

4.3.2 Community colleges

Traditionally, higher education was the almost exclusive preserve of universities. Now, although universities still account for about 60% of full-time students, postsecondary education is conducted in about 200 other institutions without degree-granting status which, with support from provincial and federal governments, have developed since 1960 as an alternative to university. A community college is any public or private non-degree-granting institution which provides postsecondary university transfer programs or semi-professional career programs, as well as other credit or non-credit educational programs oriented to community needs. In Quebec completion of a two-year college level program is required for university admission. While the term "community college" is used to refer to these establishments in a general sense, there is a variety of designations: colleges of applied arts and technology in Ontario; colleges of general and vocational education in Quebec (CEGEP, an acronym from the French designation *collèges d'enseignement général et professionnel*); institutes of applied arts and sciences in Saskatchewan; institutes of technology or technical institutes; colleges of agricultural technology; and colleges providing training in other specialized fields, such as fisheries, marine and paramedical technologies.

Hospital schools of nursing are not considered community colleges, but do comprise part of non-university enrolment. Many provinces have transferred nursing training to community colleges.

History. Not until the 1960s, often on the recommendation of special commissions, did the provinces attempt to organize postsecondary non-university education into a community college system, either by transforming older institutions or founding new ones. Colleges are based on the philosophy that educational opportunities should extend beyond existing schools and universities to include a broader segment of society. Criteria of admission are flexible. Secondary school graduation is normally required but in some institutions mature student status allows otherwise ineligible applicants to enter. Qualifying programs are also offered to help them attain the appropriate academic level.

Organization. The recent development, structure and organization of postsecondary non-university education differ from province to province. Not all institutions were transformed into community colleges and amalgamated into a province-wide network. A number operate privately. However, the provinces are partially or totally responsible for co-ordinating, regulating and financing community colleges. Some provincial governments finance them completely, while others do so in part. Similarly, the colleges' local autonomy varies.

There are four main patterns of provincial government management: (1) direct establishment and operation, largely confined to institutes of technology in the West and the Atlantic provinces; (2) a triangular partnership between the government, colleges and school district boards, existing only in British Columbia; (3) much delegation of provincial administrative responsibility to college boards, co-ordinated by a provincial commission or board, as in Ontario and New Brunswick; and (4) a partnership between the department of education and college boards supplemented by non-governmental college associations, as in Quebec.

Curriculum. Colleges offer three basic programs: university transfer, technical (semi-professional career) and trades. The first enables students to proceed to university with degree credit of one or two years. The latter two prepare them for direct entry into the labour force. Technical programs take at least one academic year but more often two or three, and sometimes four.

Quebec students who wish to attend university must first complete two preparatory years in a college of general and vocational education. By contrast, Ontario's colleges of applied arts and technology do not maintain a transfer program; however, Ontario universities have agreed to admit with advanced standing college graduates on the basis of individual merit.

Staff. Unlike university faculty who are obliged to conduct scholarly research in addition to teaching, community college staff concentrate almost exclusively on instruction. From an estimated 4,900 in 1964-65, the number of full-time teachers at the postsecondary level in non-university institutions rose to 20,400 in 1980-81.

Students. Total full-time enrolment in postsecondary, non-university programs in 1980-81 was 260,800, a 3.4% increase over 1979-80. About 70% of the students were in community college technical programs. The other third were taking university transfer programs. Half the students were female. While women predominated in career programs, they were outnumbered by men in transfer programs. Quebec students accounted for 52% of the total. Enrolment in Ontario represented nearly 30%, followed by Alberta and British Columbia (7% each).

Nursing. In 1964 Toronto's Ryerson Institute of Technology became the first non-hospital institution to provide nurses' training. Since then, most diploma programs have been transferred from hospital schools to community colleges. The former no longer exist in Quebec, Ontario or Saskatchewan. In the other western provinces, training is still offered in hospital schools but programs are also available in community colleges. Only in the Atlantic region is nursing training carried out exclusively in hospital schools.