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Organizational paradigm shift and the university colleges of British Columbia¹

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Abstract. This study focuses on the *university colleges* of the Canadian province of British Columbia, connecting the behaviors of managers and faculty to government policy and legislation and determining that the responses of managers and faculty can be construed in part as responses to economic globalization. As such, this investigation observes that global forces of change framed and affected the evolution of five community colleges in British Columbia to university colleges. As well, this study addresses cultural change within British Columbia's university colleges, particularly to note if the baccalaureate degree status of these institutions has brought about an alteration to the organizational paradigm.

Keywords: community colleges, globalization, university colleges

Institutional diversity and differentiation are concepts that frame numerous examinations of national systems of higher education. Yet, that framework is but one approach to the understanding of institutional development of higher education internationally and organizational change locally. For example, mergers and amalgamations of colleges and universities in Australia and changed status for polytechnics in the U.K. over the past two decades may characterize the pattern of change for a national higher education system (Green and Hayward 1997). However, these patterns – essentially system-wide re-structuring – do not pertain to all institutional change in higher education. While similar forces may stimulate institutional change, social and historical contexts may lead to different results and shape other patterns of change (Marginson 1999). Furthermore, institutional type, such as the community college as distinct from the university, may be a variable in how higher education institutions alter in the face of such pressures as changing student populations, marketplace requirements, and employer needs – all assumed to be the drivers of new forms of higher education (Gellert 1997; Scott 1996). Local or regional institutional change is often subsumed under the rubric of national system change. In Canada, however, if there are systems of higher or post-secondary education, these systems are provincial not national. Because of their distinct histories, Canadian provinces (and territories) are sites of differing models of higher education and at the

level of the non-university sector institutional difference between provinces is pronounced (Dennison 1995; Dennison and Gallagher 1986; Levin and Dennison 1989).

Institutional change of community colleges in British Columbia, Canada, to university colleges during the 1990s reflects not just alteration to a provincial system but a shift in organizational paradigm for institutional members. The development of university colleges in British Columbia, including the introduction of baccalaureate degree programming to these institutions, demonstrates that alterations to mission and to behavioral norms at these institutions, formerly community or two-year colleges, reflect significant changes to organizational members' world-view. This world-view constitutes those "... beliefs that shape and guide members' values, perceptions, attitudes, and behavior ... [as well as] the organization's purpose, policy, priorities, procedures, and structures" (Levy and Merry 1986, p. 10).

In what could be construed as an understatement, the community colleges of Canada were referred to in 1986 as the "most striking development of the last quarter century" (Dennison and Gallagher 1986, p. 3). These publicly funded colleges reach the largest number of adults in Canada, serving communities, regions, provinces, and the nation in human resource development and in contributing to the economic, social, and political development of Canada (Dennison 1995; Dennison and Gallagher 1986; Levin and Dennison 1989). Presently, they enroll 38.5% of all post-secondary students in Canada and 42% of all undergraduate students (Levin 2001). These institutions, however, are not homogeneous organizations. There are significant differences among community colleges in Canada, province by province both historically and in current legislation (Dennison 1995; Dennison and Gallagher 1986; Levin 2000b; Levin and Dennison 1989). In British Columbia, the site investigated in this study, there are significant differences between these colleges and those of other provinces, excepting those in Alberta, primarily in their academic mission including a university transfer component. Furthermore, there are developing differences between colleges within British Columbia as a consequence of changed legal status for five of fifteen public colleges.

The British Columbia public college began in the 1960s, modeled after California's junior and community colleges and formally conceived of by both the Chant Commission – a provincial commission – and the McDonald Report – a University of British Columbia study and committee report (Dennison and Gallagher 1986). In 1963, B.C.'s colleges were incorporated in the Public Schools Act and were largely local institutions until 1977 when they became provincial institutions in the College and Provincial Institutes

Act, proclaimed by the party-in-power, the Social Credit party (Dennison and Gallagher 1986; Levin 1995).

In 1988, a provincial government commission on post-secondary education in British Columbia, Canada, advanced the concept of an institution that would combine the characteristics of the community college with a limited function of universities, specifically the provision of baccalaureate degrees (Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Advance Education 1988). By the 1990's that concept, known as the *university college*, was implemented through government direction and then enshrined in legislation. Legislated authority for colleges to grant baccalaureate degrees is subsumed under institutional status as *university colleges*, with one of three objectives for these institutions "to provide comprehensive . . . courses of study for a baccalaureate degree program" (Government of British Columbia 2000).

By the end of the 1990s, there were five functioning university colleges in British Columbia, with substantial numbers of students graduating with baccalaureate degrees not only in traditional university fields such as arts and sciences but also in such areas as applied design and small business management. Furthermore, while these institutions maintained their original mission that upheld open access to education and training, they also enlarged their mission to include traditional university values. Thus, at one and the same time, the university college promoted both an egalitarian and a meritocratic institution. The 1990s saw the development of a legislated role for faculty in institutional governance, the establishment of a senate-type body, the Education Council, and increase in professional status, evidenced by the application for membership of these institutions into the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, membership that signifies university status because of its prerequisite for joining institutions to possess legal authority to grant baccalaureate degrees. Considerable government intervention and organizational friction and change accompanied the evolution of the community college to university college. Additionally, large external and global forces such as world economies and global competitiveness, seen in changing modes of production and emphasis upon workforce training, affected these institutions as they developed throughout the 1990s.

University colleges in British Columbia can be viewed as hybrid institutions, combining characteristics of community colleges and universities or four-year colleges. Five institutions in British Columbia have been designated university colleges, and all five were initially community colleges, referred to as public colleges, with a mandate identical to that of traditional community colleges (Cohen and Brawer 1996; Dennison and Gallagher 1986). The articulated intent of both government and institutional leaders was to maintain the community college mandate and mission and to adopt four-year degree

programs as well as numerous traditions and conventions that pertain to university status, such as scholarly activities (Ciceri 1998; Dennison 1999; Johnston 1998; Perrin 2001; Petch 1998; University Colleges of British Columbia 1999a, b; Young 2000).

Within university colleges during their development in the period of 1989 to 2001, the efforts and actions to preserve the norms of the two distinctive institutions led to tensions among and between employee groups, especially faculty (Dennison 2001; Levin 2001). These tensions can be viewed as incompatible institutional values: the egalitarian nature of community colleges and the meritocratic system of universities. They also can be viewed as resource dependent behaviors where baccalaureate program faculty receive a disproportionate share of resources, even at the expense of non-baccalaureate faculty. These tensions can also be construed as examples of globalization of higher education, where re-structuring of economies, for example, lead to the rise of some academic and training fields and the demise of others. This might suggest that the baccalaureate programs constitute a strategy to adapt and are more compatible with economic globalization than traditional community college programs.

Both the observations of college practitioners and statements within government policy suggest that the university colleges of British Columbia were developed solely as responses to limited access to post-secondary education (Dennison 1992, 1999; Gallagher 1999; Petch 1998). But other motivations either propelled the establishment of university colleges or accompanied their development in the 1990s. Economic rationales, including work force training and social and economic development, were among the more overt motivations (Ciceri 1998; Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology 2000; University College of British Columbia, undated). *Charting a New Course* (Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Education, Skills and Training 1996), a government strategic plan for the post-secondary education sector of the province for the end of the 1990s and into the first decade of the twenty-first century, makes little more than passing reference to baccalaureate degree programs and university colleges. This is surprising as the university colleges gained considerable resources and claimed the major attention of university college practitioners in the 1990s.

By the year 2000, there was acknowledgement even by government agencies that baccalaureate degree programs and their presence in university colleges were influenced by market forces – “[m]arket and technological changes created need for continuous upgrading to ensure sound provincial economic development” (Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology 2000, p. 1). Furthermore,

the reference to an applied degree in government policy, which was not mentioned in earlier enabling legislation, makes obvious the connection between the economic marketplace and baccalaureate degrees.

This present study focuses on the *university colleges* of British Columbia, connecting the behaviors of managers and faculty to government policy and legislation and determining that the responses of managers and faculty can be construed in part as responses to economic globalization. As such, this investigation observes that global forces of change framed and affected the evolution of the university college in British Columbia. As well, this study addresses cultural change within British Columbia's university colleges, particularly to note if the baccalaureate degree status of these institutions has brought about an alteration to the organizational paradigm.

The history of community colleges suggests that these institutions possess characteristics of organizations engaged in defining and articulating their mission, in establishing an identity, and in organizing and managing work (Bergquist 1992; Dennison and Gallagher 1986; Dougherty 1994; Frye 1992; Levin 2001; Levin 2000a; Ratcliff 1994). Furthermore, community colleges are institutions with considerable potential for change (Levin, 1998). Although they are culturally and managerially autonomous from other institutions (Brint and Karabel 1989; Levin 1992), governments have constrained community colleges, and local, provincial, state, and national economies have influenced their operations and engendered institutional change (Brint and Karabel 1989; Dennison and Gallagher 1986; Levin 2001; Levin and Dennison 1989).

In the 1990s, globalization, and particularly economic globalization, was identified as a major force responsible for institutional change in higher education (Currie and Newson 1998; Levin 2001; Marginson and Considine 2000; Slaughter and Leslie 1997). The global economy is characterized by its new demands for educational and occupational skills to cope with technological change and the redistribution of jobs (Barnett and Cavanagh 1994; Castells 1996; Held, McGrew, Goldblatt and Perraton 1999; Levin 2001; Schugurensky and Higgens 1996; Teeple 1995). Governments use higher education institutions, generally, as economic instruments, contributing to a shift in institutional responsiveness from citizens to markets (Marginson and Considine 2000). This is especially the case for community colleges (Levin 2001).

While all of higher education internationally experienced rising levels of economic objectives from government, business, industry, students, and the public in general, community colleges were poignant examples of the instrumentality of higher education. Community colleges became more overtly connected to the marketplace and to the ideologies of a neo-liberal state.

Organizational behaviors resembled those of private business and industry, pursuing competitive grants, relying more and more on the private sector for revenues, privatizing services and education, securing contracts with both the private and public sectors, and simply "economizing" – that is, letting financial rationales take precedence over others. The institution's mission encompassed the acquisition of resources and the prudent ministering of its own financial resources. Colleges expanded their traditional mission by enlarging workforce training and by emphasizing skills development (Levin 2001). This resulted in a more overt concentration upon private sector interests and reflected changing priorities for student learning. Indeed, the development of baccalaureate programs at community colleges both in Canada and the U.S. can be construed as an adaptive strategy.

Globalization, however, is not monolithic. It does not lead to convergence of cultures or organizations (Guillén 2001; Robertson 1992). While international re-structuring of higher education can be viewed as reflecting both managerialism or corporatism, linked to public accountability and efficiency, for example, and a market mechanism to aid the interests of governments and corporations (Henkel 2000; Leslie and Slaughter 1997; Slaughter and Leslie 1997), not all re-structuring leads to the same ends. Some actions lead to greater differentiation among institutions within a system; others lead to convergence, which is arguably the case in the U.K. (Gellert 1997); and still others lead to a combination of results, with some institutions converging and others differentiated, as in the case of the state system of Minnesota in the U.S. (Wallace 1998).

The study of the university college

This investigation relies upon qualitative field research methods including data collection, data analysis and theory application, modification, and re-application (Berg 1995; Burgess 1984; Mason 1996; Merriam 1988; Miles and Huberman 1994). Post-secondary education in British Columbia constitutes an exceptional case (Yin 1984). It is this jurisdiction where, arguably, the first system of university colleges were established.² The research addresses organizational change in the university colleges of British Columbia from their inception in 1989 to the year 2001. Data collection includes interview data from organizational members at two university colleges, document analysis of British Columbia government documents and institutional documents, and observations on site by a research team.

Interview data include interviews with approximately 120 people on site from the period of 1997–2001. Included are data from a sample of administrators and faculty. These organizational members were interviewed during

two extended site visits – once in the 1997/98 academic year and once in the 1998/99 academic year. Several of these organizational members were interviewed twice. Furthermore, college presidents (there were three at the two colleges during this period) were interviewed during the two site visits and then two were interviewed again in 2000 and 2001. Additionally, in 2001, two college vice presidents, the chair (faculty member) of the Education Council (a senate-type body), a program head, and a faculty union leader were interviewed. Interview questions and responses covered areas that included organizational change as well as curricular and government changes. These questions addressed both determinants and outcomes of the change process.

The second data source was documents, and these were collected over the period of 1989 to 2001. Document analysis included government legislation, government strategic plans and reports, letters between government and institutional officials, government and institutional studies, institutional reports, and formal notes from meetings among college officials. Institutional budgets and collective agreements as well as college and student newspapers also provided documentary evidence.

The third data source was observations. These observations were carried out on two separate site visits to two colleges lasting 4–5 days each. Research team members from the first site visit and the principal investigator from both site visits noted their observations. The principal researcher maintained a detailed set of notes and written observations during three site visits at the two institutions. These data formed a journal, which included theorizing, such as comparing observations from the sites with established globalization and organization theory.

Data analysis relied upon the analytical frameworks of globalization theory and organizational and institutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Levy and Merry 1986). Levy and Merry (1986) develop a conceptual framework for organizational change, premised upon the concept of second-order, fundamental, and enduring change. They employ four main categories of change for their framework: paradigmatic change, mission and purpose change, cultural change, and change in functional processes, including structures, management, technology, decision-making and communication patterns. Paradigmatic change refers to alteration to the assumptions of those who are stakeholders and influencers of the organization. This change also suggests that the organizational world-view has altered: that organizational members define their institution differently and regard their institutional context as altered over time. Mission and purpose refer to intentionality of organizational members and other stakeholders with respect to organizational actions and outcomes. Cultural changes refer to beliefs, norms, and values of organizational members. While difficult to identify a single collective culture,

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it may be more appropriate to view an organization as comprised of various cultures, some ideographic, unique and expressive of a singular ethos, and others holographic, expressive of the attributes of a larger, institutional culture (Martin and Meyerson 1988; Morgan 1997). Functional processes include structures, management, technology, decision-making, and communication patterns.

Globalization theory provides another framework to analyze behaviors in the university colleges of British Columbia. Economic globalization in particular refers to the dominance of the market in organizational and social behaviors and the interventionary role of the state through education, training, and labor market policies (Dudley 1998). Globalization and responses to globalization, by governments for example, clearly affect practices of institutions (Robertson 1992). Indeed, institutional agendas reflect the choices available from global forces that promote technological change and market forces, as well as reflect a particular ideology and political decisions at national and regional levels (Held et al. 1999). Knowles (1995) suggests that in recognizing the presence of a global economy that impinges upon the local environment, community colleges are required to diversify their resource base as well as their program offerings. Organizational actions of community colleges that include alteration to mission and purpose, such as the development and implementation of baccalaureate degree programs, are consistent with the dynamics of economic globalization. Globalization would thus tend to affect community colleges by not only stimulating market sensitive behaviors, such as programming for the needs and demands of students and employers, but also conforming to government policy, such as developing a globally competitive workforce by expanding access to higher level educational credentials. Globalization is thus manifest in organizations through change to organizational paradigm, mission and purpose, culture, or simply functional processes: all or any reflect global flows (Appadurai 1990) and responses by such entities as government, the public, or business. These global flows include massive immigration from the East to the West and from the South to the North (Held et al. 1999), technological advances such as electronic network communications (Castells 1996), changing modes of production (Teepie 1995), worldwide webs of economic activity (Barnet and Cavanagh (1994), and "growing interdependence across the world" (Robertson 1992, p. 176), particularly economic interdependence.

Data were extracted from interviews, documents, and observations and applied to a theoretical framework. Interview and observational data were placed within the change framework of Levy and Merry (1986). Interview, document, and observational data were pattern coded (Miles and Huberman 1994) and connected to both globalization and institutional theory, including

the concept of isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). For example, the tendency of university colleges to model practices of universities is consistent with mimetic isomorphism, and university colleges in British Columbia began to resemble universities with their new emphasis upon research and scholarship, academic rank, and application for membership into a national association for universities.

Two of five university colleges in the province of British Columbia were examined as specific sites. Both institutions are given pseudonyms consistent with researcher and interviewees' understanding of maintaining anonymity. Other indicators of institutional identity, such as specific location, are concealed. Interview, documentary, and observational data from the two institutions – East Shoreline University College (ESUC) and Rural Valley University College (RVUC) – are presented and analyzed.

The transformation of organizational culture

The development and implementation of baccalaureate programming accompanied by the formal designation of five community colleges as *university colleges* led to substantial change in how organizational members view and judge themselves and their institution and in organizational behaviors including interpersonal and group relations. At East Shoreline University College, administrators and faculty reported on the tensions apparent between groups and the separation that developed between program areas.

There is a conflict among vocational and academic faculty where the new university model has marginalized the vocational faculty. (Dean)

There is a schism between university and vocational programs. (Program co-coordinator)

There are tensions between applied and academic areas. (Vice President)

There is us and them: up the hill and down the hill. If you teach in a degree program you have more status. (Program co-coordinator)

We have institutionalization of university – university wannabees. (Governance body chair, faculty)

At Rural Valley University College, both faculty and administrators report mission and identity confusion.

RVUC (Rural Valley University College) is both a university and community college. (Dean)

There is a problem of equilibrium between the community college and the university college. (Department head)

We are still a community college – will never be a university. (Department head)

We are moving out of an older model, yet the community college model drives us in labor relations. (Faculty)

We have an identity problem . . . In the university there is the culture of disciplines; in the community college there is the culture of community. (President)

These perceptions cover an extended period – from 1998 to 2001 – with the dean at East Shoreline College noting in 1998 that an academic-vocational conflict has surfaced in the institution and a program coordinator observing in 2001 that the “schism” still exists. East Shoreline began its university college form in 1989. At Rural Valley College, which began its university college form in the early 1990s, the perceptions indicate that the institution maintained both identities – community college and university.

The historical institution of the community college, referred to in British Columbia as public college, expanded its mission and purpose to incorporate baccalaureate degree programs in a broad range of fields, some traditionally academic and some occupationally related. The formally designated university college is considered by organizational members to be both a community college and a university college: two institutions within the same organization. It combines disparate curricula such as vocational programs in welding, automotive mechanics, and office administration, occupational and professional programs such as nursing, education, social services, and business, and academic programs – both two-year and four-year – such as liberal studies, history, biology, and English literature. Faculty are diverse in their educational backgrounds, with new faculty predominantly possessing credentials at the doctoral level, or Master’s level for four-year occupational/professional programs. Even within the faculty ranks, there is a “disjuncture between old faculty and new faculty” (Department head, Rural Valley University College). Issues of rank and title as well as workload differentials and ultimately institutional influence and power characterize both group and interpersonal behaviors.

The student body also altered, and this alteration intensified the emphasis on higher-level programming.

There is a different set of demands with fourth year students. (President, RVUC)

Student now come here for degrees. (Faculty, RVUC)

People who were not working came back into programs – women in their thirties and forties [for degrees] in education and social work. (President, East Shoreline University College)

Students have a broader scope, able to ‘speed walk’. (Governance body chair, faculty, East Shoreline University College)

Again, these statements cover a period from 1998–2001, suggesting that student motivations and behaviors are patterned.

Not only faculty and students have changed in their characteristics from the period before these colleges were university colleges but also values and assumptions of organizational members have altered. Research and scholarship became accepted and expected professional behaviors of faculty, with formal workloads comprised of both teaching and scholarship. Forms of governance that were based upon administrative or governing board authority were replaced by a form of bicameral governance: indeed provincial legislation was enacted to permit faculty a role in board governance and to enshrine a senate-type body for colleges in legislation. What was formerly the domain of administrators and board members – decision making-authority – was now shared with faculty. Additionally, labor relations, structured within a combination of an existing provincial framework and a local collective agreement, were undergoing review. As a union official at Rural Valley University College noted, “there is a difference being a unionized community college to being a unionized university college”. Assumed equalities in workload, salaries, and rank among faculty were undergoing questioning among faculty, with three university colleges in the province already adopting new formal titles for faculty, including “professor” where previously “instructor” was the norm.

Origins and determinants of institutional transformation

What gave rise to these alterations? What influenced the development of the university colleges? Several categories of behaviors are suggested by documents and interview data. These include government policy, government funding, the professions, and globalization. A commissioned report on the university colleges in 1998 provides what is evidently the public rationale for the creation of the university college. University colleges were “created in 1989 as part of the Access for All plan of the British Columbia government to increase access to post-secondary education” (Petch 1998). In a personal response to this commissioned report, Dennison (1998) refines the rationale to address government intentions: “they [university colleges] would provide opportunities for local students to earn baccalaureate degrees without having to relocate to Vancouver or Victoria” (p. 11). Access here

is thus seen as geographical. This point is further emphasized in another commissioned report (Perrin 2001). A reading of the Access Report itself (Province of British Columbia, Ministry of Advanced Education 1988) may suggest an interpretation that access is the sole reason for the establishment of university colleges. The Access Report recommends the establishment of university degree programs through "an upper level university college component" in densely populated areas outside of Vancouver and Victoria. Other sources, however, indicate that government policy is more complicated and multi-valent than singularly fixed on access.

The economic benefits of the university college to the province of British Columbia are also part of government policy. The Assistant Deputy Ministry of Education, Training, and Technology in 1998 (Ciceri 1998) states in a letter to the Chair of the University Colleges presidents' group that these institutions "play a significant role in preparing students for life and work and in strengthening the economy, both regionally and provincially". Perrin (2001) notes in his commissioned report that, as a matter of public policy, investment in post-secondary education "provides significant economic and social returns". Bindon, the president of Okanagan-University College, in a report of the presidents of the university colleges, notes that these institutions are an essential component of British Columbia's economy, suggesting that their economic value is part of their history and formation. Schuetze and Day (2001), in their examination of post-secondary education in B.C. from 1989–1998, while acknowledging that university colleges were part of a government strategy to address the demand for university education, also note that government decisions were "based strongly on brick and mortar investments which were seen as the generating of jobs and enhancing economic development" (pp. 26–27).

Understandings among organizational members for the establishment of university colleges are more varied than documentary evidence. At both East Shoreline University College and at Rural Valley University College, perceived rationales for the functions of the university college are predominantly focused upon economic motives. At East Shoreline University College, organizational members believed that government policy for the creation of university colleges was to promote and ensure both job training for business and industry and for economic development for the province. Several members cited job training as the prominent determinant of the university college. One faculty leader indicated that the government wanted applied degrees offered by university colleges to replace PhDs, presumably offered by provincial universities. A program head noted that because baccalaureate degrees were needed for professional employment in the government sector, the labor market was the initial determinant of government policy

to establish university colleges. Several organizational members, including the college president and one vice president, stated that the initial intention of government was the provision of applied degrees – baccalaureate degrees with workplace relevancy to meet the needs of employers and the demands of students. Certainly there was near consensus at East Shoreline University College that initially and during the first half of the 1990s government wanted degree programs with an employment focus.

At Rural Valley University College (RVUC), there were a variety of perceptions about government intentions, including the job training focus of the university college. Student demands for skills, employers' demands for skilled workers, and changing societal demand for an educated citizenry all contributed to the government's decision to establish these institutions. Furthermore, it was noted at RVUC that government wanted to increase enrollments in post-secondary education in the province and that the establishment of university colleges was a vehicle for this growth. This perception matches the views of Schuetze and Day (2001).

In a discussion paper, Gallagher (1999) contends that the government clung to an academic bias in establishing university colleges "which served to reinforce the Ministry and government bias toward academic studies at the expense of other kinds of programming" (p. 3). This view was not reflected in the perceptions of organizational members at either East Shoreline University College or Rural Valley University College, although it is consistent with the view that government motives were based upon demand for degree opportunities outside of the two major population centers in the province.

The academic bias was not that of government but rather an outcome of the development of the university college. Two principal factors can be identified as contributing to this outcome – student demand for Bachelor of Arts programming and professionalism or institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). At East Shoreline University College in the first part of the 1990s, the Liberal Studies degree program was intended to satisfy the needs of students who wanted an "Arts degree". But both student demand for more traditional and disciplined focused Arts degrees as well as the lack of support among Arts faculty for the "interdisciplinary" approach led to the development and establishment of discipline specific baccalaureate programs, including Anthropology, English Literature, Geography, History, and Psychology. The Liberal Studies approach "didn't carry the day" according to one organizational member. Programming "drifted to majors and minors" (College president).

East Shoreline shifted gears in the mid-1990s. There was a call for traditional Arts and Sciences. BA programs mushroomed. (College vice president).

Once the traditional degrees took hold, the college was subject to “more competing masters” (Governance body chair, faculty), indicating a more pronounced role for the professions.

Government funding supported and indeed reinforced the growing academic orientation of the university college. The provincial government contributed large start-up grants to the university colleges for the initiation of degree programming. College operating budgets, with the help of this new funding for baccalaureate programs, expanded as much as 100% in the 1990s. Government funds provided for both operating and capital expenditures. For example, libraries were physically expanded and library holdings increased. There was “immense growth”, according to the president of Rural Valley University College. With increased resources came increasing numbers of new faculty and the development of more academic programming and, as a result, the accommodation of students with interests in academic fields. “We had an influx of young, ambitious faculty”, notes a vice-president at East Shoreline University College. A new student body, one characterized as more serious than in the past, was evolving at the university college. These students, unlike their traditional counterparts at the established provincial universities, were local and many were beyond the 18–24 year age of college-going participants. The large majority was identified as women, and many of these as single mothers. Education was “taken seriously”. Faculty and administrators viewed students as accessing the college for programming at higher levels, considerably more than in the past. “Students now come here for a university degree”, noted an organizational member at Rural Valley University College. These alterations – to both faculty and student characteristics, including motivations and background experiences – contributed to considerable cultural change and were made possible through provincial government funding allocations.

Notwithstanding the role of government fiscal resources in institutional growth and alteration, larger economic factors were influential in organizational change. The new global economy contributed to the development of the university college, primarily through the interpretations and subsequent responses of government, employers, and students to the requirements of this economy for employment and particularly for government and business and industry for global competitiveness of the provincial economy. Furthermore, college members supported the rationales of economic globalization, which included the assumptions that market forces inevitably affected education and social change. In a recent government document that addresses the approval process for new baccalaureate degree programs, market and industrial needs justify the development of higher-level programming. “Market and technological changes created a need for continuous upgrading to ensure sound

provincial economic development” (Province of British Columbia 2000, p. 1). Indeed, government in conjunction with college officials, including governing board members, administrators, and faculty leaders, served as agents of economic globalization. All emphasized the need for new knowledge and new curricula in community college education. For government, the emphasis was upon greater connectivity between college and workplace (Davies and Guppy 1997; Province of British Columbia 1996). Degree programs at university colleges were promoted that had an “applied emphasis and a focus upon employment opportunities” (Province of British Columbia 1996). College members at both Rural Valley University College and at East Shoreline University College noted that baccalaureate programs were “responding to new economies”, that there was “pressure on the institution to prepare people for jobs” and to provide “job ready and work ready professional programs”. These responses indicate a neo-liberal stance of both government and college officials, with economic globalization working its way through these agents. In the neo-liberal framework, reforming or altering education to meet market needs means emphasizing market sensitive knowledge and skills areas. These include consumer relations, problems solving, entrepreneurialism, and cross cultural skills (Davies and Guppy 1997).

But, not all plans and intentions are realized or at least not fully and not without variability. In the case of university colleges of British Columbia, the demand for and growth of liberal arts oriented programming outstripped expectations. Although professional, work-related programs such as Nursing and Education were in demand, the Bachelor of Arts degree was the dominant credential attained. Of 1,283 baccalaureate degrees granted in 1999 at the five university colleges in British Columbia, 402 or 31% were Bachelor of Arts degrees (University Colleges of British Columbia, undated).

We have a liberal arts emphasis. (Department head, Rural Valley University College)

We have incorporated a liberal education into our degree programs. (Program head, Rural Valley University College)

In spite of government intentions for university colleges to serve the economy as good corporate citizens, the university colleges’ first decade of operations could be characterized as both liberal arts and career preparation in the professions. Nonetheless, curricula in baccalaureate degree programs were rationalized by government, institutional managers, and several faculty as conforming to neo-liberal expectations through ascribed workplace relevant characteristics, such as lifelong learning, critical thinking, and communications skills (Levin 2001).

We design biology labs with jobs in mind. (Co-coordinator, East Shoreline University College)

We have job-ready, work-ready professional programs. (Governance body chair, faculty, East Shoreline University College)

Such characteristics – employment-oriented baccalaureate degree programs – that are articulated by faculty and administrators at both East Shoreline University College and Rural Valley University College are nearly identical to those promoted by the provincial government as well as by business and industry in their recommendations for post-secondary education in British Columbia. Surprisingly, the presence of baccalaureate degree curriculum within the institution that is aimed at both the workplace, or for growth of the economy, and at individual students' personal development does not result in institutional tensions between groups affiliated with baccalaureate degree programming. The tension rather was evident between those faculty who do not participate in baccalaureate degree programming and those who do – roughly, those in vocational fields and those in academic or professional fields.

What constitutes the organizational paradigm shift of university colleges of British Columbia?

It can be argued and indeed demonstrated that university colleges constitute a new institution (Scott 1995). They are heirs to the interests of government officials, politicians, community members, and community college faculty and administrators. That is, both the professions and the state operated in concert with other interest groups as institutional agents. For faculty and administrators, the development of a new institution suggests the formation of a paradigm shift for organizational members who formerly embraced the mission and values of community colleges. While several of these values and the mission were amalgamated within university colleges, new values replaced old ones and a larger mission transplanted the community college mission.

This organizational paradigm shift was not acknowledged explicitly at the two university colleges. Nor was there recognition by government of the profound alteration to the community college. Indeed, government continued to respond to university colleges as if they persisted as public two-year colleges as defined in the legislation of the province. Efforts by the presidents of university colleges to promote the alteration of both provincial legislation and government funding practices so that university colleges received treatment consonant with their roles and functions were met with pleasantries by

government officials but not by action (Ciceri 1998). The actions of university college presidents in forming a consortium of university colleges and in addressing government in unison signifies that this group recognized the considerable divide they had crossed from community college to university college.

This shift from community college to university college signifies that the views and values of organizational members altered substantially with the introduction of baccalaureate degree programming, particularly with programming that includes university parallel curricula. The community college, now university college, is perceived and defined differently than in the past. The university college is not simply halfway between a community college and a university, but rather a new institution. Even with full university status, including a label "university", it will continue to be a different institution from a traditional university.

The university college suits the global economy with that economy's attendant needs for a higher credentialed and an advanced and specialty-skilled workforce. Whereas critics would argue that the global economy deskills the workforce, in the case of the university college the global economy and the responses of government, business and industry, and educational leaders, such as college presidents, vice presidents and faculty, have been instrumental in creating a new institution that alters traditional community college and university education, amalgamating these to increase the skill level of students and ultimately the workforce.

Both community college and university: a distinct identity

The development of the university college in British Columbia reflects the local or regional response to changing global conditions; its establishment suggests that governments while pursuing policies similar to each other, such as increasing access to post-secondary education, do not converge in their behavior patterns (Guillén 2001), and that there is indeed potential for local identity in a global and national context (Marginson 1999; Marginson and Considine 2000). While university colleges do imitate parts of higher status institutions as predicted in institutional theory as an isomorphic behavior (Di Maggio and Powell 1983), they also retain connections with their past through their community college mission. While they do fit the neo-liberal agenda and can be seen as indistinguishable in their purposes from institutions characterized by academic capitalism or entrepreneurialism (Clark 1998; Slaughter and Leslie 1997), they continue to provide programming and services that are not part of that same agenda. They carry forward their community college goals of general and developmental education, including

special education that responds to disabled students at whatever level of ability. They maintain their university transfer programs and provincial agreements for credit transfer with universities. They continue to train students for low to moderately skilled jobs, not simply because of employer needs but because of student interest and ability, in such areas as cook's training, auto mechanics, and long-term care. Unlike Readings' (1997) account of the contemporary university, an institution that has separated itself from the nation-state, the university college, similar to the community college, is provincial and local in nature and is inseparable from the state. Although the culture transmitted by the university college is not the same as Readings' national culture idealized in his conception of the pre-"posthistorical" university, that culture has a sub-text: open access, non-elitist, non-ageist, and in part class-less – both sociologically and pedagogically (that is, non-traditional instruction through such means as on-line instruction and practica). These institutions constitute a new form, internally merging their own community college mission, purposes, and behaviors with those from both a past (the historical university) and a present (the "posthistorical" university).

Notes

1. The author acknowledges Canada's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council for a funded grant that supported an earlier component of this investigation.
2. Technically, in the province of Nova Scotia, the University College of Cape Breton could make the claim as the first university college; however, it is not a system of university colleges but a single institution. Additionally, as noted by Dennison (1992, 1995), its curriculum is unlike the British Columbia institutions. Furthermore, its roots are not the California junior college as are those of the public colleges of British Columbia, with a large university transfer component. I would suggest that although it is a university college in some ways similar to those in British Columbia, it possesses its own local and regional characteristics.

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