The 85-year history of the Riverside Community College District is a microcosm of the history of the community college system in California. Opening its classes in September 1916, it is among the earliest of the “junior” colleges started in the 20th century. A study of the records indicates that the first junior college was established in Joliet, Illinois in 1902, the result of advocacy by such notable American educators as William Rainey Harper, President of the University of Chicago; David Starr Jordan, President of Stanford University; and Alexis F. Lange, Head of the University of California Education Department. Harper’s efforts led to the founding of the junior college in Joliet.

As one looks at the developments in California, however, keep in mind that the enabling legislation was different from what happened in Illinois. In short, the difference is that the Illinois model is a “downward” reach of the university, but in California it is an “upward” extension of the high school. Only recently have various acts of the legislature addressed the impact of that circumstance.

A quick look at the first five significant pieces of legislation shows some of this development: 1907 – The Thompson Act enabled high school districts to offer “post graduate” courses that would approximate the courses offered during the first two years of university work; 1917 – The Ballard Act enabled high school districts to set up junior college programs; 1921 – The Hughes Act provided for the organization of junior college districts; 1921 – The Harris Act provided funding for junior colleges; and 1927 – The Jones Act added to existing provisions concerning the organization of junior college districts. As one will see, in Riverside the elementary, secondary, and junior college districts were governed by the same five people serving on three more or less separate boards of education until 1963.

In 1916, Riverside was among the early areas to use the Thompson and Ballard Acts to begin a junior college. It was preceded by Fresno, 1907; Santa Barbara, 1908; Bakersfield and Fullerton, 1913; San Diego, 1914; and Citrus (Azusa); and Santa Ana, 1915. Sacramento also opened in
1916. Other early junior colleges were Gavilan (Gilroy), 1919; Hartnell (Salinas) and Hancock (Santa Maria), 1920; and Modesto, 1921.

One needs to recognize the foresight of school officials and citizens who began, in 1914, to move toward establishing a junior college. In 1910, the Riverside High School was offering “post graduate” courses under the 1907 law, but annual reports do not indicate that any students were taking them.

Evidently, from late 1914 through 1915, interest in a junior college grew, and on January 10, 1916, Dr. W.W. Roblee conducted a meeting of the Polytechnic High School PTA at which speakers, among them Riverside Superintendent of Schools Arthur N. Wheelock and Principal Delbert Brunton of the Fullerton High School and Junior College, promoted the establishment of a junior college. The PTA voted unanimously to form a committee to “confer with the Board of Education concerning the possibility of establishing a junior college.” Before the February meeting, a form letter was sent to the parents of high school students; it contained a progress report and an endorsement for starting a junior college.

In addition to the points made at the January meeting—economic and educational advantages, over-enrollment at the University of California, opportunity for smaller classes and more individualized instruction and so forth—the letter noted that parents would not be sending their children off of distant institutions. A short quote indicates the tone of the appeal:

It was urged also that many of our young people finish high school at too tender an age to be sent away from the protecting influences of the home. The question of expense, also, which at the least must amount to five or six hundred dollars a year, in many cases is almost prohibitive.

Other passages in the letter urged parents to make letter or telephone contact with the Board of Education supporting a junior college for Riverside.

The Board met on March 13, 1916, and among its other business, heard the arguments for starting a junior college. Will C. Wood, State Commissioner of Public Education, spoke adding two novel and prophetic ideas to the concept: first, he made a “plea for democracy” by including vocational courses in the junior college curriculum and thus attracting students other than those interested in transfer to the university; and second, he talked about filling the needs of those students who could attend on a part-time basis. Both of these ideas became fundamental aspects of the community college.

The minutes of the Board of Education meeting note simply:

The subject of opening a Junior College September 1916 was discussed at some length. Following the discussion it was moved by Mr. W.C. Davison that a Junior College be opened in September 1916, motion was seconded by Dr. John Esgate. The role call gave the following vote: All voted yea.
It is very likely that community colleges founded during this period and perhaps into the 1930s share essentially the same impetus. As one can see in the developments following World War II, major changes would take place, and those community colleges founded after the war came into existence with quite a different set of circumstances.

To organize the developments pertaining to the Riverside Community College District, we can best take a look at five periods of unequal length: 1916 to 1946 – years of steady growth under the leadership of A.G. Paul; 1946 to 1972 – growth following World War II to the separation of the college district; years of expansion, faculty-administration tensions, and student activism; 1972 to 1991 – a period of major changes and unprecedented development; and 1991 to 2001 – the most recent decade of initiatives and innovations.

One will discover in the brief overview of these five periods that the one constant of the community college movement is change. The ability of the community college to adapt to ever-new situations is its great strength.

1916 – 1946

This 30-year period is dominated by the vision and leadership of Arthur G. Paul, a significant leader whose career as Director, then President, of the college from 1920 to 1950 provided a legacy of excellence in education, which continues to the present. Prior to Paul’s tenure, the junior college was under the direction of the high school principal, Hugh Law (1916-1919) and then Donald P. McAlpine (1919-1920). There was a Dean, A. Haven Smith, but his duties are not clear from any records. In 1920, the Board of Education appointed Arthur G. Paul to be principal and Fred L. McEuen to be Vice-Principal. As it developed Paul gave much, then most, of his attention to the junior college, leaving the high school to McEuen.

Of course all classes were taught in the high school rooms. There were 14 instructors involved, most with dual high school/junior college assignments. The offerings in the first schedule of classes included science courses -- physics, chemistry, math; vocational courses -- surveying, mechanical drawing, agriculture; business courses -- shorthand and typing, accounting; social science courses -- logic, history, political economy; foreign languages -- German, Spanish, Latin; and English courses. Also in the schedule was “shop work to be arranged.”

The initial enrollment was 114, rising to 137 in 1917, but then falling to 92 as World War I and the influenza epidemic took their toll in 1918. Subsequent growth was slow, but steady, increasing to 359 in 1925 and 544 in 1930. As enrollments grew so did the need for more room.
For starters, the college operated a few classes in the Gage House, a residence on property across the street from the high school. Soon more of that residential area (the southwest corner of Riverside and Terracina Streets) was purchased, and in 1924 the first two buildings of the Riverside campus quadrangle were constructed. One was for a library; the other mostly for sciences. These buildings are now historic landmarks and are the oldest extant buildings dedicated to junior college instruction in California.

The Quad, now named for Arthur G. Paul, was expanded in 1928 and 1932, and eventually completed in 1950. Recognized as a beautiful structure, the Quad owes a great deal to the vision of Paul and to the architect G. Stanley Wilson. Much of this construction was done to provide a more collegiate atmosphere for the institution; however, Poly High School was still just across the street, and the junior college was often referred to as “Terracina Tech,” a deprecating remark that would endure to the 1960s.

The Great Depression of the 1930s had its impact. Statewide, there were serious attempts to eliminate faculty tenure, and of course, there were severe restrictions on school budgets. Although no one was laid off in the Riverside District, faculty did take a 10% cut in pay, and other budgets were slashed. The college nevertheless continued to develop its programs.

While student enrollment did not expand much above the 700 mark throughout the 1930s, the college had grown significantly as indicated by the fact that it was difficult to find a parking space. Other indicators – more important – were the development of a much broader curriculum, a full complement of extra- and co-curricular activities, the innovation of many community services, and the start of what today falls in the area of economic development or work force preparation.

Continuous curriculum revisions and additions were made in the arts -- music, drama, painting – as well as in the social and behavioral sciences, natural and biological sciences, and technical and applied arts. There was a decline in the classical languages, but an increase in modern foreign languages. More English and speech courses were added. However, it is important to note that there were no courses for remediation in composition, reading, and mathematics. Those would come later, especially after World War II.

Student activities developed and flourished. The Associated Student Body had a budget of some $4000.00 in the mid-1930s -- $750.00 of which supported “social” activities, with other amounts (sometimes as little as $40.00) going to various other extra curricular programs. There were, of course, a student newspaper (Arroyo) and a yearbook (Tequisquite) as well as clubs for every interest and a full complement of athletics. Forensics, drama, and vocal music also flourished. The college had both sororities and fraternities, some connected with service/social groups in the community as well as the more traditional Greek organizations. One interesting development was the use of three homes to house women students and one for male athletes. These “dorms” were short-lived and often controversial.
The junior college proved to be an important catalyst for the arts in Riverside. Through its Extension Division, it offered support and/or sponsorship to the Riverside Opera Association, the Riverside Community Players, the Riverside Art Association, and a number of musical groups including the College Adult Chorus. The Extension Division was organized as early as 1918 “to carry to the community such educational advantages as they may require.”

Begun in the early 1920s and continuing to the late 1930s, the Cooperative Educational Program – Coop for short – was a remarkable innovation in work force preparation. The basic idea was for students to attend college for half a quarter term and work during the other half. Eighteen employers were involved in 1922 and 32 a year later. Enrollments were modest – only 12 in 1922 to a high of 33 in 1928 and then declining as the Depression took hold. The program offerings included nursing, forestry, engineering, architecture, library work, music teaching, home making, and hotel management. (Note that the program did not offer the expected wood or metal shop sorts of things; the high school did that.) The value of such a program (and others like it in community colleges everywhere) can be seen in the story of Chester Carlson, class of 1925, who could not have had a college career without the work-study plan of the Coop, but was able to attend and continue and eventually invent the process we now call Xerox.

The attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, put in end to this period of growth and development. Enrollments plummeted as young men entered the military. Faculty were likewise drafted; some taught at Poly High School to make up full contracts. By 1942, only 170 students were enrolled, most of them women. Enrollment would creep up over the next few years and explode in the fall of 1946 at 1101, marking the beginning of a new era.

1946 to 1972

The ending of the war brought many changes to Riverside’s junior college. Even before hostilities ceased, events were underway that would make the college a very different institution from the one the young men had left five years earlier. A.G. Paul was no longer associated with the high school, and moves to make the college distinct from Poly were underway. All adult education in the district came under the supervision of the college, and an alumnus, Orland W. Noble, was given the direction of that enterprise. By 1946, to accommodate returning veterans, RCC was holding double sessions and the Board of Education was considering a 6-4-4 plan for the school system. Some discussion of converting RCC to a four-year institution was held, but that issue would be settled by the advent of the University of California, Riverside, in the 1950s.

Of course there was a rapid expansion of faculty and the addition of administrative positions, notably deans for the faculty and for men and women. There was the need to augment the classified staff to handle the GI Bill. By 1950, a Director of Student Activities, a College Nutritionist (also a faculty member), a Bursar, and a Director of Guidance were added to the administrative staff. The college also got some government support for a shop

Orland W. Noble
building in 1947 and very much increased the emphasis on “trades and vocational programs.” During this period, O.W. Noble became Assistant to the President as well as Director of Adult Education – a preparation for his becoming President in 1950.

In curriculum, there were likewise many adjustments in the immediate post-war era. Veterans attending needed both review and remedial courses in what today are called basic skills. For the first time, the college introduced courses below the transfer level. English R – basic composition; English Y – reading; Math X – beginning algebra; and Math Y – plane geometry made their appearance. Instructors were hired for these courses as well as faculty to rebuild programs in art and music and other areas. The vocational program – offered in a separate catalog – included a program in aeronautics (which was short-lived) and courses in electricity, welding, radio and cosmetology – the latter to be housed in a controversial separate building in the mid-1950s.

The end of the career of A.G. Paul came in 1950, not without its poignancy. He had been the college’s leader for 30 years and had single-handedly made it a major asset to the community despite the depression and the war. Paul did not want to retire, but the Board of Education felt that the time had come to turn the college over to a younger person and, perhaps, one who had a concept of the community college more suited to the changing times. In the final year of his tenure, the Quadrangle was completed with construction of the southwest corner to enclose what remains to this day one of the most beautiful buildings for a community college in the state and a fitting tribute to the man whose vision it commemorates.

The presidency of Orland W. Noble, 1950 – 1963, is marked primarily by a continuation of the slow expansion and steady development set in motion during his tenure as Director of Adult Education. The hostilities in Korea would take a toll on enrollment figures, declining to a low of 679 in 1952; however, a decade later the student population grew to four times that number – 2956. This reflects the rapid growth California was experiencing in the same period – from 10.5 to 17.5 million in the period from 1950 – 1964. Despite the growth in both population and the economy, there were some periods of instability, and voters were reluctant to vote themselves into debt. In 1959, for the first time in history, the citizens of Riverside defeated a major bond issue.

There was, however, growing interest in the role of public education, and efforts were underway to reorganize the state’s system. One action was the Donahoe Act, 1960, which would greatly influence the role of the junior – not called “community” – colleges.

These, and other changes, reflected an increasing awareness of the role the community colleges were to play, not least of which was accommodation of a larger minority student body.

There was expansion of the remedial and vocational courses as more veterans took advantage of the GI Bill. Classes at night were also increasing, and a whole program called Extended Day came into existence. It was clear that more space was needed, and the college expanded beyond the Quad with construction of an Administration Building (now named for O.W. Noble), the Cutter Park Pool, Landis Auditorium, a women’s gymnasium, and a facility for cosmetology courses. Many of these facilities were shared with Poly High School, which was still just across
the street. The cosmetology building was controversial, but Noble argued that the instruction there would take many people, mostly women, off the welfare rolls and move them to the tax rolls.

Two significant developments not directly related to curriculum or faculty or facilities also occurred during Noble’s tenure. The first was accreditation. No federal or state law mandated accreditation studies, but in 1947 the recently formed California Junior College Association recommended regular five-year studies. RCC, a member of the Association, agreed with the recommendation, Noble pointing out that a favorable report would give the college status, especially for government approval of its programs under the GI Bill. Noble submitted a detailed report to the accreditation committee in July, 1953, which included basic objectives of the college: 1) preparation of students to enter directly into civic and occupational life after one or two years of post high school training; 2) presentation of cultural and vocational training for adults; 3) presentation of general education as well as strictly academic, vocational, or semi-professional offering; and 4) adaptation of the college to serve cultural needs of the community. Noteworthy is the emphasis on vocational programs and service to the community. Also noteworthy is that the report evidently, was written by the president with little if any assistance from a steering committee for an accreditation self-study as required now.

The visitation team came in October, 1953, and, while giving RCC high marks in general, its report also contained some pointed remarks on deficiencies – the need for a general philosophy of education, for diagnostic testing of basic skills, for stronger requirements in general education, for more administrative personnel to aid the president; and for better library facilities and services. Five years later, Noble submitted another report, this time to the Western College Association, that again thoroughly described the institution as it was in 1958, but also contained a preface which was a rebuttal of the findings from 1953 visitation. Again, the college received high marks, but there were two recommendations that would have long lasting repercussions – the need for clarification of lines of authority within the administration and the need for more democratic procedures.

This latter recommendation introduces the second significant development: the desire of the faculty to have a greater voice in the governance of the college. There had been for years a college-high school Faculty Club and a Faculty Wives Club; both of which concerned mostly with social events, while the Riverside City Teachers Association dealt with working conditions in general – salaries, class sizes, schedules, and so forth. But by the late 1950s, issues relating to faculty had grown in number and significance, and the faculty decided to elect a slate of officers. A meeting was called, but the idea offended President Noble, who said, “There will be no meeting of the college faculty.” Noble could not and would not see the faculty convened without his presence. By 1959, however, and following the accreditation report, Noble allowed a faculty committee of five to advise him on issues. The faculty would submit ten names, and he would select the five he wanted. This arrangement lasted a couple of years, but by 1962, with more complicated issues and with a larger and younger faculty, a steering committee was formed to
explore the creation of a Faculty Association. At its first meeting on September 13, 1963, the Steering Committee of the Faculty Association set up committees reflecting the concerns of the faculty – salary problems for senior faculty, academic rank, professional growth and achievement, sabbatical leaves, faculty load, student assistance, academic calendar, and a constitution for the Association. A major achievement was a constitutional convention held on Saturday, April 25, 1964, at which 63 of the now 102 faculty spent four hours framing a document that set in motion the development of faculty governance at RCC. The Association had an executive committee of five officers, a Senate with ten members, five faculty representatives to the College Council and established salary and professional growth committees. RCC was among the very early community colleges to move toward faculty involvement in governance.

Bill Noble had to retire from the presidency due to ill health in May 1963, and the Board of Education named Ralph Bradshaw its new leader. Bradshaw’s nine-year tenure was to be one of momentous changes for the college. To keep this history brief, the items selected include the formation of a separate community college district, an ambitious building program to accommodate major growth, the rise of student activism, and increasing faculty involvement in governance.

Throughout the late 1950s, a number of studies, meetings and recommendations were made concerning the future of the facilities of the combined community college and high school. Both institutions were feeling the stress of increasing student populations, and it was clear something needed to be done. The details of the studies and the specific work of the committees need not be examined here, but the final result in the early 1960s was to recommend that the elementary and secondary schools of the city be unified and that the community college be a separate educational district. It was also found that the most economical move was to have the college take over the high school campus and to build a new facility for Poly High School at a site about two miles away. Of course this would involve considerable funding, but once again the citizens of Riverside came through in 1962 and passed a six million dollar bond issue to allow the college three million to purchase the high school property and three million for its own building program. Later that same year the voters approved the unification plan, but the actual separation of the unified district and the college district did not take place until the middle of 1964, following passage of Senate Bill 1152 in July 1963.

The election for the new Board of Trustees of the Riverside Community College District was held on June 2, 1964. Five trustees were elected in a lively campaign that included 15 candidates. The new board met in its first session on July 1, 1964. It clearly had its work cut out for the months to come. The previous Board of Education passed on to the newly elected trustees a newly chosen president, a recommended building program, and the various provisions of the Donahoe Act (California Master Plan for Public Higher Education) passed in 1960 which meant both more state financial support and, therefore, more
state control. This state control was to become a reality in fact when, after proposals in 1966, the legislature passed and Governor Reagan approved (July 1, 1967) the formation of a Board of Governors for the California Community Colleges. It met for the first time in 1968 and changed the nature of the community colleges across the state.

Riverside Junior College

Enrollment 1956-1972

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Year</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
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</thead>
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<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>1957-1958</td>
<td>1,287</td>
<td>86</td>
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<td>1958-1959</td>
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<td>409</td>
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<tr>
<td>1971-1972</td>
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With the money to acquire the high school property, the Board of Trustees took on an ambitious building and property acquisition program to provide adequate space for the growing student, faculty and staff populations. The first item was to raise the old (c.1912) Poly structures and erect four new facilities – a much-needed library, life science and physical science structures, and a student center. With the development of the new buildings on the old high school property and the removal of math and science and library operations, the way was clear to do extensive remodeling of the quadrangle – both for more classroom space and for seismic integrity. A 1930s portion of the venerable Quad was dismantled (much to the consternation of some) and a new west entrance with a number of then state-of-the-art classrooms were built with an effort to tie the more modern parts into the charm of the original design. (A move is currently underway to dismantle this construction and restore the Quad to something closer to its original design.)

Even as more space was being provided, it was clear that at some not too distant point, the enlarged downtown campus would be unable to handle the anticipated growth of the District. The Board of Trustees decided to purchase a property in the southern portion of the city called La Sierra with a view to future use as a second campus. It is important to remember that at that time the community college districts were really districts; that is, if a student lived within the district he/she was expected to attend the local community college. A student could apply to attend a community college in another district, but had to have good reason to do so. At the end of the year, the colleges would figure how many of their students attended elsewhere and how many students they educated from elsewhere, and then one college would pay the others or receive income from the others depending on the balance. This was important because, since the community colleges were still essentially funded on the basis of average daily attendance (like the secondary schools from which they emerged) attendance was the source of funding. During that time, RCC and Chaffey College competed for students in the Corona and Norco areas. There was even an election held, and the districts, at that time, decided to be a part of the Chaffey District. The hope that a campus on the La Sierra property would attract Corona and Norco students did not pan out. (Later, of course, with the construction of a campus at Norco, all of this would change.) To this day, just what to do with the La Sierra property is an issue for the RCCD.

As noted earlier, this was a period of major growth not just in buildings, but in student population. When Noble became president in 1950, the college enrolled 681 students; by the end of his tenure there were 3061, and by the fall of 1971, as Bradshaw’s presidency is ending, the figure had grown to 5728. Other community colleges throughout California were experiencing similar expansions. Toward the end of this period, the students were very different from those who came before. The earnestness of the 1920s and 1930s was gone and so too was the exuberance of the post-war student body. The students of the mid-1960s and early-1970s were very much a part of the many movements taking place across the nation in response to the
assassinations of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr.; opposition to the war in Viet Nam; promotion of civil rights, free speech, women’s liberation, and ethnic pride.

In the fall of 1968, after some trial and error, a United Mexican-American Student group (UMAS, later MECHA) and a Black Student Union (BSU) group were formed. The next spring, the Many Feathers Indian Club joined them in making various demands for ethnic studies courses, a textbook loan library, and tutorial programs. A women’s liberation group and some free speech and anti-war demonstrations also made the scene. In December of 1969, at the request of the ethnic organizations, the district held a sensitivity workshop at Riverside’s historic Mission Inn where a number of grievances and issues were aired. It is to President Bradshaw’s credit that his leadership kept the campus from any violence during the period. By the spring of 1972, the ethnic groups were provided with three houses that the district had acquired as part of its expansion plans. Where he could and where proposals made good educational sense, he conceded on issues; where demands violated Board policy, he would stand firm, saying no in ways which did not increase tensions.

Another major change during this period occurred with the traditional student organizations. The Associated Student Body (ASB) and the social or extra-curricular clubs nearly went under. A faculty member, who sat as advisor to the ASB, argued that the method of collecting fees during registration virtually mandated that all students pay for membership instead of voluntarily joining. In part this worked a hardship on poorer students and/or older students who would not be participating in ASB sponsored events. With the help of the Academic Senate, the Board was persuaded to change the practice with disastrous financial impact on the student budget. The budget for 1965 was $69,500 and the proposed budget for 1966 was $78,500. As a consequence of the change in procedures, the 1967 budget was $34,000 dropping to $22,500 in 1969. By 1971, the budget was a mere $4,000; however, that figure also represents some shifting in accounting practices, especially relating to sports. Nevertheless, funding for clubs and for drama, musicals, student publications, forensics, and so forth took major hits, and the amounts previously designated for social activities disappeared.

The role of the Academic Senate in the above ASB matter is but a small indication of the major role the faculty played in governance during this period. Various joint committees of the faculty, administration, and trustees met to work on issues facing the new college district, including
formulation of the district’s educational philosophy, the nature and design of the new buildings, policies for professional growth and movement on the salary schedule, policies for sabbatical leaves, and criteria for academic rank. These meetings were generally amiable and collegial with the goal of making RCC a better institution. The Faculty Association determined that a fall convocation to usher in the new academic year was a good idea, and the first was held to inaugurate President Bradshaw. The event continues to the present. The faculty also worked cooperatively on matters like the annual faculty lecturership (1961) and creation of the alumnus of the year awards, a speakers’ bureau, and other areas to promote awareness of the college within and beyond the community. There were other perks as well – a faculty coffee room and discounts at the bookstore, for example. One important area was securing a guaranteed stipend for faculty conference attendance. At that time it was $50.00 per faculty, but departments could pool their stipends and spend what it took to send one of their members to a major meeting. (Today the stipend is $200 per faculty, and RCC remains one of few colleges to fund professional growth from its general fund, augmented by money from staff development funding.)

Perhaps the major role of the Academic Senate came with the announcement of Ralph Bradshaw’s retirement. The Board of Trustees undertook a nationwide search for his successor and had settled on two finalists, one of which it favored and one that appealed more to the Senate representatives. The Senate prevailed, and a new era for the college would begin in 1972.

1972 to 1991

Ralph Bradshaw retired after 26 years of service to the college, the last nine as president. His resignation was a surprise, but he felt, as he said, that he had used up most of his credits, and no doubt he was spent after leading the college through a period of rapid growth, major building projects, student activism, and faculty assertiveness. (At the time of his retirement, the national average tenure for college presidents was a little over three years, but RCC had had only three presidents in 56 years. Currently in California – 2001 – there is a shortage of people prepared to become college presidents, and short tenures and rapid turnovers are almost normal.)

At faculty urging, the Board of Trustees selected Ken Harper to be Bradshaw’s successor. Harper was very much for “participatory government” involving faculty and students; however, this very trait brought difficulties. Too many demands and too many proposals that simply could not or would not fit into the district’s situation or policies had to be denied, and Harper quickly fell out of favor with many of his supporters. He resigned after two years to join the faculty at RCC in anthropology.

The trustees undertook another search, this time clearly and definitely leaving the faculty out of the process. In 1974, they contracted with Foster Davidoff to be the fifth RCC president. He held the position until 1978. Part of the agreement was, at least general rumor believes, that Davidoff would put the faculty in its place and make sure that the trustees of the district were in charge of the college. True or not, relations among administration and faculty and board and faculty began a decline that exists to the present day.
Both presidents had to deal with enormous pressures created by multiple factors including a rapidly changing student body, the need for still more space, difficult inflation rates nationwide, increasing state controls and regulations, demands by faculty for improved compensation, a need to reorganize the administrative structure, difficulty with enrollment management, and other problems or situations.

The student population changed in a number of ways. There were of course more minority groups, with increasing numbers of Latinos, Asians – especially Vietnamese – and Middle Easterners. Accommodation of these groups presented problems as well as creating controversy. ESL courses became an issue. In addition, the Priolo Act of 1971 (which defined 18 year olds as adults) posed a problem for the community colleges across the state since these young adults could move, establish residency, and enroll in any college of their choice. The veterans of Viet Nam added another factor to student change. One problem was simply that many of the students now enrolling had special needs, but who was to pay for the increased costs? As Harper’s presidency began, there were cutbacks in federal Economic Opportunity Grants (EOG) as well as reductions in the state Equal Opportunity Program and Services (EOPS) funding.

Finding space for the unevenly increasing student population posed another frustrating problem for the Board of Trustees and the president. Since the district had lost the annexation elections with Corona and Norco as well as those with Elsinore and Perris, the Board of Governors reconsidered the building of a second site. Their negative recommendation was a virtual kiss of death since it meant there would be no state funds for such a project. The district needed to concentrate on doing what it could with the city campus. During the late 1960s and into the 1970’s the college had acquired properties along Ramona Drive (now called City College Drive) between the Quad and Magnolia Avenue, houses were demolished, and the land converted to paved parking spaces that, for the first time, were financed by parking fees. In addition the new tennis courts were installed in the southwest corner of the arroyo, and fine arts and ceramics buildings were built into the banks of the arroyo just north of the Quad. Auto shop and business education buildings would also emerge during the late 1970s. The Child Development Center near Stadium Way made its appearance in 1977. As the 1970s came to a close, the district undertook extensive remodeling of other facilities. While not as dramatic as the construction in
the 1960s, the new and remodeled buildings helped alleviate the press of increasing enrollments and new or revised programs.

Money was increasingly an issue. An inflation rate of 10% during many years of the 1970s put pressure on the district in all areas – costs of construction, faculty and staff salaries, and operating expenses. At the same time, there was increasing taxpayer reluctance, culminating in California’s 1978 Jarvis-Gann Initiative (Proposition 13) in 1978 to finance not only community colleges but also other agencies through higher property taxes. Since funding depended on average daily attendance (ADA, now more commonly cited as Full Time Enrolled Students or FTES), loss of students from other districts was a problem. In addition, state funding remained uncertain. At some point, the districts were limited to a 5% growth cap, but RCC often grew at a 10% rate, meaning that funding was not forthcoming for educating more students. In 1975 it amounted to a loss of $400,000. At other times, the number of students would increase, but the ADA figure would go down since the students were enrolling in fewer classes. To this day, it remains a problem for community colleges to accurately anticipate the reality of their respective budgets.

For the faculty it was a time of unrest. There was, for the first time, increasing need to employ part-time adjunct faculty in ever-larger numbers, and their positions relative to contract faculty became issues. Three examples will suffice. Six fully credentialed adjunct faculty were hired to man the English department’s newly formed clinics at 20 hours a week. In addition they also taught some night classes. After a couple of years, at the urging of the AFT, the six brought suit to claim that they were working more than 60%, were unfairly being paid at classified rates, and were entitled to contracts. They won their case, and the Board immediately eliminated the program and all six lost their positions. In another instance, full-time faculty negotiated for increases in their overload pay, but did not include higher compensation for adjunct faculty. In the final example, issues of part-time participation in department meetings, eligibility for conference attendance, or inclusion in representative bargaining groups were also hot topics.

The faculty formed a nine-member Certificated Employees Council (CEC) in 1974, citing the provisions of the 1965 Winton Act to argue for more participation in the selection of President Harper’s successor. The formation of this group, a first in RCC’s history, indicates the deterioration of faculty-administration relations at that time. In the 1974-75 academic year, the CEC asked for a salary increase of 16.2%, and settled in August for 9.2%. In 1975, the Rodda Act (AB 160) repealed the Winton Act, creating a situation for only one agent to represent the employees in bargaining for salaries and working conditions. (The classified staff had negotiated separately.) The situation was confused by the roles played by the CEC, the Academic Senate, and those who wanted no agent. Both the AFT and the CTA had maintained chapters at RCC since the 1960s, characterized by a friendly rivalry. However, after July 1, 1976, only one of them could be the bargaining agent, and the rivalry turned heated. In April, CTA officers filed a petition indicating 290 of the 577 faculty members (full- and part-time) supported their organization. The following week AFT representatives filed another petition with 209 supporting signatures. Matters were complicated because the Trustees questioned the validity of some of the people CTA had counted – especially department chairs who had been declared managers in the new organizational arrangements the previous January. During the next year, the issue would be placed before the newly created Educational Employment Relations Board.
(EERB, now PERB), and a decision would not be given until 1978, declaring chairs to be management. In the meantime, the local CEC negotiated salaries on behalf of the faculty, with an earlier form of the Classified Schools Employees Association (CSEA) bargaining for its staff. In 1979, the AFT challenged the CTA by claiming to represent the summer school faculty, but its bid was turned down. Since that time, the local chapter of CTA has represented the faculty with a continuously evolving agreement with the District.

As Foster Davidoff came to the end of his four-year presidential contract, he put the final touches on changes in administrative structure begun in 1975 – the outcome of accreditation recommendations in 1973. In 1974 there had been 16 administrators; in 1975 there were 25. The additions were in a new area called middle management. Many of the people involved remained the same, but job titles and descriptions were changed, and some had to reapply for positions while others chose to return to the classroom. With the decision that chairs were managers, the ranks of administration swelled again. In early 1978, the Board studied another plan which included, but was not limited to, abolishing the 13 academic divisions chaired by faculty and creating four larger divisions headed by deans, but keeping intact those divisions with year long instructional programs. While the plan also abolished some administrative positions, it created other dean or director positions that had previously been faculty slots. One consequence of this reorganization was a sense among faculty that they were being further removed from participation in the decision-making processes.

Charles A. Kane became the college’s sixth president in mid-1978. He, as an alumnus of RCC, was in a sense coming home, and despite many ups and downs in his tenure at the college, it was always clear that he loved the institution. To be sure, he stepped into a messy situation. There had been a difficult replacement battle for a seat on the Board of Trustees. The administrative reorganization, the adversarial salary negotiations, the bargaining agent rivalries, and a sense of general dislocation among faculty were problems. The passage of Proposition 13 and the board’s decision to cancel the summer session in the face of financial uncertainty was another blow. Still one more issue concerned the department/divisions secretaries, who were essentially secretaries to the faculty, but now were secretaries to the new deans. This also involved shifting the preparation of classroom materials (tests, handouts, etc.) from faculty office spaces to a newly created communications center. The new president faced a faculty and some staff who were not happy campers.

President Kane brought a number of new ideas to the college, most especially in management styles. He was an ardent booster of RCC and of Riverside and devoted much energy to raising public awareness of the value of its community college. Some felt that this effort was just so much public relations puff, but the result after 13 years was a much greater appreciation of all that the college meant to the community in terms of its course offerings and opportunities, its community activities programs, its athletic events, its dramatic and musical achievements – especially its marching band – along with many other programs and services. He also commissioned two faculty members to write a history of the college to mark its 65th anniversary.
in 1981. There was an impressive public celebration of that event to further the awareness of the institution in the region.

Kane had been influenced by some aspects of the Harvard Business School and was a great believer in management by walking around. As the college had a high profile in the community, so too did Chuck Kane have a high profile on campus. He was everywhere. He insisted that the campus be kept well maintained, and as he walked about the campus, he would stop to pick up trash or note that a hedge or tree needed pruning. All managers and staff were expected to do the same.

Another, even stronger tenet was his support for management by objectives. In the 1980s, he began a series of meetings of the Presidents Strategic Planning and Action Committees. Between 30 and 50 faculty, students, staff, and administrators from all walks of campus life would meet for a dozen weeks or so in the spring semester. The sessions consisted of some training in strategic planning using businesses or other operations as examples of the role such planning plays in success or failure. Toward the end of the semester, the group, through breakout sessions, produced objectives for the coming year, and these would be further worked on at retreats during the fall. Many times the goals of the PSPAC groups (as they were called) were aimed at specific issues facing the college or at working on such questions as what is our business or what are our vision and values. Some felt the sessions were a waste of time, some felt that the application of business strategies to collegiate issue was misguided, some felt the sessions provided only a show of staff involvement in decision making; but regardless of these feelings, a strong case can be made that the PSPAC sessions put the college and its staff in an enviable position to deal with growth challenges facing the district and the planning for two new campuses to open when Kane’s tenure ended in 1991.

At 16,000 students as Kane became president; the campus was at saturation point.

It was clear that the college needed more space to house anticipated growth. The population surge in the Moreno Valley and Corona-Norco areas during the 1980s put great pressure on the district, and the Board responded by seeking and getting some major land acquisitions in both those areas. A donation of ?? acres from a Moreno Valley developer provided the site for that campus, and a dollar to the US government purchased land in Norco. The college had been offering some selected courses in the high schools in those areas, and phone surveys of the citizens lead to further enthusiasm for campus developments. A long period of planning and consultation was begun, and part of that effort was directed toward the political philosophy of the expanded district; namely, that it be one college on three campuses. All the work came to fruition in March of 1991, with a shortened spring semester opening of the Norco and Moreno Valley campuses. The gala celebration was complete with runners carrying the lamp of learning from the Riverside campus to the two new campuses in a festive relay. The event coincided with the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Riverside institution.

President Kane’s tenure was one of great accomplishment. How many presidents get to build one campus, let alone two? Yet not everything was smooth sailing. There was still the problem of the La Sierra property. The Board had formed a development agency to deal with the possibility of commercial and residential use for the area. Significant opposition to the agency,
to the developer, and to the various proposed plans came from many quarters. After a series of setbacks, any further proposals were set aside, and use for the property would await the next president.

Another controversial area was the formation of the RCC Foundation. Some felt it was a dubious venture and would give the administration access to funds that might not be used in the best interests of the college. However, the foundation has proven to be a great asset to the college, and its development, indeed one of its major accomplishments, was raising one million dollars for scholarships – a feat achieved by few, if any, community colleges.

While all the planning, building, and proposing were in progress, the college continued to grow in faculty and staff, curriculum, and technology. The accreditations of 1973, 1978, 1983, and 1988 were all successful, and while recognizing the growing pains and fiscal difficulties of the district (not unlike most California colleges), the association noted the many positive changes and improvements made. One persistent difficulty noted included governance (relations between Academic Senate and the CTA chapter on the one hand and their relation to the administration on the other). Other areas involved dependence on part-time faculty, compliance with Title V and AB1725 regulations (especially the 75%-25% ratio), and the constant problem of maintaining appropriate computer technology.

The presidencies of Ken Harper, Foster Davidoff, and Charles Kane saw many significant changes in the size of the student body, in faculty-administration relations, in technology and facilities, in curriculum, and so forth. The dominant change, looking back over two decades, however, is more sociological. The world of 1991 was very different from that of 1972, and the values, ambitions, preparation, and expectations of students, faculty, staff, and administration had undergone profound permutations.

1991 to Present

When Salvatore G. Rotella became RCCD’s seventh president in 1991, he brought to the administration an experience that no other CEO had previously possessed (with the possible exception of Ken Harper). Rotella was not a Californian and had not been “reared” in the CCC tradition. His prior leadership roles had been in the New York and Chicago community college systems, and his vision for Riverside was, therefore, quite different in many respects from his predecessors. There is space for only a few of the new perspectives that the present decade’s accomplishments reveal.

Almost immediately Dr. Rotella had to face the financial realities of operating three college campuses on a stagnant budget. While the state had provided construction funds and, later, some furnishings and equipment money, it simply did not come through with operating costs. During nearly four years, the District watched the slow growth of the two new campuses and the faculty and staff needed to run the sites,
while at the same time seeing no additional funds from the state. There was even consideration of possibly having to close one of the two new campuses.

Despite these financial woes, the District found ways to keep the new sites up and running and, eventually, prospering. However, the distribution of funds to the new areas did cause some faculty and staff, especially those who were not in favor of opening new sites to begin with, to grumble about the cost of operating the campuses at Norco and Moreno Valley.

A major change initiated by Rotella was another reconfiguration of the administrative organization. Rotella, a proponent of shared governance, proposed that the dean/division structure was administratively top heavy and effectively prohibited significant faculty participation. Thinking along the lines of a university model, a committee approved his recommendation to restructure the administration into four large areas – academic affairs, student services, research and planning, and administration and finance – each headed by a vice-president. Moreno Valley and Norco would each have a provost, and the three campuses would each have a dean of instruction. The intent was to keep the district administration lean; however, subsequent development needs would lead to additional appointments and the leanness of the district administration was not realized.

The academic divisions were dismantled and replaced with a score or so of departments. Appendix F of the agreement between the District and CTA spells out the duties, compensation, and reassigned time for the department chairs. Throughout the period since its inception, the system has been modified in a number of ways, including revisions to the duties, computation of reassigned time, compensation for work during winter and summer sessions, relationship to the Academic Senate, and so forth. The idea is that, eventually, matters such as hiring, evaluation, program assessment, and other issues will be the responsibility of the department faculty.

Another factor to come up in recent years is the creation of departments at Norco and Moreno Valley. As those campuses grew, and especially as the number of full-time faculty increased, there was the sense that departments based on the Riverside campus were not efficient in dealing with issues peculiar to the other sites. Three new departments have been created at each of the two campuses, but this has not been a final answer to the problems. Since the local departments are multi-disciplinary, some faculty feel that curriculum issues and related items are not well handled and that there is a need for district-wide discipline committees to address those issues, especially since it is the aim to have one district-wide curriculum.

These changes did not come cheap. Each department is served by an Instructional Department Specialist (IDS), requiring office space, furniture and computer. In addition, the compensation and reassigned time for the chairs carried a cost and also meant that these faculty were not in the classroom; hence the need for more part-time faculty. However, the district determined that the philosophy behind the reorganization plan with its condition for more direct faculty involvement was worth the cost.

Through all of the above restructuring, the issue of what should be centralized as a district function and what should be decentralized to the three campuses was discussed. While decisions have been made in some areas, others are still open to consideration. This is why a theme running through the accreditation self-studies of 1995 and 2001 has been that the district and its
three campuses are a “work in progress.” Both accreditation reports were positive. The few recommendations received concerned areas of research and planning for institutional and program assessment and development; providing the computer technology to support what needs to be done; and the need for clearer lines of communication, responsibility, and authority – what’s district, what’s campus, what’s administrative, what’s faculty, etc. These were items that the district itself had clearly recognized in the process of the two self-studies and which are currently being addressed.

Various significant innovations have resulted from Rotella’s presidency. There is room to list just some. The creation of Board of Trustee committees has expedited board business. The plan is to have the committees composed of two trustees and representative administrators, faculty, classified and student personnel meet once a month to discuss issues in areas such as academic affairs and student services, planning and development, finance and legislation. Recommendations go from these committees to the full board meetings (also once a month), and action can be taken with a minimum of further discussion. With some modifications made over the years, the structure has proved effective. Dr. Rotella also initiated a series of meetings with other educational governing boards in the district’s service area, and he has established sound working relationships with all nearby two-and four-year institutions.

Other innovations and programs have included a much increased use of grant money; the creation of a culinary institute; work on a school of the arts, a successful middle college high school at the Moreno Valley campus; introduction of a weekend college at the Norco campus; an early start calendar recently changed to a condensed semester calendar with a winter intersession; a first-ever in California physician’s assistant program; a community interpreters (English/Spanish) program; the relocation or renovation of other programs, such as administration of justice and fire science programs; further development of early childhood studies; customized training programs; college without walls and other community service programs; new centers for manufacturing technology, applied competitive technologies, procurement assistance and international trade development; and others. The district also works to fulfill its mission in work force preparation and other aspects of economic development.

One crowning innovation is the Passport to College initiative in which the district, through its foundation, has raised money to guarantee that the 1996 fifth graders in the district’s service area have the wherewithal to enroll at RCC. More important than the funds is the increased awareness throughout the community that young people can go to college (and parents and siblings too) and that a higher education and the benefits it brings are available. Surely this will be one of President Rotella’s major contributions to the Inland Empire.

The current year 2001 seemed to hold the best of financial prospects, but (as is so often the case with community college funding) the unexpected happened, and the many billion-dollar surplus that could have meant much needed funding will likely be used to buy energy. The community colleges of California always seem to do more with less. A recent LA Times column by Dan Walters noted the following discrepancies: University of California budget $15 billion plus with 182,000 students; CSU budget $5.1 billion for 309,000 students; and the community college budget of $6.2 billion will have to support 1.6 million students. Despite this inequity – handling three times the number of students on a little over 40% of all state funds for education – the
community college system continues to offer opportunities for learning and services unparalleled in American educational history.

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The District, nevertheless, will continue to meet its challenges and fulfill its mission. Its history, its established traditions, its ever-developing initiatives and adaptations to serve the citizens of the community are typical. Change is the constant of community colleges. Even after 85 years, Riverside Community College is still a venture, a work in progress, a promise for the future. It has come far since those early years, now serving about 29,000 students on three campuses. Its staff and faculty continue to be dedicated to the education of students, young and old, full- or part-time, wanting associate degrees, transfer status, certificates, or special interest instruction. Like so many community college, through its various programs and services, RCC also continues to enrich the area it serves. To all who participate in this venture – students, faculty both full- and part-time, classified staff, administrators, board members, and citizens – it is important to remember that the community college is the greatest contribution America has made to education and the most democratic of all institutions of higher learning.