TRENDS AFFECTING HIGHER EDUCATION
IN CALIFORNIA IN THE 1980's

A Summary of
an Address by
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Mr. Kessler's talk pointed out some recent (and not so recent) trends that have very significant implications for community colleges, and particularly for community college transfer programs. Highlights of the talk follow, with Research Office comments on the local situation in parentheses.

1. The overall reduction in high school graduates is being accompanied by a strong shift in the ethnic composition of high school graduating classes, especially in large urban areas. While overall enrollment is down, minority enrollments are up, and in some areas, minorities constitute about half the enrollment. In Southern California this minority population is mostly Hispanics, who historically have gone to college in lesser numbers. (Both trends are evident at SBCC, but perhaps not as pronounced as elsewhere. The minority enrollment in twelfth grade is gradually approaching 30 percent.)

2. Students are more career oriented, less interested in college as a place to develop a philosophy of life. Transfer programs and especially humanities programs in community colleges have therefore suffered a decline. About six percent of community college students transfer to UC or CSUC. Balance of transfers is now in the opposite direction. A large number of BA/BS holders are enrolled in community colleges. Occasional on/off attendance at CC's is common. The modal number of courses taken in CC's is one. The curriculum has become more lateral rather than linear, i.e., less developed according to a logical progression toward a degree. (The number of UC/CSUC transfer students from SBCC in 1978 was about 6 percent of our Fall 1978 enrollment. One out of eight students at SBCC has a baccalaureate and the percentage is increasing.)

3. More eligible high school graduates, who aspire to gain a baccalaureate are opting to go directly to UC rather than CC's. In 1975, 23 percent of UC-eligible high school graduates went to community colleges, but now only 8 percent list CC attendance as a first choice. (This seems consistent with a Research Office survey in Spring 1978, when a third of all student respondents and 40 percent of transfer student respondents said they would have gone elsewhere if money were no object.)
4. It is presumed that, as more high school seniors opt to go directly to 4-year campuses, it will be the "best" who do so, and this will have a deleterious effect on CC transfer program quality. This is supported by studies conducted at UC using Quality of Student Effort Scales to compare work of CC transfers at CC's with subsequent work at UC.

5. Attrition at UC is largely related to academic difficulty. Many students discover too late that they can't handle an outside job and maintain a full course load at UC. Transfer shock is as great for CC transfers as it is for students right out of high school. Fewer CC transfers relative to native UC students are graduating in 3 years. (If more UC-eligible high school graduates are going directly to UC, then it follows that relatively more CC transfers are students who had poorer high school academic records, and the probability that they will not do as well at UC is greater.)

6. A trend toward the disappearance of transfer programs at CC's is seen. This is inconsistent with the Master Plan, would change the nature of CC's, and would place an undesirable lower division burden on the 4-year segment. It would restrict options available to CC students who, for whatever reason, could not go directly to a 4-year campus.