

Elements that Lead to a Successful Continuing Education

Program at a Select Midwestern Community College

Barry Hancock

John A. Logan Community College
Carterville, IL

ABSTRACT

Continuing education programs at community colleges have been around for many years and typically serve adults, non-traditional learners, in non-transferable, short-term and often non-credit leisure/hobby type courses. Other words used synonymously with continuing education include community education, adult education and lifelong learning. Continuing education programs are important and will continue to grow in popularity, especially with the aging of the baby boom generation and as more professions require continuing education for their employees.. The purpose of this study was to show why students feel the continuing education program at a select Midwestern community college has seen large enrollment increases during the past ten years. The respondents felt the major reasons for departmental success was the colleges' senior citizen tuition waiver policy, reasonable tuition/fees, a relaxed and friendly classroom atmosphere and the curriculum. The study concludes by offering suggestions which could be of value to community college continuing education programs.

Introduction

Continuing Education, community services, community-based education, adult education and lifelong learning are words often used synonymously with each other when discussing the part of the a college which offers a curriculum consisting of short-term, non transferable, often non-credit leisure and hobby type courses and with an emphasis on programming for older adults. For the sake of brevity and consistency, continuing education will be used primarily throughout the rest of this article. But more and more, this part, or arm of the college is becoming responsible for doing training in occupational, or workforce related curriculum which offer students credit (reimbursable for each hour generated) and the skills necessary to gain or retain employment in the workforce. The short-term occupational, workforce training, or vocational courses offered to healthcare, real estate, education, business and industry, and law enforcement professionals, to name a few, are vitally important to the area economy. In fact, many professions now require continuing education in order for the employee to remain in the workforce. Continuing education programs are not bound by as many of the other institutional rules so it can respond quicker to needs in the community.

The Continuing Education program at John A. Logan College, a community college in southern Illinois, makes available comprehensive educational activities which are especially designed to meet the needs of all citizens in the community. Included in the program are general studies credit courses, non-credit public service courses, public service activities (such as workshops, conferences, and seminars), and other community service activities as needed. There are twelve categories of courses offered, including: healthcare for professionals, occupational classes, computers, homemaking, general

education, physical education, music, dance, arts and crafts, pet care, photography and classes for kids. Both the Illinois Community College Board and John A. Logan College include continuing education in their mission statements. In fact, the vision statement at John A. Logan College is Learning for Life.

The John A. Logan College District is composed of parts of the five southern Illinois counties of Franklin, Jackson, Perry, Randolph, and Williamson and continuing education courses are offered in over 96 different locations in a given semester throughout these counties. The college has two extension centers in the district, and both have been a tremendous asset to the continuing education department. The continuing education department at John A. Logan College served almost 14,000 students in calendar FY 2006, and has seen a 293% increase in students served over the past ten years.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to show why the students feel the continuing education program at John A. Logan College has seen a 293% enrollment growth over the past ten years. It is believed that the results of this study will show that if a community college continuing education program is to become and remain successful and a viable constituent in the community, it should endorse the suggestions outlined at the conclusion of this article.

Research Question

What do the faculty, administration and students see as the major reasons for the success in the continuing education program. In other words, what has the college done right that has helped facilitate the increase in the number of students enrolling in courses.

Significance of the Study

As the population of the college district gets older and as more professions require continuing education for their employees, more relevant and quality classes need to be offered. The community college is an excellent place for the citizens of the district to come and get their continuing education needs satisfied. Some of the area professions requiring continuing education include real estate salespersons and brokers, healthcare professionals, food handlers, chiropractors, medical doctors, cosmetologists, attorneys, certified public accountants, wastewater and water facility operators, and teachers. There is a need for this type of study as there appears to be a gap in the literature between the growth and success of continuing education programs nationwide and community college continuing education growth and success in rural southern Illinois.

Review of Related Literature

The literature clearly shows the Continuing Education Department at John A. Logan College is very similar to other continuing education programs nationwide. The literature also shows there is a need for continuing education as part of the community college mission.

Wang (2004) says a community education program can be defined as one that focuses on college-community interaction, utilizes the community as a learning laboratory and resource, helps to create an environment in which the community educates itself, and evaluates its success by citizen successes that are recognized as significant by the community itself. Hiemstra (1993) defines community education as an education philosophy that advocates learning as a continuous process that is facilitated by an education organization where community resources and agencies are used to supplement learning experiences. Community education programs come in many forms, including adult education, continuing education, lifelong learning, community services and community-based education (Baker, 1994). Community education programs, unlike other core programs offered by community colleges, are less bound by institutional regulations and are able to respond quickly to community needs (Wang, 2004). Community education proponents foster activities different from the traditional courses taught by regular faculty members, saying that these are archaic, restrictive, discriminatory, and narrowly focused (Cohen and Brawer, 1996). They seem to feel that doing away with the traditional forms in which education has been conducted will necessarily lead to a higher quality of service. In their desire to eschew elitism, they articulate populist, egalitarian goals. The more diverse the population served, and the

less traditionally based the program, the better. Many commentators have favored community education as a dominant function for community colleges. Myran (1969) traced the community education concept through university extension services and the adult and continuing education that has been offered by the public schools for the past century. These institutions were thereby able to provide educational services to individuals and groups without being wed to traditional academic forms, such as credits, semesters, and grades. Such a (community) college would offer the kinds of education community members want, not the kind that pedagogues think is good for them, and at locations where the learners are, not where the college says they should be. Harlacher and Ireland (1988) urged community colleges to cooperate with social, governmental, professional, education and neighborhood agencies in mutually supportive advisory relationships and in joint ventures.

Dillman, Christenson, Salant, and Warner (1995) summarize the results from a national survey on higher education on learning whether Americans are now continuing their education and training throughout their working lives, or instead, whether lifelong learning is important only in the minds of scholars. They asked a random sample of 1,124 adults about their interest in education and training beyond high school; experience with continuing education; views on distance education; and opinions about the performance of colleges, vocational schools, and universities. The majority (81%) think that getting additional education is important for them to be successful at work. A similarly large majority have received some kind of job-related training or education in the last three years. Over half said they would take a college credit course in the next three years and three-fourths will take a noncredit course. Interest does not vary by

income level, diminishes only slightly with age, and seems to reflect the pressures of working in a knowledge-based economy. The researchers concluded that teaching conducted only in the traditional campus classroom will not meet the public's demand for tailored educational services. Noncredit classes, short courses, and conferences are more important than traditional classes-for-credit as a means of obtaining additional education. Colleges and universities must change the manner in which they conduct their business to respond to the needs of adult learners.

When looking at whether programs are effective or not, it is found that assessing the outcomes of community education is difficult. Cohen and Brawer (1996) says with the entire community as the client, effects are diffuse and subject to contamination from innumerable sources. One way of measuring the effect of continuing education courses has been to ask the participants how they like them. Nickens (1977) said 4,631 students recently enrolled in community service courses in ten Florida community colleges were asked why they enrolled and the extent which their expectations were met. Among the twenty-two choices, the major reasons for enrolling were "to improve my chance of employment" (42%), "to further my cultural or social development" (39%), and "to learn a certain hobby" (34%).

The literature also shows reasons that could explain why the continuing education department has seen so much success over the years. Kart (2004) says three areas of the current literature about adult education and training highlight the components that affect success. The first looks at students and how their knowledge affects attitudes about continuing education and how student's attitudes affect behavior. The second looks at educational programs and how the success of the programs depends on communication,

strategic thinking, visibility and positioning. The third area looks at people who work in continuing education and what variables have the greatest impact on the success of the people who work in continuing education. The literature shows that students find value in noncredit continuing education activities, but administrators of continuing education programs often do not pay enough attention to what motivates a person to participate. This area of the literature is significant because it deals with the motivation behind attitudes regarding continuing education. Another study found that three components existed when a person had a positive attitude about continuing education-enjoyment of learning, intrinsic value, and perceived importance (Blunt and Yang, 2002). The second area of focus in the literature looks at the impact of communication, strategic thinking, visibility and positioning on the success of education programs. The research points to several key components to creating a successful continuing education program. Sissell (2001) argues that strategic thinking and visibility are among the key political issues facing adult education. Failing to take part in these activities could mean failure for a continuing education program. A third area of research focuses on the people who work in continuing education and the variables that have the greatest impact on their success. Hendricks (2001) examined the relationship between “interests, negotiation, and power” in the adult education planning process. Specifically, she wanted to see how these variables affected each other.

Klein (2004) says that adult learners have become more discriminating about choosing their continuing ed programs than ever before, and that’s because now, they can be. Today, the options are abundant; adult students can have their pick of distance education and hybrid programs (specifically designed to make education more accessible

for even the busiest of adults), as well as choose from no end of traditional brick-and-mortar programs, continuously restructured to meet students needs. Klein (2004) further discusses the qualities that will be needed for a successful continuing education program. She says those schools that employ the speed-to-market philosophy are the most successful, especially in the virtual education world.

A comprehensive departmental curriculum is also very important to the success of a department. Finch and Crunkilton (1993) define curriculum as the sum of the learning activities and experiences that a student has under the auspices or direction of the school. In looking at the John A. Logan College Continuing Education Program Review (2006) that is submitted by the colleges Office of Institutional Development to the Illinois Community College Board, it is very clear that the department offers a wide selection of courses for the citizens in the district. For instance, in calendar year FY 06, an average of 151 different courses, 350 sections, and 25 new courses were offered each semester.

Quality instruction is also critical to the departments' success. Finch and Crunkilton (1993) say that instruction may be perceived as the planning interaction between teacher and student that (hopefully) results in desirable learning. Documents in the Continuing Education Department at John A. Logan College show that approximately 175 instructors are hired to teach classes each semester and course evaluations from calendar year FY 06 clearly show students are happy with instruction in the department.

Eaton (1981) addresses continuing education for women as she cites a major emphasis of the role of community colleges is on community education and the development of "lifelong learning". Community colleges are serving more women than ever before and play a major role in providing leadership to women "making career

decisions, changing their lifestyle, and seeking economic stability.” Statistics from the John A. Logan College Program Review (2006) show that 39% more women enroll in continuing education classes than men.

Method of Investigation

Description of Site and Population

The population of this study consisted of a possible 3,475 students, along with eight continuing education faculty and staff members, currently enrolled in continuing education classes at John A. Logan College in Carterville, Illinois. The students were enrolled in a variety of primarily daytime classes including, windows, quick books, photo editing, Microsoft office, computers for older beginners, photography, Reiki, real estate, guitar, private investigations, and security guard training. The study was based on the responses of 232 volunteer participants during the spring semester, 2007.

Description of Variables and Instrument

The instrument used in this study was developed from the qualitative responses of eighteen individuals familiar with the Continuing Education Department at John A. Logan College. These individuals included the Director of Continuing Education, the Dean for Workforce Development and Community Education, the Associate Dean for Baccalaureate Education, the Director of Advising, the Dean for Student Services, the Coordinator of Distance Learning, the Associate Dean of Media Communications, the secretary to the Associate Dean for Community Education, the secretary to the Director for Continuing Education, the President of the Illinois Community College Foundation, a continuing education community coordinator, a transfer faculty member, a college computer technician and former continuing education instructor, the Coordinator of Institutional Research, the Executive Director of Workforce Development at the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), the Associate Dean for Corporate Education, and two continuing education instructors. Each individual was sent an email (see Appendix A)

asking them to list five reasons why they feel the Continuing Education Department has seen so much growth in the past ten years. Their qualitative responses were then merged into a quantitative, Five-Point Likert Type Survey (see Appendix B) called the John A. Logan College Continuing Education Department Program Success Evaluation. Respondents were asked to rate each of the items using a scale of “5” to “1” with “5” meaning a Major Reason and “1” meaning a less likely reason. Finally, the respondents were asked one open-ended, qualitative type question, asking them if there were any other reasons they feel have contributed to the success of the Continuing Education Department at John A. Logan College.

Data Collection

The data for this study were collected during one week from eleven different classes. The researcher went to five of the classes personally and collected data to ensure consistency and confidentiality. The instructors in the other six classes were contacted by phone and in person and asked to administer the evaluation to their respective classes. In addition to the students, instructors and continuing education staff at John A. Logan College were also asked to fill out the survey.

Data Analysis

The responses to the survey were tabulated and percentages were calculated for each of the 20 items. In addition, the items were broken down and categorized into eight themes, including, curriculum, marketing, facilities, internal economic, external economic, student services, leadership and community consideration. Frequencies and percentages were calculated and used to analyze the data. All of the data were tabulated and the results are presented in the “Results” section of this paper.

Results

This section of the paper will present the results of survey data gathered in the study. Frequencies and percentages for each of the items were figured and can be found in Appendix C. Several of the 232 respondents did not circle every item on the survey.

The respondents felt the major reasons for the success in the department over the past ten years was the colleges' senior citizen waiver policy (72%), reasonable tuition and fees (61%), a relaxed and friendly classroom atmosphere (61%) and the curriculum (59%). The respondents felt like the least likely reasons for the departments success was the addition of healthcare classes (11%), loss of jobs in the region (8%), the positive articles which appear in local newspapers (8%) and senior administration and board of trustees leadership (7%).

When looking at the various themes individually, the theme internal economic proved to be the most important reason why respondents felt the department has seen so much growth over the years. The colleges' senior citizen waiver policy (people over 60 years old are not required to pay tuition) proved to be the number one reason (72%) and reasonable tuition/fees (61%) proved to be the number two reason on the entire survey as to why respondents felt the department has seen so much success.

The respondents did not feel the external economic theme, consisting of items on the economy and loss of jobs and business in the region, was as major of a reason for department success. In fact, there were only 213 responses out of 232 surveys collected for each of these items.

Both items under the leadership theme, including good departmental management/leadership (38%) and good senior administration/board of trustees

leadership (34%), were felt to not have as great of a significance by the respondents as the other items in the survey. There were only 216 respondents for the departmental management/leadership item and 211 respondents for the senior administration indicating many respondents did not feel comfortable or qualified to answer the questions.

The curriculum theme consisted of the items curriculum, instruction/instructor, addition of healthcare, relaxed/friendly classroom atmosphere and flexible scheduling. Respondents found a relaxed/friendly classroom atmosphere (61%), curriculum (59%), flexible scheduling (51%) and instruction (54%) to be major reasons why the department has seen so much success. The addition of healthcare to the curriculum was considered by the respondents to be a less likely reason for departmental success. In fact, 11% of respondents found this item to be the least important, the most of any of the others on the survey.

The respondents clearly felt that college marketing efforts were not major reasons for the enrollment increases in the department. Within the marketing theme, less than one-half (44%) felt the brochure that is mailed to every district residential and business address (75,000 total each semester) to be major reason for growth. Word of mouth (18%) and positive articles in the newspapers (25%) about the program were also believed by the respondents to not be major contributors to the department's success. In fact, 8% of the respondents felt that positive articles in the newspaper were the least likely reason for growth in the continuing education department.

Within the facilities theme, more than one-half of the respondents (55%) felt the facilities were a major reason the department has seen so much growth. Only 43% of respondents felt that up-to-date software was a major reason for departmental growth.

The student services theme found that the majority of the respondents did not feel the registration process (39%), nor the friendly support staff (47%), were major reasons for departmental success.

Under the community consideration theme, most respondents felt that the locations of classes (51%) were major reasons for department success, where 47% of respondents felt community reputation to be a major reason.

Below are the qualitative responses from students who answered the question “Are there any other reasons that you feel have contributed to the success of the Continuing Education Department at John A. Logan College? The handwritten responses have been interpreted and typed as the respondents wrote them on the survey.

Responses:
Nothing more than have been listed.
Overall, John A. Logan is a good experience as well as a great group of people.
No, the variety of course offered is great.
Well rounded variety of choices of studies.
No objections to taking the same course more than one time.
The wide variety of subject matter available.
Job skills.
Work force is older – need for more continuing education.
Good location of college.
I like that the tech courses cater to “older students”.
Very nice
Location Barry is at.
More seniors are interested in continuing education
The teacher Terance Henry!
Location
The emails from the department are a big help to me.
Offering cutting edge course for older folks.
Helping seniors continue to grow, good word of mouth, campus feels safe.
Accessible parking, safe atmosphere.
Helping employees update their skills.
Courses are what people want and need – Thank you!
Yes, staying up to date with what people want and need. How about someone to teach how to interface music to a computer. How to collect music off the net. How to transfer L.P.’s to computer – transfer cassettes.

Most classes are very good. In some of the computer classes, you (need) to standardize the course – it seems if you take a class from one instructor it is different if you take it from another teacher.
Purchase new equipment – need to learn how to use.
Purchased new equipment – need training.
Interest from student community.
Building – very good for me.
You have put all of the above items together in a great package.

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to show why the respondents feel the continuing education program at John A. Logan College has seen so much growth over the past ten years. It is hoped that the results of this study will help both the continuing education program at the college and other continuing education programs to remain successful and viable constituents in the communities they serve.

In the introduction, continuing education was found to be a very multifaceted branch of the community college. Names, such as lifelong learning and community education, are often used to describe programs which serve the same functions. The program serves many diverse types of people in the community, with varying lengths of time, in many different locations, and with a very diverse and broad curriculum.

The review of literature showed the necessity and the similarities and differences of the continuing education programs in the community colleges nationwide. It also alluded to some of the potential reasons why the department has seen so much success over the last ten years.

The study was based on the responses of 232 out of a possible 3,475 students, along with eight faculty and staff members, currently enrolled in spring 2007 continuing education classes at John A. Logan College, in Carterville, Illinois.

The instrument used in this study was derived from the qualitative responses of individuals familiar with the continuing education program at the college. These select individuals were asked to list five reasons why they feel the continuing education department has seen so much growth over the past ten years. These responses were then

merged into a quantitative, five-point Likert type survey where respondents were asked to rate each item, or reason for department success. Respondents were finally asked one qualitative type question asking if there were any other reasons they feel have contributed to the success of the continuing education department.

The twenty items were broken into eight themes and the frequencies and percentages for each of the responses were calculated and analyzed. The top four reasons the respondents felt the continuing education department has seen extraordinary growth include the college's senior citizens waiver policy, reasonable tuition and fees, a relaxed and friendly classroom atmosphere and the curriculum.

In order of decreasing importance, the results of the respondents feelings for the next ten items from the survey include facilities for classes, quality of instructors/instruction, locations of classes, community reputation and friendly support staff (tie), brochure mailing, up-to-date software and equipment, the economy and the registration process (tie), and good departmental management/leadership.

The respondents felt the least likely reasons for the departments success was the addition of healthcare classes (11%), loss of jobs in the region (8%), the positive articles on the program which appear in local newspapers (8%) and senior administration and board of trustees' leadership (7%).

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study began by asking a qualitative type question to several people in order to build the quantitative, Likert type survey instrument. After administering the survey, the frequencies of the respondent's responses were counted and the percentages for each

item were figured, the qualitative data collected at the end of the survey was reported, and several interesting conclusions and recommendations resulted.

Without a doubt, financial considerations played a big part in the respondents' feelings. The respondents found the internal economic theme, which includes the senior citizens waivers policy, to be the number one reason why the department has seen so much growth and success over the last ten years. Department records do show that approximately 41% of students registering for credit (tuition) classes are 60 years of age and older and who do not pay tuition. In fact, records show the continuing education department waived approximately \$140,000 in calendar 2006 because of this waiver policy. The college does receive some reimbursement from the state for the credit hours produced by the seniors which does help to offset costs. Steve OKeefe, (personal communication, March 5, 2007), the Director of Marketing at the college, says the college feels this policy is worthwhile as it is in essence saying thank you to the seniors for supporting and paying a lifetime of taxes to the college. Historically speaking, as Mr. OKeefe says, seniors do vote and John A. Logan College has had an excellent track record in the community when asking seniors for approval of tax and bond referendums. Based upon these results, it is recommended that community colleges implement a senior citizen waiver policy similar to the one found at John A. Logan College. Perhaps, colleges could extend this waiver policy to include non-credit classes which charge fees.

Also under the internal economic theme, respondents felt the reasonable tuition and fees to be the second major reason for the department's growth and success. Dr. Larry Peterson (personal communication, March 5, 2007), vice-president for administration at John A. Logan College, says tuition at John A. Logan College is still

one of the lowest of the 49 other community colleges in the state of Illinois. This indicates that college officials have managed budget resources effectively. Obviously, colleges should take into account a variety of factors, including the area economy when setting tuition and fees.

The curriculum theme was found to consist of several items the respondents felt to be major reasons for departmental growth. Respondents determined the relaxed/friendly classroom atmosphere, the curriculum (the selection of courses offered) and quality instructor/instruction to respectively be the second, fourth and sixth reasons why the department has seen so much growth. The colleges' program review (2006) and the departments spring 2007 catalog of classes shows an excellent variety of courses. The department offers an average of 25 new courses each semester indicating they are continually attempting to offer what the students want. It is recommended that for continuing education programs to remain effective in the community, they must "stay on the cutting edge", listen to what the students want and offer the courses they are interested in.

Respondents did not feel the addition of healthcare classes to the curriculum was important to the success of the department. Although departments records show approximately 2,200 students take healthcare classes each semester, this survey was not distributed to any of these classes. Had these classes been surveyed, perhaps the results would have shown a greater interest in the healthcare curriculum.

The leadership theme, consisting of items on departmental leadership and board of trustee's leadership, were found by respondents to not be as important reasons for departmental success. This was somewhat of a surprise to this researcher because the

board of trustees sets policy allowing the senior citizens waivers and they determine the tuition and fees charged for classes. The department leadership is directly responsible for the curriculum, the hiring of instructors and thus the relaxed and friendly classroom atmosphere. The department management/leadership also schedules the classes into both on-campus and off-campus facilities, which respondents were also fond of. Perhaps the respondents felt the management/leadership was to “distant” from the classes and the classroom. Perhaps departmental and senior administrators should make themselves more visible with the students if they want to see more growth and success in the department.

This researcher was surprised that respondents did not feel marketing was as major of a reason for department success. Department staff feel the brochure that is mailed out to every district residential and business address is a major reason for enrollment increases. Kim Neace (personal conversation, March 6, 2007), continuing education community coordinator, feels the brochure makes the students feel more “connected” to the programs as many students look forward to receiving the brochure each semester. Perhaps these brochures are not being delivered correctly, or perhaps the students are so accustomed to receiving them each semester that they are taken for granted, or perhaps more students are using the internet when looking for classes. Department staff also feel that word of mouth and positive articles in the newspapers have historically spurred enrollments. Ms. Neace (personal conversation, March 6, 2007) says that classroom enrollments generally increase immediately following nice, positive, timely articles which appear in the newspapers about specific classes. Perhaps the continuing education program managers should revisit marketing efforts if future studies show similar results.

Use of email, the college website and phone text messaging might be better ways of spending marketing dollars.

Regarding the facilities theme, this researcher has personally visited the majority of community colleges in the state of Illinois and feels that John A. Logan College does have some of the nicest facilities. The respondents in this survey were most likely referring to the excellent on-campus facilities when they completed the survey since all classes surveyed were on-campus. The department does have classes in over 96 different locations each semester throughout the district. Perhaps future studies should include surveying students at off-campus facilities.

A future study might include a more equal sampling of students. The majority of the surveys in this study were completed during the daytime classes which senior citizens typically take classes. Evening classes would typically not consist of as many seniors and would include more students who work during the day. These students might also have better incomes and who might not be as concerned about internal and external economic factors as a senior, or possibly an unemployed student taking classes during the day.

Since students in healthcare classes make up approximately one-half of students enrolled in the department, future studies should sample at least one-half of these classes to ensure better survey results. Greg Stettler (personal conversation, March 5, 2007), Director of Continuing Education, says these classes are very important to the areas healthcare professionals and they bring a lot of state money to the college for the credit hours they generate.

Another area future studies might look at would include demographic data. Students' age, gender, future plans, religion, residency status, marital status, and household income are all demographics which might be of value to continuing education department managers when they are determining how to run their programs.

When analyzing the data, it was discovered that the themes were not grouped together on the instrument. Future studies of this nature should have the themes grouped together so the data can be interpreted much easier.

The review of literature did not show many related studies which looked at why community college continuing education programs are successful. With this in mind, it is suggested other surveys of this nature be completed in more detail and with the suggestions from this study taken in consideration. Continuing education programs have been an important branch and will continue to grow in popularity, especially with the aging of the baby boom generation and the fact that more professions are requiring continuing education for their employees.

References

- Baker, G. A. (Ed.). (1994). *A handbook on the community college in America: Its history, mission, and management*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Blunt, A. & Yang, B. (2002). Factor structure of the adult attitudes toward adult and continuing education scale and its capacity to predict participation behavior: evidence for adoption of a revised scale. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 52, 299-314.
- Cohen, A. M., & Brawer, F. B. (1996). *The American community college* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Killman, D. A., Christenson, J.A., Salant, Pl, and Warner, P.D. (1996). *What the Public Wants from Higher Education*. American council on Education Update.
- Klein, A. (2004). Sink or swim? *The Catalyst* (a National Council for Continuing Education and Training Publication) 33, (2), 14-15.
- Eaton, J.S. (1981). *Women in community colleges*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Finch C. R. and Crunkilton, J. R. (1993). *Curriculum development in vocational and technical education. Planning, content and implementation*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Harlacher, E.L. and Ireland, J. (1988). Community services and continuing education: an information age necessity. *Community Services Catalyst*, 18 (1), 3-5.
- Hendricks, S. (2001). Contextual and individual factors and the use of influencing tactics in adult education program planning. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 51 219-235.

- Hiemstra, R. (1993). *The educative community*. (3rd ed.). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Adult Education Publications.
- John A. Logan College Continuing Education Program Review, (2006), Prepared by the John A. Logan College Office of Institutional Development and submitted to the Illinois Community College Board.
- Kart, S. (2004). Power, perception, and promise: staff attitudes and the success-or-failure-of continuing education programs. *The Catalyst* (a National Council for Continuing Education and Training Publication), 33 (3), 3-7.
- Myran, G. A. (1969). Antecedents: evolution of the community-based college. In E. L. Harlacher and J. F. Gollattscheck, *Implementing Community-Based Education, New Directions for Community Colleges*, 21.
- Nickens, J. M. (1977). Who takes community service courses and why. *Community/Junior College Research Quarterly*, 2(1), 11-19.
- Sissell, P. (2001). Thinking politically: a framework for adult and continuing education. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 91, 5-15.
- Wang, W. (2004). UCLA community college review: community education in the community college. *Community College Review*, 32 (3), 43-56.

Appendix A

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I was hoping I could get just 5 minutes of your time to help me with a little project I am doing for my studies at SIU, the CE department and for the college. For my class this semester I am being required to do little study and submit the results to a Research Journal. What I have decided to do, and this has been cleared with SIU, is a study on the success of the Continuing Education Department here at the college. Since you are familiar with the department, I was hoping you would take just couple of minutes and provide me with some qualitative data. Once I get this data, I will put it into a quantitative survey form and do a poll of some students/staff.

Here is the title of the paper as of this moment: **ELEMENTS THAT LEAD TO A SUCCESSFUL CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM AT A SELECT MIDWESTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE**---basically I would greatly appreciate it if you would reply back with Five factors that you believe have helped/led the CE Department see a 294% increase in the number of students served over the past 10 years.

Here are some of examples of some responses you might have: curriculum (courses we offer); marketing we do in the community; positive communication about classes (word of mouth); presence in the community; retention; support of board/college officers; senior citizens waivers; good instructors; positive articles in newspapers; good leadership; department reorganization in 1999----- these are just some examples that came to my mind—please list others if you think of them.

Please jot down at least five reasons why you feel the Continuing Education Department has seen so much growth over the past 10 years. I would really appreciate if you could reply back within the next couple of days!!! If necessary, in order to get your assistance I will even go as far as to buy you lunch!!!

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Thank you very much!! Please let me know if there is ever anything I can do for you!

☺

PH: 618-985-2828, ext. 8202 FX: 618-985-2762

Visit our College Website at: www.jalc.edu

Visit our Continuing Education Website: http://www.jalc.edu/cont_ed/index.html



**John A. Logan College Continuing Education Department Program
Success Evaluation**

Please assist us in our program improvement efforts by rating and evaluating the success of the Continuing Education program at John A. Logan College. Rate each item using a scale of 5 to 1 with 5 meaning a Major Reason and 1 meaning a Less Likely Reason. (Circle your choice on each item). Please respond to the question below.

Why do you believe the Continuing Education Department has seen such rapid enrollment growth over the past ten years? Is it the:

	Major Reason				Less Likely Reason
Curriculum (selection of courses offered)	5	4	3	2	1
Quality Instructor/Instruction	5	4	3	2	1
Marketing-Brochure of Classes Mailed to Community	5	4	3	2	1
Marketing-Word of Mouth	5	4	3	2	1
Marketing-Positive Articles in Newspapers	5	4	3	2	1
Facilities for Classes	5	4	3	2	1
Reasonable Tuition/Fees	5	4	3	2	1
Senior Citizen Tuition Waivers	5	4	3	2	1
Convenient Locations of Classes in Community	5	4	3	2	1
Addition of Healthcare Courses to Curriculum	5	4	3	2	1
Registration Process	5	4	3	2	1
Up-to-Date Software/Equipment	5	4	3	2	1
Friendly Support Staff	5	4	3	2	1
Community Reputation	5	4	3	2	1
Relaxed/Friendly Classroom Atmosphere	5	4	3	2	1
Flexible Scheduling	5	4	3	2	1
Good Departmental Management/Leadership	5	4	3	2	1
Good Senior Administration/Board of Trustees Leadership	5	4	3	2	1
Economy	5	4	3	2	1
Loss of Jobs and Businesses in the Region	5	4	3	2	1

Are there any other reasons that you feel have contributed to the success of the Continuing Education Department at John A. Logan College? _____



John A. Logan College Continuing Education Department Program Success Evaluation Responses

Please assist us in our program improvement efforts by rating and evaluating the success of the Continuing Education program at John A. Logan College. Rate each item using a scale of 5 to

1 with 5 meaning a Major Reason and 1 meaning a Less Likely Reason. (Circle your choice on each item). Please respond to the question below.

Why do you believe the Continuing Education Department has seen such rapid enrollment growth over the past ten years? Is it the:

	(Frequency of Response/Percentage of Students Responding)				Less Likely Reason
	Major Reason				
Curriculum (selection of courses offered) (232 responses)	138/59%	69/30%	16/7%	8/3%	1/4%
Quality Instructor/Instruction (224 responses)	122/54%	68/30%	26/12%	6/3%	2/8%
Marketing-Brochure of Classes Mailed to Community (221 responses)	98/44%	71/32%	39/18%	10/5%	4/2%
Marketing-Word of Mouth (222 responses)	40/18%	58/26%	78/35%	33/15%	13/6%
Marketing-Positive Articles in Newspapers (219 responses)	55/25%	48/22%	71/32%	27/12%	18/8%
Facilities for Classes (221 responses)	121/55%	61/28%	31/14%	5/2%	3/1%
Reasonable Tuition/Fees (221 responses)	135/61%	47/21%	30/14%	5/2%	4/2%
Senior Citizen Tuition Waivers (227 responses)	163/72%	30/13%	20/9%	6/3%	8/4%
Convenient Locations of Classes in Community (223 responses)	113/51%	65/29%	36/16%	5/2%	4/2%
Addition of Healthcare Courses to Curriculum (210 responses)	53/25%	60/29%	59/28%	15/7%	23/11%
Registration Process (226 responses)	88/39%	57/25%	59/26%	15/7%	7/3%
Up-to-Date Software/Equipment (221 responses)	95/43%	64/29%	44/20%	13/6%	5/2%
Friendly Support Staff (223 responses)	104/47%	69/31%	33/15%	12/5%	5/2%
Community Reputation (229 responses)	108/47%	76/33%	35/15%	5/2%	5/2%
Relaxed/Friendly Classroom Atmosphere (225 responses)	138/61%	64/28%	13/6%	8/4%	2/1%
Flexible Scheduling (222 responses)	114/51%	72/32%	28/13%	5/2%	3/1%
Good Departmental Management/Leadership (216 responses)	82/38%	67/31%	46/21%	13/6%	8/4%
Good Senior Administration/Board of Trustees Leadership (211 responses)	71/34%	56/27%	52/25%	8/4%	14/7%
Economy (213 responses)	83/39%	70/33%	35/16%	16/8%	9/4%
Loss of Jobs and Businesses in the Region (213 responses)	76/36%	63/30%	41/19%	16/8%	17/8%

Are there any other reasons that you feel have contributed to the success of the Continuing Education Department at John A. Logan College? _____