



Past Winners of the TYCA Fame and Shame Awards

2010 TYCA Fame and Shame Award Winners

FAME AWARD

“Community College Surge” by Scott Jaschik in *Inside Higher Ed*

- While a mixed bag in some ways, the article, “Community College Surge,” faithfully portrays Community Colleges as vital institutions of higher education
- Jaschik constantly cites a recent report by the League for Innovation in Community Colleges
- Therein he cites Kenneth Green who points out that despite budget cuts, “community colleges are keeping their long pattern of ‘doing more with less. (Directly implying that given the resources, we’d be even better.
- He points out that community colleges are doing as well or better than many four-year college counterparts in responding to student demand for online education.
- However, he does not place a halo around anything and notes than done correctly, online education “is not inexpensive.”
- Sadly—but accurately—however, he also notes that “the one hiring category where a majority of community colleges plan to increase hiring is part-time faculty members [rather than full time].

SHAME AWARD

The Pilot Episode of *Community*, the Sitcom (especially the promotional trailer): Writer/Producer: Dan Harmon

The online description of *Community* reads, “A smarmy lawyer whose education is deemed void by the bar is *forced* to attend a local community college with an extremely *eclectic* staff and student body.”

- The fact that the dishonest lawyer has been *forced* to attend a local community college makes his attendance (and opportunity for a “second chance”) more of a prison sentence than anything else.
- *Eclectic* is quite a euphemism here since
 1. Students are depicted as losers
 2. Instructors are portrayed as perverts
 3. Administrators are seen as befuddled wanna be CEOs who can’t cut it in the corporate world (there may be some truth here)
- The Public Image of Two-Year Colleges Committee offered a brief clip to illustrate *how* and *why* the pilot clip advertising *Community* earned the TYCA Shame Award for 2010.
 - 15 seconds into the clip viewers see a confused man reading off cards in a quad, addressing nobody in particular. After asking “What is a community college?” he answers his own question explaining:
 - “You’ve heard of it as loser college or remedial teens, 20 something dropouts, middle aged divorces, and old people keeping their minds active as they circle the drain to eternity.”

- He concludes with, “However, I wish you luck,” before becoming concerned that he dropped one of his cards.
- The *Community* clip contained other disparaging, remarks including, “Before I attended this school shaped toilet, I was a lawyer.”

2009 TYCA Fame and Shame Award Winners

FAME AWARD

The 2009 TYCA Fame Award went to Second Lady, Dr. Jill Biden, for commitment to the mission of community colleges. The fact that she has chosen to continue to teach at a community college after becoming “Second Lady” speaks volumes about her dedication to two-year college ideals.

- Biden said in a statement. "I have always believed in the power of community colleges to endow students with critical life skills, and I am pleased that I can make a difference by doing what I love to do, teaching people who are excited to learn."
- Though she does not have to work, let alone teach at a two-year or four-year college/university, Biden is thought to be the first second lady to hold a paying job while her husband is in office.
- She could have chosen to teach at George Washington University, or Georgetown University, or the University of Maryland, yet instead, she picked a community college because she feels passionately about them.
- A 28-year veteran educator and community college instructor for nearly a quarter of a century, Dr. Jill Biden, Vice President Biden's wife, currently teaches two classes at Northern Virginia Community College (at the Alexandria campus): an English as a second language course and a developmental English course.
- In addition to Biden's two master's degrees, she also earned a doctorate in education from the University of Delaware in 2007. Her dissertation was on “retaining students in community colleges”
- Biden intends to assume a role as a public advocate for community colleges as second lady, and she also “may advise the Obama administration on related education policies.”

NOTE: Several newspapers and magazines, including *The Boston Globe*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Huffington Post*, *Time*, and many others all ran similar stories detailing aspects of Dr. Jill Biden's commitment to community colleges during the past year. However, the Public Image of Two-Year Colleges committee felt the person rather than a single article (often reprinted in many different publications) deserved to be honored with the TYCA 2009 Fame Award.

HONORABLE MENTION

“Brush with Destitution Fuels a Desire to Succeed,” an article written by Peter Schworm and printed in *The Boston Globe*, January 21, 2009. The story discussed how an opportunity for a higher education provided by Bunker Hill Community College enabled a homeless individual, Maximilien Yelbi, to comprehend his talent and build a sense of self-worth—an experience that enabled him to ultimately state, “I felt free.”

SHAME AWARD

The 2009 Shame Award went to *U.S. News and World Report* for Kim Clark's January 9, 2009 article, “Community Colleges: Cheaper but Not Necessarily Better.” Therein, the author warns those who might opt for “low cost community colleges” rather than pay the rising tuition costs at four-year colleges. “Counselors across the country warn, however, that sometimes students get what they pay for,” suggesting that people who often attend community colleges end up with a second rate education.

- Clark goes on to explain that, “Choosing a two-year college could actually harm students' long-term prospects” because “Research has shown that community colleges, overall, do a poor job of getting students into four-year schools.”
- Clark’s article appeared in “College Knowledge,” a section of *U.S. News and World Report* by the U.S. News Education Team. However, it does not praise the quality of education available at two-year colleges in general. At best, it offers sweeping assertions and limited evidence to justify claims that cheaper is not necessarily equal—or better. Even though, occasionally, a community college education can be as effective as lower division education at a four-year college or university, Clark implies that such occasions are the exception rather than the rule.
- Clark cites a 2008 paper by Harvard Professor Bridget Terry Long, who she identifies as an alleged authority on community colleges, stating that Long “found that, among similar students, those who chose two-year colleges were less likely to get a bachelor's degree than those who went straight to a four-year college.”
- The “College Knowledge” Education Team and Clark further quote Professor Long who notes that “Since employers tend to pay those who actually earn a degree more than those who've had only a few years of college, saving a few thousand dollars on tuition when you are 18 might end up costing you hundreds of thousands of dollars over your lifetime.”
- This is particularly true, according to Long, if students “get discouraged in community college and don't persevere to a bachelor's.”

Although Clark’s article concludes with a reference to a video by Santa Monica Community College that contains some tips that could help a “community college student succeed” in higher education, overall, the article was derogatory in tone and content. Success as defined by the article means transfer to and the reception of a four-year college/university degree.

- Again, most of the tips have nothing to do with quality education that one may receive at a community college. Rather, they focus on transfer because then and only then “students can take advantage of the low-cost classes at community colleges and still make it through to a *prestigious degree*.”
- The author never mentions and in essence dismisses the value of a two-year AA/AS degree or certificate.
- Tips include such advice as, drive “a few extra miles to attend a school [community college] that has a better *transfer* track record.”
- And take honors classes at community colleges to prepare students for rigorous courses and upper-class assignments at universities [the implication being that community college courses in general lack academic rigor and that transfer should be the ultimate goal of a community college student].

2008 TYCA Fame and Shame Award Winners

FAME AWARD

The 2008 TYCA Fame Award went to Gail O. Mellow, President of LaGuardia Community College, New York for the position she took on community colleges at the annual meeting of the American Council on Education—a council that represents all public and private two-year and four-year colleges and universities.

As Scott Jaschik reported in “Call for Equity for Community Colleges” in the February 11 edition of *Inside Education*, Mellow explained that “American higher education ‘is not sustainable,’ and risks a growing detachment from reality if it does not come to grips with the needs of community colleges and the way

higher education and government consistently mistreat the sector.” Highlights of her introductory talk at the annual meeting of the American Council on Education include comments such as:

- “We must stop giving community colleges straw and expecting spun gold.”
- “The fact is that what happens to community colleges affects all of higher education. As higher education leaders, we have allowed the baccalaureate and community college systems to develop separately and unequally, with tenuous points of integration and inadequate financial support.”
- Community Colleges “embrace a radically inclusive student body,” an open door for all those seeking a higher education.
- “We are therefore funding those students most prepared to go to college at rates well above those who need the highest level of support.”
- “Community colleges are not just the junior version of four-year colleges. To understand community college success—or lack thereof—we must find a new way of measuring outcomes. Everyone wants to look at graduation statistics— and I do, too. But without other measures it subverts the real contribution of a community college.”
- Jaschik relates that, “Mellow also noted that community colleges deserve praise, not criticism, when they successfully offer remedial education—even if the student doesn’t reach college level or graduate.”
- “This doesn’t imply a backing away from the standard of graduation with an associate’s degree, but it realistically incorporates the progressive reality of education that seeks to move adults ahead step-by-step.”

In concluding her address, Mellow informed attendees at the American Council on Education’s Robert Atwell Lecture that she was in the midst of writing a paper on community college issues for New York officials—issues that they may have overlooked or insufficiently considered. She further insisted that, “States must not assume that it is ‘an either/or situation’ with regard to supporting community colleges and the rest of higher education.

SHAME AWARD

The 2008 Shame Award went to “Schools Don’t Do Enough to Help Kids Get into 4-year Colleges, Study Says,” an article by Carlos Sadovi in the March 13, 2008 edition of the *Chicago Tribune*. The article asserts that, “A large number of Chicago public high school students ‘sell themselves short’ by attending two-year colleges or vocational schools when they could go on to four-year colleges, a new report says.”

Sadovi frequently quoted a study called “From High School to the Future: Potholes on the Road to College,” a piece that equated education in a community college to a “pothole” in the road of a real education at a four year college or university. While he’s not one of the study’s authors, Sadovi’s article in the *Tribune* reinforced and perpetuated negative images of two-year colleges as well as the faulty notion that people only attend a two-year college as a last resort.

- According to Sadovi’s article and the study he refers to, high schools are not doing their job since “many students simply gave up trying to go to four-year colleges, discouraged or intimidated by the application and financial-aid processes.” He further notes:

- “Researchers found that teachers and school culture had more influence than parents did on whether students went on to four-year colleges,” suggesting that High Schools have a greater responsibility to students to get them in four year colleges as opposed to higher education—which would include community colleges.
- Again and again, the author alludes to the report repeating that “students tended to sell themselves short” by attending two-year colleges for their lower division course work, implying that the only “real” institution of higher education would be a four-year college or university (e.g., “Most of our CPS kids are going to colleges well below the colleges they are qualified to attend,” Roderick said. ‘You go with what you know. This sends precisely the wrong message to students. If you are going to tell them they need to work hard to go to college, you have to have that work pay off.’”)
- Sandovi also cites Melissa Roderick—lead author of the study—noting that while her study only focused on Chicago students, it could just as well apply to “any school system in the United States.” In other words, students who go to two-year colleges in every school system and in every state are “selling themselves short” of a quality education.

While the study focused on Chicago students, Melissa Roderick, the study's lead author, warns that the study could apply to "any school system in the United States." To steer students away from two-year colleges, 27 high schools now employ “post-secondary coaches” to help fill out forms for four-year colleges and thereby avoid “potholes”—community colleges—as one seeks a higher education.

2007 TYCA Fame and Shame Award Winners

FAME WINNER

The 2007 TYCA Fame Award went to **William D. Green** for his article, "My Turn: We've Overlooked One of Our Greatest Assets," which appeared in the May 1, 2006 issue of Newsweek magazine. The CEO of Accenture, a global consulting company with \$17 billion in revenue and 130,000 employees, Green credits Dean College, a two-year residential college outside of Boston for opening the doors of opportunity for people like himself. Son of a plumber, he assumed he would become a plumber too until a visit to the college became a “life-altering experience.” Green notes that:

- “While Americans are waking up to the idea that we need to sharpen our competitive edge in the world, many still overlook our system of community and junior colleges.”
- “An investment in your local junior or community college is a sound investment in the competitiveness of our country and the potential of our citizens.”
- Whenever he gets a chance to talk to young people, he urges them to consider options other than four-year schools because community colleges “can help them become better equipped to continue their education and to face real-world challenges.”
- Green encourages businesses to donate funds, recruit students, offer career counseling and encourage their employees to teach [business] classes at community colleges.
- Today he also sits on Dean College's board of trustees.
- Green concludes his article reiterating his support of two-year colleges in the United States, claiming that he knows what he’s talking about; he is a beneficiary such higher education.

FAME FIRST RUNNER UP

The Public Image of Two Year Colleges Committee agreed that “Community Colleges First Stop for More Students,” by **Matthew Santori** in the April 13, 2006 issue of the Examiner.com was worthy of mention as a First Runner Up in the Fame category. Santori’s article explores many positive reasons for the

popularity of two-year colleges among students seeking a higher education. While he acknowledges that the “junior college” moniker still implies the superiority of four-year colleges and universities, he cites Craig Claget, vice-president of planning, marketing, and advising at Carroll Community College who points out, “As more people go to community colleges and experience it, those views are disappearing.”

SHAME WINNER

The shame award went to “Community Colleges Not Making the Grade,” an article on the Opinion/Editorial page of the **Orange County Register**, December 4, 2006. The article asserts that California’s community colleges dramatically underperform on their two most fundamental missions: graduating students with associate degrees and transferring students to four-year colleges and universities. The author smugly claims that “A good teacher would give community colleges an ‘F’” because:

- Fewer than a tenth of community college students who focus on associate degree courses earn two-year degrees.
- A fourth of students who intended to transfer to four-year schools ever do.

The article’s narrow view of community colleges sees their multiple missions as weaknesses rather than strengths, alleging that, “Trying to be all things to all students may explain a low success rate.” Referring to community colleges like a business, the author sarcastically states, “Sadly, we don’t expect community college officials to work against their own financial interest to reduce the scope or size of their kingdom.” The author concludes with a call to “reevaluate the curriculum at community colleges because taxpayers deserve education that “serves a public interest.”

NOTE: All major claims in this editorial were refuted in subsequent counterpoint articles. Still, uninformed, irresponsible articles—even on an opinion page—continue to perpetuate negative images of two-year colleges.

2006 TYCA Fame and Shame Award Winners

FAME WINNER

The 2006 TYCA Fame Award went to **Dr. Betty Young**, the Harley-Davidson motorcycle riding President of Northwest State Community College in Archbold, Ohio. She embarked on a “unique, innovative tour [September 19-28] designed to raise the profile of all community colleges in Ohio and around the nation as the Economic Engine of the new economy.” She called her tour “Lessons for Leno” in response to frequent and disparaging remarks about community colleges and two-year college students on The Tonight Show (last year’s selection for the Shame Award).

SHAME WINNER

This year, the committee did not present a Shame Award. One person on the Public Image of Two-Year Colleges Committee optimistically said that perhaps public opinion has changed with regard to two-year institutions!

2005 TYCA Fame and Shame Award Winners

FAME WINNER

The 2005 TYCA Fame Award went to **Clint Eastwood** for his movie *Million Dollar Baby* because he presents community colleges as places of opportunity and hope, giving a catalog for a community college to the character that needs it. Additionally, the Fame Award committee felt that *Million Dollar Baby* co-star, **Morgan Freeman**, earned equal acclaim for his attendance at TYCA SE, for donating his honoraria to a community college fund, and for his high praise of community colleges and the role they played in his higher education.

SHAME WINNER

The 2005 TYCA Shame Award went to **Jay Leno** for continually making disparaging remarks about community colleges and community college students on NBC's Tonight Show. Specifically, the award went to Leno for his introductory monologue on March 17, 2004; therein, he noted, "Thousands of students gathered in Sacramento to protest the proposed hike in tuition fees -- all these community college kids." He explained that "You could kind of tell they were community college students," and then ran a video clip of young protesters -- presumably community college students -- holding signs bearing slogans such as "Skool is expensive," "Let us lern," and "Don't raise tooishun."

2004 TYCA Fame and Shame Award Winners

FAME WINNER

Fort Worth Star Telegram is also the 2004 winner of the TYCA Fame Award for a February 2, 2004 article titled, "Don't Dish up that Pine Tree Yet." In that article Dr. Tahita Fulkerson responds to Jim Lee, who was quoted in the January 25th article "Poems from the Edge": "However, by the time I had read enough of Guinn's article to find my friend Jim Lee's remark that in academia 'any junior college is considered Siberia,' I knew that I had to present another view of professional life at two-year colleges. If Rattan would 'eat wood' to leave his employer of three decades, it may be because he just doesn't understand the mission of the institution."

SHAME WINNER

Fort Worth Star Telegram is the 2004 TYCA Shame Award for the article "Poems from the Edge," published on January 25th of 2004, in which the following comment was made in a quote from Dr. Jim Lee: "In our line of work, any junior college is considered Siberia. Most people teaching at them would probably eat wood to get out. But if you stay on junior college faculty too long, unfairly or not, you establish yourself as a sort of junior college type. Typically, you never get out of there."

2003 TYCA Fame and Shame Award Winners

FAME WINNER

Tracey Wong Briggs of USA Today

Her April 22, 2002 article, "Two Years Changed Lives: New Arrivals Pursue Dreams" focused on the All-USA Community and Junior College Academic teams and honored 20 students for their academic achievements, leadership, and service.

SHAME WINNER

Heald College

An advertisement for their school included a dishonest and disparaging portrayal of the two-year college classroom and cost of education.

2002 TYCA Fame and Shame Award Winners

FAME WINNER

Willard Scott of the NBC Today Show

On April 12, 2001 he saluted the 100th anniversary of the community college.

FAME HONORABLE MENTIONS

Mathew Daneman of the Democrat and Chronicle newspaper of Rochester, New York for the March 25, 2001 article "Community Colleges Celebrate 100 Years: Growing by Degrees."

Ellen Olmstead, Chronicle of Higher Education for her May 5, 2001 article, "It's the Community-College Life for Me." This classically educated scholar with degrees from Dartmouth, U Mass at Amherst, and Columbia says, "I taught at colleges and universities, urban high schools, TRIO programs, community-based family-learning centers, and prisons. . . . Now I have finally bested my staying-at-the-same-job record: For seven years, I've taught at . . . a community college." She recounts the deep professional pleasure she gets from teaching at Bristol Community College (the college where the editor of TETYC, Howard Tinberg, also teaches).

SHAME WINNER

March 7, 2002 episode of *ER*

Nurse Abby and four doctors were having a personal conversation, and she said she attended Penn State. One doctor replied, "Really?!" Abby retorted, "Did you think I went to a community college because I'm a nurse?"

SHAME DISHONORABLE MENTIONS

Mayor Thomas M. Menino of Boston. He attended a community college and then received a B.A. from a special program for adults at the University of Massachusetts at Boston. When questioned about why he did not mention the community college on his resume, he said that he did not think of it as a real college.

Peter Carlson of the Washington Post. His July 31, 2001 article about Gail Sheehy's interview with Hillary Rodham Clinton has these quotes: "One of the pleasures of reading Gail Sheehy is sitting back and watching while she starts babbling pseudo-intellectual gibberish like some junior college professor who's been smoking too much wacky weed." And "Wow! You don't generally get a chance to see writing this kooky unless you happen to be employed grading freshman English essays."

2001 TYCA Fame and Shame Award Winners

FAME WINNER

Black Issues in Higher Education

August 17, 2000 "Special Report: Community Colleges: Storied Success"

This story reports articulation agreements between San Francisco City College and 35 Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Illustrated with photos and citations of Blacks of high achievement who came from community college backgrounds, the report is commended for directly addressing the educational function of the two-year college and highlighting a record of student success.

FAME HONORABLE MENTIONS

Sam McManis, Staff Writer, San Francisco Chronicle, for the December 22, 2000 article, "East Bay Writer Hits the Big Time with Saga of a Black Family." This is the story of Richard Dry whose first novel *Leaving* will be published by St. Martin's Press in 2002. The story treats Dry's employment at Las Positas College and Chabot College, both two-year colleges, with the same respect it affords his graduation from San Francisco State University. This story models journalistic practices in the use of institutional names that TYCA would like to see adopted universally.

Jeffrey R. Young, Chronicle of Higher Education for the January 26, 2001 article, "Community Colleges Want a More Eminent Domain." This story reports on the Department of Commerce regulations that currently prevent two-year colleges from creating web addresses ending in "edu" and explores the consequences for two-year colleges by interviewing personnel at William Rainey Harper College in Illinois, Northwest Arkansas Community College, Cuyahoga Community College, and the past and current presidents of the American Association of Community Colleges and the League for Innovation in

the Community College, as well as the author of a relevant article in the *Community College Journal*. The story shows a breadth of understanding of two-year colleges and the agencies that support them. It's tone and thoroughness provide a commendable model for the covering of two-year college issues.

SHAME WINNER

Hope Reeves, New York Times Magazine

December 17, 2000 "Lives: Evening the Score"

The author describes her strong personal response to SAT scores and in so doing passes on her unexamined prejudice that only students of less than average ability attend "the local community college."