

## **Online Guide: LDR 9870 Introduction to Community College Leadership**

### Preface

This course is designed to prepare individuals to engage in community college leadership with a recognition and understanding of the unique institutional role community colleges play in American higher education. Students who successfully complete the course will have a working understanding of community colleges as dynamic organizations responsive to and formed by a broad spectrum of constituents and forces. This course is the first of three which comprise the Community College specialization. The other courses are: Legal and Ethical Issues in Community College Leadership and Contemporary Trends and Challenges in Community Colleges.

This study guide provides an overview of the topics to be explored in LDR 9870. The guide details anticipated learning outcomes resulting from active engagement in the study areas and participation in the course. The readings and assignments are organized around three major themes: the origins and development of the American community college system; the academic and curricular elements of community colleges; community college leadership challenges and possibilities. LDR 9870 is a practitioner-oriented, applied course for individuals currently engaged in a leadership role in a community college.

As an active learner, you are expected to read this guide thoroughly and carefully. Throughout the course, instruction and direction for discussion, study, reflection and collaboration with your peers will be provided through the course website and concomitant interactive media. The course materials include readings in the texts articles, materials on web sites and other Internet resources, as well as the expertise and experiences of the leader and fellow participants. Learners are expected to actively contribute to the collaborative learning experience through contribution of reflection, information, responses and peer mentoring. The instructor will serve as a facilitator, guide and individual and group consultant throughout the learning experience.

## Course Description

This course examines the roots and diversity of the American community college system by viewing these institutions in the context of multiple communities: legislative, academic, social and cultural. The course will explore a broad spectrum of community college types including urban, state-governed, and tribal community colleges. Topics addressed in the course include: the history and development of American community colleges; community college missions and governance structures; the characteristics of curriculum development and faculty; accreditation; funding; the role of community colleges in workforce development and recent trends. A particular focus of the course is developing an understanding of contemporary issues as evolutionary outcomes of community college systems and of the environmental impacts which effect limitations as well as contribute to potential.

## Instructional Sequence

The instruction sequence of LDR 9870 is divided into three major themes which will be explored over the 15-week course period. This guide is divided accordingly.

Theme One, the origins and development of community colleges, examines the forces and types of communities which led to the development of these institutions. Students will explore the variety of degree-granting institutions which fall under the rubric of community college; differing missions and governance structures and the internal and external political impulses. The role of legislators, educators, community groups, business interests and others will be presented as a basis for understanding the systemic context in which community colleges operate. We will also explore how the historical genesis of community colleges has resulted in the specific issues which are constant challenges for community college identity and governance.

The academic and curricular elements of the community college form the core of the second section of the course. This component focuses on understanding the nature of community college curricula with a particular focus on the divergent functions of baccalaureate/transfer preparation; workforce preparation; and community education. The role of the K-12 education system in community college development will be examined as a significant contributor to community college faculty culture. Students will consider the interrelationship between the academic direction of community colleges and program outcomes.

The third component explores current and emerging challenges for community college leaders. Particular attention will be paid to legislative changes influencing governance, fiscal and academic directions. Students will consider the impact of technology as well as changing student demographics. Concomitantly, the class will review the potential for community college leadership in the growing trend toward leading learning communities in education.

## Learning Outcomes

It is anticipated that through active engagement with the materials and peers and application of themes and theories in the workplace, participants will be able to:

- identify the major organizations, cultural and social forces critical to the formation and to the development of community colleges
- describe the effects of originating groups and missions on institutional culture
- recognize various forms of community college structures and governance processes
- understand and be able to apply systems theory and concepts to community college leadership
- critically assess social, cultural and legislative trends and anticipate challenges and possibilities they present
- be an agent of change within the organization by understanding how to establish a direction for proactive and responsive change
- stimulate and promote understanding of community college functions in a broad social context

## Course Conduct

LDR 9870 is conducted using WebCT. All instruction is internet based and all communication with the instructor and between and among participants will take place via this medium. You are expected to log a minimum of five hours per week working online, exploring and examining relevant Internet sites, reading posted materials, engaging in threaded discussions and chats with classmates, working on the portfolio and final presentations and interacting with the instructor. You are expected to engage in off-line work, including assigned readings from the texts, conducting applied research and other forms of research, approximately four hours per week.

When logging in, students should read the posted lecture for the week and all discussion messages and respond to at least three posted messages. The WebCT software tracks log ins, enabling the instructor to follow student online activity and assign points for participation in discussion.

WebCT also allows for synchronous chats. At the outset of the course, I will schedule an introductory chat to allow the group to get acquainted, review the course materials and expectations and provide an overview of the WebCT process. As a collaborative learning group, we will learn from each other and contribute to each other's learning. Written materials should be clear and substantive. Together we will create a comprehensive, multi-faceted body of material which fully explores and expands understanding of community colleges as dynamic systems.

## Required Readings

- Cohen, A. M., & Brawer, F. B. (2003). *The American community college* (4th ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. ISBN 0-7879-6011X
- Dougherty, K. (2001). *The contradictory college: The conflicting origins, impacts and futures of the community college*. Albany: State University of New York Press. ISBN 0-7914-1955X.
- Kofman, F., & Senge, P. (1993, Autumn). Communities of commitment: The heart of learning organizations. *Organizational Dynamics*, 22(2), 5-24.
- McCabe, R. H. (1997). *The American community college: Nexus for workforce development*. Mission Viejo: League Publications. ED 405 040.
- O'Banion, T. (1997). *Creating more learning-centered community colleges*. League for Innovation in Community College. ED 414 980

## Recommended Readings

- Birnbaum, R. *How colleges work: The cybernetics of academic organization and leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. ISBN 1-5542-126-1.
- Boyer, P. (1997). *Native American colleges: Progress and prospects*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. ISBN 0-931050-63-4

Students are strongly encouraged to read *The Chronicle of Higher Education* on a weekly basis and at least one professional journal. *The Community College Journal* is of particular relevance. Other articles and references will be posted on the class website periodically.

## Course Requirements

Learning activities for LDR 9870 consist of readings, interactive learning experiences (threaded discussions), a team project and major written assignments.

**Readings:** The reading assignments are essential for full understanding and informed exploration of the topic, as well as for written assignments. You are expected to integrate the content of reading assignments (both assigned and supplemental) into all of your work. Commentary on bulletin board postings and chat rooms should also reflect a sharing and integration of information obtained through the readings as well as your professional practice. Questions can be posted either to the discussion area (for everyone) or to me privately through email. There will be opportunities for questions, clarifications and exploration of the concepts presented during a synchronous as well as synchronous discussion. Reading assignments will be posted in the appropriate folder under Course Content.

**Lectures.** Your instructor will post written lectures related to the readings, issues, concepts and assignments for the course. You will be required to read the lecture and post written responses in the discussion folder. WebCT allows for threaded discussions to allow full participation by all members of the learning group.

**Written assignments:** Over the course of the semester, participants will create a structured portfolio comprising three separate sections (detailed in the assignments below) which collectively map an individual institution in a dynamic systems context. The portfolio will include an institutional profile as well as descriptions of the specific constituents and communities which have impacted the governance structure, academic mission and campus culture of the institution. Course participants may choose to focus on the institution where they are employed or may choose another institution. The selected institution must be approved by the instructor. This consultation may take place via email, within the first two weeks of class.

*Portfolio.* Each element of the portfolio shall be comprised of a paper, 10-15 pages in length, complemented by supporting documentation. Research sources must include: 1) primary documents produced by the organization (e.g. catalogues, yearbooks, administrative papers); 2) secondary documents, material about the organization (e.g. articles in the professional literature and popular media); 3) structured interviews with a minimum of five individuals representing different communities within the college system and environment. The written papers must follow APA guidelines and will be evaluated for clarity, coherence and appropriate references, as well as evidence of substantive reflection and integration of the theories and principles of learning organizations.

*Assignment 1:* Institutional Profile. This paper and supplementary portfolio elements present the origins, mission, governance structure of the institution being studied. The

paper should also describe the community in which the institution is based and trace changes in these elements over time, noting constants and shifts.

*Assignment 2: Academic Characteristics.* This paper and supplementary portfolio elements should describe the student demographics at the outset and currently; relationships with other academic institutions, including K-12 systems and universities; characteristics of faculty. The paper should also include an assessment of the relevance of curricular offerings and academic outcomes to the institution's mission.

*Assignment 3: Trends and Challenges.* This element of the portfolio should focus on anticipated trends and challenges for the organization. The paper shall identify one projected organizational challenge, provide a clear statement of the origins and trajectory of the challenge supported by quantitative and qualitative data; identify the systemic elements of the challenge and recommend organizational strategies to develop a response.

*Case Study Presentation.* An end-of-course presentation will draw upon portfolio materials complemented by appropriate research in the literature to form a comprehensive case study of the institution from origin to the present time. The presentation should view the institution within the framework of a learning organization, including an examination of interactions between and among the elements which comprise the institutional system. The case study should present the mission and institutional characteristics from founding to the present (demographics, structures, constituents, culture). The analysis should discuss shared goals, visions and purposes and where they diverge; underlying assumptions as manifested in the organizational structures and actions; and the present-day outcomes of past "solutions" to institutional challenges.

Weekly Outline:

Theme 1: Origins and development of American community colleges  
Weeks 1-5

- introductions, course overview and mechanics
- participants post personal/professional profiles
- learning how to work with WebCT
- review study guide and become familiar with course requirements and anticipated outcomes
- review the OL form and style guide, review APA
- origins of university-affiliated community colleges
- origins of local community colleges and vocational/technical institutions
- institutional missions
- forms of community college governance
- theoretical framework for exploring influence and role of businesses, students, parents and community leadership in community college development

Reading:

*The American Community College* - Background, chapter 1

*The Contradictory College: The Conflicting Origins, Impacts and Futures of the Community College*. Introduction, Chapters 5-9

*Communities of Commitment: The Heart of Learning Organizations*

Instructor approval of focus institution must be obtained by the end of week 2  
Assignment 1 is due at the end of week 5

Theme 2: The Academic Elements of Community Colleges  
Weeks 6-10

- elements and processes of curricular development
- baccalaureate/transfer functions
- workforce development
- community education role
- faculty identity and culture
- student demographics
- campus cultures

Readings:

*The American Community College: Nexus for Workforce Development*.

*The Contradictory College: The Conflicting Origins, Impacts and Futures of The Community College* chapters 7-13

*The American Community College* chapters 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, 10,11

Assignment 2 due the end of week 10

Theme 3: Leadership Challenges and Opportunities  
Weeks 11-15

- balancing conflicting institutional roles
- program outcomes
- technology
- legislative shifts including accountability and assessment
- the role of community colleges as learning communities
- case study reviews and commentary

Readings:

*The American Community College*: chapters 13, 14

*The Contradictory College: The Conflicting Origins, Impacts and Futures of The Community College*: chapter 3

*Creating More Learning-Centered Community Colleges*

Assignment 3 and case study presentations due week 13

Grading Criteria

discussion/chat participation	20% of grade
assignment 1: institutional profile	20%
assignment 2: student/faculty profile	20%
assignment 3: trends and challenges	15%
Case Study	25%