centers. The private sector also provides a significant amount of postsecondary education and training through business, industry associations, unions, and proprietary schools. Both public and private institutions offer a wide range of postsecondary training opportunities, including credit and noncredit courses offered in programs of varying length. Opportunities include associate degree programs (terminal or transfer), bachelor's degree programs, institutional certificate programs, industry skill certifications, and noncredit course work.

Students served by postsecondary CTE come with exceptionally diverse backgrounds, experiences and needs. The complex mix of students poses a challenge for systemic improvement – they are

young and old; well-educated and poorly prepared; and tend to have greater financial need.

## Growing Skill Deficit

Employment projections in the US paint a stark picture. While there is job growth in the low-skilled service sectors, many of the newest jobs are in occupations that have postsecondary skill requirements. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that of projected openings in 2014, "24 of the 30 fastest growing occupations will be among those for which the most significant source of postsecondary education and training is a CTE award or an academic degree". While some skilled jobs are shifting overseas, projections show a growth in a variety of occupations and there is a clear need for more skilled workers.

However, for every 100 US students starting ninth grade, only 68 will graduate from high school, 39 will enter postsecondary education and training, 26 will still be enrolled in college for their sophomore year and only 18 will graduate from college within six years. Similar numbers hold true for adults; only approximately 28 percent of people who earn a GED progress to postsecondary education. America faces a growing shortage of skilled workers if we do not get more students enrolled in – and successfully completing – postsecondary education.

The impending deficit of well-trained workers calls policymakers and educators to develop systemic educational responses to ensure people are getting the skills needed to be successful in the workplace and that we are training the workforce we need for our future. It is critical that all of the different sectors of education begin functioning as systems of lifelong learning in order to increase the number of people who continually earn postsecondary credentials

for workplace success and stay up-to-date in their knowledge and skills.

Increasing successful transitions between postsecondary education and the workplace also requires education to forge deeper connections with and understanding of those that they serve. Since one of the primary goals of education is preparing people for the workforce, more significant shifts must be made by postsecondary education to meet the needs of students and employers.

**There is no single, simple solution to these challenges. Developing comprehensive systems that increase participation and completion of workforce education and training requires a multifaceted and concerted effort at both the policy and practice level to drive increased attainment.**

## Recommendations

What follows is a set of interconnected recommendations developed by the Association for Career and Technical Education promoting an integrated system of education that enables people to access and complete postsecondary education and training throughout their lives and to secure high-skill, high-wage or high-demand jobs in current or emerging career fields.

### 1. Establish postsecondary preparation and expectations for all.

Postsecondary coursework must be made more rigorous and relevant. We must ensure that all students exiting high school receive some level of

postsecondary education and training, and that adults receive additional education and training to ensure continued career advancement and success.

### 2. Develop education systems that integrate all levels.

Seamless P–16 education systems that align all education and training sectors are needed to foster postsecondary success. All states should enact policies that promote the integration of secondary, postsecondary and adult education; workforce development; economic development; and welfare into a more coherent system focused on educational advancement, wage progression and a higher standard of living for all.

### 3. Develop curriculum and instructional offerings that link to careers, foster lifelong learning, and encourage completion.

Concrete linkages must be developed between middle and high school, postsecondary education, and work. Lifelong postsecondary learning must be a part of this cycle. CTE and its applied learning and academic and technical integration can serve as the connection point between and across these sectors.

### 4. Ensure portability and transferability of credits and skills attained.

Students' progress toward and completion of postsecondary credentials would be improved with clear, consistent policies that ensure full transfer and articulation of postsecondary learning. There would also be tremendous benefit if states adopted systems to assess, measure and document the educational progress of learners in ways that are clear and meaningful to students as well as employers.

### **5. Enhance student advising and academic and life supports.**

The availability of effective student supports can play a critical role in enrollment, persistence and completion of postsecondary credentials. States and postsecondary institutions must implement inventive solutions to provide students with academic, career and financial aid guidance, as well as explore opportunities to enhance funding for student services.

### **6. Increase financial support for low-income students.**

As the price of postsecondary education has escalated, the purchasing power of financial aid to low-income students has decreased, and this must be reversed. Financial aid policies should be expanded and revised to provide more support for part-time and working students, including those taking short-term basic skills and workforce development programs, in order to help move these students through the education continuum.

### **7. Pilot innovative funding solutions.**

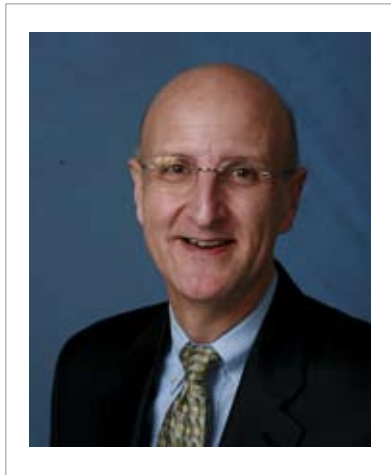
Public postsecondary providers are expected to fulfill a number of educational missions linked to separate funding streams, such as academic coursework, workforce education and training, distance education and research. States must engage in thoughtful consideration of how postsecondary finance policy can be improved to bridge these diverse programs.

— adult and youth alike — succeed in such an education system in the US is crucial. It is important to recognise that CTE plays an important role in systems thinking and can lead the way in building smooth transitions for students. CTE, at both the secondary and postsecondary levels, is all about creating success for the next step in a student's life (either in the workplace or through additional education and training), and must play a critical role in expanding postsecondary opportunities for youth and adults.

## **Conclusion**

There is a growing national interest in thinking about education as a system that flows from preschool through to the completion of a higher education credential. Finding solutions that help more students

## A New Educational Imperative for a New Global Century



Ronald A. Williams and  
Stephen J. Handel, The College  
Board, USA

*Today our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant, and to face the challenge of change.*

*Martin Luther King, 1967*

We live in a time of extraordinary ferment — one might even say turmoil. The narrative of the 21st Century presents us with two central challenges: can our educational systems prepare our students for a new world that is more competitive economically and more complex politically? Can we effectively educate all students for this new world, advancing a universalist access agenda that is as daunting as it is essential?

These challenges will require the collective efforts of governments, businesses, philanthropies, communities, and individuals. What follows is a strategic direction to engage the shared energies of all in pursuit of this new educational imperative.

At the core of the United States' concern about its world position is the extent to which its educational system, as currently constructed, will address the demands of the new global century. A seemingly endless flurry of reports attests to the startling improvement of student outcomes throughout the EU as well as China and India, in contrast to the relatively flat performance of students in the USA. Even in higher education — where the United States still possesses an advantage — there is concern over a “BA degree gap.” Currently, several groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in higher education have significantly lower degree attainment rates. Moreover, there is a continuing need for remedial education. Conservative estimates indicate that 40 percent of all college entrants have to complete at least one remedial course.

To create schools that are authentic representations of this country's egalitarian ideals, we must prepare many more students for postsecondary success — strengthening K-12 and higher education in transformative ways. Our current educational pathways find too many students without a map, often leaving the road altogether. Recent reports indicate that as many as three out of ten high school students depart high school without completing a diploma. Moreover, while the United States can be proud of the number of students who enter higher education, many never complete a certificate or degree.

One recent report predicts that the USA will need to raise degree completion rates by as much as 40 percent to meet our future workforce needs — needs that will be realised only if we substantially increase the completion rates of students who have been underrepresented in higher education.

## An Imperative for Education Renewal

We have no margin morally or economically for the educational failure of any student. The dynamics of the 21st Century demand that we do a better job of providing educational opportunities for all. Thus, our response cannot be shortsighted or scattershot. We know what is important. Research is unequivocal about the overarching value of a rigorous secondary education and good teaching. Students from all backgrounds respond to high standards. They want to work hard — and do, especially if guided by effective teachers in successful schools.

Furthermore, our educational renewal must be inclusive—a long-term commitment to students providing them with multiple opportunities to succeed. And it must be flexible enough to

accommodate students who enter this system possessing a variety of skills and coming from a diversity of backgrounds.

## Advancing Excellence for All

Understanding that our future cannot be secured without a renewed and sustained commitment to education, the College Board, a membership organisation of more than 5,300 schools and colleges worldwide, is working to strengthen students' preparation for higher education and to provide access to those who might not otherwise be able to earn a postsecondary credential or degree.

The College Board is best known for its assessments, such as the SAT®, but the organisation is moving far beyond its traditional boundaries to help shape and level the educational playing field. While assessments provide valuable information to students, families and educators, they alone cannot drive educational reform. Thus, the College Board is working to chart students' academic progress in multiple ways, believing that such a strategy better responds to the challenges students face.

But a single organisation, however well intentioned, cannot level the educational playing field overnight or alone. That is why the College Board is collaborating with leaders in education, philanthropy, and business to develop a three-part strategy designed to: 1) influence national and state education policy; 2) construct model educational reform structures; and 3) democratise access to educational excellence.

1) **Advocacy:** Identifying issues that reflect directly on our nation's educational challenges is the first step toward reform. Recent College Board reports have documented:

- the centrality of writing in the curriculum and its importance for shaping sharp thinkers and creating efficient communicators;
- the need for better-trained and compensated teachers in K-12 who can advance an agenda for education that encompasses all students;
- the value and necessity of enrolling many more students from low-income backgrounds in our colleges and universities and
- the often-overlooked importance of America's community colleges as pivotal institutions in expanding access to higher education and in training new cadres of workers in 21st Century technologies.

Upcoming reports will describe the declining academic performance of males in American postsecondary education; the need for reform in the federal financial aid system; and the challenge of providing authentic access and equity in higher education institutions.

Each of these reports has a specific advocacy agenda attached through which the College Board is affecting policy at the federal and state levels.

## 2) Model Educational Reform Structures:

The College Board is investing in an ambitious plan of action called the College Readiness System. The elements of the system — curricula, instruction, teacher professional development, and assessment — have been designed in tandem to help schools, colleges, and families collectively promote student success through:

- **A Common Curriculum** Focusing on College Readiness — The College Board's *Standards for College Success™* represents an array of knowledge, skills, and abilities that help high school students prepare for

college. *SpringBoard®*, an innovative middle school curriculum in mathematics and English provides students with the tools they will need to challenge themselves in rigorous high school courses.

- **Advanced Placement® for All** — AP® is a college preparatory curriculum that provides students with stimulating and rigorous courses (for which they earn college credit) and professional development for teachers. Through a determined effort to broaden access to a stronger preparatory track, AP participation has nearly doubled in the past 8 years, with many more educationally disadvantaged students gaining admission to these courses. The College Board has also developed *AP Potential™*, a research-based tool that helps teachers identify students with the potential for success in AP courses.
- **Whole School Reform** — In 2006, the College Board created *EXCEerator™* High Schools in selected urban areas to provide low-income and minority students with an authentic opportunity to prepare for college. This past year, 90 percent of the graduating class earned a diploma and 80 percent are prepared for college admission. Building on this success, the College Board established "College Board Schools" for grades 6–12.

3) **Democratisation of Excellence:** Establishing strong schools will take significant and long-term investments by federal, state, and local governments. This investment is well within our reach and utterly essential for the challenges ahead. We have the tools; we need simply the will to work them.

Still, cost can be a barrier—especially for families unaccustomed to understanding the resources needed to prepare their sons and daughters for college. For example, one of the issues the College Board has had to confront is that many students cannot afford its test fees. As a result, the organisation has moved aggressively to aid students by spending \$27 million a year in fee waivers to low-income students who take the College Board's tests. This has allowed many more students to gain access to one of the strongest curricula in the country.

### **The Next 100 Years**

These collaborative and strategic efforts demonstrate that connecting students to college success and opportunity is indeed possible. A well-educated citizenry - an essential element of any democracy - is central to the world's continued prosperity.

While there is a great deal more to do, we hope the College Board's advocacy and programmatic initiatives, in partnership with K-12 schools and colleges and universities, will serve as a model as nations strive to expand opportunities for students, families, and educators in ways that advance the educational imperatives of the New Global Century.

## Canada Changes Visa Guidelines to Attract More International Students

### Gardiner Wilson, Canadian Education Network

*Over the past six years there have been a number of changes in Canadian visa policy designed to position Canada as a more attractive destination for international students.*

*Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), the federal department responsible for managing Canada's visa regime, has responded positively to representations from education stakeholders in Canada, including the Canadian Education Centre Network, to develop policies which would help encourage more international student interest in Canada. CIC has also been keenly aware of the positive changes implemented in other countries like Australia which are also competing for the best and brightest international students.*

Many of the improvements are inconsequential if looked at individually. However, taken cumulatively, the changes represent a significant shift in Canada's student visa regime.

The first major change on the student file was in 2002 when CIC exempted students from requiring a study permit for any program of up to 6 months in length (previously the exemption period was only 3 months and applied only to the language sector). This change was welcomed particularly by the English/French language training industry which specialised in shorter term programs. Community colleges were also enthusiastic about the change as it opened up the possibility of developing short term specialised programs (in which community colleges excel) to international students. Administrative and operational changes continued within CIC over the next few years designed to make the study permit scheme less bureaucratic and more 'international student friendly'.

A program to allow international students to work off campus for up to 20 hours a week and full time during holiday periods was introduced on a pilot basis in select provinces in 2004 and, in 2006, rolled out nationally. (Previous to this there were only very limited employment opportunities for international students on the campuses where they were studying.) There had been a post graduation work scheme in place which allowed international students to work for up to two years after the completion of their programs at either community colleges or universities. However, there were a number of cumbersome restrictions attached and the program was regarded as being only marginally successful.

An unanticipated but very welcome announcement was made by CIC Minister Finley on April 21, 2008

with the decision to expand and add flexibility to the Post Graduation Work Permit Program (PGWPP) program.

The key elements of the expanded provisions allow an international student who has completed a minimum of a two year provincially approved post secondary university or community college program to:

- work up to three years anywhere in Canada (previously the limit was one or two years depending on where the student graduated);
- receive an open work permit (ie removes the restriction that the work must be linked to the course of study);
- allows the student to obtain a work permit without a job offer.

At the same time, the changes also removed the work limit on students graduating from within the MTV (i.e. graduates from post secondary institutions in Montreal, Toronto or Vancouver can now also work for up to 3 years).

These expanded provisions are the most important changes affecting international students since the off-campus employment program was introduced in April 2006. The expanded provisions position Canada much more favourably vis-a-vis international competitors.

The new provisions will benefit Canadian community colleges as well as universities. International students attending community colleges will be eligible for a full three post graduation work opportunity on completing a minimum two year certificate or diploma program. Work eligibility for students attending shorter programs will be linked to the length of the program, i.e. a one year program would allow a

one year employment visa. The minimum program length allowing post graduation work is an eight month period of study which, obviously, would allow the student to work for that same length of time. Students attending community colleges which offer two year Associate Degrees would also be eligible for the three year post graduation work term.

The PGWPP is also linked to a second new CIC initiative – the ability of international students attending most post secondary institutions, including community colleges, to apply for landed status (i.e. permanent residence status) under what is being termed the Canadian Experience Class (CEC).

While details of this new program are still being finalised, it is anticipated that under the CEC scheme international students who have completed a post graduation work term of at least one year (in the two year period prior to application) in a National Occupation Classification category “O”, “A” or “B” (i.e. management, professionals and skilled and technical occupations) would be eligible to apply for landed status from within Canada. In fact, CIC would assess the applications on the basis that the international student was a “skilled worker”.

Current immigration regulations preclude most international students from applying to remain permanently because the application must be made *outside* the country with all the bureaucracy that usually entails. Thus, unlike Australia, where it is estimated that about 50% of migrants have an education experience in Australia including a post secondary qualification, the corresponding figure in Canada is estimated at between 5 and 12%. With the growing demand for skilled labour Canadian immigration authorities have finally realised the

value of attracting international students and have put in place much more attractive measures to ease the bureaucracy and allow them to remain. The final touches are being added to the Canadian Experience Class guidelines and it is expected that there will be a formal announcement in autumn 2008.

The positive CIC changes targetted on international students are part of a Canadian government strategy to make Canada a more attractive destination for skilled workers. Considerable government effort and resources have been committed to addressing foreign credentials recognition issues and specific offices have been established in Canada to assist immigrants in dealing with a bureaucracy that reflects the complexity of the shared federal-provincial constitutional jurisdiction over labour market questions.

The government has also increased funding for English or French language instruction for immigrants. And with reference to international student recruitment the government has provided financial support for the development of a national education brand for Canada. This is being led by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and officials have been working closely with provincial counterparts for the past two years in this regard. Other federal dollars have been allocated to DFAIT to increase international marketing initiatives focussed on international students.

There remain a few idiosyncrasies in the Canadian study permit system – it is not possible to obtain a study permit from within Canada. Potential students who enter Canada on Temporary Resident Visa (TRV), or visitors visa, are not able to switch this to a Study Permit should they decide they wish to take up an education program. This means they

must either return to their home country to apply or apply through a Canadian visa office in the United States – Seattle, Washington and Buffalo, New York are the application offices of choice. If they are lucky, the intending student may receive their study permit through the mail and is able simply to exit Canada for a few minutes without actually entering the United States and then re-enter a few minutes later with Study Permit in hand (the so-called “round the flagpole” approach).

However, in many cases, the Canadian visa officer will insist on a personal interview in the US border city which means the intending student has to obtain a United States visitor visa – this can be difficult these days especially for some nationalities. Accordingly, many intending students simply give up. If the international student had obtained the Study Permit before arriving in Canada they would not face this difficulty. Needless to say they are so counselled by Canadian Education Centre Network offices abroad.

The application fee for a Canadian Study Permit remains C\$125 which, depending on the type of program followed, will allow student status in Canada for up to four years. Extensions to Study Permits can also be obtained through a specialised visa processing centre in Canada.



George R. Boggs, CEO, Association  
of American Community Colleges

Community colleges in the United States have evolved over the past one hundred years to be comprehensive institutions, providing a wide variety of academic, technical, and developmental education courses.

While community colleges in some states in the US began as junior colleges, providing the first two years of a four-year baccalaureate education, those in other states had their beginning as technical colleges: their reason for existence was to satisfy the workforce needs of the community. Business advisory committees were formed to assist in the development of curricula that aligned with the needs of business and industry in the community. The advisory committees assured that the programs continued to meet current needs.

Over the years, these two basic missions of academic transfer and vocational-technical education have become fundamental to the American Community College Movement. Community colleges are considered to be part of higher education in the United States.

American community colleges are very responsive to the educational and training needs of their communities. For example:

- the Community College of Southern Alabama boasts a state-of-the-art paper technology program in response to the pulp industry in that part of the US.
- Napa Valley College in California has a viticulture program to support the wine industry in Northern California.
- the Maricopa Community Colleges in Phoenix Arizona offer a chip manufacturing technology program to support the computer industry in the area.

- College of the Mainland, near the Gulf of Mexico, offers petrochemical processing technology programs.
- Santa Monica College in California has educational programs to support the Hollywood film making industry.

These kinds of examples are typical of the ways community colleges respond to local needs. Many of the educational programs are articulated with four-year universities to enable students to transfer to obtain baccalaureate degrees if they desire.

There are nearly 1,200 regionally accredited community colleges with approximately 2,200 campuses or educational centres enrolling nearly 12 million students (46% of all of the students in American higher or postsecondary education). About half of the students are enrolled in college credit programs with about half of those enrolled in credit occupational degree programs that feed directly into the workplace. The non-credit programs include those in remedial education, English as a Second Language, and short-term job training.

American community colleges are also active providers of contract education to local business, providing needed training programs often at the work site. This training is not usually state supported, but most often paid for by industry. Because businesses value the skilled workforce that community colleges produce, they often make their equipment available to the community colleges for training. They either donate the equipment or allow the community college to provide training at the work site.

Community colleges are also often called upon to retrain displaced workers when factories close or to provide the training to bring new industry into an area. Examples of the latter include South Carolina

and Kentucky, which were able to help their states bring automobile manufacturing facilities to their states. Community colleges in North Carolina are helping that state to adjust to the loss of the textile and furniture manufacturing industries by providing training programs in the biotech field.

American community colleges have become the most responsive sector of American higher education. They are increasingly focused on assisting their students to be successful, while maintaining access to affordable and high quality academic and skills training programs. The colleges are also becoming more aware of the importance of global education, and many invite partnerships with polytechnics and TAFE and FE colleges in other countries.

In addition to the examples cited above in the economic transformations of Kentucky and the Carolinas, another demonstration of the responsiveness of community colleges is the actions taken by the Community College of Allegheny County in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, shortly after the tragic events of September 11, 2001. In a matter of a couple of weeks, the college had courses up and running to retrain the thousands of US Air airline workers who were suddenly unemployed.

The responsiveness of community colleges can be explained by a lack of bureaucratic approval processes and strong ties to local communities that lead to local decision making. In fact, the colleges are formed most often by the vote of the people in communities that will be served by the colleges. Most American community colleges are governed by elected or appointed boards of trustees who represent the interests of the communities served by the colleges. Although funding formulas vary significantly by state, on the average, local

communities provide 19% of the revenue for the colleges. Other funding sources include 38% from states, 20% student tuition and fees, and only 7% from federal sources. Other sources of funding include contracts and grants and amount to about 16%.

In the last ten years, community colleges, which have always focused on improving access to higher education and training, have begun to more seriously focus on improving the success rates of their students. Students are assessed for their basic skills abilities upon entry and are advised or placed into remedial or developmental courses, if needed. Other success strategies include advising students to enroll in a college success skills class early in their college experience, providing access to tutorial assistance, encouraging learning communities and linked courses to strengthen the connections among students and between students and faculty, and encouraging students to study and work in groups. The colleges also advocate for need-based financial aid and student loans, if necessary, in order to provide for the financial needs of the most financially at-risk students.

Leaders of American community colleges recognise that they must prepare their students to succeed in an increasingly global society and economy. College curricula have been revised to include a multi-cultural and global perspective. More community colleges are inviting international students onto their campuses and encouraging American students to study abroad. Through AACC and organisations such as the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics, American community colleges are finding avenues to form partnerships with colleges in other countries that are facing similar challenges and opportunities.

American Community Colleges have a proud history of working with their communities, skilling workers in ways that meet regional industry needs, while at the same time working effectively with employers. In becoming the most responsive sector of higher education in America, leadership is also important, especially when decisions are required quickly to meet regional or national needs. The AACC clearly has a continuing central role to play in ensuring community colleges continue to excel in the US education sector.

## California Community Colleges and International Education

Rosalind Latiner Raby, Director,  
California Colleges for International  
Education (CCIE)

*The US community college system is composed of over 1,200 regionally accredited two-year colleges and technical institutions that enrol over 11 million students annually.*

*In 2007, community colleges enrolled 45 percent of the higher education students in the US and 52 percent of the continuing education students in the US 51 percent of students attending four-year institutions transferred from community colleges.*

*The vast majority of community colleges are state-funded public institutions, and are accredited to grant short-cycle certificates and award associate degrees following a two-year course of study. The community college system does not include vocational schools, adult education centres, and/or proprietary businesses and trade colleges.*

The curriculum at community colleges is designed to meet the needs of the diverse population attending these schools. This population includes not only traditional college-aged students (18–22) who intend to transfer to a four-year institution, but also vocationally-oriented students (average age of 29–34) seeking to learn skills that they can apply directly in the job market, as well as community members seeking personal enrichment. Thus, the curriculum at community colleges has three separate focuses:

- a) to provide academic liberal arts and science preparation for transfer to a four-year institution;
- b) to prepare school-to-work training in vocational, technical, and occupational subjects for mid-level labor markets; and
- c) to promote life-long education through community service, remedial education and English/accluturation for recent immigrants.

United States community colleges have grown with unique missions that emphasise open access, local commitments, and workforce preparation. All US community colleges embody the concept of open access. Hence, whether for terminal certificates or potential transfer to universities, community colleges remain the first rung up the social ladder and provide, for many students, a last chance for personal and professional growth.

Local commitments are evident as US community colleges are designed to meet and serve the needs of local communities defined geographically. However, in today's world, when community is defined globally, it expands local networks and requires that curriculum examines issues across borders, with a goal of educating students as global citizens. Finally, a key charge of the community

college remains workforce preparation. Globalisation has changed the employment field, and in so doing the types of graduates that community colleges produce. Increasing, programs are designed to provide those skills and competencies that have international literacy of scientific, economic, social, political, and environmental issues at their core. In that community colleges are the vanguards in most US educational initiatives, it is not surprising that they are also leaders in bringing international education to their students, faculty and surrounding communities.

## California: a case-study

In the 1960s, Californian educational and political leaders built a community college system that defined the first national state tripartite system. This system includes a) University of California (UC) to offer Baccalaureate, Masters and Ph.D. studies; b) California State University (CSU) to offer Baccalaureate and Masters studies; and c) California Community Colleges (CCC) to offer Associate degrees and certificates.

A 2 + 2 model was highlighted in the Master Plan which allowed students to take the first two years of instruction at a community college and then seamlessly transfer to either a CSU or a UC campus to finish their Baccalaureate education. This system has since been emulated by other States and consequently by other countries.

Today, Californian supports 110 community colleges that enrol over 2.6 million students in a state where one in fifteen adults is a community college student. These colleges vary in size, location and venue yet, combined, reflect a multiethnic and culturally diverse California. California community colleges, with their commitment to open access and

low tuition fees, assist students whose academic background is lacking, who cannot afford university tuition, who are denied access due to minority status, and who do not fit a traditional profile.

All students in the state, at the age of seventeen, are eligible to enrol in Community Colleges, regardless of educational attainment or socio-economic status. As such, the student population mirrors the multicultural and multiethnic mixture of the local community. The current mix of California community college students is: 42% Caucasian, 25% Hispanic, 16% Asian, Filipino or Pacific Islander, 7% African-American, 1% Native American, and over 50,000 international students.

California Community Colleges have been offering various forms of International Education since the 1970s including international development, faculty exchanges, international curriculum programs which support new degree and certificate options, international business programs. Study Abroad is the second only to international students in the scope and depth of international education offered at California community colleges. Some 65% of California Community College Districts offer avenues for their students to study abroad either through their own programs, mini-consortia programs, or self-directed programs.

An average of 3,500 California community college students study abroad annually. While this number is but a fraction of the total California community college student population, it nonetheless is comparable to the number of students sent abroad by the UC and the CSU systems and represents about 80% of all US community college education abroad students.

The most popular forms of international education continues to be international students in which 98%

of California Community Colleges offer international student programs that range in size between 5 and 3,000 students annually. In California, as evidenced nationally, the education of International Students has become the fourth largest services sector export in the US Economy. The 2+2 program defined by the California Master Plan continues to be a great incentive for international students to study at a California community college. Eight California community colleges receiving 800–2,600 international students annually.

## California Colleges for International Education (CCIE).

One of the national leaders in advocating for community college international education is California Colleges for International Education (CCIE). CCIE was founded in 1983 and today is a non-profit consortium that serves as a clearinghouse and advocacy group to help support California community colleges in their internationalisation efforts. CCIE's mission:

- a) encourages development of international/ inter-multicultural perspectives in community colleges;
- b) increases awareness and encouragement of international development through technical education;
- c) promotes opportunities for sharing international expertise;
- d) forms liaisons between national organisations and consortia involved in international education activities; and
- e) provides an international education resource for the California community colleges' State Chancellor's Office. CCIE, through its advocacy

helps to bring international education to the forefront of educational policy, program implementation, and works to stimulate public awareness of the benefits of all aspects of community college international education.

The California State Chancellor's office has long supported International Education as depicted by the 1999 California Global Task Force's Vision to support *Learners engaging in developing an awareness of and shared accountability for international and global competencies, at home and abroad, preparing them for full participation in our increasingly multicultural communities.* The California Education Code Sec. 66010.4.3 says that "a primary mission of the California Community College is to advance California's economic growth and global competencies through education, training, and services." International Education, through its various facets, strives to accomplish this task. Currently, international education is recognised in the mission statements of 47% of California Community Colleges and is included in the California community colleges' Board of Governors Basic Agenda that mandates a diversified curriculum that comprehensively analyses cultures and economies of other nations and of California's potential role in international activities.

California community colleges are continuing to grow in popularity as they are:

- a) less expensive and more accessible than universities;
- b) adaptable to providing product-oriented, as well as transferable curricula;
- c) flexible in providing short-term programs that address varying interests of the community; and
- d) able to meet the demands of emerging local population and regional needs.

Above all, US community colleges are designed to serve both the people and their communities. The most crucial function of the community colleges has been to provide students with training and retraining programmes which help them to achieve social mobility and contribute to the economic well-being of a country in terms of workforce preparation and economic development.

The diversity of California community college students, together with the academic open access policy, has helped community colleges to challenge the traditional higher educational profile for international education as an elitist venture intended for 'only the few'. Community colleges tend to serve a greater proportion of lower income and minority students than in any other post-secondary institution. By offering international educational programs at the community college, we are broadening access by ensuring that students who would not otherwise participate in these educational endeavors now have an opportunity to do so.

Since community college students bring to the classroom backgrounds and skills which enrich the academic learning environment, it is now recognised that international issues are an integral part of every community college discipline and, the task of internationalising the curriculum not only can, but should be internationalised in all areas of the college environment.

## Conclusion

US Community colleges are at a crossroad as they examine their role and function in preparing the next generation of students to live and work locally, but within a global economy. The role of international education in facilitating this process

becomes the key element for educational reform on our campuses.

International experience provides life-altering experiences that produces definite changes in perception and attitude towards global relationships, increased empathy towards democratic decision-making and interest in local and national politics, social service, and the reduction of cultural stereotypes and a significant learning curve growth in academic performance. The importance of international education is no longer one that is disputed. It is so widely recognised that those colleges that do not offer international educational opportunities are doing a disservice to their students.

In that our world is increasingly multiethnic, multicultural, and multilingual, a higher educational structure, such as the community college model, that acknowledges, endorses and respects that diversity, becomes most desired and will further ingrain these institutions in post-secondary educational structures.

Prof John Haas, Ph.D is History Professor and Director of the Global Consortium

As humans we live in one of the most unique times in our history. We are at the crossroads of our very existence and we have a hell of a fight on our hands if we wish to survive. We face global challenges today that can either tear us apart or bring us closer together. Indeed, survival makes for strange bedfellows.

The challenges which confront humanity in the twenty-first century – terrorism, global warming, AIDS, genocide and human rights violations – transcend individual countries. TB, AIDS, and SARS, are equal opportunity destroyers; these epidemics know no borders. These problems can only be comprehensively addressed by bringing the world together with a spirit of co-operation and co-ordination unprecedented in “humanity’s collective experience.”<sup>1</sup>

## **The Need for Global Competency**

Innovative educators have sought to expand their students’ global thinking in ways that shape and influence their lives. Never has this been more important. The need for a pluralistic world-view has become particularly crucial in the aftermath of 9/11. People living in the 21st Century are global citizens. Since 9/11 it has become abundantly clear that the world has become decidedly smaller. America’s woeful ignorance of the world constitutes a real liability to national and global security. There is a dire need to study and embrace other countries and cultures, whether they are friend or foe. Similarly, the rest of the world would do well to study America. Consequently, I concur with Barbara Lawson and others, that as ‘citizens of the world’ it is imperative that we learn to “become globally competent, by embracing change, understanding other cultures and recognising the

interconnectedness of all people and systems in order to become productive and effective in the world arena.<sup>2</sup>

## The Global Consortium

How can we prepare students, “citizens of the world,” and tomorrow’s teachers to be globally competent, embrace change, and recognise the interconnectedness of all people and systems to become productive and effective in the world arena? At Cerritos College I created the Global Consortium to provide a pragmatic answer to these questions.

The Global Consortium (GC) is a network of global partners that share a common goal of bridging cultural gaps in our world. The GC raises awareness of global issues to college students, “global citizens” and aspiring teachers throughout the world, many of whom would not be able to have this opportunity if it were not for this program. The GC has the unique advantage of being broadcast live to more than 2.5 million college students throughout California, web cast on the internet, broadcast on local cable television (3CMedia Solutions) and interactively shown live to our partner schools, educators, students and institutions across the globe. The GC seeks to provide education and information about global issues, challenges and cultures around the world, to our young people — the people who will one day be asked to take part and solve global problems.<sup>3</sup>

Today everybody’s going global. Nearly every educational institution is talking about internationalising or globalisation. However, many attempts to implement “globalisation” programs have been superficial at best. I wanted to create solid, deep, meaningful global learning communities with colleges and universities around the world.

I began my quest with a host of questions to myself: Was it possible to get first-rate scholars to come to Cerritos College to explore global topics on a limited budget? Could I use technology to bring the world to the classroom and the classroom to the world? Would I be able to get the UN, the US State Department, and various NGOs to join the Global Consortium for live dialogue? Could I persuade countries around the world that there are Americans with humility who wish to learn about the culture of others? The answer, ultimately, to all of these questions was yes. In short, the Global Consortium at Cerritos College offers a comprehensive global integration strategy.

## Partnerships in Action

In the spirit of global collaboration, professors at Cerritos College in California, LaGuardia College in New York, and International Pacific College (IPC) in New Zealand decided to combine their efforts to create a truly “global learning community” class by taking the very diverse student populations of Cerritos and LaGuardia, and connecting them with students from Japan, Korea, China, Indonesia, Egypt, Malaysia, Vietnam and New Zealand that make up the academic population at International Pacific College. **In essence, by utilising learning community classes and technology, we brought the world to the classroom and the classroom to the world.**

The goal is to create space for students to find their own voice, appreciate other voices, and become engaged and active contributors to their own education. In this vein, students from across the globe are engaged in course content organised around a common theme designed by a myriad of instructors. We used a global topics course as the foundation for our collaboration and then allowed

scholars to bring their expertise and their classes to the study of the world. Historians, political scientists, economists, environmentalists, human rights scholars, and experts in Maori literature have lent their expertise to this global endeavor. We wanted students to understand that their voices are an integral part of the classroom dynamic.

Collectively, our theoretical approach to this collaborative endeavor mirrors those developed by constructionist learning environments which stress “personal autonomy, reflectivity, active engagement, personal relevance, and cultural pluralism.” **Technology plays a critical role.**

As our students are place-bound, the global topics class is facilitated by synchronous course delivery through the use of “video over IP”. This relatively new technology enables video signals to be transmitted via Internet Protocol. Additionally, we used Blackboard online course delivery for asynchronous discussions both in preparation and in response to live sessions.

As teachers and students walk into their teleconference centres the excitement is palpable. Students gaze at a large screen and can see when a phone call has connected the colleges. As soon as the transmission is complete they immediately see other professors and students across the world. Putting together a global venture between three colleges in different time zones presented some logistical problems.

In August, the start of my fall semester, New Zealand is nineteen hours ahead of California. A Monday 2:00p.m. start time in California means a Monday 5:00p.m. time for New York and a 9:00a.m. start time for New Zealand, on Tuesday. Much preparation has taken place before the actual meeting. Professors have collectively decided upon a topic

and the reading has been assigned well in advance. We usually commence with three or four thought-provoking questions about the topic and then let the students loose to communicate.

As a moderator, I often feel like an air traffic controller constantly checking for blips on the radar screen to see who wants to speak next and making sure there are no mid-air collisions. It is arduous work watching three colleges to make sure the meeting runs smoothly. In the end, however, it is worth all the effort. Watching students from around the world engaging in global topics is exhilarating. Student responses to this pedagogy have been universally positive. Indeed, many students have responded that this has transformed their view of education.

## Special Guests

This past spring the Global Consortium featured an incredible array of first-rate speakers presenting for a global audience and for a global education. Rick Eaton of the Simon Wiesenthal Center made a presentation on “Organised Hate Crimes and Terrorism.”

SaveDarfur.org asked the Director of the Global Consortium to make the case for their organisation in a dialogue with Dr Peter Jackson of the UN on the critical situation in Darfur. Dr Jackson videoconferenced live from the UN in New York to Cerritos College. Paul Divakar spoke live from India to Cerritos College on the terrible condition of the Dalits. Shari Villarosa, Chargé d’Affaires of the US Embassy in Rangoon, spoke from Rangoon to Cerritos College and the world on the terrible plight of women and children in Myanmar. Louisa Benson-Craig, Director of the US Campaign for Burma, spoke about the plight of the Karen people in Burma.

Finally, Dr Judea Pearl (father of slain journalist Daniel Pearl) teamed up with Dr. Akbar Ahmed for an interfaith dialogue. The BBC wrote that Dr. Ahmed was perhaps the finest Islamic scholar today. Additionally, the UN had requested to join the interfaith dialogue. This was unprecedented. On the stage at Cerritos Colleges Drs Pearl and Ahmed joined the UN via videoconferencing from New York.

One of the chief goals of the Global Consortium is to initiate an ongoing dialogue about how to live with diversity in a global community. The videoconferencing format provides students with the opportunity to listen to experts from around the world, scholars whom students would seldom be able to access. We are linking colleges and universities in India, Singapore, Cambodia, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Jerusalem, Germany and Northern Ireland to Cerritos College and universities throughout the US regardless of socio-economic standing. My next quest is to find money. The Global Consortium is in dire need of funding.

In sum, the Global Consortium has created a novel approach to education that will, over time, promote peace, love and understanding. And as Elvis Costello sings, "What's so funny about peace love, and understanding?"

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(Endnotes)

- 1 "Sustainable Development and the Human Spirit," UN Conference on Environment and Development
- 2 Maggie J. Brown and Barbara Lawson, "Preparing Students as Global Citizens," **Howard Community College**.
- 3 Matthew Pizzo, "Summary of the Global Consortium," PowerPoint Presentation.





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