

Race and the History of the American Junior College, With a case study of the California Junior College

Josh M. Beach

Very little historical work has been done on the issues of racism, segregation, and educational inequality in the community college. This lack of scholarship is partly due to the fact that very little, if any, educational demographic data broken down by race was collected by American educational institutions prior to 1963.¹ Based on an analysis of the United States Census, Hurley H. Doddy argued that from 1940 to 1960 the total population of college graduates rose from 5 to 8 percent while non-white college graduates rose from 1 to 3 percent. The enrollment percentage of non-white students based on total population was less than half the rate of white students in every region of the country except the West where 6.7 percent of non-whites enrolled in college compared to 7.9 percent for whites. However, only 8.4 percent of non-whites in the West achieved one to three years of college, compared to 13 percent of whites, and only 5.4 percent of non-whites in the West attained four or more years of college, compared to 9.8 percent of whites.²

1. Community Colleges, Segregation and Equality, 1960s – 1980s

Kenneth Meier has argued that from the 1930s to the early 1960s, “poor and minorities were rarely an object of research or even much curiosity on the part of the American Association

¹ Gary Orfield, Mark D. Bachmeier, David R. James, and Tamela Eide, *Deepening Segregation in American Public Schools*, Harvard Project on School Desegregation (Boston, 1997).

² Hurley H. Doddy, “The Progress of the Negro in Higher Education,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 32 (1963), 487.

of Junior Colleges and most local leaders.”³ During the late 19th and early 20th centuries both Northern educational philanthropists and Southern educational reformers were in many ways “white supremacists” that “insisted on a second-class education” for blacks in order to accommodate them for “subordinate roles in the southern economy.”⁴ In 1939 Horace Mann Bond, a black historian and social scientist, argued that the South was dominated by a “planting aristocracy” that had used the public schools “to maintain both the structure of social classes and that of racial caste” in order to protect their economic and social interests. Bond noted that “the masses of white people in Southern States have, slowly and grudgingly, fought toward the achievement of systems of universal education for white children,” but blacks were left largely outside the push for reform.⁵

In Koos’ treatise on the junior college movement no mention was made of race or segregation. However, in Koos’ text on secondary schools published two years later, he did include some mention of race, which can be used to get a sense of how much access non-white Americans were able to gain to higher education. Out of 740 pages of text, Koos devoted less than one page to “secondary-school facilities for negroes.” He noted that only a “very small proportion” of the “negro population of high-school age” was enrolled in secondary institutions. In a chart located at the beginning of the book, Koos noted that only 4.3 percent of “native-born negro” school age population in the United States were enrolled in public high schools. This was

³ As late as 1965, Blocker, Plummer, and Richardson’s *The Two-Year College: A Social Synthesis* included a wealth of data on two-year college students in terms of education, age, class, employment, and even gender, but there is not a single word on race or ethnicity (107-133). See also: Meier, *The Community College Mission*, ch 3.

⁴ James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860 – 1935* (Chapel Hill, 1988), 1-2, 279; Regina Werum, “Sectionalism and Racial Politics: Federal Vocational Policies and Programs in the Prede-segregation South,” *Social Science History*, 21, no. 3 (1997): 399-453.

⁵ Horace Mann Bond, “Education in the South,” *Journal of Educational Sociology* 12 (1939): 264-74.

less than half the rate for “native-born white” students (9.5 percent) and also less than the average rate for all “foreign-born” ethnic groups (4.9 percent).⁶

Negro junior colleges did receive some attention in the 1930s. Walter Crosby Eells included the equivalent of one page on Negro junior colleges in his textbook *The Junior College* (one page out of over 800). It seems that most of the Negro junior colleges in the United States were not even known to the American Association of Junior Colleges, although Eells said that representatives from 16 of these Negro schools purportedly attended the annual meeting in 1929. Eells stated that the Junior College Association *Directory* listed 14 Negro junior colleges, but he claimed personal knowledge of at least 33 segregated Negro institutions. This lack of knowledge on Negro junior colleges was due to an institutionalized neglect of these segregated schools. Eells admitted that the junior college community had “a lack of definite information regarding their present existence and status.” Part of this lack was no doubt due to the racial animosity of many white junior college leaders. A lack of information on junior colleges may have also been due in part to the un-accredited status of most Negro institutions of higher education until the late 1920s and 1930s. Black schools were often excluded from the mainstream accreditation and funding processes of state education systems, thus, they often operated without any oversight from state educational officials and national educational organizations.⁷

The Journal of Negro Education was inaugurated in 1932 and it devoted several pages of each issue to updates on the accreditation of Negro schools. It wanted to publicize “the degree of progress which Negro colleges are making in improving their status as institutions for higher education.” This journal was also the only scholarly or professional source that persistently attempted to keep track of Negro junior colleges, which were mostly invisible to the white junior

⁶ Koos, *The American Secondary School*, 136, 354.

⁷ Eells, *The Junior College*, 22, 37.

college movement because these segregated southern schools constituted a “separate system” of schooling that were of no concern to most white educators. Most of the known Negro junior colleges were created in the mid 1920s. A majority of these schools were in Texas and most were private institutions. Three of the seventeen segregated states of the South in the 1930s had white-only junior colleges and no Negro junior colleges. One state, Delaware, had no junior colleges at all. In the other thirteen Southern states, there were 27 Negro junior colleges enrolling about 3,164 students, while there were 491 junior colleges for whites enrolling 119,147 students. Segregated Negro junior colleges constituted 5.21 percent of all junior colleges in the South and enrolled 2.58 percent of all junior college students, but African Americans constituted 24.5 percent of the total Southern population.⁸

Interestingly, the attitudes of some of the black scholars writing for *The Journal of Negro Education* displayed the same sort of progressive elitism as white junior college leaders. Nick Aaron Ford explained that Negro junior colleges were important institutions that would clear out the “clutter” of unprepared students from black four-year colleges. Junior colleges would serve primarily “students from backward communities” that needed “stricter supervision” so as to help mold “individual development and conduct.” With these less promising students out of the way, Black four-year colleges could “devote their time, energy and talent to the select few who will become the race leaders of tomorrow.”⁹

The Truman Commission called for an end to discrimination in higher education in 1947. Less than a decade later the Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 and

⁸ “Current Events of National Importance in Negro Education,” *The Journal of Negro Education*, 1, no. 1 (1932): 91-97; Nick Aaron Ford, “The Negro Junior College,” *The Journal of Negro Education*, 5, no. 4 (1936): 591-94; David A. Lane, Jr., “The Junior College Movement Among Negroes,” *The Journal of Negro Education*, 2, no. 3 (1933): 272-283.

⁹ Ford, “The Negro Junior College,” 591-94. On progressivism and black educators see: Derrick P. Alridge, “Of Victorianism, Civilizationism, and Progressivism: The Educational Ideals of Anna Julia Cooper and W.E.B. Du Bois, 1892-1940,” *History of Education Quarterly*, 47, no. 4 (2007): 416-446; Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*; David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois, 1868 – 1919* (New York, 1993).

outlawed segregation in public schooling. Then in 1956, *Florida ex. Rel Hawkin v. Board of Control* effectively outlawed segregation in higher education. But despite new policy initiatives and judicial reform, both *de facto* and *de jure* segregation remained in effect in much of the country until the late 1960s and early 1970s. The seventeen Southern states that had *de jure* segregation up until the 1950s did not quickly end these legal statutes, and even when they did, *de facto* segregation was left in place.¹⁰ In 1949 there were fifty segregated private higher education institutions nationally for Black students. Twenty two of these institutions were Black public and private community colleges, most in the South, serving roughly 6,447 students. In a 1962 study of Southern and border state private and public community colleges, there were only 19 out of 245 schools (8 percent) that specifically served blacks, all of them public and most of them in Florida (13). The remaining six institutions were in three other states. This left 13 out of 17 Southern states (76.5 percent) without a black serving community college. And those few institutions that did serve African Americans offered a distinctly unequal curriculum focused mostly on “limited terminal programs” leading to “low level positions.” As far as the sparse records indicate, there were only five formerly segregated junior colleges that had integrated by 1960.¹¹

The only state to receive some scholarly attention on the issue of segregation in junior colleges was Florida. There were eight segregated junior colleges in this state available to African Americans in the early 1960s. According to Carroll L. Miller, they all offered “limited terminal programs which tend to perpetuate job placements in low level positions and which

¹⁰ Davison M. Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North: The Battle over Northern School Segregation, 1865-1954* (Cambridge, UK, 2005); Peter Irons, *Jim Crow's Children: The Broken Promise of the Brown Decision* (New York, 2002); James T. Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy* (Oxford, 2001).

¹¹ Meier, *The Community College Mission*, Ch 3; Rufus E. Clement, “The Present and Future Role of Private Colleges for Negroes,” *Phylon* 10, no. 4 (1949): 323-327; Carroll L. Miller, “The Negro Publicly-Supported Junior College,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 31, no. 3 (1962): 386-395; George H. Walker, Jr. and David W. Hazel, “Integration in the Junior College,” *The Journal of Negro Education* 29, no. 2 (1960): 204-206.

offer no opportunities for Negro youth.” By the 1967-68 school year, most community colleges in the state had been integrated, but the largest Florida community colleges were at least 92 percent white, with three colleges over 96 percent white. In the late 1960s Florida was only 78 percent white with about 15.3 to 17 percent blacks and about 5 percent Latinos. Florida should be considered an extreme example of segregation in community colleges because this state had legally segregated public schools, including its system of higher education, up until 1960. It is interesting to note the ambivalence of junior college leaders and scholars to the issue of racial segregation and educational inequality. Medsker’s 1960 review of junior colleges in various states never once mentions the issue of race. In his section on the Florida community colleges it did not even occur to him to mention that this public junior college system was completely segregated and, therefore, by definition was not actually designed to “serve the entire state.”¹²

In 1966 Arthur M. Cohen documented the integration of Miami-Dade Junior College, which began as a single administrative unit overseeing two racially segregated campuses in September 1960. The Northwest Center campus was connected to a segregated black high school and enrolled 185 black students. Three miles away the Central Center campus was connected to a segregated white high school and it enrolled 1,200 white students. Slowly, as designated by the gradual desegregation plan drafted by community college and state officials, black students and faculty were integrated into the Central Center campus. By 1962 the black Northwest Center campus was closed and the Central campus became Miami-Dade Junior College. This newly integrated community college was about 92.5 percent white in 1962 and it grew astronomically to 21,661 students by the 1967-68 school year. But despite Cohen’s claim for the “success of phased integration,” the integrated Central campus actually became less

¹² Carnegie Commission, *The Open-Door Colleges*, Appendix A, Table 1; Cohen, “The Process of Desegregation”; Gibson and Jung, *Historical Census Statistics*, Table 24; Miller, “The Negro Publicly-Supporting Junior College,” 389-91; Medsker, *The Junior College*, 214-216.

diverse one year after integration. The white student body grew from 92.5 percent to 93.9 percent of the total student population. Thus, African Americans became an increasingly marginalized minority presence in a predominantly white and probably hostile educational environment.¹³

While Florida may have been a successful example of peaceful integration, it still demonstrated the lack of access non-white minorities had to institutions of higher education, even to the supposedly “open-door” community college. Even though non-white minorities had newly won access to white institutions of higher education, there were still many segregated community colleges. When integration happened, enrollment of ethnic minority students in white colleges rarely reached parity with the racial demographics of the regional communities. In the 1967-68 school year, all across the nation, large community colleges with 3,000 or more students were all highly segregated by race. Jefferson State Junior College in Birmingham, Alabama was 95.5 percent white in a state that was almost 30 percent black. Of the seven large community colleges in Texas at this time, five were over 90 percent white (two of which were over 97 percent white), while only two large junior colleges enrolled significant numbers of black and Latino students: El Centro College in Dallas, the second largest community college in Texas, had an 18.2 percent minority student population, while San Antonio College, the largest college with 12,717 students, enrolled 53.5 percent minority students. Two out of the three largest community colleges in Illinois were over 93 percent white in a state that was between 83 percent to 89 percent white. Five out of the seven largest community colleges in Michigan were over 93.4 percent white and one college in Highland Park, the black ghetto just north of Detroit,

¹³ Cohen, “The Process of Desegregation.”

enrolled 45.7 percent black students. Between 1960 and 1970 Michigan was around 89 percent white, about 10 percent black, and about 1 percent Latino.¹⁴

As Leland L. Medsker and Dale Tillery acknowledged, by the late 1960s it was “clear that neither higher education generally nor any segment specifically is providing equal opportunity for minority students.” But of all segments of higher education, the open-door junior college was “the least restrictive in reference to minority enrollments.”¹⁵ But simply gaining access to desegregated, predominantly white institutions of higher education by the 1960s did not mean that non-white students experienced a welcoming, non-discriminatory environment. Black students in particular faced social segregation, exclusion, and racial hatred on many integrated college campuses throughout the country. Mark A. Chesler and James Crowfoot argued that this racial hatred on college campuses lasted well into the 1980s. They also reported that the issue of racial exclusion and hatred within integrated schools continually went unnoticed and undocumented by most scholars because of the “sheer invisibility of racism to white people.” Chesler and Crowfoot went so far as to say that the institutional racism at the organizational level actually enabled and sanctioned white racism on most college campuses. Even up through the 1990s the legacy of segregation and white racism continued to be factor on college campuses. Sylvia Hurtado and her colleagues argued that “the historical vestiges of segregated schools and colleges continue to affect the climate for racial/ethnic diversity on college campuses...Because they are embedded in the culture of a historically segregated environment, many campuses

¹⁴ Carnegie Commission, *The Open-Door Colleges*, Appendix A, Table 1; Gibson and Jung, *Historical Census Statistics on Population*, Tables 15, 28, 37. The population percentages are estimates that are skewed because of a lack of data on Latino(a)s in the United States before 1970. Up until 1970 the U. S. census only collected demographic information by race on whites, blacks, American Indian, Asian & Pacific Islander, and Other. For a discussion of race and ethnicity as social scientific and political categories in relation to the U. S. census see: David A. Hollinger, *Postethnic America: Beyond Multiculturalism*, 10th anniversary edition (New York, 2005).

¹⁵ Medsker and Tillery, *Breaking the Access Barriers*, 76-77.

sustain long-standing, often unrecognized, benefits for particular student groups.”¹⁶ Non-white American and immigrant students also argued that the general education curriculum in most institutions of higher education bore a marked White and Western bias, which some students found “irrelevant, if not outright racist.”¹⁷

In 1985 Lois Weis reiterated what had become the standard litany of New Left critics of the community college: these colleges were institutions of social reproduction in a racist and sexist society. But community colleges were not completely determined by the oppressive social structure of United States society, as they also sought to embody a democratic ethos that offered increased opportunities for social mobility. Weis’ contribution to the critical literature on community colleges was to differentiate the experiences of working class African Americans, who occupied a “caste” distinct from the travails of working class whites. Weis’ ethnographic study of the African American cultural experience of community colleges explored how racialized and class-bound students could “embrace and reject schooling at one and the same time.” Weis also pointed out that while community colleges might help individuals escape the chains of “underclass” life, “the group can never follow,” thus, “the college cannot possibly work for blacks as a collectivity.” Therefore, Weis looked beyond the myth of an “enlightened” faculty, and she argued for a modest program of teaching students and faculty about their “position” in a racialized and classed society.¹⁸

¹⁶ Mark A. Chesler and James Crowfoot, *Racism in Higher Education*. Center for Research on Social Organization, PCMA Working Paper #21, CRSO Working Paper #412 (Ann Arbor, 1989); Sylvia Hurtado, Jeffrey F. Milem, Alma R. Clayton-Paderson, and Walter R. Allen, “Enhancing Campus Climates for Racial/Ethnic Diversity: Educational Policy and Practice,” *The Review of Higher Education*, 21, no. 3 (1998): 279-302; Watson Scott Swail, Kenneth E. Redd, and Laura W. Perna, *Retaining Minority Students in Higher Education*. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report 30, no. 2 (San Francisco, 2003), 57-61; Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 304-05.

¹⁷ Medsker and Tillery, *Breaking the Access Barriers*, 69. See also: Gerald Graff, *Beyond the Culture Wars* (New York, 1992); James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars* (New York, 1991), ch 8; Lawrence W. Levine, *The Opening of the American Mind: Canons, Culture, and History* (Boston, 1996).

¹⁸ Lois Weis, *Between Two Worlds: Black Students in an Urban Community College* (Boston, 1985), 7, 13, 27, 56, 133, 166-69.

By the 1980s and 1990s, it was still not clear that non-white minorities were making up lost ground in terms of taking full advantage of more “open” systems of higher education and earning more proportional amounts of postsecondary degrees. For African Americans between 1976 and 1994, college going rates improved and attainment of baccalaureate degrees increased, but not by much in comparison with the total college student population. Increases in college going and degree attainment were made mostly by Black females, while Black males were relatively stagnant on these measures.¹⁹

In 1987 Richard C. Richardson, Jr. and Louis W. Bender argued that “no one believes that more than two centuries of segregation and discrimination will be erased in one generation by improved access to baccalaureate education.” Richardson and Bender conducted two studies to investigate higher education policies targeting minority students²⁰ in higher education, specifically in terms of measuring the progress of minorities in attaining postsecondary degrees. They found that hierarchically structured systems of education, in combination with segregated residential communities and disproportionately funded local school districts, combined together to systematically perpetuate inequality and disadvantage urban minorities from postsecondary degree attainment. Many urban community college districts were distributed so as to promote *de facto* segregation patterns and there was no adequate “pipeline” from many urban high schools to postsecondary degree attainment. Because a majority of urban high schools students were not adequately prepared for college, community colleges were the “primary access point” for minority students in urban America. And even then, anywhere from 60 percent to 95 percent of

¹⁹ Antoine M. Garibaldi, “Four Decades of Progress...and Decline: An Assessment of African American Educational Attainment,” *The Journal of Negro Education*, 66, no. 2 (1997): 105-120; Swail, Redd, and Perna, *Retaining Minority Students in Higher Education*, 1-30.

²⁰ Richardson and Bender defined “underrepresented minorities” as blacks and Hispanics. Asians are acknowledged as minorities, but they were not “underrepresented” in public institutions of higher education. Native Americans were also acknowledged as minorities, but they were not largely enrolled in public, urban institutions of higher education, which was the focus of this study (15).

urban community college students needed some form of remedial education. There was also a distinctive culture to urban community colleges that impeded the preparation of minority students in terms of academic achievement and successful transfer to baccalaureate granting institutions. Community colleges were cheap, local, and often very supportive of students, but they also offered lower standards, a “watered-down” curriculum, and little opportunity to teach students self-direction and self-discipline. In short, many community colleges made a compromise. They lessened academic rigor and lowered standards in order to become a “custodial institution,” which offered a kind of “social welfare” to help improve minority education at a lower level. But Richardson and Bender’s assessment was not ultimately unkind to this institution. They argued that community colleges were doing the best they could under difficult and constrained circumstances: “When one looks below the surface of test scores, economic uncertainty, and previous educational performance, one finds human beings who are striving to realize the American dream in the face of many barriers. Many will not achieve that dream, but some will. Moreover, it is the dream that is important, not the success ratio. The community college for many of these students truly represents America’s last frontier.”²¹

2. *Segregated Education in California and the Junior College*

Junior colleges in California were supposed to be “open” institutions of higher education for all high school graduates who could benefit from some college level education. However, it is not clear just how “open” these institutions were and when they become open to *all* students

²¹ Richard C. Richardson, Jr. and Louis W. Bender. *Fostering Minority Access and Achievement in Higher Education: The Role of Urban Community Colleges and Universities* (San Francisco, 1987), 1-3, 5, 18, 28, 34, 36, 44, 49, 64, 98, 134, 178, 202.

regardless of sex, race, income, or ability. Nationally, there were some academic requirements from the start. In 1928 Frederick L. Whitney wrote an article on standards and accreditation for junior colleges, and he argued that most junior colleges had clear “entrance requirements,” which usually meant the completion of a good portion of the high school curriculum, although there were some states that had age restrictions or required an exam. Some states had more lenient requirements and permitted specially admitted students.²² Private junior colleges seem to have had the most “open” enrollment policies, probably because they were more dependent upon student tuition. However, some private junior colleges, like the one at the University of Chicago, began to segregate students within the school based on sex. There were also sex segregated institutions, all male or all female. In 1930 there were five male-only private junior colleges in California and two female-only private junior colleges.²³ The California state constitution of 1879 mandated that “no person shall be debarred admission to any of the collegiate departments of the University on account of sex.” The University of California was a trend setter in the nation in terms of co-education and most likely all public junior colleges in the state eventually followed suit, but there is no data to verify this issue.²⁴

While some institutions were segregated by gender, it is unclear if California junior colleges were overtly segregated by race. Even if it was not official policy, until the 1960s most states in the U.S. actively segregated non-white students in separate educational institutions or

²² Frederick L. Whitney, “Present Standards for Junior Colleges,” *The School Review* 36, no. 8 (1928): 593-603.

²³ Howard Erdman and William R. Ogden, “Reconsidering William Rainey Harper as ‘Father of the Junior College,’” *College Student Journal* 34, no. 3 (2000); *New York Times*, 24 June 1902; *New York Times*, 31 July 1902; *New York Times*, 1 Feb 1904. In 1931 Walter Crosby Eells stated that the majority of junior colleges were coeducational; however, there were many sex segregated private junior colleges in the East and South. Eells, *The Junior College*, 4, 31.

²⁴ Clara S. Foltz was denied access in 1879 to Hastings College of Law in San Francisco because she was a woman. But because the college had been recently re-designated as part of the University of California in 1878 Clara Foltz won her case before the State Supreme Court in November 1879, which ruled that female students had a right to attend any school within the University of California. *Article IX of California’s New Constitution of 1879*, quoted in Cloud, *Education in California*, 70, 82, 261; Douglas, *The Conditions for Admission*, 21.

classrooms, from K-12 to higher education.²⁵ During the late 19th and early 20th centuries both Northern educational philanthropists and Southern educational reformers were in many ways “white supremacists” that “insisted on a second-class education” for blacks in order to accommodate them for “subordinate roles” in local economies. Little is known of segregated junior colleges because early junior college leaders and the American Association of Junior Colleges did not keep track of most of these institutions.²⁶ While the Californian junior college was “open” to all high school students in the state regardless of sex, a history of segregation in the state raises questions about how “open” these institutions were to non-white minorities.

The Constitution of the state of California officially outlawed slavery in 1849, but there were still laws prohibiting non-whites from voting, holding office or testifying in court against whites, as well as laws forbidding mixed marriages, and for returning fugitive slaves to other states. California’s first school laws did not explicitly mention race, probably because there were so few ethnic minorities in the state during the mid-nineteenth century (mostly Chinese men). But as school systems developed, it was assumed that all non-whites would attend separate, segregated schools. The state school laws were amended in 1855 and 1863 to distribute funding primarily to white schools and to prohibit “Negroes, Mongolians and Indians” from attending white public schools. The school law of 1866 and 1872 sanctioned segregated schooling for non-white children, but some communities did not even bother to support non-white schools, thus, many non-white children were effectively barred from an education. Other communities

²⁵ Davison M. Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North*; Irons, *Jim Crow’s Children*; Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education*.

²⁶ James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860 – 1935* (Chapel Hill, 1988), 1-2, 279; Regina Werum, “Sectionalism and Racial Politics: Federal Vocational Policies and Programs in the Predesegregation South,” *Social Science History* 21, no. 3 (1997): 399-453. Walter Crosby Eells included the equivalent of one page on Negro junior colleges out of over 800 pages in his textbook *The Junior College*. Eells reported that the Junior College Association *Directory* only listed 14 out of the 33 known negro institutions to Eells because of, as he explained, “a lack of definite information regarding their present existence and status.” Eells, *The Junior College*, 22. See also: Ford, “The Negro Junior College;” Lane, “The Junior College Movement Among Negroes.”

had small populations of school age children and integrated schools became sanctioned by necessity and/or by choice. However, there was widespread racism amongst the white population and, according to Roy W. Cloud, even white educators who supported integrated schooling still “for the most part, held to the theory of the inferiority of the colored peoples.” The first legal challenge to segregated schooling in California was initiated by African Americans in *Ward v. Flood* (1874). The California Supreme Court upheld the right of every child, regardless of race, to an education, but it also justified the principle of “separate” schools in accordance with the Fourteenth Amendment and California law – twenty-two years before the U.S. Supreme Court would enact the “separate but equal” ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896).²⁷

Challenges to segregation at the local level were much more successful, but never complete. In 1875 the school board of San Francisco, the largest city in California with the largest non-white minority population, decided to end school segregation, but only for Black children. San Francisco’s ruling marked a state-wide turning point, which eventually led to the amendment of the state Constitution in 1880. The new Constitution stated, “Schools must be open for the admission of all children,” except for “children of filthy or vicious habits, or children suffering from contagious or infectious diseases.”²⁸ But the California Supreme Court still left the option of separate schools, which were used to legally segregate Asian, Mexican, and Native American children until the early twentieth century.²⁹ School officials often used the logic of citizenship as a means to exclude Asians, Mexicans, and Native Americans because

²⁷ State Superintendent Andrew J. Moulder wrote in 1859: “It is not desirable that such children [Africans, Chinese, and Diggers] be brought up in ignorance and heathenism. Any district may establish a separate school for the benefit of the interior races and apply a certain portion of the public funds to its support, provided the citizens do not object, which it is presumed they will not do, unless for cogent reasons.” Cloud, *Education in California*, 38, 42, 44-45; Davison M. Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North*, 28-29, 67-68; Charles M. Wollenberg, *All Deliberate Speed*, 23. See also John Aubrey Douglas, *The Conditions for Admission*; Irving G. Hendrick, *Public Policy toward the Education of Non-White Minority Group Children in California*.

²⁸ Davison M. Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North*, 105; Wollenberg, *All Deliberate Speed*, 25. See also Hendrick, *Public Policy toward the Education of Non-White Minority Group Children in California*.

²⁹ Wollenberg, *All Deliberate Speed*, 26.

these foreigners were not yet “Americanized,” which was a cultural euphemism for becoming an “assimilated” citizen. But the Americanization process, when it was genuinely offered, meant giving up ethnic cultures, values, and languages in order to embrace a white supremacist, Anglo-Protestant Americanism.³⁰ Clearly the education available in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was mostly open to white, middle to upper class, native born children. In 1911 native born children from native born fathers (most likely all white) composed only about 42 percent of the children in Californian public K-8 schools, but made up 60 percent of California high school students and 69 percent of California university students.³¹

There were many white supremacist and nativist reactions to the successive waves of immigrants to America, especially Chinese contract workers and later Japanese immigrants. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 was the first restriction on immigration in the United States, and it was extended in 1892, 1902, and indefinitely extended in 1904. Combined with the Contract Labor Law of 1885, these two acts made Chinese immigration illegal for any purpose. In 1924 the National Origins Act, also called the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act, signed into law the total exclusion of Asian immigrants. This Act insured that American would remain a predominantly north-western European and white nation until 1965 when the Hart-Celler Act removed racial quotas.³²

³⁰ George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900 – 1945* (Oxford, 1993), 87-107; Wollenberg, *All Deliberate Speed*, 96-97. For discussion of Americanization, citizenship, and socio-political exclusion see: Edward George Hartmann, *The Movement to Americanize the Immigrant* (New York, 1967); Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, 2001); Desmond King, *Making Americans: Immigration, Race, and the Origins of the Diverse Democracy* (Cambridge, MA, 2000); John F. McClymer, *War and Welfare: Social Engineering in America, 1890 – 1925* (Westport, 1980), ch 4 & 5; Noah Pickus, *True Faith and Allegiance: Immigration and American Civic Nationalism* (Princeton, 2005); Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (New Haven, 1997).

³¹ Geraldine Joncich Clifford, “No Shade in the Golden State: School and University in Nineteenth-Century California,” *History of Higher Education Annual* 12 (1992): 42.

³² Thomas J. Archdeacon, *Becoming American: An Ethnic History* (New York, 1983); Alan M. Kraut, *The Huddled Masses: The Immigrant in American Society, 1880 – 1921*, 2nd ed. (Wheeling, 2001); James P. Shenton and Kevin

California led the nation in anti-Asian agitation from the early 20th century up until World War II, and many white supremacists in California saw the Japanese people in particular as a racially inferior enemy of the United States. Historian Kevin Starr has argued that California in the early twentieth century conducted its own private war against the Japanese: “The worst possible kind of war, born of fierce racial hatred, uncompromising and annihilating in intent.” There was a “fierce and persistent racism of California,” and many nativist whites believed that Asians, especially Japanese, represented a Yellow Peril, an encroaching race bent on world domination. At an anti-Japanese rally in 1900, San Francisco mayor James Duval Phelan told the crowd, “These Asiatic laborers will undermine our civilization and we will repeat the terrible experience of Rome.” In 1905 the *San Francisco Chronicle* called the Japanese in the state “scum” and “human waste material.” In 1906 the Anti-Japanese League was able to convince the school board of San Francisco to expel “all Chinese, Japanese, and Korean children” from white schools and to force these students to attend a segregated Oriental Public School that had been serving San Francisco’s Chinese students. Out of a public school population of about 25,000 students, there were less than 100 Japanese and Korean students who were the target of this decree. Most Japanese parents kept their children at home instead of sending them to the segregated school.

The Keep California White! campaign influenced the California legislature to pass a series of anti-Asian and anti-Japanese laws, including the Alien Land Laws of 1913 and 1920, which made it illegal for Asians to own land in the state. The smaller community of Japanese in Los Angeles did not face as much discrimination as did Asians in San Francisco because Los Angeles was much more dependent on non-white immigrant agricultural workers, and there were

Kenny, “Ethnicity and Immigration,” in *The New American History*, Eric Foner, ed., 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1997): 353-73; Starr, *California*, 178-79, 225.

no white unions to be threatened by a non-white labor force. Despite less overt hostility, it was always clear where Asians stood in the racialized hierarchy of segregated Los Angeles. In 1920 one member of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce made it clear that Asians were only a contingent labor force, “The question can he be assimilated is beside the mark. We do not want to assimilate him.” This hatred of the Japanese combined with the looming war with Japan led to the wholesale roundup of over 120,000 Japanese-Americans on the Western coast of the U.S. on March 1, 1942. General DeWitt called Japanese-Americans’ citizenship a mere “scrap of paper” because he knew, as did a lot of other racist Americans, that “a Jap’s a Jap. They are a dangerous element, whether loyal or not.”³³

In one of the most significant milestones for equalized education in California, Mexican Americans won the right to equal, non-segregated schooling in *Mendez v. Westminster* in 1945. The *Mendez* ruling was upheld by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeal in 1947, and this ruling would lay the foundation for the eventual repeal of the final segregation laws in the state Constitution on June 14, 1974. The practice of *de facto* segregation, often due to restrictive residential covenants and gerrymandered districts, was not explicitly challenged until the mid 1960s and 1970s, but these challenges did not often change residential patterns.³⁴ *De jure and de facto* segregation in residential districts has been a fact of life in California for all non-white minorities throughout the twentieth century, and even some white minorities have felt the sting of segregation in California, like the Okies who migrated to California looking for work during

³³ John Modell, *The Economics and Politics of Racial Accommodation: The Japanese of Los Angeles, 1900-1942* (Urbana, 1977), 36-37, 41, 45; Kevin Starr, *Embattled Dreams: California in War and Peace, 1940 – 1950* (Oxford, 2002), 37, 40, 42-50, 89, 94-95; Wollenberg, *All Deliberate Speed*, 54, Ch 2 & 3; David K. Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei: Race, Generation, and Culture among Japanese Americans of California, 1924 – 49* (Urbana, 2000).

³⁴ Wollenberg, *All Deliberate Speed*, 125-135. See also Hendrick, *Public Policy toward the Education of Non-White Minority Group Children in California*.

the Great Depression.³⁵ Segregated housing in large urban areas where most minority populations dwelt led to the creation of *de facto* segregation in public schooling. This created a system of separate and unequal schooling opportunities that kept many minority students from being prepared or wanting to enter higher education.

The population of Latino, African American, and Asian minorities in Californian K-12 schools was low until the 1950s because segregation and discrimination in neighborhoods, public school systems, and labor markets didn't give minority students much incentive to finish high school and enroll in higher education. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s national media began to report more and more on the conditions of segregation in California housing, employment, and schooling. The state National Guard wasn't even completely de-segregated until December 1959. There were numerous reports of discrimination and segregation in public housing and private residential communities, and it became a well established fact that non-white minorities in California were often forced to dwell in urban ghettos.³⁶

In 1950, non white minorities constituted only about 12.3 percent to 13.6 percent of the total population: 4.4 percent African Americans, 6 percent to 7.2 percent Latinos, and about 2 percent combined for Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, and Native Americans.³⁷ The majority of these minority populations were concentrated in three urban centers: the San Francisco-Oakland Bay area, the Los Angeles area, and San Diego. The largest minority populations were African American and Latino (mostly Mexican and Mexican-American), and these populations were

³⁵ In writing about segregation in California, the historian Kevin Starr wrote: "Jim Crow was a well-known figure to Mexican, African, and Japanese Americans in the first half of the twentieth century. Even the so-called Okies were targets of ethnic prejudice. They were white people, true, but they were also racialized." Devra Weber points out that even though lower class whites like the Okies could be racialized, they still often felt superior to blacks and Mexicans and often struggled to maintain racial distinctions. Starr, *California*, 306; Devra Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold: California Farm Workers, Cotton, and the New Deal* (Berkeley, 1994), 148.

³⁶ Davison M. Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North*, 136-37; Starr, *California*, 178-79, 232, 234.

³⁷ Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, *Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, And by Latino Origin, 1970 to 1990, for the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States*, Population Division, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Working Paper 56 (Washington, D. C., 2002), Table 19.

concentrated mostly in the San Francisco-Oakland Bay area (African Americans) and the Los Angeles area (Latinos and African Americans). In these major urban areas non-white minorities were socially segregated in ethnic ghettos and forced work in ethnic labor markets or in servile, low-paid positions in the white labor market.³⁸ But both populations didn't become large and permanently settled populations until after World War II in the 1940s and 1950s, as the wartime economy drew large migrations of minority workers to these three urban areas, especially Oakland and the East Bay area.³⁹

Jackie Robinson, the first black professional baseball player to integrate the major leagues, grew up as a second-class citizen of Jim Crow California. Robinson recounted the strict residential and social segregation in Pasadena in the 1930s. There were segregated movie theaters, segregated public pools, segregated restaurants, and segregated neighborhoods. The public schools and Pasadena Junior College were the only integrated public institutions. Jackie Robinson was able to use his superb athletic ability to earn the respect and admiration of whites at the Junior College, but he was an exceptional case.

The evidence available seems to suggest that California junior colleges, like other public institutions of higher education in California, were legally open to both sexes and all ethnic groups. However, junior colleges were often built in segregated school districts and disproportionately served the majority race of the local area. And while these institutions most

³⁸ Davison M. Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North*, 228; Matt S. Meier and Feliciano Ribera, *Mexican Americans/American Mexicans: From Conquistadors to Chicanos* (New York, 1993), 154-55, 194-95; Ricardo Romo, *East Los Angeles: History of a Barrio* (Austin, 1983), 162-65; Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 34, 87-105, 210; U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, *The 50 States Report* (Washington, D.C., 1961), 43-46.

³⁹ *Ibid.* While there were over 600,000 Mexicans and/or Mexican Americans in the U.S. by 1930, this was a highly unstable population composed mostly of young men who planned to return to Mexico. In California Mexicans had the lowest rates of naturalization of any ethnic group. The population of Mexicans in the U.S. dropped considerably in the 1930s due to the Depression as both U.S. and Mexican officials conducted a widespread, and often forced, repatriation effort to send Mexicans back across the border. Over 350,000 Mexicans repatriated during the 1930s and legal immigration into the U.S. was severely curtailed until these restrictions were lifted during World War II because of the need for cheap labor for the war effort.

likely mirrored the integration policies of most local high schools, they surely fostered norms of social segregation and curricular segregation by race and sex, mostly likely determined by the larger social segregation of the local population and regional labor markets.⁴⁰

There has been little written on segregation, social exclusion, and access to higher education in California.⁴¹ Up until the 1960s it was not really an issue: There were simply not significant numbers of minority students eligible for higher education in the state, and thus, policy makers and higher education researchers generally ignored this issue. When access to postsecondary education became an important political issue in the mid to late 1960s, race was often ignored, or when it was mentioned it was lumped with income, region, and language as a marker of “disadvantage.” Here is an example from a 1966 report, *California Higher Education and the Disadvantaged*. Even as the Civil Rights movement had become a national policy issue, in this report race is completely ignored: “In recent years concern has now focused on higher education as it is noted that individuals may be denied access to a higher education due perhaps to their physical location, their abilities, or their financial capacity to assume in some instances even a minimal cost for a higher education.” The report noted that “these and other problems” caused some students to have “a greater ‘disadvantage’ to overcome” than other students, and this disadvantage was manifested in financial, geographic, motivational, and academic “barriers”

⁴⁰ John Aubrey Douglas, *The Conditions for Admission*, 68; Wollenberg, *All Deliberate Speed*, 137-39. Interestingly, junior college sports teams in California seemed to have been racially integrated since at least the 1940s. In fact, Jones Junior College of Ellisville, Mississippi almost withdrew from the junior college Little Rose Bowl in 1955 because the opposing team, Compton College, fielded black students. But the majority of teams were coached by whites up until the early 1970s and some black student athletes at UC Berkeley in 1968 spoke of racial discrimination by coaches and officials. Gendered integration of junior college sports teams in California did not take place until 1973. “Race Issue Touches Little Rose Bowl,” *Los Angeles Times*, 4 Dec 1955, B7; “Pasadena, San Diego Grids Clash,” *Los Angeles Times*, 23 Sept 1948, C3; Dwight Chapin, “Conflict at Cal: Negroes Give Their View,” *Los Angeles Times*, 29 Jan 1968, C3; Sue Avery, “Girls Enter College Sports; Turmoil Begins,” *Los Angeles Times*, 8 Apr 1973, GF1.

⁴¹ Brint and Karabel, *The Diverted Dream*; Douglas, *The Conditions for Admission*, ch 3.

that keep students from gaining access to higher education. Notice that race, racism, and social segregation are not even mentioned as causes of “disadvantageness.”⁴²

But while public institutions of higher education in California might have been legally “open” to all races, there was still segregation and racial discrimination both on and off campus. In 1921 the University of California at Berkeley enrolled Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, and “Hindu” students who constituted about 3 percent of the student body. However, these students suffered from residential segregation in the larger community.⁴³ While Japanese were able to attend the University of California at Los Angeles in the 1930s, the landlords next to Los Angeles State College were turning away students based on race until at least 1964.⁴⁴ After the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling in 1954, the University of California at Los Angeles Student Legislative Council began reviewing sorority and fraternity charters in order to eliminate racial restrictions on membership. But rather than submit to this oversight and end segregation, twenty-two sororities left the council in protest. Similar discrimination was taking place in other fraternities and sororities in the state. For instance the most of the fraternities at Santa Barbara College in the 1950s restricted membership to “Christians of the Caucasian race only.”⁴⁵ And even though non-white students could be integrated into California public schools, there was still racial animosity and discrimination between students on campus. One study of public schools in the Los Angeles area published in 1968 explained how students at school often displayed “the prejudices of their parents:” “The word ‘nigger’ was constantly used by ‘Anglo’ students and there were general expressions that indicated that Negroes and Mexican-Americans were felt to

⁴² Coordinating Council for Higher Education, *Increasing Opportunities in Higher Education for Disadvantaged Students* (Sacramento, July 1966), 14-22; Coordinating Council for Higher Education, *California Higher Education and the Disadvantaged* (Sacramento, March 1968), 1-2.

⁴³ Douglas, *The Conditions for Admission*, 70, 72-73.

⁴⁴ “CDC Accuses Police of Attacking Civil Rights,” *Los Angeles Times*, 13 April 1964, 2; Modell, *The Economics and Politics of Racial Accommodation*, 128.

⁴⁵ Collier-Thomas and Franklin, *My Soul Is A Witness*, 42, 61.

be intellectually inferior and primitive.”⁴⁶ While these racist attitudes would have mostly likely followed students to college, there does not seem to have been a documented study of the racial climate within institutions of higher education in California until the 1980s.⁴⁷ There was also overt racial discrimination in private institutions of higher education up until the 1960s. In 1959 the state superior court upheld the right of the Hollywood Professional School in Los Angeles to deny admission to African Americans. The court ruled that “state anti-discrimination statutes were never designed for the purpose of regulating what strictly private groups do.”⁴⁸

The placement of junior colleges within a segregated landscape did cause some political controversy once African Americans in the state had been able to secure enough political capital after the Watts riot to muster a protest. After the riot there was public pressure to increase African American access to higher education in the Los Angeles area, which resulted in a plan to build Southwest College between Watts and Inglewood in the black ghetto of South Central Los Angeles. However, many area residents and teachers criticized the placement of the school in a “predominantly negro area” because it would be just “one more racially segregated school” and it would do nothing to challenge the established *de facto* segregation in housing, schooling, and local labor markets, which were at the root of the Watts riots. Some African American groups in the area were also concerned that Southwest College would be designated a “trade-technical college,” which would divert students into lower-status occupational programs and away from opportunities at an academic curriculum and access to four-year universities. These groups were

⁴⁶ Carter and Hickerson, “A California Citizens’ Committee Studies Its Schools and De Facto Segregation,” 102.

⁴⁷ California Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Fair and Open Environment? Bigotry and Violence on College Campuses in California* (Washington, D.C., June 1991). According to this study, which cautioned that it was not an “exhaustive review,” during the 1988-89 school year in Los Angeles County there were 2,265 “hate incidents.” From 1985 to 1988 there were 178 “racial/ethnic incidents” between all UC campuses. For studies on the racial climates in institutions of higher education see: Chesler and Crowfoot, “An Organizational Analysis of Racism in Higher Education;” Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, and Allen, “Enhancing Campus Climates for Racial/Ethnic Diversity.”

⁴⁸ Collier-Thomas and Franklin, *My Soul Is A Witness*, 104.

“unalterably opposed” to such arrangements. Amidst such controversy, the construction of the college proceeded and another *de facto* segregated community college campus was created.⁴⁹

But simply gaining access to and graduating from an institution of higher education, even a prestigious one like the University of California or Stanford, was no guarantee of a better life if you were not white. The example of Japanese in the 1920s and 1930s is illustrative of this point. The segregated “ethnic economy” for Japanese in metropolitan Los Angeles and San Francisco was the primary labor market that would hire immigrant Japanese and first generation Japanese-Americans. Up until the 1940s first generation Japanese-Americans, the Nisei, could find work only in this segregated labor market because whites would not hire them, even with college degrees. Many Nisei went from college to working as a farm laborer or as a clerk in a store. Historian David K. Yoo argued that “not only did higher education not pay in terms of employment, but it actually made the realities of life after graduation more painful because of the raised expectations that schooling fostered.” One Nisei in the mid 1920s explained his bitter disappointment with the racist and segregated American society:

In going through high school and college, I can't recall how many times I was cast aside just because I am a Japanese. I was barred from parties, dances, swimming pools, etc. for the same reason previously given. Truly America is for Americans and all other races not given its [*sic*] chance. Pretty soon these other races might be rejected from the supposed-to-be land of the free.

Paul Kusuda was a Nisei living in Los Angeles and attending Los Angeles City College when he and his family were deported to a Japanese concentration camp in 1942. Experiencing wholesale racial discrimination against “Japs” in America, Kusuda began to question his faith in the

⁴⁹ Turpin, Dick, “Negro Group Requests Non-Technical College,” *Los Angeles Times*, 1 April 1966, A8; “Board Refuses State Loan on Junior College,” *Los Angeles Times*, 30 Sept 1966, 29; “Southwest Jr. College: Teacher Group Disapproves,” *Los Angeles Times*, 28 Jan 1967, B4; Jack McCurdy, “Board Plans to Give Priority to South L.A. Area College,” *Los Angeles Times*, 13 Oct 1967, SG1; Jack McCurdy, “Educational Board Unit Ends Integration Study,” *Los Angeles Times*, 24 Oct 1967, A8; John Dart, “Race Issue Explanation Is Candidate’s Purpose,” *Los Angeles Times*, 29 Jun 1968, 19.

American dream: “Time and time again, I have argued that America is not a democracy for white people only. Was I wrong?” As David K. Yoo summarized the Japanese American experience, and one could argue the experience of most non-white Americans in California, “hard work, playing by the rules, and investment in education guaranteed nothing.”⁵⁰

The first systematic collection of data on ethnicity and access to institutions of higher education in the state was conducted by the California Higher Education Coordinating Council in 1967, but this study was only focused on access to the University of California system. They found that only 3.6 percent of public high school seniors were African American, but only 1.2 percent were eligible to attend the University of California. The same study found that 8.7 percent of seniors were Latino, but only 3.3 percent were UC eligible. In 1968 Dr. John Lombardi, the Assistant Superintendent of the Los Angeles district’s college division, criticized junior colleges in the state for not doing more to combat segregation and racial discrimination. Lombardi argued that junior colleges had made “no outstanding improvement in the education of minority students,” but he said that they had reduced the “grosser forms” of racial discrimination on college campuses. But in 1968, according to *Los Angeles Times* reporter Jack McCurdy, junior colleges in urban California areas were still “mostly *de facto* segregated and are growing more so.” McCurdy reported that junior college faculty and administrators were still mostly white, and many junior college physical education teachers and coaches were “almost exclusively white” and hostile to African Americans and integration.⁵¹

In 1970 the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education had published data demonstrating that several states in the U. S. with the largest community college systems were still highly segregated by race. Ironically, the issue of segregation was not directly discussed in

⁵⁰ Yoo, *Growing Up Nisei*, 4, 26, 27, 50, 109.

⁵¹ Douglas, *The Conditions for Admission*, 98; Jack McCurdy, “Junior Colleges Charged with Lagging in Minority Education,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 1 Nov 1968, A12.

this report and these data were sequestered in an appendix. Analysis of this data gives some concrete focus to the issues of segregation in community colleges, both across the U.S. and specifically in California.

California community colleges were highly segregated in the late 1960s. Between 1960 and 1970 the state as a whole was about 76 percent to 80 percent white, 8 percent to 13.7 percent Latino, 5.6 percent to 7 percent black, and 2 percent to 2.8 percent Asian and Pacific Islander, and 0.4 percent American Indian with the majority of the non-white populations concentrated in the urban metropolitan areas around the Los Angeles, San Francisco Bay area, San Diego, and Sacramento. Of the thirty-two large California community colleges with over 5,000 students, twenty-one of those colleges (66 percent) had white student populations over 85 percent with twelve of those colleges (37.5 percent) having white student populations over 90 percent. Four of these colleges had a black student population above 25 percent with Compton College having a student population that was 48.9 percent black. One college had a Latino population above 25 percent, East Los Angeles with 40.1 percent. Out of the thirty-two large California community colleges, five (16 percent) colleges had minority student populations between 35.1 percent and 52.7 percent of the total student population: Three in the Los Angeles area (Compton College, East Los Angeles College, and Los Angeles City College) and two in the East Bay area (Merritt College in Oakland and Contra Costa College in San Pablo).⁵²

It is quite clear that by the early 1970s the state of California was still highly segregated by race due to a history of *de jure* segregation and *de facto* residential and labor market segregation. It is also clear that California public schools, community colleges, and state universities were affected by this legacy of racial discrimination, and many community colleges

⁵² Carnegie Commission, *The Open-Door Colleges*, Appendix A, Table 1; Gibson and Jung, *Historical Census Statistics on Population*, Tables 19.

in particular were still highly segregated by race because of their placement in *de facto* segregated residential areas.

The history of racism and segregation in California makes the highly influential 1970 Carnegie Commission policy document, *The Open-Door Colleges*, very problematic, especially in relation to California's still highly segregated educational system during the 1970s. While the Carnegie Commission supported "open access to the 'open-door' college for all high school graduates and otherwise qualified individuals," this policy report did not touch the issue of educational segregation, the inability of many minority students in the country to successfully graduate from high school, and the role that community colleges would play in equalizing access to higher education. This policy report was quite clear on the fact that "the proportion of minority-group students in community colleges (except for Japanese- and Chinese-Americans) falls short of their representation in the youthful population." The report does not, however, discuss how community colleges could help overcome this legacy of disproportional representation. *The Open-Door Colleges* points to the California system of higher education and the California Master Plan of 1960 as a model for the rest of the country in terms of improving access to higher education. But the Carnegie Commission did not come to terms with the unequally structured and highly segregated nature of the California educational system that was really not an adequate model for other states to follow in terms of increasing access to higher education or adequately positioning community colleges as a means of social mobility for economically and racially excluded populations.⁵³

But even if community colleges offered an "open door" to students irrespective of race, these institutions were not able to offer anything more than access. A Californian postsecondary policy report published in 1968 made it clear that community colleges "have the greatest role to

⁵³ The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, *The Open-Door Colleges* (New York, 1970), 2, 5, 10-11.

play in providing for higher educational opportunities for the disadvantaged” because they are open-door institutions and tuition-free. But it also acknowledged that community colleges have “relatively little financial assistance programs available,” limited funds for any special programs, and faculty who “have little time beyond the classroom to develop special efforts for disadvantaged students.” Thus, community colleges served the disadvantaged in a laissez faire way by simply being “open” institutions that would not bar potential students due to academic preparation, race, or age. Obviously this so-called “open door” institution could do nothing to compensate for the lingering racial hostility and social segregation in the community at large, and further, since postsecondary education was freely available to all students through the community college, it was easy to blame students for their lack of ability or motivation, rather than targeting the social environment for structuring the failure of non-white students.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Coordinating Council for Higher Education, *California Higher Education and the Disadvantaged* (Sacramento, March 1968), 1-2.