

VERTICAL EXTENSION OF TWO-YEAR COLLEGES
A TEN YEAR SURVEY: 1964-1974

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SUMMARY

The number, location, and characteristics of two-year colleges that had elevated to four-year status during the past decade was reviewed. Data were gathered from the annual issues of the Education Directory, Higher Education prepared by the U. S. Office of Education. A total of 70 institutions were involved in upward academic moves with the annual average of seven in substantial agreement with similar studies previously reported in the literature. A decreasing percentage of two-year colleges, of the total eligible, were involved yearly. Institutional characteristics church-affiliation, enrollment of under 500, and lack of regional accreditation were present in a higher proportion than found generally in all two-year colleges during the same period. It was concluded that the frequent allegations that the two-year college is an unstable format and has a propensity to seek transformation to a four-year status are inaccurate and have become even more so in recent years.

INTRODUCTION

Legislation involving either the establishment or reorganization of two-year college systems has recently been passed in several states. Accompanying the creation or expansion of these post-secondary institutions is the frequent assumption that the junior college has been a very unstable institutional format. This rapidly expanding segment of American higher education has often been confronted with the allegation that it seeks transformation to a four-year college status.

It was assumed that the results of an investigation into this allegation would be of interest and value to educational planning agencies, professional organizations, researchers-scholars, and the boards of trustees, administrative personnel, and faculty currently involved with the two-year college movement in this country. Thus, the focus here is an investigation into the recent activity and characteristics of two-year colleges that sought academic extension during the period 1964-65 through 1973-74.

To arrive at a conclusion about the occurrence of vertical extension of such institutions, the following questions were posed: Has a rapid expansion of two-year college elevation taken place in the past ten years? Does a combination or frequency of certain characteristics such as type of institutional control, student enrollment, or accreditation appear disproportionately in institutions involved in academic elongation? In essence, is the junior college guilty of a propensity of seeking an upper division academic addition? These questions will be examined in the following sections of this report.

Brumbaugh (1966, p. 20) has written that: "The reason for the changes from junior to senior college status have not been studied systematically." Morrison (1966, p. 442) has also remarked that: "Possibly no subject in administrative organization is more deserving of close and careful study than the criteria needed for change from two-year to four-year colleges." Patterson (1970, p. 1) has stated that: "There is very little written about what is involved when a community college moves toward a 4-year institution. This leaves people facing a pioneering effort because the experiences of others have been so infrequently recorded."

While the professional literature is somewhat fragmentary, a search did reveal several surveys and studies related to the process of academic extension. Eells and Martorana (1957a, 1957b) published two articles closely related to the topic of upward extension. In analyzing the number of institutions that had become senior colleges during the span of 1945-56, the authors found some 91 junior colleges, approximately eight per year, had been involved in that process. The other article dealt with an analysis of curricular changes which had occurred in the transitions. Eells, as reported in Morrison (1966), recorded that almost 400 two-year colleges were established in the 1940s and 1950s. Of that total, eight percent, or 32 institutions, all privately controlled, had become four-year campuses.

Reynolds (1965) cited the period elapsing between publication of the 5th and 6th editions of American Junior Colleges (1960-1964) as having produced 31 junior colleges that became four-year colleges. Of that number, six were independent and 13 were church-affiliated junior colleges; the remainder were under public support. The most comprehensive study as of 1965 was conducted by Schultz and Stickler (1965). Included in their analysis of all levels of institutional extension was identification of aspects of institutional operations that may have been significant in the decision and its subsequent success. The findings of their pilot study covered the period 1953-54 through 1963-64 during which 319 institutions were identified as having undergone academic reformation. Included in that total were 72 junior colleges of which 11 were public, 23 independent, and 38 church-related institutions.

Hughes (1966) reported on seven church-related two-year colleges that made an academic extension during the period of 1955 to 1966. He concentrated on reporting the impact of curricular changes in those transcending institutions. A summary of institutional transitions for the period 1956-1966, prepared by the National Science Board (1969), revealed that 75 two-year institutions had moved to the status of a four-year college. Morrison (1966) found that 81 of the 656 two-year colleges in existence during the three-year period 1962-1965 were reclassified as four-year institutions; all but four were under private control. Bill (1968) used information from the Education Directory spanning the years 1946-1967 to detail data on curricular shifts in upward extending junior colleges.

Beeler (1969) described nine characteristics about the 72 extending two-year colleges identified during the period 1958-59 through 1967-68. The study of former junior colleges revealed that 21 had been under public auspices, 16 under independent sponsorship, and 35 under church support. Hodgkinson (1971) reported that 89 two-year colleges had become four-year colleges during the span of 1948 and 1968. That number represented about eight percent of the total sample eligible for upward gravitation. Beeler (1973), in an update of an earlier study, found that 77 two-year institutions, 23 public and 54 non-public, had been transformed to four-year status during the period 1963-1972.

Two analytical and evaluative studies were uncovered in the literature search. Schroeder (1966) studied ten institutions to determine internal and external factors that influenced those two-year colleges to seek expansion. He categorized the problems encountered in the upward move under eight areas and issued 37 guidelines for consideration by institutions contemplating such a shift. More recently, Gott (1968) inquired into and reported on the dynamics of change in two-year colleges which had undergone a transformation to four-year college status. Ten variables were selected for study and his examination provided an in-depth review of the rationale and implications of upward extension in two metamorphosed four-year colleges. Several institutional case studies (Dawson, 1960; Merrill, 1961; Smith, 1961; Roueche, 1964) have also provided analyses of the steps involved in a change in academic status and could provide meaningful recommendations regarding that process.

This review of the professional writings shows an increased activity in the study of the process of upward gravitation in institutions of higher learning. There likely is no one set of guidelines and policies concerning academic elevation which could be universally applied to all institutions in all states. The educational mission and indigenous qualities of each college need to be considered on their own merits. However, the availability of

research studies and other systematic appraisals into academic transformations, such as those reported here, could benefit institutions that are considering an upward academic shift. To ignore these retrospective analyses and surveys of two-year institutions that have undergone a vertical transition would be a serious omission.

PROCEDURE

This survey reported on the annual number and location of two-year institutional changes that had occurred in 70 two-year colleges during 1964-65 through 1973-74. Also, institutional information was profiled on the basis of (1) institutional control, (2) student body, (3) enrollment category, (4) academic calendar, and (5) regional accreditation. Curricular changes involved in the transitions would have been a valuable addition. Unfortunately, the comparison of curricular transformations was not possible since the categories used by the United States Office of Education (USOE) to designate the highest level of training offered by an institution was changed from eleven to five in 1968-69.

Institutions included in this study were identified from the annual issues, 1964-65 through 1972-73 of the Education Directory, Higher Education (designated as "Part 3" until 1968-69) prepared by the USOE. The directory sections listing "institutions reclassified" were reviewed and then a roster was made of transformed two-year institutions. The Education Directory for the year 1968-69 did not contain such a section but data was supplied by the National Center for Educational Statistics of the USOE. Names of institutions involved in upper extension beginning with the 1973-74 academic year were obtained from The Chronicle of Higher Education (September 24, 1973). Data on those involved colleges were gathered from the 1972-73 Education Directory.

The USOE maintains a policy of continuing a two-year classification for an institution until it has conferred baccalaureate degrees, not when the institution announces the change and has begun offering a higher level of instruction. Due to the possible influence of the pending higher curricular offerings affecting characteristics like the kind of student body, college enrollment, or academic calendar, information on the included institutions was gathered from the preceding directory, e. g., profile data on the institution that changed from a two-year status during 1971-72 were collected from the 1970-71 Education Directory.

TABLE 1

Academic Extension of Former Two-Year Institutions by Year and Location

State	64-65	65-66	66-67	67-68	68-69	69-70	70-71	71-72	72-73	73-74	Totals
California	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Canal Zone	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Colorado	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Connecticut	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Florida	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Georgia	0	0	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
Idaho	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Illinois	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Louisiana	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Maine	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Massachusetts	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
Michigan	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2
Minnesota	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Missouri	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	1	5
Nebraska	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
New Hampshire	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
New Jersey	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
New York	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
North Carolina	1	3	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	8
Oklahoma	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Ohio	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Pennsylvania	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	5
Rhode Island	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
South Carolina	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Tennessee	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Texas	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	5
Utah	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Vermont	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Virgin Islands	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Virginia	1	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	6
Totals	9	7	5	19	11	9	5	1	0	4	70

A larger number of previous two-year institutions in operation during the ten year period would have been included if the criteria for selection had been extended to include all institutions listed in the USOE directories that once offered two years but less than four years of academic work. Institutions not typically recognized as junior colleges -- Bible institutes, seminaries, military schools, proprietary, and other single purpose professional and technical schools -- were excluded from this survey. It is also important to note that no attempt was made to identify reasons underlying the changes in academic status of the profiled institutions.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the classification, by academic year and location by state, of the 70 junior colleges selected for inclusion in the ten-year survey. A range of 19 (1967-68) to none (1972-73) annual institutional transformations was observed. Involved in at least one instance of upward extension were 28 states plus the Canal Zone and the Virgin Islands.

During the decade, 14 states including the Canal Zone and the Virgin Islands contributed only a single institution to the overall total. The highest number of transformations to occur in any state in any year was three (Georgia, Missouri, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania). In only six cases did a state provide more than one reclassified two-year institution within the same year. The highest number of different states affected in any given year was in 1967-68 when 14 states and the Virgin Islands contributed at least one transformed institution. North Carolina led all others with a total of eight institutional gravitations including activity in six different years during the ten-year period. Virginia recorded six two-year upward shifts followed by Georgia, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Texas with five each. The survey revealed an average of seven institutions annually sought academic elongation during the survey years covered.

Table 2 provides data on the two-year institutions based on the characteristics of (1) type of control, (2) type of student body, (3) enrollment category, (4) academic calendar, and (5) regional accreditation for the period 1964-65 through 1973-74.

TABLE 2

Characteristics of Former Two-Year Institutions

Characteristic	64-65	65-66	66-67	67-68	68-69	69-70	70-71	71-72	72-73	73-74	Totals
Type of Control											
public	2	3	3	8	4	0	2	0	0	2	24
independent	2	0	2	4	2	7	0	1	0	1	19
church-related	5	4	0	7	5	2	3	0	0	1	27
Type of student body											
men	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
women	1	1	0	3	2	3	1	1	0	1	13
coeducational	7	6	4	15	9	6	4	0	0	3	54
Enrollment category											
under 500	4	2	2	6	5	4	0	1	0	0	24
500-999	3	2	2	6	0	2	2	0	0	3	20
1,000-1,499	0	2	0	2	4	1	2	0	0	0	11
1,500-1,999	1	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	0	1	8
over 2,000	1	1	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	7
Academic calendar											
semester	5	5	4	13	7	5	4	0	0	3	46
trimester	2	0	0	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	6
quarter	2	2	1	5	4	2	1	0	0	1	18
Regional accreditation											
Southern	1	3	3	6	4	2	4	0	0	3	26
North Central	3	2	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	1	12
New England	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Middle States	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	5
Western	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Northwest	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
No regional accreditation	2	0	1	6	5	6	0	1	0	0	21

(1) Type of control. Twenty-seven, or slightly less than 40 percent, of the transformed institutions were operated under denominational auspices. The number of institutions under public control was 24, and the number under independent sponsorship was 19. The highest number of two-year colleges affected in upward extension in a single year, by type of control, was eight for public (1967-68) and seven for both the independent (1969-70) and church-related (1967-68) colleges. All three institutional types had three years when they yielded no two-year institutions to a four-year status. In four different years the annual list of upward transfers included at least one from each institutional type of control.

(2) Type of student body. Slightly more than three out of four institutions involved in vertical extension had a coeducational student body. At least one coeducational two-year college was involved in an upward shift every year, except for 1971-72 and 1972-73, with a high of 15 recorded in 1967-68. Only three all-male student campuses were involved in upward extension with each in a different year and none in the past six years. The all-female colleges were involved in 13 institutional changes with a high of three (1967-68 and 1969-70) and a contribution in every year except for 1966-67 and 1972-73.

(3) Enrollment category. Over one-third (24) of the campuses involved in academic extension had less than 500 students enrolled but this enrollment range was involved in institutional elongation only once in the past four years of the survey period. Over 60 percent (44) of the revised institutions had an enrollment of less than 1,000 when the 20 ex-junior colleges in the 500-999 enrollment range were added. Eleven of the total 70 institutions had between 1,000-1,499 students when they sought a change in status. Eight institutions were found in the 1,500-1,999 and seven in the over 2,000 enrollment range.

(4) Academic calendar. Nearly two-thirds (46) of the surveyed institutions operated on the semester calendar system at the time of their academic transformation. From three to 13 colleges using that calendar were actively involved annually except for the span of 1971-73. Eighteen two-year institutions were on the quarter calendar format preceding their shift in status, while six institutions had a trimester program in operation at that time.

(5) Regional accreditation. The geographic distribution of the affected institutions, using the boundaries of the six regional accrediting associations, revealed that more than one-third (26) were concentrated in the Southern Association. The highest number of institutional transfers within an accrediting region in one year was six from the Southern Association. The large area covered by the North Central Association contributed 12 former two-year institutions. The Southern Association contributed two new four-year colleges annually on seven different occasions; the North Central association provided two or more elevated institutions during four different years. Five transformed institutions were located within the Middle States Association region. Only two revised colleges were in the area of the New England Association and none in the last six years. Just two junior colleges, at the time of their upward move, were located in the territory of the Western (none since 1965-66) and Northwest Associations. The total of institutions surveyed without regional accreditation was 21 or nearly 30 percent. In only one of the past four years (1971-72) had an unaccredited two-year college been involved in upward extension.

In summary, the modal former two-year institution would have undergone an upward change beginning with the 1968-69 academic year. The hypothetical institution would have operated with church affiliation and would have been regionally accredited by the Southern Association. The newly transformed college would have been located in North Carolina with less than 500 men and women attending classes on the semester system.

DISCUSSION

As previously noted, no attempt was made to identify or analyze the reasons underlying the upward academic shift of the 70 institutions profiled. However, it would generally appear that different combinations of factors, both internal and external, were likely involved for each affected institution.

Among the reasons that could be cited as promoting a two- to four-year college transfer during the past decade are these: desire for growth and increased financial support of the institution; desire for greater academic respectability and prestige by faculty, administrators and community at large; need for training programs of four years length such as teacher education; completion of four years of study elsewhere too expensive for students; state and local political pressures; increased public demands in the area and state for expanded college opportunities; meeting requirements of state-wide master plans for higher education; crowding at other state colleges; more economical to expand existing facilities than to construct new colleges; desire to increase economic impact and social-cultural betterment of the community area; and recommendations for expansion by outside consultants hired by the board of trustees.

Just what has directly contributed to the decline of two-year college upward extensions is not so easily discerned. However, a current look at the higher education scene may provide us with some explanation about the decreased activity. Glenny (1973) has isolated a number of pressures on higher education resultant from current and future social and economic trends. He listed the pressures as being those which arise from the actions of government and organized groups, and those which arise from more or less "natural" factors or forces. Many of these influences are unplanned by society and are also largely unrecognized and uncontrolled but all will have a profound influence on the entire system of postsecondary education. Some of the trends included by Glenny were the shift toward occupational and career training rather than general and liberal education; the decline of higher education as a growth industry; a new set of social priorities such as health care and environmental concerns which have displaced higher education to a lower level; a decreased volume and number of dollars for categorical support from the federal government; an increase in non-traditional means of acquiring an education; and a sharp drop in the number of college-age youth. Permeating many of these factors is an overall public disenchantment with higher education due, in large part, to the campus strife and student unrest that surfaced in the middle to late 1960s and continued into the early 1970s.

More specific explanations for the slow-up of institutional shifts to four-year status might include the financial pinch facing colleges today, the development of new institutional types, the recent establishment of statewide higher education planning commissions, and state statutes which prohibit upward extension of public junior colleges.

State higher education boards and their counterparts are not presently in a financial position to expand instructional programs when simultaneously faced with major problems like reducing or maintaining current levels of spending, avoiding the release of full-time faculty, and keeping raises in student tuition at a minimum. Some of the factors that accompany the addition of upper divisional study, for which additional money must be found, include increased library holdings, a more qualified and specialized faculty, increased student services, more administrators and a larger secretarial-clerical staff (thus increasing the appearance of Parkinson's Law), some expansion or rehabilitation of physical plant, and additional maintenance services and personnel.

The development of the upper-level college and university -- offering junior and senior year baccalaureate programs and in some cases graduate study -- has gained prominence in several states that also have well developed junior college systems. California, Illinois, and New York have all established state-supported upper-division institutions. Texas has six institutions of this type in the planning, building, or staffing stages between 1972 and 1975; Florida opened two additional upper-level institutions in the fall of 1973.

State planning commissions are influenced by various considerations and pressures to establish new institutions and locate them in areas previously without state-supported higher education. This activity has contributed to a decrease in support for expanding existing two-year colleges and reflects a "sharing of the wealth" of the state tax dollar for post-secondary education.

Statutes in a number of states prohibit the escalation of junior colleges or is unquestionably the policy regarding the upward extension of public two-year colleges. This legal stance or precedent has apparently been uniformly followed in the states of Washington, California, Nebraska, Iowa, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Illinois, Arizona, Texas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Tennessee, Minnesota, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and generally in states of sparse population. A doctrinaire idea has been proposed (M. M. Chambers, personal correspondence, July 21, 1973) for the position in many states which prohibits vertical extension of two-year colleges: "A junior college is so unique that it should never ever undertake to do anything other than what a junior college is supposed to do; and that no other kind of institution can ever ever do any part of what a junior college is supposed to do."

The major reason offered by the investigator for the lack of current expansion activity and accompanying sentiment among two-year college people is the success of the junior college itself. As has been true historically with all institutional types, the junior college has had to build constituent support for its institutional purposes and prove the worth of its existence. The expanded commitment by this twentieth century "Made in U. S. A." higher education institution to its educational mission has accelerated its overall stability and maturity and gained it academic respectability. These advances have lessened the desire on the part of two-year colleges to become part of the older more established form of higher education -- the four-year college. In short, it would appear that the junior college publics feel a more complete identify of their own and are rapidly gaining in the goal of seeing the two-year institution recognized and accepted as a permanent and full partner in the postsecondary scene.

CONCLUSIONS

In the introduction three primary questions were posed regarding the rate of change of former two-year colleges, characteristics of two-year colleges that had reached four-year status, and the overall propensity of the junior college to actively seek academic elevation. Question one: Has a rapid expansion of two-year college elongations taken place in the past ten years? It was reported here that 70 two-year institutions, an average of seven annually, had become four-year colleges. This average is substantially consistent with the annual averages reported in the literature review on upward extending institutions: Eells and Martorana (average of 8), Reynolds (average of 7.8), Schultz and Stickler (average of 6.5), National Science Board (average of 6.8), and Beeler (averages of 7.2 and 7). These surveys covered different lengths of time, were conducted over the past 21 years, and included data on upward extending institutions since 1945. In the decade surveyed in this report, the overall average of 7 annual upward extensions was exceeded during four of the 10 years but not since 1969-70. The actual number of colleges affected had declined yearly during the six-year period from 1967-68 through 1972-73.

The second question dealt with the frequency of appearance or combination of institutional characteristics in academic elongation such as type of control and student enrollment. The number of colleges affected that were under church control was at a proportion higher than the percentage of such colleges in the overall total during a like span of years. A disproportionately high percentage of campuses with enrollments under 500 were also involved in upward extension when compared to a similar breakdown of statistics for all two-year colleges. Almost one out of every three of the institutions surveyed did not hold regional accreditation. That proportion was below the level of regional accreditation held by two-year colleges in general during the same ten-year period. It can be stated, based on the data reported here, that the combination of the institutional characteristics of church-affiliated control, enrollment of under 500 students, and lack of regional accreditation were all present in a higher degree among affected institutions than that found in two-year colleges generally during a similar period of years. There is some indication, although not as convincing, that institutions which might seek a future academic elevation would also be likely to have women only on campus and operate on the quarter calendar system at the time of their upward shift.

The final question had to do with whether the junior college is actually guilty of the propensity of seeking a higher academic format. The percentage of two-year colleges eligible annually for transformation that actually followed that pattern has not been provided here. It is well known, however, that the total number of two-year institutions from the national total eligible for an upward shift has steadily decreased. In conclusion, then, from the data presented that dealt with the annual number of transformations and the confirming nature of the related literature, it would be difficult to describe the two-year college as an institution that actively and consistently seeks academic extension to a four-year college status.

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