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Perceptions of community college faculty with regard to the role of general education in the associate degree curriculum

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The Ohio State University, 1992
PERCEPTIONS OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY
WITH REGARD TO THE ROLE OF GENERAL EDUCATION
IN THE ASSOCIATE DEGREE CURRICULUM

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

Rayma Evangeline Smith, B.S., M.A.

* * * *

The Ohio State University
1992

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DEDICATION

To my Mother
Marie Johnson Smith

With Thanksgiving for your Love and Support
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter

### I. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

- Introduction | 1 |
- Definitions and Characteristics of General Education | 2 |
- Significance of General Education in the Two-Year College | 5 |
- Two-Year Colleges | 7 |
- Statement of the Problem | 11 |
- Significance of the Problem | 12 |
- Definition of Terms | 18 |
- Limitations | 21 |

### II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

- Literature Related to Faculty Attitudes | 22 |
- General Education Program Requirements | 24 |
- Literature Related to the Value of General Education as an Area of Study | 28 |

### III. METHODOLOGY

- Selection of the Sample | 45 |
- Instrumentation | 46 |
- Data Collection Procedures | 49 |
- Hypotheses | 50 |
IV. FINDINGS

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample
Institutional Practices and Policies
Results of Statistical Analyses
Faculty Perceptions Related to General Education Requirements
Faculty Perceptions Related to the Value of General Education as an Area of Study

V. SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary
Implications and Recommendations

APPENDIXES

A. Instrument
B. Pre-questionnaire Post Cards
C. Follow-up Postcards

REFERENCES
### LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Demographic Characteristics of the Sample</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Institutional Practices and Policies</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Multiple Regression Summary Table</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Regression Equation 1</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Multiple Regression Summary Table</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Regression Equation 2</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Introduction

Undergraduate general education at both two-year and four-year institutions has been characterized as an idea in "distress and in disarray," a curricular concept "chronically in a state ranging from casual neglect to serious disrepair," and the "neglected stepchild of the undergraduate experience" (Conrad, 1983; Boyer, 1987; Carnegie Foundation, 1987).

Several reasons have been identified for the erosion of general education on American campuses over the past thirty years, including:

- student demand for practical, vocational courses;
- the elective curriculum;
- emphasis on disciplines and majors by faculty;
- lack of interest among students;
- faculty dissatisfaction with teaching introductory, survey courses;
- few rewards for teaching general education courses in faculty and tenure decisions;
- student preferences for courses they perceive to be more interesting and useful in their major areas; and

Conrad (1983) identifies three additional factors that have contributed to the neglect or erosion of general education on two-year college campuses: (1) the necessity to develop college prebaccalaureate or transfer programs to articulate with programs of four-year institutions; (2) the strong commitment to serve students with a wide range of academic abilities and educational preparation; and (3) the rush to accommodate rapidly expanding enrollments in career/technical programming and community education.

Definitions and Characteristics of General Education

There is a commonality among authors who define general education and describe the characteristics of a generally educated individual, for example, The National Institute of Education (1984), Boyer and Levine (1981), Gamson (1984) and Gaff (1988; 1989).

Various terms are used on college and university campuses to refer to the general education component of the undergraduate curriculum, for example, the core curriculum, the common curriculum, common learning, and the "required" courses. The terms "general education" and "liberal education" are often used interchangeably. Conrad (1978) explains that the term "general education" became popular after World War II with the publishing of the book, General
Education in a Free Society: Report of the Harvard Committee. As the general education movement spread rapidly on college campuses during the latter part of the 1940's and the early 1950's, the term "general education" became more acceptable than "liberal education" largely because the latter had an elitist connotation.

A general/liberal education, according to the National Institute of Education (1984), enables students to adapt to a changing world and places emphases on the development of the following capacities:

- critical thinking;
- analysis;
- problem solving;
- synthesizing large quantities of new information;
- mastery of the essential language skills of critical reading, effective composition, clear speech, and careful listening;
- an understanding of history and the experience of other nations;
- application of theories and methods of empirical investigation; and
- integration of knowledge across disciplines.

Boyer and Levine (1981) describe general education as a program with clear objectives achievable in a variety of ways rather than as a single set of courses. General education, they write, "should concern itself with those shared experiences without which human relationships are
diminished, common bonds are weakened, and the quality of life is reduced" (p.22).

Gamson (1984) uses the term "liberal education" interchangeably with general education. In her view, liberal education or general education has the potential to liberate in three central ways: (1) it leads students to a broad critical awareness; (2) it helps them apply what they learn to everyday life; and (3) it increases their sense of empowerment---having the resources, skills, and personal qualities necessary for enlightened action and for the pursuit of a variety of options. Heckinger (1981) reasons that general education is the foundation of knowledge and understanding upon which people should be able to build for the rest of their lives.

Gaff (1988; 1989) suggests that generally educated individuals display the following characteristics: (1) broad general knowledge; (2) skills to communicate clearly, to think logically and critically, and to get along with different kinds of people; (3) the capacity to work independently and as a part of a team to solve problems; and (4) moral sensitivity.

The various definitions and characteristics of general education can be summarized to provide the following definition: "General education" is that aspect of a college's instructional program providing opportunities for students to develop mastery in critical literacy skills
(writing, speaking, reading, problem solving, analytical, and computational skills) and to acquire breadth in the basic liberal arts and sciences (humanities, fine arts, social sciences, and natural sciences) so that students can function effectively in a lifelong process of inquiry, learning, and decision making. The general education program is general in that its outcomes are applicable to every student, regardless of his/her personal, educational, or career objectives. An integrated general education program aims at broad and integrated learning and provides students with a broad perspective for understanding complex issues and problems.

Significance of General Education in the Two-Year College

The two-year college is a particularly significant institution for a vital and strong general education program.

Approximately 43 percent of the nation's undergraduate students are enrolled in two-year colleges, and at least 51 percent of all first-time entering freshmen begin their collegiate experience at a two-year institution (American Council on Education, 1990; Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 1988). Accordingly, these institutions provide general education for a sizable proportion of the nation's undergraduate students, a significant percentage of whom will never choose to enroll in a four-year college or university. Eaton (1988) further adds that the collegiate
identity or purpose of the two-year college has historically been linked to its liberal education/general education function—the humanities, the social sciences, the natural sciences, and the fine arts—and the notion of a generally educated person.

In the past fifteen years, there has been a renewed interest in general education or liberal education on both the two-year and four-year campus. Gaff (1983) suggests that Carnegie reports issued in the late 1970's and the early 1980's, such as Missions of the College Curriculum and Common Learning, which called for reform in general education, together with reform proposals from such prestigious institutions as Harvard University, launched the national movement of the 1980's to re-evaluate and then to reform if necessary, general education on many college campuses, both two-year and four-year. The function and role of general education is one of the recurring questions being raised by college faculty and administrators within two-year colleges, community-based institutions serving a diverse clientele in terms of age, educational needs and goals, abilities, interests, and socioeconomic status. As community college leaders continue to debate the future goals and missions of these institutions, an assessment of faculty attitudes in relationship to general education may provide some significant insights for curricular planning and decision making.
Two-Year Colleges

Two-year colleges include comprehensive community colleges, junior colleges, technical colleges, and in some states (for example, Ohio) regional or branch campuses of four-year universities, located in urban, rural, and suburban communities. Two-year colleges are low cost, open-access, geographically accessible institutions responsible for educating a substantial number of students in higher education. It is estimated that at least 51 percent of entering freshmen and 43 percent of all undergraduate students enroll in the nation's two-year colleges annually (Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 1988). The average age of students in these colleges is 28, with women comprising more than half (57%) of all enrollments and over two-thirds (68%) of the student body attending part-time (American Council on Education, 1990).

An outgrowth of the junior college concept, the contemporary two-year college traces its roots to the beginning of the twentieth century. These institutions have been the most rapidly developing segment of higher education during the present century, growing from only a few colleges and a few hundred students in the early 1900's to over 1,220 colleges currently serving 5.1 million students enrolled in credit courses (National Center for Education Statistics, 1989).
The term "community college" was first used in 1947 by The Commission on Higher Education, appointed by President Harry S. Truman. The Commission advocated the development and expansion of a network of locally controlled, low cost two-year community colleges within commuting distance of all Americans for the purpose of enhancing educational opportunity and broadening educational offerings. Included among the Commission's other recommendations was the call for a strong general education component in both college transfer programs and career/technical programs:

"If the semiprofessional curriculum is to accomplish its purpose, however, it must not be crowded with vocational and technical courses to the exclusion of general education. It must aim at developing a combination of social understanding and technical competence. Semiprofessional education should mix a goodly amount of general education for personal and social development with technical education that is intrinsic, accurate, and comprehensive enough to give the student command of marketable abilities" (cited in Levine, 1978, p. 622).

Missions of Two-Year Colleges

Two-year colleges are community-based institutions with three related missions: the traditional or comprehensive educational mission, the vertical mission, and the horizontal mission, which is an evolving mission.

The comprehensive or core mission includes three functions: (1) providing career/technical programs leading directly to a field of work; (2) providing the first two years of a baccalaureate degree for students planning to
transfer to four-year institutions; and (3) providing noncredit continuing, lifelong educational opportunities for residents of the community.

Career/technical education, the major function of the overwhelming majority of two-year colleges, meets the needs of the local community for technicians and paraprofessionals trained at the associate degree level. About two-thirds of all two-year college students are enrolled in career/technical programs and approximately 71 percent of all associate degrees and certificates are awarded in technical areas (Bernstein, 1988; Commission on the Future of Community Colleges, 1988).

Comprehensive two-year colleges are often criticized for neglecting their collegiate or transfer function in response to student demand for and interest in career/technical programs. (Deegan and Tillery, 1985; Cohen and Brawer, 1987; Eaton, 1988; Greenfield, 1988). Various institutional and state studies indicate that the percentage of college students who begin in a two-year college and eventually transfer has dropped from 25-35 percent in the 1960's to an estimated 15 to 20 percent today (Greenfield, 1988; Pincus and Archer, 1989). There is, however, limited information and lack of adequate data at the institutional, state, and national levels to assess the effectiveness of the two-year college transfer mission (Eaton, 1990). The results of a recent study conducted by the American
Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC) confirm the diversity of educational objectives for students enrolled in two-year colleges (American Council on Education, 1990). One-third (36%) of the two-year college students surveyed said that their primary reason for enrolling was "preparation for transfer to a four-year college or university"; 50% enrolled to acquire job related skills; 15% wanted to fulfill a personal interest; 4% indicated that they "wanted to increase basic English, reading, or math skills." It is estimated that only 20 to 25 percent of two-year college students who intend to receive a baccalaureate degree eventually receive one (Pincus and Archer, 1989).

The vertical mission of the two-year college focuses on the establishment of linkages with high schools to ensure that high school students are adequately prepared for college-level work and on the formation of partnerships with four-year colleges and universities to create successful articulation or transfer agreements (Cross, 1985; Commission on the Future of the Community College, 1988). The vertical mission of the two-year college places the college between the high school and the four-year institution and emphasizes the two-year college role in facilitating and encouraging the flow of students through the formal educational system from high school through the two-year college to a four-year degree.
The horizontal mission, focusing on economic and human resource development, is an evolving mission for the two-year college. In recent years the American Association of Community and Junior College (AACJC) has called for America's two-year colleges to establish partnerships with business, industry, government, and labor and to assume a pivotal role in meeting the needs for economic development and workforce training within their communities. Two-year colleges across the nation have begun to develop alliances with employers and local and state governments in an effort to meet local community and state needs for human resource development.

Statement of the Problem

The problem area to be addressed is a determination of faculty attitudes with regard to (1) general education as a requirement for students in comprehensive community colleges and (2) the value of general education as an area of study. To address this problem, the following questions are offered:

1. Are there differences between the perceptions of those faculty who have primary teaching responsibilities in career/technical programs and those faculty who have primary teaching responsibilities in the basic liberal arts courses (humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and the fine
(12) with regard to general education requirements for career/technical students in comprehensive community colleges?

2. Are there differences between the perceptions of those faculty who have primary teaching responsibilities in career/technical programs and those faculty who have primary teaching responsibilities in the basic liberal arts courses with regard to the value of general education as an area of study for career/technical students in comprehensive community colleges?

Significance of the Problem

One of the significant developments currently taking place on American campuses is a renewed interest in reforming and restructuring undergraduate general education or liberal education. Since the release in 1977 of the Carnegie Foundation commentary, *Missions of the College Curriculum*, labelling general education as a "disaster area" and the subsequent publication of Harvard's curricular reform proposal for restructuring the institution's core curriculum, a host of conferences, reports, workshops, and projects have addressed the issue of general education reform (Gaff, 1983; 1988; 1989). As a result, hundreds of individual colleges and universities have taken concrete steps to strengthen their general education programs as the enthusiasm for general education once again sweeps across the college campus.
The significance of general education can be viewed from at least three different perspectives: a context for moral reasoning and ethical decision making; intense national concern with overspecialization in undergraduate education; and the two-year college setting.

One of the goals of general education is helping students develop a set of sound moral values upon which moral actions are based. The concern for general education is expressed in the popular press by writers who lament a growing laxity in sound moral values and moral leadership. A cover story in the May 25, 1987, issue of *Time* magazine depicts America as wallowing in a "moral morass," indifferent to the concept of ethics and a sense of what constitutes right and wrong. In recent years Americans have witnessed a spate of scandals: insider-trading on Wall Street, the Iran-contra affair, influence peddling, and the savings and loans crisis as well as improprieties and dishonesty of religious leaders, political leaders, and governmental appointees. Boyer and Levine (1981) believe that a primary purpose of general education is that of providing moral training to students and resetting the ethical compass of the nation. Conrad (1983) concurs, emphasizing that value awareness bears a close relationship to preparation for life in a changing society. The ability
to adapt appropriately to rapid technological and social change, Conrad maintains, needs the direction offered through the study of ethical issues and the examination of societal values.

Major national reports on higher education over the past few years have addressed the issue of reform in undergraduate general education or liberal learning. The report of the National Institute of Education, "Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education," (1984) emphasizes that specialization and professional programs at the undergraduate level often stand as barriers to broad understandings associated with liberal learning. The study group that prepared the report asserts that the college curriculum has become excessively vocational in its orientation and that the bachelor's degree has lost its potential for fostering the shared values and knowledge which bind Americans together as a society. It is recommended in the report that liberal education or general education be restored to its central role in undergraduate education to ensure that graduates from both two-year colleges and four-year universities and colleges are provided with opportunities for broad and integrated learning and for developing capacities of analysis, problem solving, and communication. Similarly, a report from the Education Commission of the States declares that overspecialization in undergraduate education "has made the
The undergraduate experience little more than vocational preparation" (1986, p.11). The Commission recommended that colleges and universities "restore the balance between specialized training, aimed at preparing students for a single career, and general education, aimed at ensuring a common cultural heritage and preparing students for life" (p.12).

The National Endowment for the Humanities in its report, "To Claim a Legacy," (1984) concluded that over the past twenty years the place of the humanities in the undergraduate curriculum as well as the coherence of the curriculum generally has steadily eroded. The report called for a strengthening of the humanities, with an integrated, coherent core curriculum, rather than a fragmented and compartmentalized one. In a subsequent document, "50 Hours: a Core Curriculum for College Students" (1989), the National Endowment for the Humanities proposed a "model" core curriculum with 50 semester hours of courses in five basic areas: 18 hours in cultures and civilizations, 12 hours in foreign language; 6 hours of mathematical sciences, 8 hours of natural sciences, and 6 hours in modern social sciences.

In the Carnegie Foundation report, College: the Undergraduate Experience in America, Boyer (1987) observes that at most colleges academic specialization and fragmentation is the great obstacle to the reforming of general education. Boyer concludes that general education
urgently needs a new breadth of life. An integrated core is recommended as one possible approach for helping undergraduate students gain a more integrated view of knowledge and a more authentic view of life. The integrated core is described as a "program of general education that introduces students not only to essential knowledge, but also to connections across the disciplines, and, in the end, to the application of knowledge to life beyond the campus" (p. 91).

Two-year colleges are faced with the challenging task of designing general education for the transfer student as well as for the career student. Greenfield (1988) argues that as career/technical programs have flourished at comprehensive community colleges over the past two decades, the liberal arts courses and the general education function have suffered from "benign neglect" related to enrollment declines. Accordingly, the scope and breadth of liberal arts courses and the general education program have been reduced to introductory-level offerings at most of these institutions, Greenfield suggests. Truly integrated general courses and a broad array of sophomore level liberal arts courses, Greenfield believes, are becoming increasingly rare for both career and transfer students. Case (1983) urges that community college faculty and administrators make the improvement of general education a concern of highest priority because of the essential, even indispensable,
function of the general education program in the community college. The National Institute of Education (1984) makes the point that liberal/general education requirements are just as relevant to the future of a medical technician attending a two-year college as they are to the biology major at a four-year college or university.

Although two-year colleges serve over 40 percent of the nation's undergraduate college population, only a relatively small percentage, approximately 15 to 25 percent, currently transfer to a four-year institution to complete the baccalaureate degree. Consequently, the general education curriculum offered at the two-year college level provides the culminating general education experience for a substantial percentage of America's undergraduates. Countless studies and commentaries on higher education in the past fifteen years have called for a re-examination of general education—its content, purposes, delivery, and evaluation. Empirical research on faculty attitudes related to general education at the two-year college level, however, is scarce. Because of the central role of faculty in the teaching/learning process, it is important to solicit their perceptions of general education within the two-year college. What faculty think and believe has much to do with their enthusiasm for, support of, and interest in the general education curriculum and program on their respective campuses. Assessing the critical role of community college
faculty, the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (1988) states:

"Those who teach control the academic standards, shape the curriculum, and help create the climate for learning on the campus. Through their professional priorities and in their relationships with students, faculty sustain or weaken the intellectual and social environment of the college" (p. 13).

**Definition of Terms**

1. **General education curriculum**

   General education is the component of the undergraduate curriculum that is required of most college students on a particular campus. The general education curriculum is a program of studies designed to provide the knowledge, skills, and attitudes important to learning throughout life. It is not a single set of courses, and the curriculum may vary from college to college.

   The definition of the general education curriculum which the writer has selected to be guided by is the one provided by the Carnegie Foundation (1987). The content of the general education curriculum consists of three components: (1) advanced learning skills courses, including English composition, mathematics, foreign language, and physical education; (2) breadth or distribution courses, encompassing courses in the humanities, fine arts, social sciences, and natural sciences; and (3) integrative courses, including interdisciplinary courses which provide students with broad understandings of issues and problems.
2. **Liberal arts**

The liberal arts are the traditional fields of study represented in the humanities, the social sciences, the natural sciences, and the fine arts. Liberal arts curricula are nonprofessional and nonvocational.

3. **General education**

The definition of general education the writer has selected to be guided by is the one provided by the American Association of Colleges (1987). General education is "the cultivation of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that all of us use and live by during most of our lives—whether as parents, citizens, lovers, travelers, participants in the arts, leaders, volunteers, or good samaritans" (p.1).

The terms general education and liberal education are frequently used interchangeably. A general education/liberal education is one emphasizing broad learnings rather than narrow specialization.

4. **Comprehensive two-year community college**

A comprehensive two-year community college is a publicly supported two-year postsecondary institution designed to carry out a comprehensive educational mission with three related missions: college parallel or college transfer programming, career/technical programming, and continuing education or community service. It is accredited to award the associate degree as its highest degree.
5. **Career/technical education programs**

Associate degree career/technical education programs are programs which do not exceed more than two years in duration. Such programs prepare graduates for immediate entry into career fields without foregoing the opportunity for further education.

6. **College transfer or prebaccalaureate programs**

The associate degree college transfer program is one that is no longer than two years in length. These programs require two years of postsecondary education in the liberal arts and provide the first two years of a baccalaureate degree program for students planning to transfer to a four-year institution.

7. **Associate of Applied Science degree (AAS)**

The AAS degree is awarded for completion of two years of postsecondary education in a career/technical program. The degree is a credential certifying that an individual is prepared to go directly to employment in a specific career at the technical or paraprofessional level.

8. **Associate of Arts (AA) and Associate of Science (AS) degrees**

The AA and AS degrees are transfer degrees awarded for the completion of the first two years of a four-year baccalaureate program. These degrees certify that
individuals are prepared for transfer to an upper division baccalaureate degree program in a four-year college or university.

**Limitations**

1. The study will have the inherent limitations of the survey approach to data gathering: the responses are assumed to be true and factual. Also, it is assumed that the respondents understood what information was requested.

2. The survey will be limited to an assessment of perceptions of faculty teaching in only one type of two-year college, the comprehensive community college.

3. With a less than 100% response rate from the sample, findings from the study will need to be interpreted cautiously when generalizations are made to the population of community college faculty in the five Midwestern Higher Education Compact states.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature review is organized into two sections: (1) faculty attitudes regarding general education program requirements, and (2) the value of general education as an area of study.

Literature Related to Faculty Attitudes

The debate between general education and career or specialized education

A perennial debate within the higher education community focuses on the distinctions between general/liberal education and career or professional education. Too often, the aims of general education—education for life—are viewed as incompatible with those of the major or specialized study—education for work.

In his celebrated essay, "The Aims of Education," Alfred North Whitehead (1959), the noted philosopher and mathematician, examined the relationship of technical education to liberal education and concluded that the dichotomy between technical education and liberal education is essentially false. He wrote:
"There can be no adequate technical education which is not liberal and no liberal education which is not technical: that is, no education which does not impart both technique and intellectual vision. In simpler language, education should turn out the pupil with something he knows well and something he can do well" (p. 74).

The American Association of Colleges (1988) advises that the longstanding distinction and traditional dichotomy between general/liberal education and the departmental or technical education "polarizes virtually all deliberations about the college curriculum" (p. 9). At most colleges and universities, both two-year and four-year, Boyer (1987) declares, degree programs are sharply divided between general education and career-related education or study in the major, creating a misleading and artificial boundary.

Dumholdt (1987), suggesting that the basic differences in the core values of general education and specialized or career education may contribute to the enduring tension or conflict between the two, comments:

"One values breadth, the other specialization; one values thinking, the other doing; one encourages exploration, the other requires a sharply focused student" (p. 34).

From his interviews with community college faculty, Seidman (1985) concluded that the division established between career/technical and liberal arts education, between general and specialized education, between training for work and education for living, continues to be pervasive in
community college curricula, in spite of all that has been written about these false dichotomies. He cautions that the deepening division between career/technical curricula and the general education curriculum seems to guarantee that students majoring in career programs will never get a solid foundation in general education.

**General Education Program Requirements**

Clowes (1984) in his examination of the four curricular functions of community colleges---transfer education, general studies, career/technical education, and remedial/developmental---determined that general education is rarely a primary or discrete function of a single course in the two-year college, but rather it is usually one of two or three functions served by a course, for example, liberal arts-transfer and general education, or liberal arts-transfer, general education, and career education.

Faculty resistance and career/technical education emphasis have been identified as two major obstacles to change and innovation in general education at two-year colleges (Monroe, 1972; Hammons, 1979; Hammons, Thomas and Ward, 1979; Conrad, 1983). In a study assessing the status of general education in two-year colleges, Hammons, Thomas and Ward (1979) found that "resistance of present faculty to change" was cited by chief academic officers as the most important barrier to general education curricular reform. The researchers offered several reasons for the faculty's
preference for the status quo: (1) most faculty are concerned more with their own discipline than with the general education curriculum; (2) faculty have been trained in a specific discipline, and they may feel ill-prepared to teach in the broad manner needed of faculty in general education; (3) faculty perceive that curriculum changes will require the investment of considerable resources in preparing to teach new courses; and (4) faculty may fear that curricular changes in general education would adversely affect enrollments in departmental courses, thereby leading to staff reductions. The results of a recent Carnegie survey, however, show an increase in faculty commitment to general education among two-year and four-year faculty (Boyer, 1987). In the Carnegie survey of chief academic officers, more than half (56%) reported that faculty commitment to general education had increased in recent years; only 5% reported that the faculty's commitment had decreased; and 39% reported that the faculty's commitment had remained unchanged.

Dressel and Lorimer (1959) reported on two companion studies conducted by the Institute of Higher Education, Columbia University, to determine the attitudes of university undergraduate professional faculty and liberal arts faculty toward liberal education/general education. Over 90% of both faculty groups agreed that liberal education courses are desirable for all students while over
80% of both groups thought that the purposes of professional and liberal education are different and that graduates with both liberal education and specialized education have an advantage with regard to future career advancement.

Seidman's (1985) observations from interviews with two-year college faculty confirm faculty support for general education among faculty both in liberal arts disciplines and in career-oriented programs. Liberal arts faculty generally understood the importance of their subjects to the career/technical degree programs while career faculty demonstrated an understanding of the necessity for more than technical training and the importance of placing associate degree career-oriented programs in a broader intellectual context. At the same time, however, Seidman urged that increased attention be focused on offering career-based degree programs within a broad historical, cultural, social, and intellectual context to bridge the gap between general and specialized education.

Many two-year college observers view the career-orientation emphasis within the majority of institutions as a second major barrier to strengthening and making meaningful changes in the general education component of the curriculum. As enrollments in career-oriented programs escalated, beginning in the mid-1960's, and surpassed enrollments in the liberal arts-college transfer program, the career/technical function assumed greater importance
within the college mission (Conrad, 1983; Cohen and Brawer, 1989). Accordingly, increasing resources were allocated to the implementation of new career-oriented courses and programs designed to provide students with access to state-of-the-art equipment and facilities essential for maintaining quality programs that met community needs and student demands (Deegan and Tillery, 1985). As student interest in careers grew, two-year colleges tended to place less emphasis on their liberal arts-transfer function and on general education, thereby diminishing the role of the liberal arts and general education within the curriculum (Seidman, 1985; Greenfield, 1988; Cohen and Brawer, 1989).

Seidman (1985) asserts that the role of social science and humanities faculty steadily decreased with the ascendancy of career/technical programs in community colleges. Eaton (1986) adds that the price of success in career education and growth in student enrollments included "neglect of and some indifference toward humanities education" (p. xi). Cohen and Brawer (1989), agree, commenting that "the 1970's saw an extreme narrowing of the collegiate curriculum. Except for political science, history, and literature, many two-year associate degree-granting institutions abandoned the humanities entirely" (p. 288).
Literature related to
the value of general education
as an area of study

The value of general education for two-year college students has been addressed by experts outside of higher education, national associations, and academicians. Student attitudes toward general education have also been examined by researchers.

Experts outside of higher education

John Naisbitt in his best seller, *Megatrends* (1982), outlines the ten major transformations restructuring American society, one of which is the shift from an industrial to an information society. In a subsequent book, *Re-inventing the Corporation* (1985), Naisbitt and Aburdene emphasize that employees in an information society will need to think, learn, and create as well as to read, write, and compute. They offer a persuasive argument for the value of general education skills and knowledge:

"In a world that is constantly changing, there is no one subject or set of subjects that will serve you for the foreseeable future, let alone for the rest of your life. The most important skill to acquire now is 'learning how to learn.'

If you know how to learn, you possess the necessary tool---your learning ability---to study new fields and acquire new knowledge" (p. 156).

Thus Naisbitt's works provide some insights into the value of general education as an area of study for two-year
college students. It is the responsibility of these institutions of higher learning to educate students who can think, reason, and communicate clearly so that their skills will not become obsolete from overspecialization.

In recent years there has been wider appreciation and growing recognition in corporate America of the vital connection between liberal learning/general education and successful business careers, particularly in management (Jones, 1985; Strassberger, 1988; Useem, 1988). The skills and knowledge essential for managerial advancement from entry level position to middle or top positions, Jones (1985) and Useem (1988) report, are those derived from a solid liberal arts/general education: proficient communication skills; effective interpersonal skills; competent problem solving and analytical thinking skills; and knowledge of other cultures. In a speech delivered to the Corporate Council on the Liberal Arts, Verkuil (1986) connecting broad, generalist learning to the education of future business leaders, makes the point that "in the corporate world of today, where job qualifications and opportunities change with disturbing frequency, the broadest kind of educational preparation will often prove to be the most practical" (p. 21). Verkuil further emphasizes that corporate leaders with a broad vision and a thorough grounding in the liberal arts are essential for corporate success in a globally competitive marketplace.
The results from a survey of officers of large American corporations, designed to determine the factors that become more important to success as a college graduate employee progresses through the middle and senior ranks within a company, reveal that the factors most often identified are liberal learning/general education outcomes: verbal communication skills; ability to identify and formulate problems; willingness to assume responsibility; interpersonal skills; reasoning ability; creativity; and ability to function independently (Useem, 1988).

Studies have investigated the perceptions of corporate managers in relationship to the value of general education competencies in the workplace for graduates of associate degree career/technical programs (Meyer, 1983; Armistead, Lemon, et.al., 1989). Corporate managers in the Meyer (1983) study identified essential and desired general education competencies needed by successful middle management personnel. Similarly, Armistead, Lemon, et.al., (1989) examined the views of business and industry employers regarding the desired amount and the importance of fifteen general education outcomes in associate degree career/technical programs. Findings derived from the study indicate that corporate employers would devote approximately 30% of a two-year degree program to the study of general education. Corporate employers rated three general education competencies more highly than any others:
communication skills, competence in critical thinking skills, and vocational adjustment capability. Competencies of lesser importance for the corporate employers included interpersonal skills, mathematical skills, computer literacy, knowledge of science, and understanding of economics and the political system.

**National Organizations**

The American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC), the national organization representing the interests of America's two-year public and private colleges, emphasizes, through several of its policy statements, the significance of general education in the two-year college curriculum for all students regardless of their educational or career objectives. The Association's position on the value of general education is reflected in its 1984 Policy Statement on the Associate Degree, the equivalent of two years of full-time study:

"All associate degree programs should reflect those characteristics that help define what constitutes an educated person. Such characteristics include a level of general education that enables the individual to understand and appreciate his/her culture and environment; the development of a system of personal values based on accepted ethics that lead to civic and social responsibility; the attainment of skills in analysis, communication, quantification, and synthesis necessary for further growth as a lifespan learner and a productive member of society."
The Association's policy statement on the Associate in Applied Science (AAS) degree specifically addresses the importance of general education in two-year career/technical programs:

"There is an increased recognition of the importance of general education and related studies as integral components of occupational education. Increasingly, the ability to think, reason, compute, communicate, and adapt to change are essential if workers at all levels are to remain employable and cope with the expanding knowledge base."

The Association recommends that the general education component of the AAS degree constitute a minimum of 25 percent (20-25 quarter hours) of the course credits.

In its 1986 policy statement on the humanities, AACJC endorses the value of the humanities component in the liberal arts/general education program of two-year colleges and calls for every two-year degree program to include humanities. The policy statement offers a compelling rationale for the study of humanities:

"Learning in the humanities is particularly critical in community, technical, and junior colleges because of the strong interest on the part of students in practical education. It is important that students become economically self-supporting. But it is equally important for them to broaden their horizons so they may participate willingly and wisely in a fuller range of human activity. .........

Community college students should study the humanities for a seemingly simple reason—to gain knowledge and ability to think concretely about important social and personal questions and to communicate these thoughts through clear and effective written expression. The
practical demands of life---both public and private---are illuminated and made more valuable by the study of the humanities."

The value of general education has been addressed not only by AACJC policy statements but also by the report of the AACJC Commission on the Future of Community Colleges (1988). "Strengthening general education," the Commission advises, "is one of the most urgent obligations community colleges confront" (p. 17). The Commission cautions that lack of attention to general education often exacerbates the narrow historical and social perspectives which many two-year college students bring to the campus. Thus, the aim of a two-year college education, according to the Commission is "not only to prepare students for productive careers, but also to take them beyond their narrow interests, broaden their perspectives, and enable them to live lives of dignity and purpose" (p. 18).

The mission of the American Association of Colleges (AAC), a national higher education organization, is the promotion of liberal learning and the improvement of undergraduate education. An excerpt from a speech given by AAC's president reflects the organization's position that a solid foundation of liberal learning/general education is an essential part of all undergraduate education:

"....all undergraduate education should be informed by the commitment to prepare students to be responsible and active citizens as well as competent holders of a job. All undergraduate education should prepare students for growth in their careers and not just for entry-level jobs. All undergraduate education should
help students to become interesting and broadly-informed human beings and not simply adept producers and consumers of economic goods and services" (Chandler, 1986, p. 30).

**Academicians**

Academicians in higher education have also commented on the value of a broad general education in preparing students to live effectively and productively in society. There is consensus in the literature among academicians that several values can be ascribed to general education.

A survey of community colleges conducted by the American Council on Education reveals that one of the trends on two-year campuses is increased attention to curricular change, particularly to general education and the broad academic competencies (mathematics, writing, and communication) that students should gain through their studies (El-Khawas, 1986). The trend of increased interest in general education is also consistent with administrators' perceptions of the importance of general education as an institutional goal (Cross and Fideler, 1989).

Administrators in selected colleges, using the Community College Goals Inventory, ranked 90 goal statements in 20 goal areas according to the degree of current importance at their respective institutions and the degree that the goals should be important, considering the institution as a whole. Respondents identified general education as the institutional goal that should be the most important goal.
among the twenty measured by the CCGI. General education, as defined by the four CCGI statements, is "acquisition of general knowledge; achievement of some level of basic competencies; preparation of students for further, more advanced work; and the acquisition of skills and knowledge to live effectively in society."

The applicability of general education to all students, regardless of major, is one of the values of general education reported in the literature. Marsee (1979), for example, argues that community colleges should provide a rich, broad general education curriculum for both the career/technical student and for the transfer student for two major reasons: (1) community college students are only freshmen and sophomores and a significant number will never experience higher education beyond the second year; (2) community college students need to learn to interpret and understand broad principles and to apply them to ever-increasing masses of factual data. Moore (1978) supports Marsee's argument, adding that the content of general education is just as essential for the technical/career student as it is for the college transfer student in that both will share many of the important future societal, economic, environmental, and political decisions locally as well as nationally and internationally.
Cohen and Brawer (1989) urge general education for all community college students because of the freedom gained through general education. They write:

"The ability to think critically, to place one's own problems in broad perspectives, to make informed choices about the conduct of one's own life is the cornerstone of freedom for the individual" (p. 329).

Cohen and Brawer believe that the trend in the community college curriculum may swing back from excessive emphasis on career education, which began to escalate in the mid-1960's, to the development of a new balance between general education and career education for the decade of the 1990's. They suggest that career education is too specialized and that without the breadth that accompanies general education, the two-year college would be occupational schools undifferentiated from industrial training enterprises or proprietary schools. This view is echoed by Knoell (1983) who contends that two-year college students who enroll for only the career/technical courses and have no additional preparation in basic skills or general education limit their opportunities for advancement and promotion.

Another value associated with general education is the foundation that it provides for lifelong learning. General education equips students with the generic thinking skills, academic skills, and an intellectual foundation from which new knowledge and skills may be extended in a lifelong process of learning, decision making, and inquiry. Urging a renewed emphasis on general education for both transfer and
career students within two-year colleges, Greenfield (1988) asserts:

"Given technological, economic, demographic, and societal trends, community college curricula must be realigned to reflect the need for more generic career-growth skills that include a greater proportion of general education, the core of which are the liberal arts and sciences" (p.129).

Feldman (1988) describes the value of general education this way:

"If the major prepares one for a job or even a career, general education, especially in its lifelong variant, educates the whole person for everything and anything--human relations, private and public problem solving, best use of leisure, and responsible citizenship---and is a prime antidote against boredom and anomie. The generally educated person I envision has a short 'boring' list and a long 'interesting' list; the generally uneducated person, the opposite" (p. 27).

Still another reason for valuing general education is its capacity for student empowerment. Conrad (1983) links general education to the concept of equality of educational opportunity, a major national higher education goal, and depicts general education as the empowering component of the two-year college curriculum:

"Educational opportunity implies more than the opportunity to choose a career path or to take advantage of a potpourri of course offerings. In a more profound sense, it implies that students can be empowered with the knowledge, experiences, skills, values, and attitudes that will allow them to achieve their potential. General education presently stands as the only component of the two-year college curriculum that is solely concerned with providing that kind of education and power" (p. 55).
Gamson (1984), in full agreement, articulates the idea that general education/liberal education leads to an increased sense of empowerment---having the intellectual resources, skills, and personal qualities necessary for enlightened action and for the pursuit of a variety of options.

Finally, academicians value general education as an essential component of the major or specialized education. There is growing recognition within the higher education community of the importance of both a strong undergraduate major and a solid foundation of general education for successful preparation in any career (Kolanbrander, 1982; Gaff, 1983; Boyer, 1987). Divorcing general education/liberal education from career preparation, Rodney (1986) maintains, is to continue the dominance of technical skills and knowledge in industry and business which, he believes, can only be to the detriment of society as a whole. An excellent general education/liberal education provides a foundation on which to build a strong major or specialized study (Rodney, 1986; Boyer, 1987). The liberal education/general education component of the undergraduate degree program enables students to place their study in the major in larger intellectual, historical, and cultural perspectives (American Association of Colleges, 1988).

Carlisle (1986) summarizes the value of general education as the core component of the undergraduate experience by asserting:
"General education provides the historical, cultural, aesthetic, intellectual, and ethical contexts for professional training, work, and decisions. For their part, the professions involve, or should involve, far more than simple application. Through them, liberal arts competence, knowledge, and values find their way into our professional and social lives. The liberal arts and the professions can better prepare educated and responsible citizens for professional careers " (p.16).

Students

Over the past two decades increasing numbers of undergraduates on both two-year and four-year campuses have pursued career-related or professional education (National Institute of Education, 1984; Boyer, 1987; Bernstein, 1988). The results of surveys to determine student perceptions toward general education reveal that, in general, students appreciate the value of general education/liberal education. In the national survey of undergraduate education conducted by the Carnegie Foundation, nearly three-fourths of the respondents believed that general education courses "add to the enrichment of other courses I have taken" and "help me prepare for lifelong learning" (Boyer, 1987). A large number of the undergraduates (62%) in the survey also responded that general education courses are not "irrelevant to the subjects that interest me most," and more than two-thirds (72%) believed that general education courses help prepare people for jobs.

Similarly, in a survey assessing the importance of student educational goals, Gaff and Davis (1981) found that
undergraduate students value a "broad general education." Fifty percent of the respondents said that "a broad general education" was "very important" to them while 44% viewed general education as "moderately important." At the same time however, students in both studies were more dissatisfied with their general education courses than with major courses or elective courses. There is evidence, then, that students are receptive to the concept of a general education.

Trufant and Kelly (1974) conducted a major survey to determine attitudes and perceptions of career/technical graduates toward their associate degree programs. Alumni were asked to rate both the quality and value of their college preparation in several areas: technical knowledge and understanding, job or learning skills, getting along with people, self-understanding, knowledge and career opportunities, communication skills, and general education. Respondents consistently gave the highest ratings of superior or good to both the quality of preparation in general education courses (81%) and the value of general education to their careers (76%). Additionally, alumni were asked to give their opinion on the balance between technical courses and general education courses in their degree programs. More than half expressed the desire to have more technical courses and fewer general education courses. The investigators concluded that although alumni rated the
quality of preparation high and found value in general education, the press of career competence caused many career/technical graduates to desire more technical courses. Studies of alumni of associate degree technical studies programs, Cohen and Brawer (1987) report, have repeatedly yielded responses indicating the value of their general education courses as an aid to obtaining employment and to promotional opportunities or career advancement.

This chapter contained a review of research literature related to faculty attitudes with regard to general education requirements and the value of general education as an area of study. Faculty resistance and career-orientation emphasis have been identified in the literature as the two major barriers to general education reform at two-year colleges. Values ascribed to the general education component of the undergraduate curriculum include the relevancy of the general education curriculum to all students, regardless of major; the solid foundation the general education program provides for lifelong learning; its capacity for student empowerment; and the pivotal relationship of the general education curriculum to the undergraduate major.

One of the responsibilities of two-year colleges is providing general education for both transfer students in prebaccalaureate transfer programs and for career students in career/technical programs. The college/transfer programs provide the first two years of a baccalaureate degree
program for students planning to transfer to a four-year institution. In associate degree transfer programs at least 75 percent of the coursework is in liberal education/general education courses. Associate degree career/technical programs, on the other hand, are designed to prepare graduates for immediate entry into career fields. Currently nearly two-thirds of all community college students are enrolled in these programs. Yet, because a significant number of graduates from career/technical programs will never choose to enroll in a four-year college or university, the general education curriculum offered at the associate degree level becomes the culminating general education experience for these students.

Faculty, both in two-year and four-year institutions, are responsible for planning, developing, implementing and evaluating the college curriculum and also for establishing academic policies. The role and significance of the general education component in the associate degree curriculum is greatly influenced by faculty perceptions. Thus it becomes imperative to examine these attitudes especially in view of the trend of increased attention to general education curricular change on many of the nation's two-year and four-year campuses and in light of mandates from state higher education coordinating boards and regional accrediting bodies for the assessment and documentation of student outcomes. The assessment movement and the general education
Curricular reform movement will occur amid a tight budget environment for public higher education, especially during the first half of the decade of the 1990's, triggered by cuts in state appropriations because of a sluggish economy combined with rising operational costs. As four-year institutions implement strategies for reducing costs, and trimming budgets, many academic leaders forecast that more and more students will be squeezed out of four-year institutions and into two-year or community colleges (Jacobson, 1991). Explaining the possible implications of such changes, Jacobson (1991) reasons:

"As the enrollment pattern shifts, the quality and scope of instruction at community colleges . . . will assume growing importance. Although two-year colleges have won praise for helping many students prepare for transfer to four-year institutions, some analysts fear that a growing proportion of undergraduates may receive a limited and largely vocational education with little of the broad preparation that employment experts say will be needed for long-term success" (p.1).

There is a notable absence of empirically based studies, reported in the community college literature, relative to perceptions of faculty with regard to the general education component of the associate degree curriculum. The researcher believes that this investigation will contribute to the existing empirical body of literature on community college faculty while stimulating other researchers to examine the attitudes of two-year college faculty in relationship to a wide range of curricular issues, practices, and policies. Additionally, the present study
will inform the decision making process for strengthening and improving general education at comprehensive community colleges.
CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

This chapter will provide a description of the research procedures followed to obtain answers to the research questions posed in this study. These procedures are presented under four major headings: (1) selection of the sample; (2) instrumentation; (3) data collection procedures; and (4) data analysis procedures.

Selection of the Sample

Faculty selected for this study were drawn from a sample of fifteen institutions drawn from a population of ninety-six public comprehensive community colleges in the Midwestern states of Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Kansas, and Ohio. These five states are members of the Midwestern Higher Education Compact, a recently formed regional organization, which promotes interstate cooperation among colleges and universities within the Compact through shared educational resources, services, and facilities. Comprehensive community colleges were selected because of their mission encompassing both the college transfer or
college parallel function and the career/technical function at the associate degree level. Liberal arts courses are typically subsumed under the college transfer function.

Fifteen sample institutions were drawn from among those listed in the 1990 Membership Directory of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. Three institutions were randomly selected from each of the five Midwestern Higher Education Compact states, and a telephone call made to the Admissions office of each institution requesting a copy of the current catalogue. The catalogues were used to generate a roster of career/technical faculty and a roster of liberal arts faculty in each of the fifteen sample institutions. In each of the sample colleges a random sample of ten career/technical faculty (those with primary teaching responsibilities in the technical degree programs) and ten liberal arts faculty (those with primary teaching responsibilities in the humanities, natural and physical sciences, social sciences, and the fine arts) was drawn. This process yielded a sample of 300 participants for the study.

Instrumentation

The twenty-five item questionnaire used in the present study was modeled after a questionnaire originally developed by the Institute of Higher Education, Columbia University, for examining the attitudes of liberal arts faculty and professional faculty members in four year colleges and
universities toward the role of liberal arts in specialized or professional curricula (Dressel and Lorimer, 1960). The questionnaire was subsequently revised and used by Shartzel (1985) in his study of the attitudes of academic deans regarding the value of liberal education in undergraduate professional fields. The review of the literature and related research as well as the instruments developed by the Institute of Higher Education and subsequently revised by Shartzel guided the researcher in constructing a survey instrument which fulfilled the objectives of the research study.

Consultants from the Polimetrics Laboratory of The Ohio State University were used to provide technical assistance in terms of questionnaire format, structure, and coding. While in draft form, the survey instrument was critiqued by a panel of experts comprised of a former academic vice president of a midwestern community college, program administrators and directors in a midwestern higher education coordinating agency, a senior research associate from a Washington, D.C., research organization, and specialists in educational administration at The Ohio State University. The panel reviewed the instrument, giving close attention as to whether questions were clear, concise, appropriate, relevant, in logical order, and without discernible bias. After all panel members returned drafts of the proposed instrument, the investigator revised the
instrument, where appropriate, including the suggested changes, deletions, and modifications. Following these revisions this same group was again given the opportunity to react to the revised instrument.

The survey was pilot tested using sixty-four career/technical faculty and liberal arts faculty in selected comprehensive community colleges similar to the sample institutions. These individuals were requested to complete the questionnaire, supply the investigator with the length of time spent completing it, and to make comments and suggestions.

After the pilot test for the survey instrument had been conducted, the reliability of the questionnaire was assessed by means of the Cronbach Alpha. This procedure yielded reliability coefficients of .74 for the General Education Requirements (GER) scale and .82 for the General Education Values (GEV) scale.

The final form of the instrument (Appendix A) was divided into three sections. Section I included six Likert items reflecting institutional practices and policies in relationship to general education within comprehensive two-year colleges. Survey participants were provided with five response alternatives for each item: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (U), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD). Respondents were queried regarding the identification of general education goals and purposes on
their college campuses, program administration, faculty commitment, and general education review and reform efforts within the past five years. Institutional practices and policies, according to the literature, can impede or facilitate the design and implementation of a strong general education program and thus affect faculty perceptions with regard to the requirements and value of general education.

Section II contained fourteen Likert items designed to elicit faculty perceptions relative to the value and requirements of general education for career/technical students enrolled in two-year comprehensive community colleges. Section II was conceptualized as two subscales: General Education Requirements (items 12, 15, 17, 19) and General Education Values (items 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 20).

Section III consisted of five items requesting respondents to provide demographic information. In addition to the area of primary teaching responsibility, items within this section included gender, age range, highest academic degree earned, and number of years teaching in community colleges.

**Data Collection Procedures**

To achieve the greatest response rate possible, the investigator utilized several practical strategies advocated by Borg and Gall (1983) and Dillman (1979): precontacting participants by postcard to inform them that they would receive the questionnaire; a short and nonimposing survey
instrument; a booklet format for the questionnaire; a letter of transmittal accompanying the questionnaire; a prepaid return envelope provided to each participant in the mailed questionnaire packet; and results of the survey promised.

The 300 participants randomly selected for the study were mailed a pre-questionnaire postcard (Appendix B) approximately ten days before the questionnaire packets were mailed. The purpose of the postcard was to alert participants to the imminent arrival of the questionnaire and to request their assistance.

Each survey instrument was coded by the researcher so that a follow-up to non-respondents could be made. Each participant was mailed the coded questionnaire and a postage-paid return mailing envelope. Two weeks after the first mailing of the instrument, follow-up postcards (Appendix C) were mailed to all participants, thanking respondents for their assistance and encouraging nonrespondents to return their completed questionnaires as soon as possible. The final response rate was 215 questionnaires or 72 percent.

**Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated for testing in this study:

**Hypothesis 1:**

Perceptions of faculty who have primary teaching responsibilities in career/technical programs will not
differ from those of faculty who have primary teaching responsibilities in general education/liberal education courses with regard to general education requirements for career/technical students.

Hypothesis 2:
Perceptions of faculty who have primary teaching responsibilities in career/technical programs will not differ from those of faculty who have primary teaching responsibilities in general education/liberal education courses with regard to the value of general education as an area of study for career/technical students.

Statistical Analyses Procedures
Multiple regression analyses were used to test the hypotheses of the study.
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of community college faculty with regard to (1) general education as a requirement for career/technical students in comprehensive community colleges and (2) the value of general education as an area of study. The data are presented in three sections. Section one reports the demographic characteristics of the 215 faculty who participated in this study. In section two the analysis of data gathered concerning institutional practices and policies are presented. Section three describes the data analysis for the research hypotheses.

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Section III of the survey instrument contained five items requesting respondents to provide demographic information. Table 4.1 displays frequency counts of the demographic characteristics of the sample in terms of area of teaching responsibility, gender, age range, highest academic degree earned, and number of years teaching in community colleges.

Of the 215 survey questionnaires (72%) completed and returned by respondents, 112 (52%) were from faculty with
primary teaching responsibilities in career/technical programs and 103 (48%) were from faculty with primary teaching responsibilities in the general education/liberal education disciplines. Males represented 113 (53%) survey participants while females represented 102 (47%) respondents.

The demographic characteristics are consistent with national demographic profiles of community college faculty (Cohen and Brawer, 1987; American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, 1988; Cohen and Brawer, 1989). Nearly two-thirds of survey participants, 140 (65%), indicated that they were over the age of forty-five. The largest age category found in the sample surveyed was between 46 and 55 years with 106 (49%) respondents reporting their age within this range. The next highest response category was between 36 and 45 years with 60 (28%) respondents falling within this category. The third largest category, "56 to 65 years", contained 30 (14%) participants.

In the sample, the largest number of respondents, 143 (67%), held master’s degrees, 47 (23%) held doctoral degrees, 21 (10%) had earned bachelor’s degrees, 2 (.10%) reported the associate degree as the highest academic degree earned and 1 respondent reported no degree.

With regard to the number of years teaching in community colleges, 107 respondents (50%) had taught for over 15 years in the community college environment.
TABLE 4.1
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE
N = 215

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<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>66.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Degree</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Years Teaching in Community Colleges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 Years</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 Years</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 Years</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20 Years</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Response frequencies revealed that 48 (22%) had taught from 21 to 25 years; 43 (20%) indicated 16 to 24 years of experience; 41 (19%) noted 6 to 10 years of teaching experience; 37 (17%) reported 11 to 15 years in two-year colleges; 30 (14%) indicated 1 to 5 years of experience; and 16 (7%) reported over 25 years of teaching at the associate degree level.

Institutional Practices and Policies

Section I of the questionnaire included six Likert-type items which reflected institutional practices and policies in relationship to general education within comprehensive community colleges. The frequency counts for these six items are displayed in Table 4.2. The overwhelming majority of survey participants 180 (84%) "agreed" (55%) or "strongly agreed" (28%) that "the goals and purposes of the general education program have been clearly identified on my college campus." A substantial majority, 183 (85%), "agreed" (27%) or strongly agreed" (58%) that the "general education goals and general education requirements are related at my college." With regard to leadership responsibilities for the general education program, 172 (80%) "agreed" (50%) or "strongly agreed (30%) that "a director/dean and/or college-wide faculty committee is responsible for the coordination and implementation of the general education program on my campus."
A solid majority of survey participants, 164 (76%), indicated that they either "agreed" (47%) or "strongly agreed" (29%) that "faculty at my college are committed to a vital and strong general education program." Regarding administrative commitment, 165 (77%) respondents "agreed" (47%) or "strongly agreed" (30%) that "senior level administrators at my college are committed to a vital and strong general education program." Finally, nearly all of the respondents, 199 (93%), "agreed" (41%) or "strongly agreed" (52%) that "within the past five years, my college has been involved in one or more general education review and reform efforts." Such efforts included curricular review and redesign, introduction of new courses, formulation of learning outcomes, strategies for assessing student achievement of general education goals, and faculty development activities.

Findings in the present study related to institutional practices and policies are consistent with national surveys addressing general education curricular issues (El-Khawas, 1986; Boyer, 1987; Cross and Fiedler, 1989; Gaff, 1989).
### TABLE 4.2

**INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES AND POLICIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>UNDECIDED</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals and purposes of the general education program. Have been clearly identified on my college campus.</td>
<td>61 28.4</td>
<td>119 55.3</td>
<td>12 5.6</td>
<td>19 8.8</td>
<td>4 1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General education goals and general education requirements are related at my college.</td>
<td>59 27.4</td>
<td>124 57.7</td>
<td>18 8.4</td>
<td>12 5.6</td>
<td>2 .9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A director/dean and/or college-wide faculty committee is responsible for the coordination and implementation of the general education program on my campus.</td>
<td>65 30.2</td>
<td>107 49.8</td>
<td>24 11.2</td>
<td>15 7.0</td>
<td>4 1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty at my college are committed to a vital and strong general education program.</td>
<td>63 29.3</td>
<td>101 47.0</td>
<td>36 16.7</td>
<td>13 6.0</td>
<td>2 0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior level administrators at my college are committed to a vital and strong general education program.</td>
<td>64 29.8</td>
<td>101 47.0</td>
<td>33 15.3</td>
<td>12 5.6</td>
<td>5 2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results of Statistical Analyses

Data were analyzed using the regression procedures of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (1990). Two multiple regression analyses were performed to determine (1) the amount of systematic variance accounted for in the two dependent variables by the controlled variables and (2) the relationship of the "faculty type" variable, the independent variable.

The controlled variables included the institutional practices and policies variables and the demographic variables. The independent variable, "faculty type", included two groups of faculty groups--career/technical faculty and general education/liberal education faculty. The two variables which were categorical in nature, faculty type and gender, were dummy coded for entry into the regression equations. The career/technical faculty category was assigned a value of "0" while the general education/liberal education category was assigned a value of "1".

Within each of the two regression procedures, the variables were entered in three consecutive blocks: (1) institutional practices and policies variables; (2) demographic variables, and finally, (3) the "faculty type" variable. Variables were entered in this manner for the purpose of determining the specific amount of variance in
the two dependent variables associated with the controlled variables and the independent variable.

The two dependent variables in the analyses were the two subscales of the questionnaire, the General Education Requirements (GER) scale and the General Education Values (GEV) scale. The two dependent variable measures of faculty perceptions with regard to general education consisted of mean responses of the sample on the GER scale and the GEV scale.

Faculty Perceptions Related to General Education Requirements

To test Hypothesis I, a multiple regression analysis was used. The block of institutional variables was first entered into the regression equation followed by the block of four demographic variables and finally the "faculty type" variable. With all of the variables regressed on the dependent variable, "general education requirements", the model was significant \( F = 4.87, \text{df} = 11, 203, p < .0001 \). The variables accounted for a significant 17% of the variance in the dependent variable.

Within equation I, with all the demographic and institutional variables being controlled, "faculty type", the independent variable, made a unique contribution of 10% of the variance in the dependent variable (Table 4.3). "Faculty type" was found to significantly covary \( (p < .0001) \) with faculty perceptions as measured by the dependent variable, "general education requirements" (Table 4.4).
TABLE 4.3
REGRESSION EQUATION 1
DEFENDENT VARIABLE: GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS SCALE
MULTIPLE REGRESSION SUMMARY TABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>R2</th>
<th>Adjusted R2</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significant R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Practices</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>.0398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>.0038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Type</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thus "faculty type' was found to be a significant predictor of faculty perceptions related to general education requirements.

The null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, the hypothesis that perceptions of faculty who have primary teaching responsibilities in career/technical programs will not differ from those of faculty who have primary teaching responsibilities in general education/liberal education courses with regard to general education requirements for career/technical students was rejected at the .0001 level of significance.

The relative contribution of "faculty type" (Beta = .35) to the dependent variable, given the controlled variables, is shown in Table 4.4. The significant difference found between the perceptions of the two faculty groups suggests that general education/liberal education faculty would be more inclined to support general education requirements and increasing these requirements, if necessary, for students in career/technical programs than faculty teaching in these career-oriented programs. Additionally, the findings indicate that career/technical faculty are less inclined than general education/liberal education faculty to support general education hours and courses beyond those mandated by state law, a state higher education governing board, or program accrediting bodies.
### TABLE 4.4
REGRESSION EQUATION 1
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS SCALE
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>Adjusted R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.34783</td>
<td>4.87*</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>.27687</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Entered</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G.E. Review and Reform Efforts</td>
<td>.0110</td>
<td>.0143</td>
<td>.193</td>
<td>.8474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.E. Goals Identified</td>
<td>.0317</td>
<td>.0512</td>
<td>.536</td>
<td>.5924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Commitment</td>
<td>.0831</td>
<td>.1281</td>
<td>1.750</td>
<td>.0816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Authority</td>
<td>-.1030</td>
<td>-.1662</td>
<td>-2.147</td>
<td>.0329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Commitment</td>
<td>-.0427</td>
<td>-.0697</td>
<td>-.860</td>
<td>.3907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G.E. Goal and Requirements Related</td>
<td>.0754</td>
<td>.1067</td>
<td>1.084</td>
<td>.2795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td>.0559</td>
<td>.0821</td>
<td>1.118</td>
<td>.2651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.0136</td>
<td>-.0119</td>
<td>-.178</td>
<td>.8588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Degree Earned</td>
<td>.0763</td>
<td>.0849</td>
<td>1.223</td>
<td>.2229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Teaching</td>
<td>.0021</td>
<td>-.0057</td>
<td>-.072</td>
<td>.9427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Type</td>
<td>.4021</td>
<td>.3495</td>
<td>4.845</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.8869</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.547</td>
<td>.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .0001
because of the continuing press for specific job knowledge and skills in career-oriented associate degree programs. Faculty perceptions related to general education requirements in this research project are consistent with Seidman's (1985) conclusion from his interviews with community college faculty that the division established between specialized education and general education continues to be pervasive in community college curricula.

In addition to responding to the questionnaire items, survey participants were invited to offer comments related to any of the questionnaire items. These written responses from faculty in the survey provide a context for understanding attitudes in relationship to general education requirements for career/technical students. The following are examples of comments from faculty with primary teaching responsibility in career-oriented or technical studies programs.

- "General education requirements are necessary (and beneficial for communication skills. If the student's goal is a technical degree, the two-year institution has precious little time to provide a broad technical background. Forcing general ed. requirements beyond the current level is working against the students' goals and best interests."

- "In order to fully prepare students for their chosen career in a community college setting, they must have the specified technical courses, which seem to be on the increase to keep up with changes in the field and expanding roles our graduates will be expected to perform. It's sad that general ed is squeezed out, but necessary to complete the degree in 2 years (64 hrs). We must accommodate both state requirements and accrediting agency mandates for our programs."
"Sometimes the general education courses need to be tailored to fit the needs of a particular program, not necessarily increased in quantity—just an adjustment in the quality or the emphasis of the courses."

"Students in the technical areas are required to take general education courses. I also feel that students in the non-technical areas should be required to take technical courses."

"Many students I advise need a 'quick route' to gain technical skills and entry-level employment. However, many also realize that they will return to campus for general ed classes before advancement and promotion."

"In general I would like to see more gen ed for career/technical programs; however, not at the expense of cutting existing technical classes. I realize that I can’t have it both ways, but I’ve yet to reach some sort of compromise in my own mind."

"I strongly believe that general education courses, such as English, math, computer studies, are absolutely necessary for our associate degrees. However, the real dilemma here is that our students generally can’t graduate within 2 years even by attending summer school. It almost certainly means that we will have to delete either tech courses or general ed courses in order to keep an associate’s degree under control timewise....and neither alternative is very appealing to me."

"In my opinion, there is too much of a split or rift on our campus than is healthy for either program of study, between "general education" and "vocational education." If a student wishes to become a chemist, then chemistry and all related courses are "vocational." In fact, I believe that all courses should be and are vocational. Many times people believe all we teach in "SHOP." In my field of diesel mechanics we have to teach math, technical writing, chemistry, physics, and other areas to teach the basic theories we work from. If we must make a distinction between these areas why not increase or require everyone to take 9 hours of vocational education? At the very least they would have some manual skills when "liberal arts education" can’t get them a job."
"I feel all students should be required to take enough general education courses to lead to correct usage of the English language both oral and written. Also, they should have a background for good citizenship. All students claiming an associate's degree should be able to use basic algebra and have some knowledge of computers. However, the trend seems to be adding more humanities to general education requirements and I feel these should be electives as the students usually feel they are being loaded down with frills and prevented from gaining deeper knowledge of their chosen fields.

A faculty member with teaching responsibilities in a liberal education discipline offered a slightly different perspective:

"During the 80’s the idea of a general education science core for technical and non-technical students lost favor. Part of the shift away from general education science courses was the pressure from senior institutions when they stopped accepting these classes, except as elective credit. The other problem arose in the technical and allied health areas when the number of hours for a technical degree became excessive. We are again evaluating our degree requirements, trying to improve the quality of the offerings to our students and the certainty of transferability. Once again, the appropriate committees are requesting our input with respect to general education requirements. It doesn’t seem that having all students take 2 classes from each of the four areas (humanities, English, science, and social science) should be such a problem, if all of the faculty agree that this is best for the student."

Another respondent from a liberal education discipline advocated expanding general education requirements to extend students' appreciation for and understanding of cultural pluralism and global perspectives:
"Because we live in a multicultural society and are moving toward a global community, all training programs should be expanded to include in their liberal arts programs courses in race and ethnic groups as well as cultural anthropology. Existing courses in their technical field or in their current liberal arts components should not be sacrificed to do this; the programs must expand to allow this."

Faculty Perceptions Related to the Value of General Education as an Area of Study

A second multiple regression analysis was performed to test Hypothesis II. The block of institutional variables was first entered into the regression equation followed by the block of four demographic variables and finally, "faculty type", the independent variable. When all of the variables were regressed on the dependent variable, "general education values" scale, the regression model was significant \[F = 5.49, \text{df} = 11, 203, p < .0001\]. The variables accounted for a significant 19% of the variance in the dependent variable.

Within equation II, "faculty type", with all other variables being controlled accounted for a significant 13% of the variance in the dependent variable (Table 4.5). The variable (Beta = .40) was found to significantly covary \(p < .0001\) with faculty perceptions as measured by the dependent variable, "general education values" scale (Table 4.6). Thus "faculty type" is a significant predictor variable for faculty perceptions related to the value of
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>Adjusted R²</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Significant R</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Practices</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>.0555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>.0083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Type</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>5.49</td>
<td>.0001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
general education as an area of study for career/technical students.

Null hypothesis II was rejected. Thus the hypothesis that faculty who have primary teaching responsibilities in career/technical programs will not differ from those of faculty who have primary teaching responsibilities in general education/liberal education courses with regard to the value of general education as an area of study for career/technical students was rejected at the .0001 level of significance.

The significant difference found for "faculty type" would suggest that general education/liberal education faculty are more likely than career/technical faculty to emphasize the significance of the general education component of the two-year college curriculum for all students, regardless of their personal, education, or career objectives and to relate the values of general education to students' career aspirations. Additionally, the significant difference implies that general education/liberal education faculty are more inclined to emphasize the value of career-growth skills such as strong thinking and problem solving skills, proficient literacy skills, and effective interpersonal skills as well as specialized knowledge and technical skills for success in the rapidly changing, technologically-oriented work place of the 1990's and the
**TABLE 4.6**

**REGRESSION EQUATION 2**

**DEPENDENT VARIABLE: GENERAL EDUCATION VALUES SCALE**

**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>Adjusted R²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
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<td>1.56339</td>
<td>5.49*</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
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<td>Residual</td>
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<td>.28459</td>
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<th>Beta</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G.E. Review and Reform Efforts</td>
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<td>-.0127</td>
<td>-.183</td>
<td>.8551</td>
</tr>
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<td>Faculty Commitment</td>
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<td>2.116</td>
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<td>Program Authority</td>
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<td>.7321</td>
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<td>Administrative Commitment</td>
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</tr>
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<td>G.E. Goal and Requirements Related</td>
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<td>2.205</td>
<td>.0286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Range</td>
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<td>.1597</td>
<td>2.202</td>
<td>.0288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.0349</td>
<td>.0296</td>
<td>.445</td>
<td>.6566</td>
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<td>Highest Degree Earned</td>
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<td>1.397</td>
<td>.1638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Teaching</td>
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<td>.0197</td>
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<td>Faculty Type</td>
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<td>.4026</td>
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<td>Constant</td>
<td>2.5390</td>
<td>6.036</td>
<td>.0000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.0001
twenty-first century. The difference further conveys that
general education/liberal education faculty members are more
disposed than career/technical faculty to recognize and
affirm the value of the general education curriculum in
assisting career/technical students to develop capacities to
make connections across disciplines and courses, to gain new
perspectives, and to apply new knowledge to contemporary
issues.

Comments written on the survey instrument by faculty in
career-oriented programs provide some insights into their
attitudes regarding the value of general education for their
students.

■ "Students from my technical program average $19.50
per hour in wages while students from general
education average $9.50 per hour. Many of the
students from my two programs obtain certificates
rather than waste their time with taking the 18
hours of GE required for a degree. The "Big
Three" are normally not interested in our two-year
programs. Our customers are small and medium size
companies (12 to 55 employees) who need personnel
that do not require training since most of them do
do not have training programs, plus normally cannot
afford extra personnel that are learning their
trade. CEO's of these companies do not see the
value of GE type courses as they relate to the
day-to-day competition of the world marketplace
for small and upcoming companies."

■ I appreciate the value of general education. I
myself have a broad general education-liberal arts
background, but at the technical, career,
vocational level, I do not believe gen. ed.
courses help to obtain a job. They will tend to
indirectly help a person advance to higher
positions. In general, in technical programs I
approve of general ed but not at the expense of
necessary technical courses which I feel may
happen in some cases."
"I am an alumnus from a career/technical program. I functioned well in my chosen work field. For career advancement, I went back to school for a BS degree and found an increased awareness that I was not conscious of, prior to the advanced education. General college requirements are essential for functioning and progressing in today's high-paced level. General education improved my skills by increased knowledge level in areas such as business, management, humanities—heightening my awareness of how the world functioned."

The following comments from general education/liberal education faculty are representative of attitudes of faculty from liberal education disciplines:

"My school in particular, my school's administration, takes a dim view of liberal arts/general education. They pay lip service to it, but their actions indicate that liberal arts/gen.ed. is just something that the students have to get out of the way, and should be allowed to get out of the way with as little trouble as possible. This is especially true of supposedly "useless" humanities work; liberal arts courses that have some "use" (sciences, math, etc.) are sometimes not treated that cavalierly. However, even in the case of sciences and math, there is pressure on teachers to pass the students along, to not have rigorous (but reasonable) standards. Technical thinking and rote memorization become the norm. We end up turning out more technically proficient barbarians than anything else."

"We are becoming a nation of "how-to-do-it" people. I think it was Robert M. Hutchins who observed that the aim of liberal education is human excellence, both private and public. Beneath this present view of how to do it, we must never lose sight of why we do what we are doing. A liberal education consistently gets at the 'why'."

"After teaching at the community college for better than 20 years I have seen many students broaden their horizons after being introduced to gen ed courses. Many change their goals away from narrower tech fields to academic or advanced professions. In many cases they are just uninformed as to 'other opportunities'."
This research investigation provides empirical evidence that area of teaching responsibility is a significant predictor of faculty perceptions with regard to the role of general education in promoting the intellectual and personal development of career-oriented students.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this research study was to assess attitudes of faculty teaching in comprehensive community colleges with regard to (1) general education as a requirement for students in associate degree career/technical programs and (2) the value of general education as an area of study for students in these programs.

A survey instrument was used to gather data relevant to examining faculty perceptions with regard to the role of the general education component of career-oriented associate degree programs. The questionnaire was mailed to faculty randomly selected from a sample of institutions drawn from a population of public comprehensive community colleges within five midwestern states which comprise the Midwestern Higher Education Compact.

The questionnaire is divided into three sections. Section I includes six items which reflect institutional practices and policies in relationship to general education within comprehensive two-year colleges. Section II contains fourteen items designed to elicit faculty perceptions
relative to the value and requirements of general education for career/technical students. Section II was conceptualized as two subscales: the General Education Requirements scale and the General Education Values scale. The third part of the questionnaire, Section III, was used to obtain demographic characteristics of the 215 respondents.

The demographics of the sample are consistent with national demographic patterns of faculty teaching in community colleges in relationship to faculty credentials, age, and teaching experience. Two-thirds of the faculty in the present study hold the master's degree as their highest degree while nearly one-fourth hold the doctorate. Community college faculty are less likely than university faculty to hold the terminal degree primarily because of the emphasis on teaching effectiveness in two-year colleges. Nearly two-thirds of the survey participants are over the age of forty-five. About one-half of them reported their age within the 46 to 55 age range. Additionally, one-half have taught for more than 15 years in community colleges. Within the next 12 to 15 years as the faculty continues to advance in age and the corollary, years in teaching, a large percentage of them can be expected to retire.

Participants' responses to the institutional practices and policies items of the survey instrument confirm findings from national surveys focusing on changing curricular
patterns and trends. A solid majority (84%) believed that the goals and purposes of general education had been clearly identified on their college campuses. More than three-fourths (85%) reported that general education goals and requirements were related at their respective colleges. Three-fourths (76%) indicated that faculty on their campuses were committed to a vital and strong general education program for students. Slightly more than three-fourths (77%) took the position that senior level administrations at their colleges were committed to a solid general education program. Finally, over 90% of the respondents reported general education review and reform initiatives on their campuses within the past five years. These efforts included curricular review and redesign, introduction of new courses, formulation of learning outcomes, strategies for assessing student achievement of general education goals, and faculty development activities.

Two research hypotheses were formulated for the study: Hypothesis 1:

Perceptions of faculty who have primary teaching responsibilities in career/technical programs will not differ from those of faculty who have primary teaching responsibilities in general education/liberal education...
courses with regard to general education requirements for career/technical students.

Hypothesis 2:

Perceptions of faculty who have primary teaching responsibilities in career/technical programs will not differ from those of faculty who have primary teaching responsibilities in general education/liberal education courses with regard to the value of general education as an area of study for career/technical students.

Two multiple regression analyses were performed to investigate the perceptions of community college faculty in relationship to the general education function within the community college career/technical associate degree programs. In both analyses, the controlled variables included six items representing institutional practices and policies, four demographic variables, and "faculty type", the independent variable.

For the first regression analysis, the dependent variable was the "general education requirements" scale. With all other variables being controlled, "faculty type" made a unique and significant contribution to the variance in the dependent variable. The standardized partial regression coefficient (beta weight) associated with "faculty type" was found to significantly covary (p < .0001) with faculty perceptions as measured by the dependent variable, the "general education requirements" scale.
In the second regression analysis, the dependent variable was the "general education values" scale. "Faculty type" significantly contributed to the variance in the dependent variable, with all other variables being controlled. The beta weight associated with "faculty type" was found to have significant covariance (p < .0001) with faculty perceptions as measured by the "general education values" scale. Results of the statistical analyses performed are summarized and discussed in Chapter IV: Findings.

The research hypotheses were not supported by the statistical analyses and thus rejected. Area of teaching responsibility was found to be a significant predictor for faculty perceptions related to general education requirements for students in career/technical associate degree programs and also for perceptions related to general education as an area of study.

Faculty with primary teaching responsibilities in general education/liberal education courses are more inclined than faculty in technical studies programs to support institutional general education requirements, and increasing these requirements, if necessary, for career/technical majors. There is evidence in the related literature (Seidman, 1985; Boyer, 1987; Gaff, 1991), however, that faculty support for general education is increasing among two-year college faculty, both
career/technical faculty and general education/liberal education faculty. The strength of support of faculty teaching in technical studies programs, nevertheless, is attenuated by demands from employers, program advisory committees, and program accrediting organizations for the expansion of technical proficiency and knowledge at the associate degree level. Similarly, the Commission on the Future of the Community College (1988) reported that in many career-oriented programs, there is little time for general education courses, beyond the minimum requirements established by the college or the state higher education coordinating board.

The statistical analyses in Chapter IV also revealed that "faculty type" is a predictor of faculty attitudes with regard to the value of general education as an area of study. Accordingly, faculty in general education/liberal education disciplines are more inclined than faculty in career/technical programs to stress the transferability of general education competencies, abilities, and skills to the work environment and to the daily lives of students as parents, citizens, leaders, and volunteers. As a group, general education/liberal education faculty view the campus general education program as the core of the associate degree program and as the foundation for lifelong learning, informed decision making, and inquiry. These faculty members would vigorously affirm the position of the
Commission on the Future of Community Colleges (1988):

"Many students come to the community college with narrow backgrounds and, for them, career education may mean only gaining skills for a specific job. Job training is a worthy goal for an unemployed adult, but it does not open the door wide enough.

Through lack of attention to general education, community colleges often exacerbate this tendency toward narrowness. . . . Specifically, the aim of a community college education must be not only to prepare students for productive careers, but also to take them beyond their narrow interests, broaden their perspectives, and to live lives of dignity and purpose" (p. 17).

In summary, the present research study provides empirical evidence that career or technical studies faculty and general education/liberal education faculty differ in their perceptions of the general education function of the associate degree. As a group, technical studies faculty demonstrate less support for increasing general education course requirements for career-oriented students beyond those mandated by state law, a state high education coordinating board, or program accrediting boards because of the push for employment-related courses in career-oriented two-year programs. General education/liberal education faculty collectively agree that the general education curriculum provides the foundation for effective lifelong learning, productive careers, and informed decision making. Although both faculty groups are dedicated teachers, committed to the task of teaching effectiveness, they differ significantly in their perceptions of the role of general education in promoting the intellectual and personal
development of career-oriented students and in providing these students with experiences that will enable them to adapt to a changing world.

**Implications and Recommendations**

The findings of this study have major practical implications for decision makers, both faculty and administrators, engaged in strengthening and improving general education at comprehensive community colleges. Within the past two decades there has been a renewed interest in the general education component of the associate degree curriculum. This renewed focus on general education has been fueled by such trends as:

- public dissatisfaction with the knowledge and skills of high school graduates;

- the changing nature of the modern workplace—for example, knowledge-intensive jobs and rapidly changing technology—which demands changing job requirements and higher skills;

- assessment mandates by state legislatures, state higher education coordinating boards, or regional accrediting bodies;

- articulation of two-year career/technical associate degree programs with four-year degree programs;

- growing emphasis on lifelong learning either through the attainment of additional degrees or recurring educational opportunities;

- rapid turnover in jobs and careers;

- a highly competitive global economy.

Simultaneously, the United States Department of Labor estimates that 75% of all jobs will require some form of
postsecondary education by the mid-1990's (Johnston and Packer, 1987). Accordingly, the Commission on the Future of the Community College (1988) declares that career/technical degree programs will assume more importance in the decade of the 1990's and beyond. Parnell (1985) agrees, contending that in today's technological society community colleges simply cannot have first-rate technical studies degree programs without a high-quality general education component. Thus, it is urgent that community colleges move forward with re-examining and strengthening their general education programs. The implications of this study and corresponding recommendations follow.

One implication of the study is related to the institutional missions and priorities of community colleges. A mediocre general education program is actually a disservice to the career/technical students a community college serves because student prospects for career advancement, for making informed choices, for broadened perspectives, for moving beyond narrow interests, and for developing intellectual resources for lifelong learning will be severely dampened by lack of access to a solid and strong general education curriculum.

**Recommendation**

Institutional priority. Because of the centrality of the general education program within the core or instructional mission of the two-year college, the program should have priority status in the programming, staffing, and budgeting processes. Despite the trends of reduced state appropriations, stabilizing
enrollments, and flourishing of career programs, the general education curriculum must be an adequately funded program of high quality focusing on the intellectual and personal growth of students within the college.

Another implication drawn from this study is the recognition of the central role of faculty in general education reform initiatives. Faculty commitment to and ownership in the institutional vision of an enhanced general education program is imperative for program success.

Recommendation

Faculty committee representation. Because of the faculty's central responsibility in curriculum development, implementation, and evaluation, one of the first initiatives in a campus general education review and reform process should focus on the selection of institutional committees with adequate faculty representation from both technical studies programs and general education/liberal education disciplines. These committees should be charged with (1) formulating an institutional definition of the characteristics of a generally-educated graduate, (2) framing program philosophy and goals, and (3) describing student outcomes.

Additionally, the study has curricular implications. Research suggests that student learning is most effective in (1) a student-centered classroom with (2) a mix of teaching techniques to accommodate a range of student learning styles, and (3) the active engagement of students in the learning process (National Institute of Education, 1984). In this type of learning environment, questions focusing on student demographics and needs can provide direction for improving individual courses and ultimately all curricula: Who are the students the college serves? What experiences
have shaped their lives? What interests them? How do they learn? How can they be challenged to become actively involved in learning (Gaff, 1991)? Additionally, in a student-centered learning environment, the curriculum is academically challenging and comprehensive, and shaped by the institutional mission, faculty, student, history, and resources. The recommendations that follow focus on a student-centered, comprehensive and coherent general education program.

**Recommendations:**

**Curricular content.** The content of the general education curriculum within the community college should be determined by such factors as the faculty’s notion of a generally educated student, learning outcomes students are to achieve, the availability of resources, and the demographics of the student body. A comprehensive curriculum should include (1) basic and advanced academic skills courses (writing, speaking, reading, problem solving, critical thinking, computation, and computer literacy skills); (2) basic liberal arts and sciences courses (humanities, natural sciences, social sciences, and the fine arts); and (3) integrative courses (interdisciplinary or thematic) which provide broad understandings of issues and problems. Additionally, gender sensitivity, cultural diversity, and international perspectives should be incorporated into the curriculum.

**Curricular structure and coherence.** The structure of an institution’s general education program should serve the institutional vision for the program’s philosophy, goals, and outcomes. One college may prescribe common core courses for all students while another two-year college may prescribe a limited range of courses distributed among the traditional arts and sciences disciplines. Still others may select a combination of the two approaches to meet general education
requirements. A coherent program is one in which the individual courses of the curriculum should be focused toward the stated general education goals of the college and directed toward assisting students to integrate knowledge and make connections across disciplines as well as between college and life.

Assessment. An enhanced general education program should provide for the systematic assessment of student achievement of general education outcomes through multiple assessment procedures. Faculty can determine the effectiveness of the curriculum and identify problems that need to be resolved through effective assessment strategies.

The need for an institutional vision of how general education goals and competencies can be applied to and integrated within career-oriented courses and programs is yet another implication drawn from this study. Career faculty have acknowledged that the demand for employment credentials leaves little time for general education courses beyond the mandated requirements. To realistically address this issue, two recommendations are posited.

Recommendations.

Integration of general education outcomes within technical studies courses. Career/technical faculty should consider revising syllabi to focus not only on specialized knowledge but also to foster and reinforce the development of such general education outcomes as: proficiency in oral and written language skills, the ability to solve problems, the capacity to analyze and synthesize quantities of information, the capability to connect knowledge across disciplines and a historical consciousness, especially in relationship to the major developments within the career field. Similarly, general faculty should consider revising general education courses to include units related to the history, ethical and moral issues, and social consequences of modern technology.
General education outcomes extended beyond the formal curriculum. The institutional vision of the integration of general education outcomes within all components of the associate degree curriculum should also be considered for extension to activities beyond the classroom, for example to lecture series, visual and performing arts events, community service projects, peer tutoring assignments, internships, practicums, and student organizations.

Still another implication related to this study is the role of faculty development in general education improvement initiatives. Gaff (1991) concludes from his most recent study of reforms in general education that it would be foolish for any college to undertake a significant reform of general education unless the college is committed to substantial faculty development. Extending his argument, Gaff adds, "In colleges with a major faculty development program, the attitudes toward general education became more favorable for larger proportions of administrators, faculty members, and students. This may be because individuals involved in workshops, seminars or retreats, for example, may strengthen their own attitudes toward general education" (p. 114). Community college faculty appear to recognize the inherent value of the liberal arts for college transfer students but the relevancy and practicality of general education for students in technical studies programs is often questioned or viewed with some skepticism by faculty in these programs.
Recommendation.

Faculty development opportunities. A systematic program of faculty development is essential for galvanizing support among career/technical faculty for instituting general education reform initiatives. Faculty development opportunities are also critical for assisting faculty with curricular changes and instructional improvement required for implementing the institutional vision for an enhanced general education curriculum.

The "graying" of the faculty and its impact on strengthening general education is a further implication of the present study. The average age of the community college faculty is 50. As the community college faculty advances in age and experience, a large number of retirements are expected within the near future.

Recommendation.

Selection of new faculty. As retirements occur, chief instructional officers, division deans, and department chairs should aim to hire replacement faculty who demonstrate a firm commitment to the institutional vision, philosophy, goals, and student outcomes of the general education program and to a well-rounded education for all students to be served by the institution.

The study additionally has implications for students served by community colleges. The following recommendation is offered for expanding the role of students in the general education program.

Recommendation

Student surveys. Students should be surveyed periodically to elicit their perceptions about the quality of their general education courses and experiences, opinions on the balance between technical and general education courses, suggestions for changes and improvements in general education courses, and for graduates, the relevance of the general education
experience to their lives, personal and career, after college. The survey results can be used for a variety of purposes: improving the advising process, revising courses, and guiding technical studies students, when necessary, to a deeper appreciation of the linkages among general education competencies, career knowledge and skills, career advancement and success, and work–workplace performance.

Finally, the role of administrative leadership is an important implication of this study. The personal commitment of the senior level administration is an absolute necessity for a strong and effective general education program.

**Recommendation**

Senior level administrative support. Senior level administrators, specifically, the president and the chief instructional officer, should assert leadership in promoting and providing the necessary human, fiscal, and administrative support essential for designing, implementing and maintaining a general education curriculum of high-quality for career-oriented students. Additionally, academic policies and practices, funding strategies, the campus culture, and academic and student support activities must affirm and reinforce the institutional vision, goals, philosophy, and outcomes for the broad and general education of the technical studies student in the two-year college.

Without the essential ingredient of enthusiastic support for and active involvement by career/technical faculty, initiatives for reforming the college's general education curriculum and expanding its role in the education of career students are apt to be met with resistance and skepticism by these faculty members.
APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT
September 9, 1991

Dear Colleague,

The function and role of general education is one of the recurring questions being raised by community college faculty and administrators. As community college leaders continue to debate the future goals and missions of these institutions, an assessment of faculty attitudes in relationship to general education may provide some significant insights for curricular planning and decision making.

The American Association of Colleges defines general education as "the cultivation of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that all of us use and live by during most of our lives." The outcomes of a general education are applicable to every student, regardless of his/her personal, educational, or career objectives. A general education provides a foundation for lifelong learning.

The purpose of this survey is to gain a perspective on the attitudes of community college faculty with regard to (1) general education as a requirement for students and (2) the value of general education as an area of study. Your name was drawn in a random sample of faculty from sample community colleges in five Midwestern states: Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Ohio. These five states are members of a recently formed regional organization, the Midwestern Higher Education Compact, which promotes interstate cooperation among colleges and universities within the compact through shared educational resources, services and facilities. In order that the results of the survey will truly represent the perspective of community college faculty in the State of Kansas, your response is wanted and needed.

Your survey is identified by a code number for the sole purpose of simplifying record keeping. No individual identity will be revealed. Respondent confidentiality is assured.

If you wish a copy of the results of the research project, please print your name and address on the back of the return envelope.

Your cooperation and patience in this research project are genuinely appreciated.

Please return the questionnaire in the stamped envelope provided by September 27, 1991.

Sincere regards,

Rayma E. Smith
Project Director

William Moore, Jr., Ph.D.
Advisor
The Ohio State University
Department of Educational Policy & Leadership
September 9, 1991

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Project Director

William Moore, Jr., Ph.D.
Advisor
The Ohio State University
Department of Educational Policy & Leadership
COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FACULTY SURVEY

Below is a three-part survey. The first section relates to institutional practices and policies with regard to general education. The second section contains a series of statements selected from many sources. These statements are expressive of points of view about the role of general education within two-year community colleges. The final section extracts personal background information about the participant.

The American Association of Colleges defines general education as "the cultivation of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that all of us use and live by during most of our lives." The outcomes of a general education are applicable to every student, regardless of his/her personal, educational, or career objectives. A general education provides a foundation for lifelong learning.

None of the statements in Sections I or II may coincide exactly with your personal views, but to facilitate treatment of the responses with those of other two-year college faculty, you are asked to respond to each statement according to the following key:

STRONGLY AGREE (SA), AGREE (A), UNDECIDED (U), DISAGREE (D), STRONGLY DISAGREE (SD)

Please circle the response that corresponds most closely to your opinion.

SECTION I: INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES AND POLICIES

1. The goals and purposes of the general education program have been clearly identified on my college campus.

   SA A U D SD

2. General education goals and general education requirements are related at my college.

   SA A U D SD

   2
3. A director/dean and/or college-wide faculty committee is responsible for the coordination and implementation of the general education program on my campus. 

SA A U D SD

4. Faculty at my college are committed to a vital and strong general education program. 

SA A U D SD

5. Senior level administrators at my college are committed to a vital and strong general education program. 

SA A U D SD

6. Within the past five years, my college has been involved in one or more general education review and reform efforts.

(For example, curricular review and redesign; introduction of new courses; formulation of learning outcomes; strategies for assessing student achievement of general education goals; and faculty development activities) 

SA A U D SD

SECTION II: FACULTY VIEWS

7. All degree-seeking community college students, regardless of major, should be required to take general education courses. 

SA A U D SD

3
8. General education courses should be required in career/technical programs even though the courses would increase graduation requirements.

9. If required by an accrediting agency to increase the number of technical courses for graduation, colleges should not replace general education courses with technical courses.

10. Employers hiring associate degree graduates are generally concerned about their general education competencies.

11. Career/technical program graduates with a broad general education are at an advantage in terms of future career advancements.

12. Students with career/technical majors should be required to take more general education courses even if it means reducing the number of technical courses.

13. General education courses make an essential contribution to the formation of marketable skills.

14. General education courses develop broad intellectual interests to a greater degree than do career/technical courses.

15. If required by the accrediting agency to increase general education requirements, colleges should reduce career/technical course requirements.
16. General education requirements should be met through broad general courses rather than through specialized courses.

17. General education requirements for career/technical students should be increased.

18. General education courses help prepare students for lifelong learning.

19. No changes should be made in general education requirements for career/technical students.

20. A solid general education will open employment doors more often than close them.

**PART III: BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

*Please circle your response to the following items.*

21. Primary teaching area:

1. career/technical degree program

2. general education/liberal education

*(humanities, social sciences, natural and physical sciences, and fine arts)*

22. Gender: 1. male 2. female

23. Age range:

1. under 25 4. 46 to 55
2. 25 to 35 5. 56 to 65
3. 36 to 45 6. over 65
24. Highest academic degree earned: (Select only one.)

1. Associate degree
2. Bachelor's degree
3. Master's degree
4. Ph.D. or Ed.D. (or equivalent)
5. M.D., D.D.S., J.D., etc.
6. No degree
7. Other degree (specify)

25. Number of years teaching in community colleges:

1. 1 to 5 years
2. 6 to 10 years
3. 11 to 15 years
4. 16 to 20 years
5. 21 to 25 years
6. over 25 years
Please use this space for your comments related to any of the questionnaire items.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND PATIENCE IN COMPLETING THIS SURVEY.


If you wish to have a copy of the results of the research project, please print your name and address on the back of the return envelope.
APPENDIX B

PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE POSTCARDS
August 30, 1991

Dear Colleague,

I am requesting your cooperation and participation in a research project designed to assess community college faculty attitudes in relationship to general education. Your name has been drawn in a random sample of faculty from sample community colleges in five midwestern states: Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Ohio. In order that the results of the survey will truly represent the perspectives of community college faculty in the State of Kansas, your response is wanted and needed.

The questionnaire and a self-addressed stamped envelope will be mailed to you within the next few days. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Rayma E. Smith
Project Director
August 30, 1991

Dear Colleague,

I am requesting your cooperation and participation in a research project designed to assess community college faculty attitudes in relationship to general education. Your name has been drawn in a random sample of faculty from sample community colleges in five midwestern states: Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Ohio. In order that the results of the survey will truly represent the perspectives of community college faculty in the State of Michigan, your response is wanted and needed.

The questionnaire and a self-addressed stamped envelope will be mailed to you within the next few days. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Rayma E. Smith
Project Director
August 30, 1991

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I am requesting your cooperation and participation in a research project designed to assess community college faculty attitudes in relationship to general education. Your name has been drawn in a random sample of faculty from sample community colleges in five midwestern states: Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, and Ohio. In order that the results of the survey will truly represent the perspectives of community college faculty in the State of Minnesota, your response is wanted and needed.

The questionnaire and a self-addressed stamped envelope will be mailed to you within the next few days. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

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Project Director
August 30, 1991

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Project Director
August 30, 1991

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The questionnaire and a self-addressed stamped envelope will be mailed to you within the next few days. Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Rayma E. Smith
Project Director
APPENDIX C

FOLLOW-UP POSTCARDS
September 23, 1991

Dear Colleague:

A few days ago I mailed a survey to you that is designed to assess community college faculty attitudes regarding the function and role of general education in the college curriculum. If you have already completed the survey and returned it to me, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to complete it and for your cooperation.

If you have not yet completed the survey, would you please do so as soon as possible. In order that the results of the research project will truly represent the perspectives of community college faculty in the State of Kansas, your response is wanted and needed.

Best wishes for a productive and successful academic year!

Sincerely,

Rayma E. Smith
Project Director
September 23, 1991

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A few days ago I mailed a survey to you that is designed to assess community college faculty attitudes regarding the function and role of general education in the college curriculum. If you have already completed the survey and returned it to me, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to complete it and for your cooperation.

If you have not yet completed the survey, would you please do so as soon as possible. In order that the results of the research project will truly represent the perspectives of community college faculty in the State of Michigan, your response is wanted and needed.

Best wishes for a productive and successful academic year!

Sincerely,

Rayma E. Smith
Project Director
September 23, 1991

Dear Colleague:

A few days ago I mailed a survey to you that is designed to assess community college faculty attitudes regarding the function and role of general education in the college curriculum. If you have already completed the survey and returned it to me, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to complete it and for your cooperation.

If you have not yet completed the survey, would you please do so as soon as possible. In order that the results of the research project will truly represent the perspectives of community college faculty in the State of Minnesota, your response is wanted and needed.

Best wishes for a productive and successful academic year!

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If you have not yet completed the survey, would you please do so as soon as possible. In order that the results of the research project will truly represent the perspectives of community college faculty in the State of Ohio, your response is wanted and needed.

Best wishes for a productive and successful academic year!

Sincerely,

Rayma E. Smith
Project Director
REFERENCES


Dressel, Paul L. and Lorimer, Margaret F. "Attitudes of Liberal Arts Faculty Members Toward Liberal and Professional Education." New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1960.


