

Dennison, John D. (1995) **The Challenge and Opportunity: Canada's Community Colleges at the Crossroads**, Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

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Introduction

- often wiser to not ask values-driven questions
- address values in the context of community college
- which values are appropriate, how translated into policies and practices, how day-to-day operations are judged by values they espouse
- demonstrate how decision-making is often plagued by value conflicts
- attests to the complexity of the college as a social organization

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Values in the Canadian Community College

- Canadian colleges do not determine own fate, product of history, political, sociocultural, economic, and educational imperatives
- governments, large stake in determining what they shall be
- further complicated because provincial and federal are not often in agreement
- also employer organizations, unions, community agencies, ethnic and minority groups, local governments
- all motivated by self-interest
- rarely share same values
- also pressure exerted from within
- Clark-three sets of values-social justice, competence, liberty
 - also loyalty-powerfully developed by government

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1. Social justice

- equality of student access, equality of treatment after admission and equality of opportunity with respect to outcome
- with respect to instructional and other staff, fair and equitable employment and in promotion and retention policies
- with respect to community, a college would ensure access to all groups who wish to express views or offer advice

2. Competence

- quality
 - aspire for high quality of student performance in classroom, and high quality of graduate performance in workplace
- promote quality in regard to personnel

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3. Liberty

- link together choice, initiative, innovation, criticism and variety
- academic freedom
- college students also entitled to liberty to express

4. Loyalty

- institutional loyalty
- relationship between institutions and primary funding source, the state
- governments expect colleges to perform certain tasks that are politically desirable
- **prepare individuals to contribute to the economy through the exercise of skills in that workplace
- connection between colleges and government is strong, stronger than universities and government
- also faculty members are affiliated with professional fields, etc..

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The applicability of Clark's Four Value Sets

- social justice-yes
- quality-yes
- liberty and loyalty-less apparent at first glance
 - caught between wishes of responding to communities and expectations of govt
 - source of conflict with various arrangements made with universities, secondary schools
 - loyalty to formal agreements
 - college contracts to offer tailor-made programs may result in difficult situations

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Conflict and Compromise

- four sets of values in conflict in practice, but logically as well
- social justice-open admissions, mass education, access to disadvantaged groups
 - quality becomes important as resources become limited, demand exceeds supply
 - instructors have to deal with high-risk applicants
- conflict-select applicants for programs in high demand vs. equity of access
- conflict-loyalty too institution may limit constructive criticism of its inadequacies

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- conflict-freedom to set standards for graduation is in conflict with demand from employers for standardization
- conflict-formula funding vs. compromise institution's requirements for quality in selection of students, instructional environment
- conflict- contracts with private industry may compromise academic standards, equity of access
- conflict-full participation of stakeholders in decision making vs. respond effectively to emerging program needs
- colleges need a code of conduct
- *****ways organization can confront challenges

debate value statements, utilize case studies

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Value Statements

- colleges should be used as a means of increasing social equity and mobility
- affirmative action respecting student admissions is defensible even in most competitive of programs
- admission of academically unqualified applicants to college will jeopardize reputation of college
- open admission is antithetical to culture of any institution committed to quality education
- in assessing performance of a student, language or sociocultural obstacles should be considered
- missions and goals of college must take precedence over mission and goals of individual departments
- individual instructor responsible for setting grade standards for course
- failure rate of 50% is acceptable to ensure competence in graduates of program
- having admitted student into program, college takes responsibility for ensuring he/she achieves goals
- when entering into a contract with industry, college must retain full authority over content and delivery

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Case Studies

- after responding to values statements, consider these cases in context

Case one

- maintain commitment to social justice, while striving to ensure quality and fairness in student admission policy
- freedom to enforce appropriate policies is compounded by its responsibility to adhere to its values of institution

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Case two

- all four value sets
- conflict arising between professional freedom of instructor and his/her responsibility to the institution

Case three

- difficulties when enters commercial arrangement with an outside agency
- preserve values which are essential to integrity are place under pressure

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College and university cultures

- universities in U.S. -educational opportunities for a wide range of students, resulted from intense competition for clients

- result is highly differentiated university system which is able to meet the challenge of providing maximum access while sustaining quality
- in Canada, smaller number of institutions, display far less differentiation than U.S.
- emphasis on research
- selectivity in admissions
- give less prominence to social justice, especially when in conflict with quality
- social justice-fall onto community colleges

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- ***Canadian education does not experience the kind of central government influence because of federal/provincial jurisdiction debate
- liberty is never under direct threat in universities
- source of debate in colleges-linkages to govt, and local/regional communities
- loyalty-colleges directly engaged in realization of govt priorities and community needs
- governance-universities-independence of departments, faculties etc.
- colleges emphasize unity-college instructor's responsibility is student learning rather than acquisition of learning in field of study
- college-loyalty to organization and its values, universities- loyalty to one's discipline

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Conclusion

- Clark's four value sets are integral to college missions
- exercise emphasizes difficulty in reaching institution-wide agreement upon a comprehensive mission
- **importance of assigning priorities to values if conflicts are to be resolved

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- ****first step in creating an overall system is to clarify the values which determine the role of each institution
- roots of organizational culture and an agenda for change may be brought to light