

WHAT IF
Community and
Technical Colleges
DIDN'T EXIST
?



FACTC Focus 2003

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Community: Where **ALIENS** and **GURUS** Meet

By Angi Caster,
Highline Community College

Community in Community College? It'sTHEM, yeah, those... CLIENTS, those....CUSTOMERS . . . our STUDENTS! I want to talk about Jackie, the divorced mom who supported herself and her son as a prostitute at night so she could get her G.E.D. during the day and got the A.A. *and* published in the Arcturus literary magazine at the same time; about J.B. and Chris who came into my Freshman Seminar fresh out of prison, sporting electric ankle collars since home arrest only allowed them out to be in college, slinking, their trained eyes cast down, into a class their naive but earnest instructor had grouped intentionally in mixed cultures/ethnicities—while their prison guards carefully segregated them *by* race; J.B. and Chris taught me more that quarter than I taught them!

I want to talk about the Indonesian Chinese international student who vanished from a 10-credit coordinated study but was staying active in the online discussion web until I finally tracked her down-- the Asian Stock Market Crash had eliminated her family's financial support, forcing her to hire out on the black market, paid under the table as a nanny so she could have room and board. She finished that course online, including her group project, and that little community helped her pass the course with a 3.0.

And the big blond guy, the ballplayer in my developmental Writing 60 class who used \$20 words and a lively intelligence in class but strangely wrote just two lines of pre-primer "sentences" for his first "essay"--until I copped to the fact that he Could Not Spell Correctly and, hence, since bad spelling had always gotten the most attention, he obediently wrote only simple words he could memorize. I bought him a mechanical spellchecker and a dictionary for bad spellers and told him, **Get Thee to Word Processing!** His next paper rocked and he skipped Writing 91 altogether. That class also included a mother of eleven children, two of whom had been taken away from her by DSHS, who celebrated her 60th birthday in our class (the students brought the cake to

surprise her—and to thank her for holding secret “office hours” for our classroom community on the 4th floor of the library every day at 1 p.m. for grammar check and peer review feedback; her own community—her Tlingit tribe was putting her through school so she could be a social worker on the reservation, a job she was already doing but for which the government required paperwork).

Two of my students finished courses with me while living out of their cars, homeless due to job loss or being kicked out of the house by parents. One of my Research Writing students—21 years old-- did a paper on breast cancer because her aunt had it, and in the process of writing, discovered a lump in her own breast which proved cancerous; she took an incomplete to have surgery.

Does this sound like Jerry Springer? Oprah? No, this is the community college of the last ten years. This is the place where you can start over, with no checkered past, no history hunting you down--but where you are alien, where your instructors expect you to “get it” but where you feel unsure of even the most basic questions like: What’s a Scantron? The culture we have built here, historically and traditionally, is more like a *cult* to them, complete with incomprehensible passwords (computer lab, COMPASS, ASSET; CGG; D/G; ABE; AA, AAS, AS), gurus (librarians and professors), rituals (citations in esoterically varied styles like APA, CMS, CBE, MLA, each of which changes annually to anoint the initiated), languages (academic journal article structure & vocabulary) and a bible—the quarterly schedule—which, in some ultimate irony, a reading expert clocked at reading level **16: post B.A.**

As the little girl (an actress who herself died of some esoteric disease before she was ten) in the old movie *Poltergeist* said of the undead, “They’re here!!!” And I am *glad* because in an American world of apathy where nobody votes, of unreality shows where tv broadcasts war—live-- back to back with “Temptation Island”, I see the reality of the American Dream alive and will every single day, and I can hear their voices grow strong in assertion and see the very first generation of their families go to college--and graduate-- and I know it is still possible to make a difference, even today, in *my community*, here, at the college.

One STUDENT at a TIME!

Tim Culler,
Renton Technical College

If Community Colleges didn't exist, I would not be writing this to you. You see, I was not a particularly good student in high school. I was there because I HAD to be there, not because I wanted to be there. After my Vietnam-era military service, and a stint of working in the real world, I decided that I needed to go back to school if I wanted to get ahead. My high school transcript would not get me into a university, but there was a community college near where I lived and worked, and they were willing to give me a chance, so I took a class. I got an "A" in that class. I have had lots of classes since then, at various institutions, ending up with an undergraduate degree (cum laude) and an MBA. I don't remember all of the grades I got for every class, at every school, but I remember the grade I received in that first class at the community college because it made me believe in ME. I COULD succeed at going back to school! Community college was NOT like high school; I had an instructor who wanted to be there, who loved his field, and who was motivated to share his knowledge with ME.

I used my education to succeed in a career, retiring after 23 years of changing the world in my field. Now, guess what? I am an instructor at a technical college, sharing MY knowledge and enthusiasm with group after group of adults and kids who would not have made it in the front door of our elitist university but all of whom have brains and potential, and I just need to prove it to them. I just need to help them to believe in themselves, the way that my first community college instructor made me believe in myself.

I could talk about statistics and note that our university system can't even begin to accommodate the numbers of students served by the community college system. I could talk about how not having the community and technical colleges offering a way into skilled jobs and trades would force a return to the guild system, where if you didn't have a "connection," you could never get into a skilled trade. I could speculate that this could lead to the erasing of the middle class and leave us with hordes of people feeling trapped

in the lower class with no path to work their way out of it... but I hope that this is unnecessary.

We DO have a community college system, and all we have to do is focus on the right priorities. Our first priority in the community and technical colleges is to offer people a chance to change their lives, then to give them the confidence that they can do it, and then finally, to teach them some skills and techniques that they can use to succeed in their chosen career field.

As for me, I'm still out there changing the world, only now I do it one student at a time...

A Call to Arms –	MORE
Teachers, LESS	Technology

By Paul Haeder, Spokane Falls Community College

Education may well be, as of right, the instrument whereby every individual, in a society like our own, can gain access to any kind of discourse. But we well know that in its distribution, in what it permits and in what it prevents, it follows the well-trodden battle-lines of social conflict. Every educational system is a political means of maintaining or of modifying the appropriation of discourse, with the knowledge and the powers it carries with it.

-- Michel Foucault, "The Discourse on Language."

The future of education -- within this new paradigm of more microchip sizzle for the buck, more on-line correspondence classes -- includes labeling students as demanding customers and instructors as obstacles.

Human face-to-face relationships – those that engender respect, consensus thinking, articulate sharing of differences, and engaged human intellectual play, as well as conflict – are becoming extinct. Do we need to construct more tele-courses and packaged video lectures? Or should live teachers be the last bastion of human social-dynamics, the last flesh and bones vestige of human contact?

We are a nation of snipping, screaming, disrespectful people who cannot understand the true meaning of deep thought and sound critical inquiry. We tend to see things from our narrow lens and then apply our splintered value system to the rest of the

planet. We like the suburbs and exurbs, gated communities, demarcated lines of escape from the real problems of the planet.

Additionally, Americans believe that all opinions are worthy; some think learning in school is irrelevant. There are no important things to study and grapple with unless a measurable outcome and employment benefit are attached. Philosophy, ethics, history be damned.

Teachers should never stand by and be inoculated against our main enterprise – experience, knowledge, and human dignity whipped up in small classes. We need more battalions of teachers, not fewer. We must protect this human enterprise so students in Biology 101, Computer Science 201 and English 99 can understand that life is not borne from might makes right or through technological tools. Human life is in the mind, expressions derived from collective consciousness and collective actions drawn fresh from a pool of primordial undertones and civil respect.

Student-teacher interchange is this moody, flesh and blood, psycho-dramatic intercourse of ideas, feelings, and cognition. We must cover more ground in face-to-face classes, especially in these times of the old, inequitable paradigm of natural and human resource waste sputtering its last immoral, greed-laden cough for one or two more decades.

The future of education should include more face-to-face contact, not less, and more variety, more funky themes, and more untraditional instructors, all of which is bound to make any college administrator's modem freeze.

In this era of efficient globalization-exploitation, there is so much more that we are able to contend with in our flesh and blood courses in history, political science, biology, writing: segregationists running our country; an asleep-at-the-intellectual-wheel president slashing and burning our last natural reserves; hyper-American consumerism creating social, economic and environmental inequities throughout the world; geo-politics misunderstood and fortified with biological and nuclear weapons.

Over 20 years of teaching, I have been faced with more and more anti-social students. These are people who have been corporate-raised to believe that all things in life have requisite free-market spin. Many of my students have never experienced one-

on-one work with their K-12 teachers, haven't had the personal touch with employers, and have failed to venture far beyond their niches, cliques, clans.

Facilitating this high-tech movement in schools to separate the student from the live classroom is the last thing we need in this fractured, bifurcated society.

Students have fallen through the cracks yet are in dire need of social work triage beyond compare. We have people who have so many personal, emotional problems who can benefit immeasurably in live classroom settings. Where else can they face Female Genital Mutilation, Sweatshop Labor or the School of the Americas as subjects to research and ponder over?

And the dinosaur ruddering the ship of fools? Ms. Living and Breathing teacher, not the cathode ray tube or flat-screen.

We have students who see themselves as the center of the universe, who see all others as "them" or the "other," and who become surly when they are faced with multiculturalism, multidimensional, multifaceted learning modalities.

The live workshop – discussion, writing and reading intensive – is where the repair can occur.

Profusely intimidating and unaccommodating to the corporate or populist norm, the live classroom brings tears, blood, sweat, and a mind hammerlock. Emotional ups and downs. The spittle and pap and sometimes inspiring learning and self-reflection.

Life (corporate, bottom line, call-center America) has taught students that humans are replaceable and that technology and a systems approach to thinking are the saviors of their crumbling world.

Do we need more distance learning, tele-courses, on-line instruction, and virtual reality classrooms to the detriment of real classrooms? Do we need administrators and legislators treating students as customers in a battle of competition for more students?

No.

Reading skills, writing prowess, and an awareness of why we have to think globally but act locally have tanked out over the past 20 years -- from the student base all the way up to high-paid administrator-coaches. We need as a society to gain back these principles.

We need people to respect communities, to respect the tug and pull of their fellow humans in this grave world of pugnacious reality. I need my students in live settings to converse and argue with air-heads, ex-junkies, geriatrics, gays, lesbians, born-again, malcontents, miscreants, professionals, retrogrades, neo-pagans, valedictorians, drop-outs, returning professionals, divorcees, skin-heads, jar-heads, egg-heads, and all the other subgroups within this diversity training camp called community college.

And out of a pattern of lies, art weaves the truth.

---D. H. Laurence

I've known rivers;
Ancient, dusky rivers
My soul has grown deep like rivers.

---Langston Hughes

What is the **COMMUNITY** College?

By Joe Safdie, Lake Washington
Technical College

“Being educated puts one almost on a level with the commercial classes,” wrote Oscar Wilde in a typical ironic mode. This pretty much summed up how I felt at the beginning of my community college teaching career in 1994. Even though I’d spent more than a decade working in “the public sector” as a typesetter and graphic designer, I still felt my natural place as a teacher was the university – snobbishness from memories of graduate school, I guess -- and was frustrated that my lack of a Ph.D. had apparently “doomed” me to college-level teaching.



Oscar Wilde

All I can say now is, thank God for lifelong learning: if there were no community colleges, they'd have to be invented.

In thinking about how the community college today might be changing, it's important, I think, to remember what it's always been. A little research proved surprising, and made me realize that the two-year college has always been unique – non-traditional, meeting diverse needs and constituencies – and that therefore, its recent changes have been less radical and severe than I'd thought.

As early as 1835, private academies that served the needs of specialized groups, with elements of secondary and post-secondary curriculum that provided terminal education, vocational study, and transfer credit, were operating in this country (Staples 260). The social and curricular changes after the Civil War, including the educational needs of large numbers of immigrants, led to the Morrill Acts of 1862 and 1877, which provided for land-grant universities, “agricultural and mechanical colleges” that made college education available “to a hugely increased percentage of the population” and that “broaden[ed] and specialize[d] the college curriculum in many ways” (Connors qtd. in Staples 260).

Sound familiar? Indeed, says Katherine Staples, “Social and economic changes have always shaped the two-year college” (261). In this century, two such historical events have led to the community college as we know it: the high unemployment of the Depression (and a corresponding need for more vocational education), and the GI Bill of 1944, which would, says Staples, “reshape all of American higher education, providing more democratic access and more curricular options than ever before” (261). The first baby boom after World War II also contributed to the growth of two-year colleges, again to meet educational needs for more transfer credit and career education.

The college's capabilities to do what the university can't, then, include the abilities to

- **Respond** rapidly to regional employment and demographic trends
- **Develop** quality curriculum tied to those needs

- **Link** easily with other academic programs to provide a more tailored approach to students with specific needs; and, most importantly,
- **Provide** open access to these diverse offerings

It's important to realize, though, that this has always been the historical mission of two-year colleges, and that today's circumstances – among them, downsizing, technological change, and increased entry-level performance standards – fit right into it. Recent educational services such as online classes, self-supporting international programs, short-term certificates, non-credit classes and learning communities can be seen, then, as natural responses to societal needs – part of what we're supposed to be doing.

What I've always valued in my teaching at Lake Washington, for example, is the chance to teach older students, some – native speakers and recent immigrants -- who already have degrees and are coming back to school to learn a new career, and some taking college classes for the first time in their 30s or 40s. These students and their diverse needs challenge me to develop my teaching techniques and methodologies in ways that 18-22 year-olds at universities probably wouldn't. Our recent introduction of a technical communication certificate program has even helped me with that snobbishness I mentioned earlier – seeing writing as an act that bridges different disciplines, and not privileging one kind (such as the literary) over another (such as the scientific) (Little 274).

What could disrupt this happy harmony? Lots of things. Meager state and tax support has caused tuition to our colleges to rise dramatically the last two years, making them out of reach for many people; four-year universities are taking less transfer students; the lack of good faculty pay and steady increments coupled with the extra stress of teaching at over-enrolled campuses might drive lots of good teachers to the public sector – or back to it, in my case. Plus, the old “junior college” stigma of being repositories for underachievers lingers, I'm sure, in many minds. But right now, I'm just glad to be working – at all! – but especially in a place that, historically, has always been receptive and responsive to educational needs – “first responders,” if you will, to the stresses caused by short-sighted

government policies. That, plus an occasional dose of Oscar Wilde-style cynicism, helps keep me going.

---Joe Safdie

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Special Section: A Tighter Focus

This FACTC Focus features a segment that's more informational than usual. Since we are the only publication directed at all Community and Technical College faculty, we thought it appropriate to provide some data that may be both interesting and thought provoking. On the following pages, you'll find out how many FTEs we've garnered over the years, how much full time tenured faculty earn, how much college presidents (and chancellors or CEOs) earn, how much adjunct earn (in theory) and how much tuitions have risen for students and how that compares to increases in the minimum wage.

Data on following pages provided by The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, FACTC representatives and The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries



How Big of A **LOAD** Do We Carry?

By Mark Doerr, Spokane Falls CC

If community and technical colleges didn't exist, almost three million full time students would have had to find their education elsewhere, and that's just since 1978.

And the number of students who utilized community and technical colleges has increased steadily since 1981. For some reason, there was big dip in FTEs in the late 1970s. Perhaps some graybeard besides me can explain that, but other than that demographic oddity, the numbers have been going up.

And some are asking, should they? Should we continue to try and serve everyone who can walk through the door, or should we try to do more quality. Another way of putting that is, should we continue to give away services that ought to be paid for by someone.

Whatever the answer is to that vexing question, we do continue to serve and grow. And based on population estimates in the K-12 schools, we will be growing even more in the future.

Someone's going to have to decide if the state is willing to pay for that growth.

State Supported FTEs by course intent and total

Year	Transfer	Workforce	Basic Skills/Developmental	Total
1978	37,618	52,691	7,450	97,759
1979	40,927	56,357	10,495	107,779
1980	42,672	55,263	12,382	110,317
1981	39,208	48,443	7,946	95,597
1982	38,076	45,771	7,957	91,804
1983	38,080	45,950	8,925	92,955
1984	38,199	46,378	9,903	94,480
1985	38,303	46,066	10,442	94,811
1986	39,367	44,737	11,556	95,660
1987	39,693	43,951	12,711	96,355
1988	39,412	43,937	13,858	97,207
1989	40,665	44,216	14,050	98,931
1990	41,274	44,583	14,666	100,523
1991	45,802	48,434	15,559	109,795
1992	45,561	47,782	16,476	109,819
1993	47,089	44,912	19,034	111,035
1994	47,972	45,124	20,307	113,403
1995	47,903	47,571	22,531	118,005
1996	46,090	47,937	24,488	118,515
1997	44,773	46,452	26,271	117,496
1998	45,419	46,902	28,367	120,688
1999	46,426	48,412	29,600	124,438
2000	47,808	48,836	30,765	127,409
2001	51852	48893	32350	133,095
2002	56101	50892	32245	139,238
				2,717,114

What A

BARGAIN !

Mark Doerr, Spokane Falls CC

Find out how salaries shake out around the state by looking at the attached handy chart. Full Time Faculty Salary Comparison for 2002-03 (data on all salary charts from State Board for Community and Technical Colleges).

District	Average Salary*	Average Starting Salary	Masters W/13 yrs Experience	Highest Salary	Lowest Salary
Tacoma	\$52,443	\$41,740	\$47,000	\$67,600	\$33,000
Shoreline	51,495	51,640	51,640	54,199	38,891
Yakima Valley	50,379	50,202	51,119	53,127	47,277
Highline	50,240	45,889	52,143	61,523	41,825
Bellingham	50,178	46,559	51,497	61,862	42,071
Green River	49,843	40,931	52,113	54,402	35,403
Edmonds	49,514	43,275	50,215	53,930	38,435
Bellevue	49,329	39,374	55,457	55,457	33,905
Lower Columbia	48,896	40,830	42,886	57,537	37,026
Centralia	48,828	42,008	43,579	55,349	31,001
Spokane District	48,739	40,509	49,927	56,658	39,730
Olympic	48,540	43,260	42,340	57,072	33,408
Wenatchee	47,909	44,917	53,296	53,296	34,144
Seattle District	47,901	42,663	44,889	56,641	39,405
Clark	47,740	38,441	48,660	58,960	37,700
Walla Walla	47,510	39,794	42,726	53,426	36,040
Renton	47,487	45,726	51,462	55,141	30,659
Lake Washington	47,376	44,760	52,523	53,047	38,291
Cascadia	47,278	44,666	45,000	52,845	35,000
Bates**	46,854	49,975	52,703	79,597	34,076
Columbia Basin	46,095	41,669	43,136	70,617	35,758
Everett	45,658	40,817	44,872	54,264	40,417
So. Puget Sound	45,302	42,192	42,192	57,363	40,506
Skagit Valley	45,156	39,073	48,205	52,298	39,073
Grays Harbor	44,864	41,709	41,318	53,830	31,412
Whatcom	44,823	37,914	36,394	56,211	30,754
Big Bend	44,801	41,849	45,520	52,128	33,406
Peninsula	44,316	36,912	41,539	56,510	36,068
Pierce District	43,386	38,390	44,914	58,874	36,815
Clover Park**	40,109	45,249	65,531	65,531	42,462

*These reflect weighted average instructional faculty salary levels reported to the State Board as of Jan. 27, 2003

**Majority of faculty on eleven/twelve month contracts and are not included in the average. Average salary includes only 9/10 month faculty contracts.

A quick look will tell you Bates College wins the prize for the highest listed salary. Those top salaries can be a bit misleading, though, because sometimes salaries

are established in a way so no one can get to the top right away because of limitations like PIUs needed or time served at an institution. I looked through the Bates salaries and couldn't find any faculty member who actually earned \$79,597.

But my research methods were a sort of hunt and peck system, so I could be wrong. Bates did have several faculty in the \$70,000 plus range and several more in the \$60,000 plus range.

Columbia Basin had only one faculty member earning the top salary; that is, my humble search only found one.

The averages could tell us more, but even they may be a bit deceptive. If a college has a lot of "older" faculty who have been around for several years, that will obviously raise the average without making the salaries higher than other colleges adjusting for time served.

But what does it mean to be paid well?

One way to find out is to check purchasing power. Can, for example, community and technical college faculty afford homes in the Seattle area? Sure, but not everywhere in the Seattle area. An online *Seattle Times* site lists Seattle area neighborhoods and shows what kind of income a buyer needs to purchase a house in that area. Of the 99 neighborhoods listed, ctc faculty could only afford homes in 29. And that was faculty at the TOP of the pay scale in two of the better paying Seattle area c & t colleges.

I didn't take a look where homes in the Seattle area are affordable to faculty in the lower end salary range, but you can compare yourself by looking at the Seattle Times website that shows how much income it takes to be a homeowner in various parts of Seattle. For example, you have to earn at least \$54,929 to be able to buy a house in the Silver Lake area. To buy a house in Kirkland, you have to earn \$72,132 a year. For more details, go to the following website for your downer of the day.

The url for that site is: (<http://seattletimes.newsource.com/homes/compare/>)

It would be interesting to see how well community and technical college faculty full time salaries stack up against salaries in other fields with comparable education requirements.

We can show you how part time salaries compare, but here's a warning. No one actually makes these salaries. They're what a part timer would make if said part timer worked a full load at the part time rate. This is the chart for 2002:

District	FY2002 Annualized** Average Part Time Faculty Salaries
Bates	41,908
Bellevue	25,346
Bellingham	38,256
Big Bend	23,665
Cascadia	25,069
Centralia	23,266
Clark	21,997
Clover Park	27,600
Columbia Basin	20,799
Edmonds	25,542
Everett	26,925
Grays Harbor	20,918
Green River	26,214
Highline	25,625
Lake Washington	38,680
Lower Columbia	24,453
Olympic	22,477
Peninsula	23,541
Pierce	21,585
Renton	33,931
Seattle	33,070
Shoreline	28,421
Skagit Valley	17,112
So. Puget Sound	22,557
Spokane	23,500
Tacoma	27,720
Walla Walla	22,514
Wenatchee	22,764
Whatcom	22,660
Yakima	21,510
System Total	25,613

As you can see, Bates is tops in the state followed by Lake Washington, Bellingham and Renton. Skagit Valley is at the bottom preceded by Columbia Basin and Grays Harbor.

Here's how salaries stack up for community and technical college presidents and district heads:

District	Prez Salary	Years Service present position
Bates	\$132,152	2
Bellevue	140,500	14
Bellingham	123,420	2
Big Bend	128,000	8
Cascadia	133,887	5
Centralia	138,000	1
Clark	155,000	0
Clover Park	137,800	6
Columbia Basin	132,173	8
District 6 (Seattle)	156,463	5
District 11 (Pierce)	128,173	4
District 17 (Spok)	\$166,000	1
Edmonds	140,000	7
Everett	126,153	3
Grays Harbor	115,177	14
Green River	135,000	20
Highline	131,250	2
Lake Washington	132,455	4
Lower Columbia	130,142	6
North Seattle	127,924	2
Olympic	152,000	1
Peninsula	123,403	2
Pierce	119,626	4
Renton	130,662	2
Seattle Central	137,961	16
Shoreline	135,000	2
Skagit Valley	145,000	0
So. Puget Sound	126,300	23
South Seattle	126,462	0
Spokane Com C	124,440	3
Spokane Falls	124,440	2
Tacoma	140,000	6
Walla Walla	134,500	19
Wenatchee	125,500	1
Whatcom	130,000	19
Yakima Valley	113,220	8

CEO multi-campus
 CEO multi-campus
 CEO multi-campus

Someone with some time on her hands might do some comparison with other areas. For example, in Spokane, the superintendent of School District 81 – Spokane's

main school district, earns \$159,300 a year according to the Bloom website that lists salaries for all state employees. (<http://www.lbloom.net/zse02.html>)

Louis Bloom, the man who created the website that lists salaries for state employees, has received a fair amount of flack from aggrieved state employees who think their salaries shouldn't be public information, but our salaries are public information and there's not much we can do about it other than look at them and, perhaps, weep.

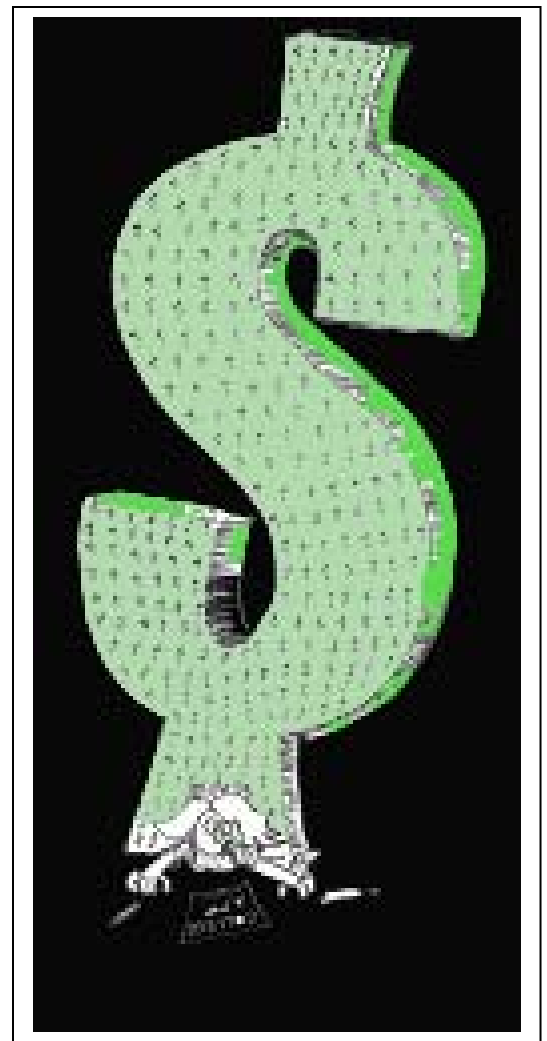
Is Tuition too	HIGH	?	By Mark Doerr, Spokane Falls CC
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Some news worth paying attention tells us, according to Shweta Govindarajan, writing in *The Los Angeles Times*, that college tuition and expenses have risen 40 percent in the past few years at four year colleges and universities, but rising costs is a problem at community and technical colleges too.

I think we ought to ask how much more we can raise tuition before we price students out of a college education, even at the community and technical college level.

Maybe we've already done that.

The generation that's cutting the state support for tuition is the same generation that benefited from state support. I happen to be one of those beneficiaries. I'm enough of a geezer to remember when I could work about forty hours at minimum wage to pay tuition for one quarter of college. That added up to about 120 hours at minimum wage for a year's worth of college



tuition at the community college I attended. I was sort of proud of the fact that I could pay for my own tuition (ignoring, of course, the huge part of the tuition iceberg the state paid for).

This was a good deal for me and, I like to think, a good deal for society. Those who were in the generation that reached college age in the 1950s and 1960s were baby boomers in another sense. The number of college graduates was unprecedented in any culture in history. One has to assume those college graduates provided huge benefits both in the quantity and quality of ideas that has helped every aspect of our society blossom.

The irony is that the recipients of all that educational largesse are the ones cutting off access for the current generation. Our motto could be, “lucky us, screw them.”

And the increases are enough to make a family finance planner cry.

How many consumers would put up with a fourteen percent increase in the cost of, say, their annual grocery prices, without raising hell? Even if they didn't raise hell, they would have to make some serious budget decisions. And the lower a family resides in the economic grid, the tougher those choices become.

I'm guessing college students and their parents are making similar decisions. When prices go up at the universities, there are always the community colleges where tuitions are less. But what happens to the students on the edge, the ones who already were going to a community or technical college because they couldn't afford the regional universities? What about the students whose parents were making just a bit too much money to allow the student to qualify for financial aid?

Even though demand continues to grow at community and technical colleges, many potential students can't afford it. That's an assumption based on economic reality. My colleagues who teach economics call it elasticity of demand and anyone who sells goods know prices can only increase so much before demand drops significantly enough to wreck the entire enterprise.

When the price of college goes up, we may still get enough students to keep the system going, but we're still cutting out access.

I say WE: the ones who were beneficiaries of inexpensive college educations. We are the educators, the legislators, the voters who are cutting state support that helped us make it through college.

I asked the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to provide me with the tuition rates at the state’s community and technical colleges over the past few years to get some kind of take on how much tuitions have increased.

And, to get a picture of the impact of these increases, I compared the tuition increases to increases in the state minimum wage. A student now has to work seventy more hours to pay for one year’s tuition at a community or technical college in the state of Washington than she or he had to work in the 1992-93 era. (see chart A below)

There has been a fairly steady increase in the gap between minimum wage pay and tuition since then and I assume this lag has increased since I was a community college student in the sixties (SBCTC figures didn’t go back that far—apparently I went to college before recorded history).

But we can look at the 1992-93 academic year and see that tuition was \$999 for the year. In the 2003-2004 academic year, tuition is \$2142. That adds 70 hours a year a student has to work (at minimum wage) to pay tuition and fees.

70 hours. That would have paid for almost two quarters of tuition back in the dark ages when I was a community college student.

Academic Year	Tuition & Fees	min wage per hr	Hours to earn Tuition
2003-04	2,142	7.01	305.56
2002-03	1,983	6.90	287.39
2001-02	1,743	6.72	259.38
2000-01	1,641	6.50	252.46
1999-00	1,584	5.70	277.89
1998-99	1,515	5.15	294.17
1997-98	1,458	5.15	283.11
1996-97	1,401	4.90	285.92
1995-96	1,350	4.90	275.51
1994-95	1,296	4.90	264.49
1993-94	1,125	4.25	264.71
1992-93	999	4.25	235.06

Chart A. *This chart shows how much tuitions were at community and technical colleges for each academic year since 1992-93. Column 2 shows tuition and fees, column 3 shows minimum wages and column 4 shows how many hours of work at minimum wage it takes to pay tuition and fees. (Minimum wage figures from The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries*).*

*<http://www.lni.wa.gov/scs/workstandards/wagehist.htm>.

IN MEMORIAM: ELAYNNE ROUSSO FACTC PRESIDENT 2001-2002

The FACTC representatives will greatly miss the presence of one of our own, Elaynne Roussou. We asked Bill Moore of The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to write a few words about our dynamic colleague:

FACTC joins many others around our system in mourning the death of Elaynne Roussou on January 22, 2003. Elaynne was a faculty member in sociology (and general rabble-rouser) at Bellevue CC, a long-time and very active assessment person, the immediate past president of the Faculty Association for Community & Technical Colleges (FACTC), and a very good friend of mine. She and I worked closely on a number of assessment projects and presentations over the past few years, and for even longer than that she was a powerful voice at Bellevue for student learning outcomes and the need for pursuing a genuine scholarship of teaching, learning and assessment. She was a dedicated, outstanding, and challenging teacher, passionate about her discipline, her students, and life in general—one rarely had to wonder where Elaynne stood on a particular issue or subject (we agreed on many things, but we also had some great collegial arguments over the years!). She was one of the few people I've met in this work who was more impatient than I am with the general pace of reform/improvement/making things better in the world we find around us, and for all her ongoing health problems, she had an amazing amount of energy and enthusiasm for working toward her vision of how things should be (the term “force of nature” comes to mind☺). All of us in the Washington higher education community have lost a strong voice and a dear friend.





**FACULTY ASSOCIATION
OF COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGES**

Comments, replies, letters to the editor can be sent by e-mail to the following address. Be sure to include the subject line as follows so your message can get to the right address:

E-mail: Markd@spokanefalls.edu

Subject line:

FACTCFOCUS

FACTC is our Network

Faculty at Community and Technical Colleges in Washington State must be active in the discussion of important community and technical college issues. We network with each other, with other higher education organizations, with legislators, and with state board staff and administration. If your community or technical college is not represented at FACTC, we invite you to join us.

FACTC Focus is a publication of:

FACULTY ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES with the purpose of presenting diverse views on faculty issues. The opinions presented herein are not necessarily the view of FACTC, its officers or representatives.

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