



# leadership

## abstracts

### GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES REQUIRED OF COLLEGE LEADERS

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Post-industrial information society has taken root. What had seemed distant projections of futurists are now the facts of a global economy and geopolitical scene being fundamentally transformed.

It is not just the pace of change that has escalated dramatically—witness that the facsimile machine has gone from exotic contraption to universal appliance in six months, but also the substance of the change is remarkable and far-reaching. East-West bloc relations have been irreversibly transformed. Debtor and creditor nations have reversed roles, and North America is about to be reduced to the third largest economic power in an overhauled global economy.

The economic restructuring now underway poses serious threats to the fortunes of both the United States and Canada. Both countries are vulnerable because they share serious productivity problems, have basic technological weaknesses, and have demonstrated little ability for government and industry to work together. Neither invests adequately in research and development, and, worse still, both have terribly neglected their human resources—traditionally treating labor as a cost to be contained rather than as an asset to be nurtured.

Unless these problems are resolved, living standards in both countries will inevitably decline to reflect their inability to compete effectively in a world economy. Their natural advantages will have been eroded, and recovering their competitiveness will not be easy, particularly, as long as prevailing values of instant gratification and greed lead to leveraged buyouts and mergers rather than to solutions to growing joblessness, drug abuse, crime, and declining literacy and job skills.

The United States is slowly addressing some of these issues but is slow to grasp the perilous position in which it finds itself. Canada has been lulled into complacency by the Free Trade Agreement. Consequently, North America risks being isolated between the juggernaut of a unified Europe and an Asian alliance led by Japan.

#### The Impact on Colleges

It is a fair question to ask how these macroeconomic and geopolitical changes affect community colleges. Indeed, far from being abstractions confined to daily news reports, they have direct impact on these institutions. Colleges are both confronted with serious challenges and presented with enormous opportunities by the current reordering of the world economy.

**The Challenge.** Colleges must now earn their way in an increasingly demanding, consumer-driven society. Colleges have no monopoly as the providers of training and job skills required of workers to survive in the emerging global economy. Students are older and more

discerning, and they choose their providers of education and training on the basis of institutional performance in demonstrating real and marketable outcomes. Business and industry invest in training and retraining using the same bottom line analysis of outcomes. Colleges must change and respond to this challenge or be relegated a limited mandate, such as basic skills and job entry, or simply be seen as irrelevant and lose public support.

**The Opportunity.** Nonetheless, increased economic competitiveness also represents an enormous opportunity for colleges who can demonstrate the quality of their programs in quantifiable terms. As business and government in the United States and Canada conclude that increases in productivity required to compete internationally can only be gained by massive investment in research, development, and workforce training, colleges stand to benefit tremendously from that investment.

However, colleges must change to take advantage of this opportunity. Curricula must be updated to be responsive to changing economic conditions. Faculty must remain current in their fields or adapt to new roles. Effective instructional practices need to be identified and implemented, including widespread use of instructional technology. Above all, student outcomes must be demonstrated by such measures as retention and completion rates, placement rates, student and employer satisfaction, quantifiable increases in knowledge and skills, and educational and career growth.

Also, perspectives and values must change in order for colleges to respond to the opportunity. Colleges, despite being rooted in local communities, must develop truly global perspectives with respect to the services they provide and the clients they serve. Even more challenging, colleges need to evaluate their efforts according to the educational standards of the world, not the local community. To be relevant in the emerging global order, colleges cannot seek simply to satisfy their local boards, funding agencies, or even constituents. Rather, they must assure that the education and training they provide competes effectively with that provided by the West Germans, British, Japanese, and French, as well as the "four tigers" of Southeast Asia.

#### Recommendations for College Leadership

More than ever, enlightened leadership is needed to transform today's colleges into ones that are truly world-class institutions that assure the competitiveness of the United States and Canada in the global economic race. That leadership needs to overcome obstacles such as aging staff with outdated skills, collective bargaining agreements that make change difficult, the natural tendency to resist change, and old values and ways of

doing things that inhibit creative approaches.

That leadership needs to create institutional climates that encourage, support, and reward innovation and entrepreneurship. It needs to involve all staff as stakeholders in the organization and to nurture individual development and renewal. Such leadership must be value-based and global in perspective, and it must respond directly to new economic realities.

**Adopt a Larger World View.** Colleges must become less parochial. Rather than focusing exclusively on their local communities, they must define the community to be served as the nation and the world. Leaders must embody qualities which encourage global perspectives to permeate their institutions. They must teach the relationship between global issues and local effects. They must educate the members of their boards to look beyond the value of college services to the local tax base and see the connections between international events and local consequences, such as plant closures.

**Encourage and Support Leadership Development.** Chief executive officers need to participate in and support ongoing leadership development activities for their college leadership teams, including themselves, members of their boards, senior administrators, and faculty leaders. Such efforts should focus on developing understanding of the dynamics of the fast-changing world in which their colleges compete. Broadening experiences should include cultural seminars and international travel organized as fact-finding and consulting trips. In addition, leaders should take courses in ethics, language, and business, and not limit their continuing development to schools of education.

**Monitor Staffing.** One of the principal responsibilities of college leaders is to assure that those hired by the college as the next generation of faculty, staff, and administrators are prepared for the twenty-first century, not clones of existing staff and other "good old boys." New staff must be competent in foreign languages, current in the use of educational technology, and possessed of a broad world view. Leaders must assure that new staff are the best available, not those who fit most comfortably within existing molds.

Hiring should also be used as a vehicle to create staff diversity. Minorities should be actively recruited and hired, even in communities where few minorities reside. Diversity that leads to understanding is the goal, not matching staff and population demographics.

**Promote Partnerships.** Leaders must develop partnership with other colleges, other segments of education, government agencies, and business and industry to assist common goals. The success of the entire educational system must be the primary interest of all participants, and each segment must place common interests above self-interests. Rather than protecting turf, colleges must be willing to develop partnerships with other colleges, for instance, by subcontracting services to replicate successful training programs for major corporations at multiple sites to assure national quality control. Partnerships with the private sector must be formed to provide the training students need to compete internationally. Partnerships with foreign governments to assist their development should be pursued for the mutual benefits that accrue to such efforts.

**Broaden the College Curriculum.** Leaders must work with their faculty to broaden the college curricu-

lum to impart larger world views to all students, not just those intending to transfer to universities. All students should receive greater dosages of foreign language, literature, and history—not just from the western world. Student and faculty exchange programs should be expanded in number and scope to include Asia, Africa, and South America. Cross-disciplinary seminars on intercultural matters should be included in all curricula.

**Promote the Professional Development of Faculty.** College leaders must assure that their faculty are involved in continual professional development to increase their subject mastery, to use educational technology, to broaden their perspectives, and to learn new skills required to compete effectively in the changing environment. Such programs should receive generous support as integral to college development, and faculty accomplishments should be noted and rewarded. A major component of faculty development programs should be overseas assignments and faculty exchanges.

**Work to Improve Graduate School Education.** As employers, college leaders must work with graduate programs to assure that their students have the skills sought by world-class colleges in their staffs. Graduate programs should require proficiency in foreign languages, intercultural seminars and experiences abroad, and cross-disciplinary courses in professional schools outside the college of education. Preparation needs to be updated to reflect the current demands of the international arena.

Colleges in both the United States and Canada have important roles to play in assuring the economic competitiveness of their respective nations. College leaders must develop enlightened world views if they are to assure that their colleges respond effectively to the challenges posed by the changing world economic order. However, individual pockets of excellent colleges are not a sufficient response to the challenge, even though they can serve as catalysts to inspire others. Leadership is required to assure that all community colleges join forces to take advantage of the window of opportunity opened by the otherwise menacing emergence of a global economy.

To survive, colleges must demonstrate their effectiveness in equipping their students to compete internationally. To prosper, they must join with partners throughout the world to assure that the enlightened self-interests of colleges, businesses, and governments assist the common interests of the global community.

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Volume 2, number 11  
July 1989