



education review // reseñas educativas

editors: gene v glass gustavo e. fischman melissa cast-brede

a multi-lingual journal of book reviews

June 21, 2011

ISSN 1094-5296

Education Review/Reseñas Educativas is a project of the National Education Policy Center <http://nepc.colorado.edu>

Follow Education Review on Facebook



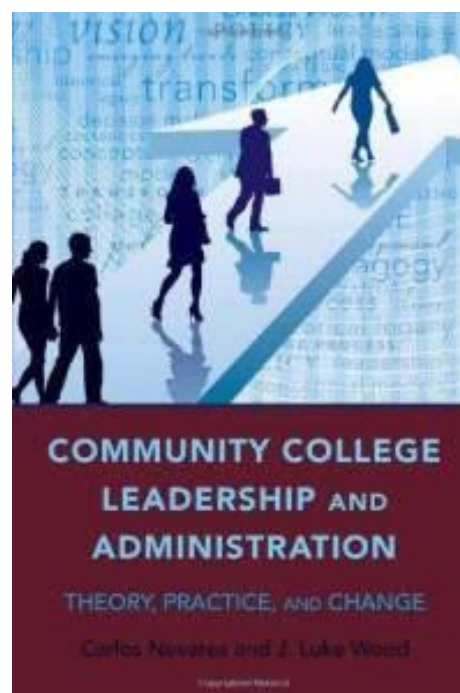
Nevarez, Carlos, and Wood, J. Luke. (2010). *Community College Leadership and Administration: Theory, Practice, and Change*. NY: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc.

Pp. xv + 290 ISBN 978-1-4331-0795-5

Reviewed by Marcia Kennard Kiessling
University of North Carolina, Charlotte

Is there a reason why, in 3 visits to the guidance counselor at XX Community College, they all failed to mention that I can't register for classes until I get some paperwork signed that takes a week? Today is sign-up day and they just told me... I'm already at the end of the line because I'm a new student and hardly any classes are left. (Personal communication, Anonymous, May 2011).

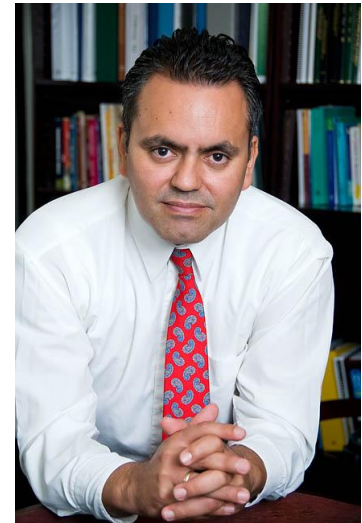
We know community college students face challenges and resulting frustrations in their journeys toward college access and success. Not understanding processes and poor information are examples of such barriers. What other



Citation: Whitlock, Annie McMahon. (2011 June 21) Review of *Community College Leadership and Administration* by Carlos Nevarez & Luke Wood. *Education Review*, 14. Retrieved [Date] from <http://www.edrev.info/reviews/rev1099.pdf>

difficulties do community college students face that minimize their achievement? More importantly, how adept are educational leaders at recognizing and dealing with policies, practices, and institutional cultures that may negatively influence student achievement?

Nevarez and Wood address these topics and more in *Community College Leadership and Administration: Theory, Practice, and Change*. While Nevarez and Wood touch on issues of access, their focus is on the role and influence of educational leaders as change agents. As others have argued, access is but one facet of the overall formula encompassing student success (Rosenbaum, Deil-Amen, & Person, 2006). Nevarez and Wood argue that shifting demographics along with increased demands for accountability and student success are driving a need for change. Changing realities, the authors contend, call for improved leadership with administrative structures and practices that will solve ongoing problems and result in positive change reflective of social justice.



Written as a textbook, the authors emphasize “leadership, change, politics, community college mission, leadership theories/models, and research and practice” (viii). This book can serve as a primer on a variety of topics including but not limited to leadership, ethical decision making, community college history, and general organization and operation of community colleges. Authors also assess the community college status quo and introduce other possibilities. Interwoven throughout the text are the authors’ perspectives of the change they argue is needed in order to solve issues facing America’s changing community college population. For example, the concept of proportional representation among faculty, staff, and administration at community colleges gets significant attention, and the authors argue convincingly of the need for community colleges to improve in this area. Another example of their perspective educates the reader to understand and deal with improving the current achievement gap. Nevarez and Wood support their arguments through a rich array of current literature and research findings. They also present several new, self-developed models and frameworks.



This book is divided into twelve chapters similarly organized. At the beginning of each chapter, readers are provided questions to consider. Each chapter concludes with a case study that provides opportunities for student

scholars/future administrators to reflect on chapter content and practice problem-solving. Current and former community college leaders contributed the case studies, which are also presented in a matrix. Intended for use as a textbook, this feature is a particularly useful tool for faculty who wish to promote structured learning opportunities with their students.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the vision and mission of community colleges. The Vision, Mission, Function, and Operation (VMFO) model is presented. Vision is described as ‘what,’ mission as ‘how,’ functions as ‘actions,’ and operations as ‘who’ in regard to community college administration. The four core functions of community colleges are identified as transfer, terminal degrees, remedial education, and continuing education. The authors argue that leaders should live the vision and mission of their institutions with their everyday practices and ensure that the mission of the individual institution is relevant to contemporary needs of their students and those affiliated with their institutions. As becomes evident upon reading, students and their success are of the utmost concern to the authors, and they repeatedly argue for practices that will increase rates of student success.

Historical Legacy of Community Colleges, Chapter 2, focuses on two main components. The first component includes a discussion of social forces and an overview of the development and expansion of community colleges. The authors categorize and describe social forces as follows: philosophical standpoints, interconnectivity of opportunity and education, German system of education, industrial market needs, autonomous and localized educational practices, and the influences of forebears on the development and shaping of community colleges. In the second section, development and expansion, the authors outline seven major periods, explaining the influences during each period. In concluding this chapter, the authors note that community colleges have been historically underfunded and have had a historical focus on the limited goals of access and opportunity. They argue that leaders must work to strengthen funding levels, just as they must recognize that student access must be coupled with student success. This student success concept is similar to Rosenbaum, Deil-Amen, & Person’s argument (2006) in *After Admission: From College Access to*

College Success; however, they focused more on institutional processes and practices, whereas Nevarez and Wood take a broader, social justice approach.

In Chapter 3, the authors touch upon various aspects of leadership. They begin by discussing the value and benefits of leadership theory. Styles (authoritarian, transactional, transformational), theories (trait, behavioral, contingency-situation), and approaches (bureaucratic, democratic, political) are each introduced. Additionally, the Nevarez-Wood Leadership Inventory, a tool to help leaders assess their leadership styles, is presented. The Nevarez-Wood Inventory adds new value, while the content for the remainder of the chapter is easily found in other publications, where such subject matter is treated more thoroughly. This chapter provides a starting point for a novice.

Chapter 4 addresses the ‘community college achievement gap’ which is defined as “pervasive success disparities among students on academic performance indicators (i.e. rates for enrollment, remediation, retention/persistence, graduation, and transfer)” (p. 73). Persistence theories developed by scholars including Spady (1970), Tinto (1975, 1987, 1988, 1993), and Bean & Metzner (1985) are reviewed. In this chapter, Nevarez and Wood build their argument that access must be matched with strategies for success. Drawing upon the work of the above scholars, they present a model that focuses on factors affecting the success of racial/ethnic and gender student groups. In their model, achievement gap indicators include remediation, persistence/retention, graduation rates, and transfer rates. Several factors affect students, including background, personal, social, institutional factors, and macro support for institutions. Nevarez and Wood encourage readers to seek additional information from scholars who have contributed to the literature on persistence and academic success specific to student groups by racial/ethnic and gender affiliation (p. 88). In closing this chapter, attention is given to minority male initiatives as well as to minority/low-income initiatives. By including these topics, Nevarez and Wood give important attention to troubling trends that have recently begun to be addressed. This attention to initiatives mentioned above also represents an area ripe for the type of policy and procedural change that the authors argue is needed.

Chapter 5 focuses on ethical leadership and decision making. The authors begin by building a case for the importance of ethical leadership. Topics include a variety of definitions of ethical leadership, pitfalls in ethical decision-making, tools such as codes of ethics and ethical paradigms, as well as ethical decision-making models of Anderson and Davis (2000), the Markkula Center (2009), and a variation of Nevarez and Wood's Case Study Model. In closing the chapter, they suggest that their Leadership Case Study Framework, with slight changes, can be utilized for ethical decision-making. This chapter and the previous leadership chapter both provide cursory treatment of complex topics, likely intended as starting points for those interested in learning more. There has been a surge in societal recognition of the importance of ethics and ethical decision-making that supports inclusion of this topic in a book geared toward leaders. Though this chapter provides only a glimpse into this important area, it is a well-conceived section.

The value of faculty and their critical roles are explored in Chapter 6. Faculty influence clearly goes much deeper than the classroom. As the authors discuss, faculty are important because they help fulfill the institutional mission, provide informal leadership, influence the sense of collegiality, have awareness of what is needed in regard to support, provide institutional culture and memory, and are the first line of communication between the local community and the institution. Clearly, it is essential for administrative leaders to understand faculty status and help create the necessary supportive structures that will sustain them. It is paradoxical that community colleges have chosen to utilize adjunct faculty to such a great degree to meet budgetary demands over the years, given the potentially positive influence of involved, full-time faculty. Faculty demographics, challenges of part time faculty, and challenges in hiring are all discussed. The authors also consider some of the barriers that prospective faculty face in being hired. Reflecting both attitudinal and structural barriers, research indicates faculty committees often hire people like them in regard to educational and life experiences and values. This practice minimizes opportunities to create a campus climate with more diversity. Particularly as our student bodies become more diverse, having diverse faculty as a part of the community

college culture to serve as role models and mentors to students becomes increasingly important. This concept of institutional diversity is interspersed throughout the book, and Nevarez and Wood see the diversification of community college faculty and administration as one way to make an important difference in regard to issues of student inclusiveness, success, and more broadly, reflective of social justice.

In Chapter 7, the authors focus on institutional, student, faculty, and administrator demographic trends. Putting trends into context, Nevarez and Wood argue that educational leaders must learn about and use their knowledge to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population. They report statistical changes from year to year and note significant gaps in ‘proportional representation’ which is a concept described by the authors as “a relative numerical or percentage comparison between the racial/ethnic background of students, administrators, teachers, and other school personnel nationwide” (Nevarez and Wood, 2007, p. 277). In the community college setting, today’s students reflect a broader diversity as compared with a relatively homogenous faculty and administration. The authors recognize that shifting demographics bring about a need for change and through this textbook they seek to educate a new cadre of leaders to deal intentionally with this issue. The authors present significant amounts of data to make their point, followed by perspectives on how to apply that knowledge to leadership situations. Supporting the need for change and offering specific suggestions regarding how change can be accomplished, both theoretically and in practice, is a common thread of this book.

Leadership in Student Affairs is covered in Chapter 8 and the authors provide readers with a smorgasbord type treatment of this division of community college organizational structure. Three functions of student affairs are outlined as: technical aspects (including outreach, orientation, registration, enrollment, financial aid, assessment, counseling, and judicial affairs), campus life that encourages social integration (student government, student clubs and organizations, intramurals, athletic events, housing), and practices that reside in the margins of academic and student affairs (service learning, retention programs, and academic advising). Though student affairs

structures vary widely from institution to institution, the authors provide a credible overview of typical structures. Just as the benefits of faculty are outlined in this book, so too, are benefits of student affairs. They include retention, quality graduates, public image, linkage to community, and partnerships for students. The authors also provide historical context in this chapter, and reference important Student Affairs documents such as NASPA's Principles of Good Practice (1996) and ACPA's Student Learning Imperative (1994). Additionally, they touch upon well respected student development theories, including types and specific theorists. Theorists whose works are outlined include Erickson (1980), Marcia (1966), and Chickering and Reisser (1993). Though Nevarez and Wood recognize the contributions of these theorists, they conclude that the work of these theorists is "inadequate in describing realities specific to identity development with specific racial/ethnic groups" (p. 192-193) and provide citations for a variety of theorists whose work focuses on groups including Blacks, Whites, Asian Americans, and Hispanics. Additionally, they identify theories of sexual identity development and intercultural sensitivity (Helms, 1990, Bennett, 1993). Similar to other sections, Nevarez and Wood offer their own conceptual model titled "Leadership in Diversity Continuum Model" (p. 195). This model is informed by the work of Helms and Bennett and offers four stages of cross-cultural rejection and three stages of cross-cultural congruency. This model ties in with the authors' belief that college leaders must understand identities of students and how to welcome and integrate these students into institutions.

Finance and Governance are covered in Chapters 9 and 10. Finance touches on revenue streams including federal, state, local, and campus funding, tuition and fees, and other funding sources. The authors identify various economic pressures such as dwindling state support, revenue generation as a means to sustain college operations, and a business model approach as creating tension among priorities and approaches of sustainable funding for community colleges and other institutions of higher education (p. 213). Financing for students is also addressed, and the important dilemma that full time students are more likely to have access to financial aid than part-time students is discussed. This is a particularly difficult barrier to many community college students who

are unable to attend college full time, yet have great financial need.

Governance structures are next presented including Tollefson's (1999) concept of state-level coordination and governance, local boards of trustees, and campus level governance. Additionally, primary influences on governance are discussed and include national, statewide, and local needs, ideological differences, internal influences, and external differences (p. 236). Nevarez and Wood discuss political and philosophical differences as well as cultural viewpoints, under the general heading of ideological differences. Important in their overall argument of the need for a more diverse and inclusive faculty is the ability of educational leaders to embrace various cultural viewpoints. They note that cultural misunderstanding and ethnocentrism lead to discord and point out that leaders need to understand issues, concerns, interests, and needs of varying cultural groups. This helps in development of a positive campus climate and enhanced relationships in which leaders can "infuse within the decision-making process the thoughts, perceptions, and needs of communities that they serve" (p. 238).

After providing an overview of various segments and components of community college systems, including context and structures, the last two chapters, 11 and 12, focus on how well leaders are being developed for these new and challenging roles and on emerging trends that challenge the mission of community colleges. Among the challenges facing leaders are: large numbers of imminent retirements, complexities of upper level administrative positions, lack of funding, and the challenges of academic success. The additional demands for accountability (often via assessment) as well as lack of diversity in leadership negatively influencing community colleges are also addressed.

In Chapter 12, Nevarez and Wood argue that the skills needed for effective leadership are human relations and budgeting and finance, yet note that doctoral programs continue to focus on research skills and technical knowledge. They identify emerging trends of: possible elimination of open access, possible need to cut comprehensive programs, addition of baccalaureate degree, pressure to serving the local community by

graduating more students, less full time faculty, meeting needs accompanied by the influx of all types of students, and addressing low rates of student success, especially for students of color and low income students. Scholars have previously addressed many of these topics (McClenney, 2004, Romero, 2004), though Nevarez and Wood's framework is clearly geared to educate new leaders and as importantly, to encourage positive change as outlined throughout this review.

To develop the book, Nevarez and Wood undertook a survey of current community college leaders. They asked these leaders for their insights on contemporary issues influencing community colleges. They then conducted a literature review based on the responses. As a result, this book reflects concerns of current leaders. It provides a significant amount of relevant emerging and current theory and research references, which is a definite strength of this book.

As noted, the data presented is relevant and supports the authors' arguments. The presentation of some of the data, however, creates challenges for the reader. For example, the graphic representations are in black and white, and not consistently labeled in detail. With gradation in shades of gray, it is often difficult to distinguish which percentage equates with which category. This is particularly true of the pie charts, which caused some frustration to this reader. By reading in the body of the related text, one can usually clarify points of confusion. There are also a variety of minor grammatical errors throughout the book. A future edition could easily eliminate both of these weaknesses.

The overarching focus and contribution of this book centers on preparing current and future leaders to understand theory, apply theory through practice, and utilize strategies to meet changing leadership needs for community colleges. Part of these strategies includes changing attitudinal barriers and part includes changing structural barriers. Nevarez and Wood are effective at providing context to the challenges resulting from shifting demographics of community college students. They push their readers to think and act broadly and inclusively and to create the changes needed to serve today's community college students. The authors are successful at tying elements of the book's content together as they argue for

change, even with chapters that cover a wide variety of aspects of community colleges. Throughout this book, Nevarez and Wood encourage community college leaders to embrace leadership practices that are inclusive and will create the type of campus climate that is likely to improve persistence and retention.

References

- Fischer, K. (2011, May 20). Crisis of confidence threatens colleges. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, LVII(37), Section A, 1-4.
- McClenney, K. M. (2004). Keeping America's promise: Challenges for community colleges. *Leadership Abstracts*, 17(8), 7 pages.
- Romero, M. (2004, November/December). Who will lead our community colleges? *Change*, 30-34.
- Rosenbaum, J. E., Deil-Amen, R., & Person, A. E. (2006). *After admission: From college Access to college success*. New York: Russell Sage.

About the Reviewer

Marcia Kennard Kiessling is Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Activities, Diversity, and Special Projects, University of North Carolina, Charlotte. She will soon assume the position of Associate Provost for Student Affairs, University of Southern Indiana; Evansville, Indiana.

Copyright is retained by the first or sole author, who grants right of first publication to the *Education Review*.

Education Review/Reseñas Educativas is a project of the National Education Policy Center <http://nepc.colorado.edu>



Editors

Gene V Glass

glass@edrev.info

Gustavo Fischman

fischman@edrev.info

Melissa Cast-Brede

cast-brede@edrev.info
