The Community College Conundrum:

Pitfalls and Possibilities of Professional Sociological Associations

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This presidential address examines the "community college conundrum" within our discipline. Although it is reported that 44% of first-time undergraduate students attend community colleges, community college faculty are underrepresented in the American Sociological Association (ASA) and within our regional associations. This lack of participation has two roots: 1) our disciplinary lack of interest in studying community college education as a unit of analysis; and 2) the failure by sociologists to understand community college education as a social justice concern. Data for this study include an assessment of membership and participation in our disciplinary associations, content analysis of the journal Teaching Sociology, and a review of ASA syllabi sets. Findings reveal a common theme: community college sociologists are ignored and are afforded a marginal status-a "less than" status-within our discipline. Recommendations include calling on the ASA and all sociologists to recognize the importance of community colleges in doing the work of "public sociology."

In Presidential addresses to professional associations, Presidents usually take time to explain how and why they chose their topic. I must be honest and say I did not select my topic—of necessity, it selected me. I believe I am the first community college President of the North Central Sociological Association (NSCA), and may be one of the few community college sociologists to serve as a President of any professional Sociological Association. Despite the honor bestowed upon me, I am deeply troubled by the relative absence of community college involvement within our professional sociological associations. In this address, I shall shed light on this puzzling lack of participation. Moreover, I shall make recommendations to reverse the negative consequences of what I call the "Community College Conundrum".

I admit that over the past two years in thinking about this address, I felt more pressure than normal for an academic presentation. The reason is simple. Community College faculty occupy a marginal position—a "less than" status—in the eyes of many professional sociologists and within the American Sociological Association (ASA) itself. Because I may represent so many colleagues whose voices remain silent, I feel an overwhelming pressure to explain myself—to explain "us"—to the professional sociological community.

I did not take lightly my decision to run for President of this association. I understood that some within NCSA would view the election of a community college faculty as President to be a judgment of the decline of the organization. I recently attended a professional workshop where a sociology faculty member from our region gave a presentation. He is not active in our association and works at a non-research institution. Over lunch, I invited him to submit a paper to the joint meetings this year. He said, "Well, I would not want to present at a conference for community college faculty." This and other such encounters over the past year made me question whether I should have agreed to serve as President of NCSA. The implication that community college faculty are "less than" continues to haunt. To what extent does this pejorative view create a self-fulfilling prophecy? To what extent is the lack of participation by community college sociologists in our disciplinary associations a function of differential treatment?

Over the years, I have heard many colleagues share stories of being stereotyped and labeled when trying to participate in our disciplinary associations. These stories also are prevalent in the research literature. The time is ripe to examine sociologically the pitfalls and possibilities of more deeply engaging community college faculty within our discipline. It is time to open the doors for all community college sociologists to continue doing the work of "public sociology."

The current state of "public sociology" in higher education demands stronger inclusion of community college sociologists and their students. According to the American Association of Community Colleges (2010), there are currently 1, 177 independent community colleges in the

United States. Enrollment in 2009 was 11.7 million students; 36% of students enrolled in community colleges across the United States are minority and 39% are first generation college students. Community college students constitute 44% of all first time freshman students (AACC, 2010). In other words, 44% of all freshman students in the United States are likely taking sociology at a community college. The conclusion is clear: community college sociologists carry substantial responsibility for the recruitment and socialization of new members within our discipline.

This increase in community college enrollment in part reflects a declining economy and the rising costs of higher education. David Levinson (2005), Sociologist and President of Norwalk Community College, notes that community colleges increasingly function as sites for public interaction and civic engagement. On July 14, 2009, President Obama announced a 12 billion community college initiative designed to boost graduation rates, improve facilities, and develop new technology. In the summer of 2009, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced $16.5 million in grants to 15 community colleges to expand groundbreaking remedial education programs. In addition, many experts say that strengthening community colleges is the key to dramatically boosting the college completion rates of low-income students and persons of color. Sadly, this cause seems to have escaped the attention of our professional associations.

It is evident that community colleges; a growing number of our doctoral graduates in the United States report having some type of community college background. The National Science Foundation reported 20% (one in five) doctoral recipients in 2008 attended a community college

at some point in his or her educational career. For minority doctoral recipients, the proportion was higher. For example, 39% of Native Americans doctoral recipients, and 24% of Hispanic doctoral recipients had some education at a community college. Fundamentally, the lack of community college faculty participation in our disciplinary associations is related to concerns about diversity and inclusion. Thus, the role of community colleges play in undergraduate and graduate education demands support and research.

HISTORICAL GLANCE WITHIN OUR DISCIPLINE

From its inception, the ASA has struggled with what it means to be a professional disciplinary association. In 1959, Talcott Parsons argued that the major role of the ASA should be twofold: the sharing of research of its members, and the training of graduate students. Parsons pointedly rejected the training of undergraduate students because most are unlikely to become professional sociologists (Simpson and Simpson 1994:261). He never asked where do graduate students come from, if not from the pool of undergraduate students. I think Talcott Parsons would be surprised to know how many doctoral recipients have some undergraduate preparation in community colleges.

Community college educators comprise only 4% of ASA members. To understand why community college sociologists are not participating in our disciplinary associations, it is important to consider the historical backdrop that has led us to this dismal state. In many ways, the history of community colleges in the United States and the growth of the ASA have been on a similar trajectory. In 1960, community colleges became a national network with the opening of

457 new institutions--more than the total number before that decade. A year prior to this, the American Sociological Society was renamed the American Sociological Association(ASA) and by 1972, there were four times as many ASA members as there had been 22 years earlier (Simpson and Simpson 1994).

Educational expansion in the aftermath of World War II, and the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, led to the growth of both the membership of the ASA as well as community colleges. Simpson and Simpson (1994) note a new pressure was added to the ASA in the late 1960s with caucuses of women and African Americans demanding more power and participation. They go on to write, "the caucuses of these members challenged the association to adapt their collective interests on the grounds of social justice. The association, composed as it is of persons whose predominant values are with underdogs and who champion social justice in the society, voted on new goals and charges for itself to become more open, to represent the societal minorities among its members "(Simpson and Simpson 1994:263). Ironically, these same values of championing social justice do not seem to include community colleges within our discipline.

Simpson and Simpson note "baby boomers" swelled the demand for higher education, thus increasing enrollments in two-year community colleges. Yet they see this development negatively, as pressuring our discipline to define undergraduate sociology as a "consumer" item (Simpson and Simpson 1994:264). Rather than see the growth of community colleges as a social justice issue, the authors define it has a "market" issue.

By implication, the "marketing" of community college education is seen as the marketing of an inferior product –a "less than" education. Our disciplinary concern for social justice is undermined if we fail to grasp the pivotal role community colleges play in reaching out to the disenfranchised. Thus the continued competition for students and the market of higher education, continue to blindside many sociologists from understanding the importance of connecting the community college to issues of social justice in our communities and in our discipline.

The literature suggests community college participation at the ASA level has always been minimal. In the early days of the establishment of the journal *Teaching Sociology*, there were two articles written about teaching at a community college. In 1977, Nancy Stein, Normandale Community College, wrote the first article in *Teaching Sociology* that addressed issues of teaching at a community college. I found the article disheartening. She identifies a status hierarchy within the disciplinary associations of sociology and states, "the consequence of this status hierarchy is that by predictable default those whose professional activities stress teaching are often viewed as marginal, untouchable members of their profession. She notes, "To help the untouchables maintain professional identity as sociologists and keep them within boundaries of sociology is less important to the profession as a whole" (Stein 1977:22).

Twenty five years later, in 2002, the final report of the ASA on articulation noted the similar issue of community college faculty being viewed in a negative light by faculty from four-year institutions (Zingraff 2002). Stein (1977) goes on to say, "Such a view not only overlooks the importance of undergraduate education but may ultimately affect the discipline as whole, since it

is increasingly the "untouchable sociologists" in the non-exalted institutions that are teaching the largest number of students" (Stein 1977:22). Stein (1977) concludes her article by hypothesizing some of the reasons why community college faculty "stay away" from the ASA. She states that the main reason why they stay away is because they perceive "*NO ONE CARES IF THEY COME"* (Stein 1977:28). This remains a sentiment that I still hear echoed by community college sociologists today.

In 1982, Albert McCormick, Macon Junior College, published his article, "Two-year Colleges Instructors and the Sociology Profession" in *Teaching Sociology*. He ask, why are community college sociologists not involved in the activities of the discipline, particularly those that focus on instructional issues? (McCormick1982:112). He conducted a survey of 100 community college faculty representing 72 institutions. The survey noted that the majority of respondents did not have a doctorate degree (McCormick 1982). Does this carry the implication that "real" sociologists have a doctorate, and those who teach sociology without a Ph.D. are "less" than?

In citing research literature at the time, he indicates three major reasons for this disengagement:

1. Community College faculty are isolated and alienated from the profession.
2. They are professionally reclusive.
3. They are disinterested in profession that seems apathetic to the unique needs of two-year college instructors (McCormick 1982:112).

His research concluded community college faculty are not as isolated as thought, and most were active in professional organizations, but that those professional organizations were less likely to be discipline focused. He also found that the degree of identification with the discipline

was low, and most had not completed the traditional academic training of a sociologist (McCormick, 1982). Respondents noted that institutional structures limit participation by not rewarding involvement. A key finding was the overall dissatisfaction with professional sociological associations, and 13% noted that they were treated like second class citizens when they did attend (McCormick 1982:119). In his conclusion, he suggests that we develop a roaming workshop for community college faculty, a clearinghouse for teaching materials, and promotion of faculty exchanges with four-year institutions.

Since 1982, is only one other article written specifically about community colleges and published in the journal *Teaching Sociology.* Ed Kain and associates (2002) used content analysis to examine community college catalogs to explore the sociological curriculum. Kain notes that despite the growth in the scope of community colleges, little systematic attention has been focused on sociology at the two-year institution. He also found that ASA research briefs do not reference community colleges (Kain 2002:350).

I examined the 36 research briefs currently available on the ASA website and searched for the words “community college”, and could find no references. Equally significant, the reports on teaching loads, adjunct faculty, and the 2005 ASA membership report, did not mention community colleges (ASA 2009 and ASA 2006).

Arguably, there has yet to be a true academic discussion about teaching at a community college within our disciplinary journals and reports. It would also seem sociologists do not even view the “community college” as a unit of analysis. Using JSTOR, I did a quick search of the

words “community college” to the words “high school” in both the *American Sociological Review* (ASR, Since 1937) and the *American Journal of Sociology* (AJS, since 1895). The words “high school” appear 1445 times in *ASR*, while the words “community college” only appear 67 times. In *AJS*, there were 59 “hits” for words “community college” and 1607 for the words “high school.” One might expect to find a different situation when examining the sociology of education literature. Unfortunately, the finding remains unchanged. In a search of the journal *Sociology of Education* (since 1963), there were only 72 “hits “for “community college” and over 1935 hits for the words “high school.” The inescapable conclusion is that we are not even researching community colleges within our discipline, let alone including them in our profession.

In 1999, the ASA appointed a Task Force on articulation between two-year and four-year institutions (Zingraff, 2002). The task force report notes that “as sociologists, we have many reasons to be interested in the programs at these institutions (referencing community colleges) where 44% of all undergraduate students are enrolled” (Zingraff 2002:9). This report further notes “students who have been historically underrepresented in higher education rely extensively on community colleges as their conduit to four-year universities, realizing thereby a social justice agenda that sociologists generally embrace….To the extent that sociology faculty and programs at community colleges thrive, so will the public’s recognition of sociology grow” (Zingraff 2002:9). Although this task force report calls for viewing community colleges within the context of social justice issues in sociology, it appears this recommendation has yet to be adopted in our discipline.

Within the ASA, the Section on Teaching and Learning perhaps has made the most significant efforts to include community college faculty. For example, this section does require the chair be elected from within the ranks of community college members every third year, and has awarded the Hans O. Mauksch for Distinguished Contributions to Undergraduate Sociology to at least three community college sociologists. Although these efforts are commendable, given the small numbers of community college faculty who join the ASA, the Section on Teaching and Learning does not appear to be a strong enough enticement for community college faculty to consider joining.

At the regional levels, the attention to community colleges also seems to be unsystematic and difficult to study since data are not collected. Many regional associations do have a community college representative serving on their councils. I know our regional association has made attempts to expand community college membership. Two previous NCSA Presidents, Bruce Keith and Jay Howard, mention the lack of participation by community colleges in regional associations in their Presidential addresses, and both note the need to figure out this "community college conundrum" (Keith, 2004; Howard 2007). This lack of interest in understanding teaching and learning at a community college, and overall lack of interest in community colleges as unit of analysis, suggest a "hidden face" of elitism that is counter to the best traditions of our discipline.

LOOKING OUTSIDE OUR DISCIPLINE

It is no surprise that the increase in the number of community college students corresponds to the increase in community college faculty. This includes the employment of part-time faculty. About 20% of all higher education faculty work full time at 1,100 public community colleges, and 44% of all part-time higher education faculty teach at community colleges (Zingraff 2002; American Association of Community Colleges 2010). If full-time and part-time faculty are aggregated, approximately one-third of the American higher education professoriate teach at community colleges. The largest growth was in the number of part-timers, which increased by 53 percent from a little more than 11,000 in 1973, to 135,500 in 1992 (Cohen and Brawer 1996). This increase has not equated to more participation in disciplinary associations.

Disinterest in examining this issue in disciplinary associations, is not unique to sociology. Many discipline-focused associations, however, have a more current literature on the subject. For example, the discipline of education has explored this lack of participation. There is one basic assertion throughout this literature: community college professorate are "different" from university faculty, and thus are presumed to be disinterested in professional engagement in the discipline. The "differences" pointed out in this literature continue to stereotype community college faculty as being "less than."

Authors McGrath and Spear further fuel the negative stereotype by harshly asserting that community college faculty are a lost cause. They write, "Since the institutional and social forces weakening the intellectual culture among community colleges are unlikely to lose their influence in the near future….realistically little can be done to reengage faculty in their original

disciplinary communities"(McGrath and Spear 1991:154). The common thread is to question the intellectual integrity of community college faculty and to blame them for lack of participation, rather than blame the organizational structures of the profession. McGrath and Spear even suggest that community college faculty have an "inferiority complex" (McGrath and Spear 1991:154).

In his book, *A Profile of the Community College Professorate: 1975-2000,* Outcalt notes these stereotypes of community college faculty are problematic. He further notes "community college faculty are often viewed as "also rans," would be university professors who could not get a real job at a university. Worse yet, most of their instructors are part-timers who do not even have both feet in the academic world" (Outcalt 2002:3).

Often cited as explanations of why community college faculty do not participate in disciplinary specific associations include speculations that part-time faculty, and those faculty without doctoral degrees, are not interested in disciplinary associations. Outcault (2002) found full-time faculty are more likely to be connected to a discipline-specific association compared to part-time faculty. He also found community college faculty with doctorate degrees were slightly more like to be involved in a discipline-specific association compared to those with master's degrees. Although he found differences in levels of participation, his research reveals one very important finding: the majority of community college faculty surveyed (regardless of degree or work status) *want* to be more connected to their disciplinary associations. He also found the majority of community college faculty surveyed viewed university faculty as a good source of

advice on teaching, and they noted that much of the ideas in their discipline were generated from universities. The implication? Community college faculty fail to participate in disciplinary associations not because they are disinterested, but because they do not have the support from either their institutions or their disciplinary associations.

Outcalt also found that contrary to popular belief, community college faculty are connected to at least one professional association (majority not discipline-specific). In fact, 75% of full-time faculty and 50% of part-time faculty were members of one professional association, such as the AAUP and/or community college specific associations. A significant number (46.4%) did report belonging to a discipline-specific association (Outcalt 2002).

Clearly, we need more opportunities within our discipline for community college faculty and university faculty to connect. We must give sociological consideration to two things--the organizational context of the community college, and the lack of support to engage in discipline-specific professional associations. Snyder and Spreitzer note, "The process of maintaining one's identity as a good teacher is heavily conditioned by the organizational context and the crucial contingencies of an academic career. A faculty in a research one institution is different from a faculty in a social science division at a community college. A college instructor with a 15 hour teaching load is different from a professor with two graduate seminars" (Snyder and Spreitzer 1984: 159).

A theme many have noted is that community college faculty are often isolated (Outcalt 2002; Cohen and Brawer 1977). I would also argue that with the growth of distance learning at

community colleges, there will be more isolation in the future for many faculty. The organizational climate and context faced by community college faculty impact their opportunities to participate in disciplinary associations. Unfortunately, until disciplinary associations generate a stronger interest in the community college conundrum, I do not see the organizational context changing.

Overall, the literature shows the majority of community college faculty want to be involved in disciplinary associations. However, much of the literature only points out the problems and rarely discusses possibilities. Although written in 1983, there is one article that did take a holistic look at the question that I am addressing today and much of what he said applies to my address today. Donald Schmeltekopf, President of the Community College Humanities Association wrote an article entitled "Professional Status and Community College Faculty: The Role of Associations." The Community College Humanities Association (CCHA), founded in 1979, is the only national organization of its kind for humanities faculty and administrators in two-year colleges. In his article he summarizes what the literature suggests the reasons are for lack of participation by community college faculty in disciplinary associations:

- "Many community college faculty do not view themselves as participants in activities that extend beyond the classroom and they accept no responsibility for the profession itself,
- Advancement in community colleges is not based on connection to profession and it is not competitive,
- There is a lack of administrative support within community colleges for serious, independent, professional activity on the part of faculty (many community colleges have no sabbatical system, no tenure system or little budget dedicated to this),
- No encouragement to publish. He argues that this robs community college faculty of connection to discipline,

- The leadership of professional organizations is from those at the university level and community college faculty are rarely involved in leadership at the higher level,
- There is a lack of appeal of the traditional discipline associations. While community college faculty may or may not be interested, it is also clear that professional associations are not so interested in attracting community college faculty as members. Professional Association are developed around the culture of the university. Add this to the the notion of the pecking order and basically a community college faculty member needs to be extraordinarily dedicated to the discipline to want to participate,
- Decline of Liberal Arts in Community Colleges,
- The final major reason is the lack of professional identity among community college faculty. They have no clear identity in higher education" (Schmeltekopf 1983:79-87).

Community college faculty are diverse and have diverse needs, though their needs have yet to be fully examined. Presently, the literature on the "community college conundrum" is dated and in many ways inconclusive. We need to ask ourselves how the ASA and regional associations can mitigate the organizational context faced by many community college sociologists. For now, I suggest two central concerns over which we have some control:

1. The inability to understand community colleges within the context of social justice issues is truly disappointing, especially given their role in reaching out to disenfranchised and explains much of the community college conundrum.
2. The overall lack of interest in understanding teaching and learning at community colleges, and even research on community colleges as unit of analysis within our discipline, constitutes and oversight we can no longer accept.

METHODOLOGY

Because we do not know much about community college participation in our discipline, I chose to examine those who do participate in an attempt to understand the types and levels of their involvement. First, I sought to gather data on community college faculty membership in the ASA, regional associations and other related associations like the Society for the Study of Social Problems and Society for Women in Sociology. My next step was to examine the participation

of community college faculty in sociology conferences. By examining nine years (2000-2008) of the ASA annual meetings programs, nine years of the Pacific Sociological Association (PSA) annual meetings programs, seven years (2002-2008) of the NCSA annual meeting programs and finally four-years (2001-2002; 2007-2008) of the Midwest Sociological Society's (MSS) annual meetings programs, I conducted a content analysis of each program for participation by community college faculty. I coded their participation as research oriented, teaching oriented, or other professional oriented. I also conducted a content analysis of *Teaching Sociology* by examining articles either written by community college sociologists or about community college sociologists. Finally, I completed a limited examination of the teaching resources guides published by ASA to examine participation by community college faculty.

FINDINGS

COMMUNITY COLLEGE MEMBERSHIP

Obtaining membership data proved to be more difficult than I anticipated. Most data are based on level of professor such as part-time, retired, assistant, associate, and full. In order to run an analysis to examine community college membership, associations would have to examine institutional affiliations, perhaps in the address field of a membership form. None of the numbers obtained could be considered official and all were sent to me via email.

The ASA reported the following numbers for 2006-2008. In 2006, there were 293 community college members out of 7472 (3.9%) total members. In 2007, 336 out of 7915 (4.2%) total members, and in 2008, 314 members out of 7605 (4.1%) total members.

The Executive Officer of Sociologist for Women in Society ran an analysis of the word "community" in their data base and came up with ten possible community college faculty members at the national level based on address data. The Eastern Sociological Association (ESA) also had to run an analysis using institutional affiliation. They had 96 names in their membership base with a total membership between 900 and 1200. The PSA reported somewhere around 25 each year, and the NCSA reported somewhere around 12 each year. Basically, we know that community college membership is low. The need to gather these data in a more systematic way is obvious.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION INVOLVEMENT

In an effort to understand the level and types of participation, I examined annual meeting programs from ASA, PSA, MSS and NCSA. In coding participation, I listed noted each i of a community college institutional affiliation showing up on a program for an annual meeting, I focused on number of activities on the program with a community college name associated with it). For the purposes of this address, I placed participation into three categories:

1. *Research* - presented a paper on research not related to teaching (see Note 1),
2. *Teaching* - presented a paper related to teaching (including the scholarship of teaching and learning) and,
3. *Professional* - serving as a panelist, discussant, organizer, or committee.

(TABLE 1 HERE)

Midwest Sociological Society 2001-2002 and 2007-2008 Results (See Table 1 Above)

In examining the four years of programs from MSS, there were 116 instances of a community college being listed on the program. Of these, 49 were research based, 32 were teaching based and 35 were professional activities. The MSS does include committee membership in their program, though not all associations do this. In 2007, there was a joint meeting with the NCSA; I coded participation this year by institution and state. Thus, participants in MSS region were coded MSS, and those living in NSCA region were coded NSCA.

Pacific Sociological Association 2000-2008 Results (See Table 1 Above)

PSA may have the highest numbers of community college participation of any regional association examined. There was a total of 204 instances of community college listings on the program, with 45 research focused, 63 teaching focused, and 96 professional focused (62 of the 96 were community college faculty listed on the program for serving as organizers, discussants, and presiders). This type of participation was not noted in any other regional association.

North Central Sociological Association 2002-2008 Results (See Table 1 Above)

The NSCA had 120 instances of community college participation listed on the programs: 29 were research, 33 teaching, and 58 were professional. It should be noted that 48 of the 120 instances of community college participation were by two individuals.

American Sociological Association 2000-2008 (See Table 1 Above)

There were 223 instances of community college participation in the programs -slightly more than the PSA for the same amount of years. There were 84 research sessions, 75 teaching and 64

professional oriented activities. Within the ASA, the majority of professional instances were activities like workshops and panels about transfer with two-year schools, working at a community college, applied sociology, and topics specific about community Colleges. As a percentage of the total sessions, community colleges presentations were less than 4% and basically mirrored the membership percentages of ASA.

In further examination of the data, I noticed that some names appeared more than one time on many programs. I went back and coded the data by community college faculty names. Of the 663 instances of community college participation on all the programs combined, 207 instances represented 16 individuals. On further examination, 87 of the 663 instances of community college participation were three individuals. In other words, not only is community college participation low, it is even more minimal than the 663 instances suggest with 13% of participation by only 3 individuals and 31% by 16 individuals.

Despite the minimal levels of both membership and participation in professional meetings by community college faculty, these data suggest teaching is not the only reason why community college faculty participate. In fact, this analysis would suggest community college faculty who participate in annual meetings are also interested and involved in research and professional activities. Other researchers have noted a similar finding (Zappia 1999; Palmer 2002). Schmeltekopf (1983) noted that those community college faculty who do participate must be extraordinarily committed to the discipline.

Teaching Sociology Analysis

A content analysis (using JSTOR) of articles in *Teaching Sociology* from 1973-2007 shows less involvement by community college faculty in comparison to both the membership data and annual meeting participation. From 1973-2007, the words "Community College" shows up 317 times in *Teaching Sociology*. I did check for the words "two-year institution" and only 3 articles came up; all three were included in the original community college search. Of the 317 " hits" for the words "community college" within *Teaching Sociology*, only 41 were peer reviewed articles. The remaining "hits" were the words showing up in the errata notes, front materials, back materials, and reviews. Of the 41 articles, 18 had multiple authors. Of the 18 multiple author articles, only 6 were solely community college authored. The remaining 12 were co-authored by community college faculty with faculty from a four- year institution.

It is disheartening to note that only 12 articles in *Teaching Sociology* were written in a partnership between a two-year faculty and a four-year faculty. There is very little interaction between community college and university faculty in publishing on teaching and learning. With increased interest in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL) within sociology, it is increasingly evident this is one area where partnerships between four-year faculty and two-year faculty should form.

Of the remaining 23 community college articles, only 13 were written solely by community college faculty. As with the content analysis of annual meeting programs, I did check for names that appeared most frequently. As with the data above, 65 of the 317 (20%) of the "hits" for

"community college" within *Teaching Sociology* were associated with only four community college faculty.

AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL SYLLABUS SETS

Over the years, my department has purchased syllabi sets on topics of interest to the courses we offer. In examining the 21 my department has in our library, none included a community college editor. In 1998, there was one edited document called "Teaching Sociology at Small Institutions." Although not edited by a community college faculty, it did include an article about teaching at a community college. Grauerholz and Gibson in their analysis of ASA syllabi sets from 481 courses confirm that there is little community college participation. They write, "Arguably they are among the best in the discipline written by conscientious teachers and selected by editors for inclusion in the resource manuals. Most of the syllabi in the study were submitted by instructors at doctoral/research universities and for courses that are substantive and solely undergraduate "(Grauerholz and Gibson 2006:11).

Given the stereotypical attitudes about community college faculty, I wonder how difficult it is to be chosen to have materials included in ASA guides and in the ASA digital library project (ASA 2009). I also wonder how many community college faculty would even bother to try to do this? Do we even know what the rejection rate has been for community college submitted syllabi?

POSSIBILITIES

The data examined for this address indicate one fact: community college participation is not happening at the regional or national levels, it is not happening in our academic journals, and it is not occurring in the development of our teaching materials. As a discipline, it is time to ask ourselves just how much we care about sociology at community colleges?

I shall offer six recommendations towards solving the conundrum of the lack of participation of community college faculty in our discipline. My recommendations are based on the literature, the research I conducted for this project, my own experiences, and something I would like to call sociological "common sense." Regardless of the somewhat lackadaisical approaches by our discipline, I am still hopeful that this conundrum can be solved. I am not ready to jump ship and suggest community college sociologists need to form their own discipline specific association, but I certainly can understand why some may think otherwise.

RECOMMENDATION 1: NOTICE AND CARE

In professional meetings where the lack of community college membership is raised, the response has been the "ASA can't be all things to all people." I have heard this statement many times in my years of participation. The first recommendation toward inclusion requires members of the ASA to decide whether we genuinely care about community college students and faculty. Our discipline should avoid sending mixed messages about community college participation within our professional associations, both regionally and nationally.

There are pockets of caring within regional associations and the Section on Teaching and Learning within the ASA, yet there is no systematic effort at the national level to recruit

community college members, or even understand their plight as professionals. For goodness sake, we do not even collect data or write reports on the topic within our discipline, let alone actively attract members!

My research suggests there are community college faculty who, despite the obstacles, have managed to be active in our disciplinary associations and who deeply care about the discipline of sociology. It is evident that those of us who have high levels of activity within our discipline may not be representative of those who are not participating, and thus we may not be the best group to speak on behalf of community college sociologists. The ASA needs to hear from them directly. Extending a welcoming message of care is the first step.

RECOMMENDATION 2: TASK FORCE AND RESEARCH

The ASA membership should call for a task force to examine the community college conundrum. Although there has been some disconnect between ASA and regional associations in recent years, it would be important for the ASA to involve regional associations because they may be where this connection can best be made for community college sociologists. Jay Howard, in his Presidential address to this association in 2007, calls on our associations to avoid being paternalistic toward community college faculty members. He goes on to state, “We need to ensure that these colleagues feel welcome and respected within our regional associations so that we can benefit from each other. It will take a concerted, intentional effort to invite and involve these faculty members; since our associations have been focused so heavily on research in the

past, many community college faculty members may not perceive the annual meeting program as having anything for them" (Howard 2007:262).

As part of this task force, we need data on what is happening at community colleges in our discipline. We need to survey both full-time and part-time sociologists within the community colleges to understand their needs and how the discipline might better serve them. We need to stop depending on anecdotal advice and suggestions from current community college members. We need to use our disciplinary theories and methods to understand this issue.

RECOMMENDATION 3: EXAMINE OTHER DISCIPLINARY ASSOCIATIONS

A third recommendation is to explore how other disciplinary associations include and assist community college faculty. The American Historical Association and the Organization of American Historians in 1994 formed a task force and conducted a survey of community college faculty within history across the United States. Zappia (1999) writes in the findings of this report, "It is not surprising that community college history teaching is now a topic of more professional focus. After all, many if not most Americans who take a college level history course do so at a community college. Nevertheless, community college historians have often labored in isolation from the professions mainstream. It sometimes seems as though community colleges exist in a world entirely separate from the rest of higher education." In their survey, community college faculty asked for more freely available teaching resources and small grants to conduct research. Interestingly they also found something similar to previously noted research in this

address--*community college faculty are interested in **both** research as well as teaching and learning*."

Both the American Chemistry Association and the American Psychological Association have also taken extensive steps to involved community college faculty; their work deserves to be examined. I think this examination should include an exploration of membership categories and benefits, as well as revisiting the cost of teaching sources we have available on teaching and learning. Many disciplinary associations have a community college faculty membership that includes "free access to teaching resources" (syllabi sets should be freely available). As a matter of social justice, does charging for teaching resources make sense in a time when increasing numbers of faculty teaching sociology in the United States are working for part-time wages without benefits?

RECOMMENDATION 4: FOUR-YEAR/ TWO-YEAR PARTNERSHIPS

The fourth step does not require a major task force report of the American Sociological Association or call on the "ASA to be all things to all people." Instead, it requires sociologists at four-year institutions to reach out to community college faculty and work together in areas of research, especially in the scholarship related to teaching and learning. We can learn from what other organizations do to encourage four-year/two-year partnerships such as the National Science Foundation and the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). I suggest we continue to look for ways to connect community colleges to four-year institutions. We all teach undergraduate students and we have so much to learn from one another. Although I

have called on the ASA to examine this issue via a task force, I also challenge faculty at four-year institutions to question their assumptions about those who teach at community colleges.

RECOMMENDATION 5: INCREASING SYSTEMS OF PROFESSIONAL SOCIALIZATION IN SOCIOLOGY

The fifth recommendation embraces the development of more intentional and systematic methods of socializing new members to our discipline. Regardless of whether we are at two-year or four-year institution, we share a common purpose-- to educate students in the core principles of sociology. Connecting students to the discipline needs to start at the undergraduate level and continue through all levels of graduate school. Undergraduate students from both two-year and four-year institutions should be encouraged to participate in our disciplinary associations early and often. As part of this professional socialization, we need to understand that the master's degree may be a terminal degree for many sociologists. This terminal degree often leads to instructional responsibilities at a community college level. Our discipline needs to offer more "preparing future faculty" opportunities and courses in teaching methods for those in master's degree programs.

Throughout the literature, many continue to suggest the absence of a Ph.D. may be a reason for lack of involvement in discipline specific associations. I believe this disconnect is not a function of the lack of interest by those without doctorate degrees. Rather, it is the intellectual elitism displayed by those at four-year and graduate institutions who may treat community college faculty as" less than" because they perceive they "only" have a master's degree.

Regardless of educational degrees and institutional boundaries, we all play a role in teaching our discipline. As implied in "public sociology", it is time we all embrace the teaching mission of the discipline.

RECOMMENDATION 6: RECOGNIZE THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ISSUE AS A SOCIAL JUSTICE CONCERN

The sixth and most important recommendation is for sociologists to truly recognize "community college" as a social justice concern and worthy of being a unit of analysis in research. I would be remiss if I failed note that some of this community college conundrum is in part caused by the continued market competition for students in the United States. It is time that sociologists recognize this issue as one related to social justice and rally around this topic. Rather than complain about the students and faculty at a community college as being inferior, we must recognize that much of this pretense and posturing is due to living in society where lack of educational capital, educational segregation, racism, sexism, and classism have led to the social movement of community colleges.

Many sociologists at four-year institutions embrace a very narrow view of community college students and faculty. We often are accused of having less rigor in our courses and much of this blame is placed on over reliance on part-time faculty. There is research, however, to suggest that the use of part-time faculty is becoming as prevalent in universities where they account for 40% of those teaching courses. They are often underlaborers who subsidize the research and salaries of permanent faculty so they can do research (Burawoy 2004).

Furthermore, although community colleges are educating approximately 44% of the undergraduate students in the United States, they receive less than one-third the level of federal support per full-time equivalent student ($790) that public four-year colleges receive ($2600). They also have correspondingly poorer outcomes and lower retention and graduate rates. (Vaughn 2006). Burawoy (2004) adds that concentration of research and professionalism in the upper reaches of the university system is made possible in part by the overburdening of our teaching institutions, the four-year and two-year colleges. The configuration of sociologies in these institutions is analogous to that in poorly resourced parts of the world (Burawoy2004:282). In a sense the "academic proletariat" is facilitating the work of the "academic elite." By rethinking the community college conundrum, our discipline can become more inclusive, embracing not just the rhetoric but the reality of equity and justice (see Note 2).

Note 1 Although I recognize the scholarship of teaching and learning as research, I included this type in the teaching category in order to understand to what extent community college faculty are engaged in research not related to teaching.

Note 2 In preparing my remarks for this address, I have to admit that the journey to completing my address at times was rather painful to the point I often thought about changing topics. It was very difficult to discover that much of what I am saying today was said by Nancy Stein in 1977. I am hoping my Presidential address today will have an impact. Our discipline can no longer ignore the need of community college faculty and their students.

Although the focus of my address today has been on community colleges, in reality it is related to a much bigger issue within our discipline. It is time the discipline of sociology recognizes teaching as equally as important to our discipline as research. I know much of what I have discussed today about community college faculty could be applied to those at predominantly teaching institutions. In adapting Buroway's line, I would like to conclude by stating "As Teachers We Are All Potentially Public Sociologists" (Buroway, 2004) and "Where You Teach Should Not Matter" (Rowell 2010).

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Table 1
Community College Participation in Sociological Annual Meetings

	ASA (2000-2008)	PSA (2000-2008)	NCSA (2002-2008)	MSS (2001-2002, 2007-2008)	TOTALS
Research	84	45	29	49	207
Teaching	75	63	33	32	203
Professional	64	96	58	35	253
TOTALS	223	204	120	116	663