

HAWAII'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES—THE PAST

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On April 23, 1964, Governor John A. Burns signed House Bill No. 257, the Community College Act of 1964, into law. The bill, sponsored by Representative Larry Kuriyama, then Chairman of the House Higher Education Committee, had been passed by an overwhelming margin in both houses of the legislature. The vote in the Senate was 17 to 7 and in the House 43 to 4. It was signed by the governor who had campaigned for the system of community colleges.

In Hawaii, a state in which education is so highly prized, one is tempted to ask why the community college concept was so slow and late in its implementation.

It is true that the numerous surveys of education contained recommendations concerning community colleges. The Stanford Report of 1957 suggested "the development of regional community colleges on the larger islands."¹ A 1962 report on higher education in Hawaii, conducted by personnel of the U.S. Office of Education, made the establishment of community colleges one of its major recommendations.² The 1963 Hawaii Legislature asked for a detailed feasibility study, and, in accordance with the findings and recommendations of this report,³ enacted the Community College Act of 1964.⁴

The 1963 *Feasibility Study of Community Colleges in Hawaii* uncovered some interesting data. Foremost was the fact that the desire to continue schooling on the part of Hawaii's high school graduates was steadily increasing—from forty-nine percent in 1952 to sixty-eight percent in 1963. In November 1963 a special questionnaire was administered to all high school seniors of the State to ascertain their views on postsecondary education. Of the more than 9,000 seniors (ninety-three percent of the senior enrollment) who answered the questionnaire, sixty-five percent indicated that they had definite plans to continue their education immediately after graduation, twenty-seven percent were uncertain about continuing their education, and only eight percent responded that they definitely did not plan

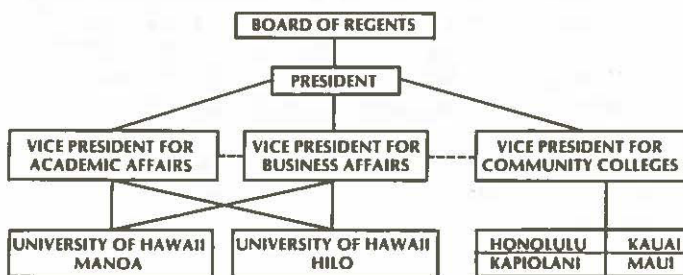
to attend school the following year.

Against this backdrop the Hawaii Community College Act was enacted. The Act is brief and states the purposes of the community colleges in broad terms: "to provide two-year college transfer and general education programs, semi-professional, technical, vocational, and continuing education programs, and such other educational programs and services as are appropriate to such institutions."

The Act established a statewide system of community colleges under the University Board of Regents. It authorized the transfer of the existing technical schools (except Hawaii Technical School in Hilo) from the Department of Education to the University of Hawaii. These technical schools were to be converted into community colleges.

On June 15, 1965, Governor Burns signed Executive Order No. 22 and four technical schools—Honolulu, Kapiolani, Kauai, and Maui—were placed under the jurisdiction of the University of Hawaii.

The University undertook the administration of these technical schools on July 1, 1965, with a simple organizational plan.



During the 1965-66 school year, no significant program changes were made. The staff and faculty participated in preparing for the conversion to community colleges.

On July 1, 1966, the four technical schools formally changed their designations to "community

colleges." Their chief executive officers were first to be called "directors" and later "provosts." The colleges were authorized to grant associate degrees: the Associate in Arts and the Associate in Science.

The first associate degrees were awarded to five accounting students at Kapiolani Community College at the end of the fall semester, in February 1967. The five, all women students, had completed the requirements of the existing two-year program and had received "certificates," but chose to return during the fall semester to complete an Associate in Science degree program.

The 1966-67 school year saw the further expansion of technical-vocational programs. With the assistance of a federal grant, the police science program was initiated at Honolulu Community College. College transfer courses were added to the curriculum for the first time.

Skepticism was early expressed that occupational education would be deemphasized in community colleges administered within a university system. But the early history of the community colleges shows an increase in the number of students enrolled in technical-vocational programs. Besides the expansion of the many excellent programs that were being provided by the technical schools, new programs such as technical nursing, hotel mid-management, data processing, and industrial technology have been added.

Tuition rates at the community colleges were purposely kept very low so that their programs would be accessible to many. The tuition and fee rates of twenty-five dollars per semester are among the lowest in the nation.⁵

In 1968, a fifth community college was added—Leeward Community College, near Pearl City on Oahu. This Community College which started as a brand new institution in the fall of 1968 in temporary quarters (an abandoned elementary school) initially enrolled 1,649 students. In its second year, in a new plant, it became the largest community college, with 3,221 students.

Hawaii Technical School in Hilo remained out of the university system until 1969. The 1963 feasibility report had recommended that Hawaii Technical School be combined with the University's two-year Hilo "branch" campus and be made into the State's first comprehensive community college. But the citizens of Hawaii County preferred to have their two-year university campus become a four-year college and until this was assured Hawaii Technical School retained its separate identity, although it too increasingly took on the form and substance of a community college. Today, as Hawaii Community

College, it continues to emphasize the technical-vocational areas.

Windward Community College was established in Kaneohe, Oahu, in the fall of 1972. Despite little lead time in preparing for its first classes, it initially enrolled 535 students in remodeled buildings on the grounds on the State Hospital.

The growth and development of Hawaii's community colleges is dramatically reflected in the enrollment gains in the first eight years of operation. From 1965 to 1972, the enrollments increased from 2,411 to 14,707, or 510.0%.

Such an enrollment growth is the result of several factors, not the least of which has been the support of the legislative and executive branches of the State Government. Hawaii's community colleges, like the rest of public education, rely almost solely on state financing.

The colleges have responded with expanded and new programs, innovative approaches to learning, better libraries, improved and far larger facilities, and a stimulating faculty.

But the most important factor contributing to the development of Hawaii's community colleges has been an understanding and responsive community. Its young and old continue to come to the community colleges in increasing numbers.

The community colleges have accomplished their primary aim: to provide citizens of Hawaii with more accessible, more diverse, and more appropriate opportunities in postsecondary education.

Footnotes

¹Hanna, Paul R., and Henry B. McDaniel. *General Curriculum and Vocational Curriculum, Organization and Administration of the Public Schools, Territory of Hawaii*, by the Odell Survey Staff. Stanford, California: June 30, 1957, pp. 76-77.

²U.S. Office of Education. *The University of Hawaii and Higher Education in Hawaii*. Report of a survey by S.V. Martorana, Ernest V. Hollis, and staff members of the Division of Higher Education. Honolulu: Department of Budget and Review, November 1962, pp. 266-7.

³Kosaki, Richard H. *Feasibility of Community Colleges in Hawaii*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii, February 1964.

⁴Act 39 of the Session Laws of Hawaii, 1964.

⁵Tuition rates in the community colleges will be increased to \$60 per year in 1974 and \$80 per year in 1975.

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