# Goals System of the Community College in Context of its Role in Local Environment: Applying to Najran Community College

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## Abstract
Community colleges' mission, purpose, and their role in the local environment are fundamental issues in today's educational environment. They face an increasingly complex environment that demands reconciling increased social obligations, rapid technological change and, public accountability with the limited resources. Community colleges encounter increasingly aggressive competition from other institutions, they which are threatening the very existence. This current environmental conflict poses a challenge for their survival and growth. Community colleges today claims to follow new philosophies and visions to ensure its survival. Practically speaking, they should rethink their mission, goals, in a way that ensures its survival and growth. To deal with such challenges, this study aimed to present a conceptual framework of goals system of the community college, in the context of the overall interaction with their local environment; then apply this conceptual framework to the Najran Community College.
**Keywords**: Community College, Goals System, KSA Community College, Najran Community College, Najran Community College Goals System

## Background
Based on the recommendations of the workshop of community colleges, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) entitled: "Reality and Aspirations of the Development", which was held at King Abdul-Aziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on January 16 to 17 (2010), which recommended - among its recommendations – work to inform and educate segments of society, about goals of community colleges, and the role played by these colleges to develop their local environment. In this context, the main idea of this study originated in the researcher's mind. The main focus of the study is about the goals of the community college because the community college goals are an appropriate approach to the development of its role in the local environment. The Higher education sector in the KSA has witnessed a remarkable quantified increase of community colleges over the past years. The researcher remarked that these colleges are racing with each other, to achieve the distinction to support the stability and growth. In this competitive situation, the community college should adopt the unconventional goals, in a way that reflects their ability to compete and survive.

## Introduction
Over the past half-century, the role of community colleges has grown, they have played an increasingly important role in higher education, many community colleges have adapted to meet the community educational needs, these colleges have become a key resource for development the communities they serve (Felix, A., & Pope, A. 2010). Today community colleges are faced with many organizational and environmental changes and an increasingly turbulent market (Townsend, & Twombly, 2001). Community colleges face "increasingly aggressive competition from for-profit institutions" - such as increasing popularity, e-learning, and online universities, which are more flexible, and more responsive to educational needs than community colleges (Bailey, T., Bawdy, N., & Gum port, P. 2001).

The changes that have occurred over the past years, threaten the existence of community colleges as a component of higher education system, also these changes poses questions such as: To what extent community colleges are still able to compete with other education and training institutions? To what extent community colleges are still able to sell themselves on the advantages of low tuition fees and small classes? (Garmon, 2001).

With the constantly changing environment, community colleges need to find new ways of creating flexible structures and processes and to develop activities and abilities through a strategic perspective, in a way that ensures its survival in this changing environment. Richard Alfred - community college analyst - believes that colleges that do not have strategic efficiency, are more retardation in an increasingly competitive world, they will be at a disadvantage in fast-moving markets (Alfred, 1998).

## Methodology
The study was based primarily on the descriptive approach. Also, it depends on a review of studies on community colleges in general, and the available and relevant studies on the system - goals in educational institutions.

Besides, the study also is based on logic and logical relationships to develop a conceptual model of the goals of the community college system in the context of its role and its relationship to the surrounding environment.

## Goals System Perspective

A goal is a result or achievement toward which effort is directed. It's a future state that we strive to achieve. Perrow (1961) noted: "An understanding of organizational behavior requires close examination of the goals of the organization which reflected in operating policies".

A major question to ask when beginning an analysis of any organization is: What is the organization trying to achieve? This question leads to consideration of goals system. Each organization has a set of goals, which reflect (system goals) of the organization, where each goal is associated with and integrates with other goals. According to Barney and Griffin (1992) the importance of organizational goals are: the basis for guidance and direction functions, facilitate planning, to motivate and inspire employees, and because it is the basis of performance evaluation.

Although there are many intellectual contributions and scientific research on the goals, but most previous research tends to deal with goals on an individual basis, rather than dealing with it as a system of goals (Mitchell, & Chang, 2005). Recently, such a system has been proposed by Kruglanski and colleagues (2002), within this system goals are viewed as Interconnected elements and, hardly invariant or fixed. Consequently, the activation of one goal affects - directly or indirectly - in the other goals, either activate or inhibit other goals. Organizational survival and growth are one of the most important priorities of the senior management level; they are one of the implicit organizational goals, which require recruitment efforts, energy, and resources to achieve them (Liebler, J. Levine, R. & Dervitz, H., 1984).

Any educational institute is viewed as an organization, particularly a college or university. Therefore, the educational institution is often used to denote an organization established to provide higher education (Rezaev, & Maletz, 2012). Because community colleges are more closely to local communities, so they are more susceptible to the impact of environmental changes than other institutions of higher education. Therefore, the goal's system of community colleges should have the ability to respond and deal with this change. The capacity to successfully implement change is of particular importance for community colleges in view of their mission, goals, and Its educational programs related to the community (Wagoner, 2004).

## Community college

Post-secondary education in all patterns and levels has become a necessity dictated by the nature of the era of the stunning speed in the growing knowledge in various fields, as which was characterized by the complexity of the various aspects of life, and this explains the increasing social demand for this type of education, also explains the efforts to develop, especially in the expansion and diversify its fields and patterns. Community colleges are the main forms of post-secondary education, where the college is an educational institution of higher education institutions for less than four years and characterized by providing a variety of programs, the academic and professional application designed to prepare students academically to complete the study at the university or professionally groomed for the job market.

Cohen and Brawer (2000) mention several names in addition to community college such as City College, County College, Technical institute, and Adult education center people's college, democracy's college, Opportunity College. A primary function of the community college is to aid those in the community who want to learn how to secure certain basic necessities (Gleazer, 2000). According to (American community colleges web site): "The most practical way to describe a community college is to say that: it is an institution of higher education that offers both technical and general education associate degrees and typically offers a host of certification programs and specialty training programs". Community colleges serve as the main source of university education for large segments of the students, as well to serve the community within which it resides (Hicks and Jones, 2011).

Hankin (1989), in his book: What makes the community college distinctive - argue "Community colleges are distinctive from other higher education institution on many dimensions, including their historical development, philosophy, student body, faculty, organization, facilities, finances, community relations, programs, and services and delivery system". The community college comes closer than the other educational institution to responding to the multiple and continuous learning needs of local communities. It is a chance institution for those who were not able to enter universities or who wish to change jobs or the direction of their lives (Cross, 1990). It is, for many people, an only chance institution. This philosophy has ensured that community colleges continue and survival.

In probing community college relationships with the community, a number of questions; soon surface: Is the community college role, limited to respond or react to community need? Does that mean the community college is always influenced by its community and does not play a role in shaping that community? The most important issue is not really what the community college is to do, but what it is to be, what its goals?

## Community Colleges in KSA

According to the national report issued by the Ministry of Higher Education KSA, (2008) titled "Education Development In The Kingdom": The community college is defined as the institution includes a number of programs and disciplines of study for two or three years of study at the intermediate level between high school and undergraduate. Programs of this institution are comprehensive and flexible to fit the needs of individuals and society, the needs of the development of human resources plans. Programs of study in college allow obtaining certificates called (the degree of participation), which is equivalent to a medium university degree.

Community colleges in the KSA are typically comprehensive and flexible in order to cater for the needs of individuals and society, as well as the needs of development plans for human resources. There are more than 400 programs offered by community colleges (Ministry of Higher Education, KSA, 2011). The community colleges in KSA are characterized by inclusiveness in the academic, professional programs and the multiple functions; therefore, they are a candidate to contribute to solving the major problems affecting higher education in the Kingdom, such as:

-Inability to meet the growing demand for university education and this crisis cannot be solved by traditional methods currently used in the development of educational institutions (Manea, 2001).

- University education is available in major cities and this has resulted in "a large class of the strata of society of higher education opportunities, especially in rural and remote areas of deprivation (Hamidi, 2000).

Community colleges in Saudi Arabia are supervised by universities, to support these colleges through their subordination with more experienced universities (Al-Murabit, 2012). Nevertheless, some community colleges have suffered from society's perception about the graduates and the college level and the level of its importance, they are considered to be less of universities (Shaw, 2006).

Community colleges have seen rapidly widespread growth throughout the KSA, where three community colleges opened in 1999 in the three regions: Jizan, Hail, and Tabuk. Such colleges came to contribute to relieve the pressure on traditional academic institutions and to provide programs that are consistent with the needs of the labor market, in addition to docking in close and effective link with the community. This was followed by a large expansion during a few years; over fifty community colleges have also been established in the last years (Hamdan, 2005). Perhaps this rapid quantitative expansion of the various community colleges across the Kingdom refers to the conviction that: that colleges are a growing interest by those responsible for higher education. Also, the expansion of community colleges refers to the importance of program diversification to ensure a qualified workforce to meet society's needs and carry out development plans (Al Ohali1, & Al Aqili, 2009).

Community colleges in KSA offer five basic kinds of programs: (1) transfer (2) technical and occupational (3) continuing education (4) remedial education; and (5) workforce development. While all five kinds are not necessarily part of the community college or similar institutions in all communities in KSA. Generally, community colleges have two main programs:
- Develops programs that prepare high school graduates to go in to the labor Market in to productive areas and consolidate their skills through training programs.
- Transition programs that provide an opportunity for outstanding students to pursue a university education.

Community colleges have lower entry standards than universities, follow the semester calendar and use the credit hour system for internal accounting purposes. Each academic year is divided into two semesters and an abbreviated summer session. Under the Ministry of Higher Education regulations, a student's semester load is not to exceed 10 hours during the summer session and up to 18 hours during the fall and spring semesters. The College qualifies its graduates to enter the labor market they obtain a suitable amount of experience and theoretical and applied knowledge. In addition, they qualify graduates to pursue their university studies (The Ministry of Higher Education, 1432HA).

Despite their central role in the life of their communities, community colleges in KSA faced challenges and conditions that threaten their existence such as shrinking student population bases, the inability to attract and retain faculty. These issues are magnified for KSA community colleges due to their declining populations and state funding, as well as limited access to qualified personnel. The most difficult challenge facing these colleges is how to achieve survival, growth, and development in the light of the quantitative increase of the number of these colleges in the Kingdom. Appropriate entrance to check the ability of community colleges to grow and survive is through the study of the goals, which strive to achieve.

## The goals of community colleges in KSA

Studies confirm that the global community colleges dealt with the philosophy that established for which those colleges, is to achieve an organic docking society, permanent response to the requirements arising from the rapid development, the logic of the market, and meet the needs of development, according to the activity of the local community.

Crosson, (1983) noted that "Community service is especially important for community colleges" and

that feature is what distinguishes this type of colleges from other types of colleges and universities. The community college should be committed to improvement in all aspects of community life and should move beyond age barriers, degree structures, and credentials toward urban renewal, environmental renewal, political renewal, and even moral and spiritual renewal.

This trend is reflected in the functions and goals of community colleges in KSA, where those functions and goals focused on the close link between the community colleges and the communities, in addition to being sought to accommodate the largest possible number of higher education provides a range of other functions conjoined society such as training in the profession, continuing education, and job education for members community, and job guidance for graduates of high school to help to choose the appropriate scientific field.

The main purpose of establishing community colleges s to expand educational opportunities and to help universities which are under pressure of accepting the increasing number of high school graduates in a country whose population is growing rapidly (AL-Murabit, 2012). Although there are general goals shared by almost all community colleges all over the world, but there are particular goals for each country according to its needs. Most community colleges in Saudi Arabia seek to achieve the following goals and objectives (National Report on Education Development - KSA, 2008):
- To accommodate high school graduates, for completing their university study.
- To provide the community with the technical professions.
- To create effective community participation that helps develop the society.
- To fulfill the actual needs of the labor market through constant review of programs and curricula.
- To offer a variety of comprehensive practical educational programs that prepare students either for university or to join the labor market.
- To accept students from the high school stage who could not join bachelor's programs and qualify them for the labor market or for pursuing their university studies.
- To Link the College with the professional community by holding periodical meetings and visits.
- To carry out studies and research on qualification, training, and development programs needed in the labor market.
- To introduce studies that meets the needs of the community in solving problems existing therein.
- To coordinate and exchange of experiences with different sectors of society to keep up with the requirements of development.

It should be noted that the goals of community colleges - in the manner described above - is, in fact, goals that reflect the needs of the environment of these colleges in what could be called (production goals). In doing so, there is a neglect of the other fundamental goals related to these colleges – as an entity in the environment - that strives to survive and to grow. Community College needs from the environment to support its continuation and to enhance its growth, in what could be called a (supportive goals). The community college should not confine its goals in production only, but should have supportive goals in accordance with a strategic perspective, to ensure survival and, growth at the same time.

**Framework for goals system of community college**
The community college sustainability is based on a simple principle -as mentioned in the "US Environmental Protection Agency"- "Everything that we need for our survival and well-being depends, either directly or indirectly, on our natural environment". A community college may lose their sensitivity to the environment, so it may become vulnerable to forces in the environment which are permitted to upset internal priorities, promotes disorganization.

In today's environment variable, simply those functions and goals which focused on the close link between the community colleges and the community (Accommodate students, profession training, and continuing education) do not guarantee the survival and continuity. Community colleges should conduct environmental surveys that help to identify any areas in which to grow and which to scale back (Alfred, 2006). The success of the colleges depends upon the ability to adapt to a rapidly changing external environment, while internal focus and reliance on historical data, does not encourage anticipating environmental changes and then assess its impact (Morrison, 1992). The purpose of the environmental survey is to provide a wide range of information that will be able to understand the current trends and potential so that it can set a proper goal for survival and growth.

Any educational institution is considered a subsystem of the overall environment system. Community College is no exception, it is a system within an environmental system, which affects, and affects their systems. So, to understand community College goals, should first explain the relationship between the college on the one hand, and environmental factors and variables on the other hand.

It is known that the communities and its organizations do not stay over the years they are in constant mobility, in constant development, their social and economic systems and methods in life. Community College is inseparable from the reality of this changing society, it has an organic relationship imposes mutual benefits and

needs, between community colleges and the components of an environmental surroundings, where community colleges provide an environmental needs in the form of eligible efficient, educational programs, training... etc., where the environment provides, support and basic requirements for these colleges to carry out its functions.

Accordingly, community college should - in order to support the continuity of existence, adapt their positions to the requirements of this change - monitoring trends surrounding environment change, and of its political, economic and social systems, and then try to adapt to these changes. In other words, the focus of the effort to achieve the production goals only (environmental needs), does not guarantee the survival and continuity of the community college, it should be - in order to support the continuity of existence - adjust their positions and their efforts, according to environmental changes, and then trying to adapt to this change, not only that, but in an attempt to influence the formulation of future conditions and the surrounding environment, which helps growth and development.

According to this conception of the relationship between the community college and the surrounding environment, we can distinguish three main activities that should be carried out by the community college: Activities related to the reasons for their existence (Reflected the goals of productivity plans), activities to support the existence and continuity in the environment (reflected in the goals of supportive plans), and activities related to the growth and development (reflected in the goals of competitive plans). Consistent with the above explanation, the framework of goal system for the community college includes three components as shown in the following figure (1):

**Figure (1)**
**Goals System of the Community College**
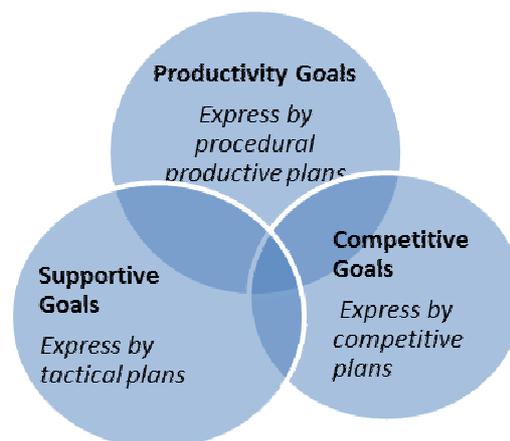


Before turning to these categories to structure the goals, we should consider some basic guidelines. First of all, let us distinguish between long-range goals and short-range goals. Long-range goals remain essential for providing a broad view of the direction during the next few years. Short-range or yearly goals, however, need to be more practical, specific, achievable, and communicable. It is assumed that such goals correlate within the framework of long-range goals.

The proposed framework for the Goal System of the Community College in Context of its Role in local Environment includes three components:

Productivity goals: Productivity is defined as the organization's ability to carry out its purpose or to do that which it was created to do. In the case of community college the most obvious products, relate to the student's performance, as well as their attitudes and values. These products evaluated in terms of their usefulness or potential for usefulness to society.

The productivity goals, they are goals related to the reasons for the existence of a community college, persistence in the environment, and expressed needs of the environment of the community college. These productivity goals are, represent in the operational plans, for example, the goals of educational programs offered by the college, which prepares students for jobs required in the labor market plans.

Supportive goals: are goals that are devoted to the survival of the community college, support continuities, achieve productivity goals. These goals reflect the needs of the community college from the environment, such as obtaining community confidence, acceptance, and acclaim from the community. Supportive goals are represented in the plans and efforts related to its ability to adapt to changes in the surrounding environment, and to deal with the threats to its existence, for example, goals plan relating to adopting and implement new technology.

Competitive goals: competition is an advantage gained over competitors by offering customers greater value, either through lower prices or by providing more additional benefits and service. Finding and nurturing a

competitive advantage can mean increased profits and a venture that is sustainable and successful over the long term. To check whether the college's efforts create a competitive advantage, we can ask the following questions: What does community college do better than other institutions of higher education in the state? What do other institutions of higher education in the area do better than the community college? What opportunities could the Community College take advantage in the next years?

The competitive advantage allows community college to produce more effectively than others. Community college should develop strategies in order to maintain a competitive advantage. There are types of strategies are available in the environment such as the better educational value, accessibility, internal processes (recruitment/enrollment /registration, completion/ graduation, record keeping), Competitive goals relate to the ability of a community college to create a competitive advantage, efforts to achieve excellence which enabling to take advantage of every opportunity offered by the surrounding environment, in a way that supports the development and growth. For example, goals relating to obtaining community confidence through, ability to respond quickly to the market.

The proposed framework, does not mean that the community colleges should, focused its effort to achieve supportive goals (related to their survival), competitive goals (related to their growth), and neglecting productivity goals (related to their existence and survival in the environment), but there should be an integral and a simultaneous balance between these goals, in the context of the surrounding environment, trends, and the relationship with the environment. It should be noted that the intersection point of the three goals represents the strategic dimension, which means that the three goals should be set as part of the basis of strategic thought.

The following section is devoted to illustrating how the theoretical framework (Goals System for Community College) can be applied to the goals of the Najran Community College in the context of the surrounding environment.

## Najran Community College System Goals

Establishing the college started in 1422 AH pursuant to a Cabinet Decree no. (3) on 5/2/1422 AH that endorsed the Higher Education Council, Decree no. (4/22) on 4/3/1422 AH. Admission was inaugurated at the beginning of the academic year 1425 AH.

According to the Najran Community College Report in (2013), and building on a framework of the goals system for community college, we can distinguish three types of goals that, the college seeks to achieve:
Productivity goals of the Najran Community College: These goals reflect the rationale for the existence of the college and the reasons for its survival and continuity in the environment. Productivity goals are implemented by the general plans, educational programs, and scientific activities. The college offers four programs of study: Applied medical sciences, information systems, computer science, management science, as well as to provide continuous training programs, and seminars for various sectors in Najran. Najran community college productive goals are represented as:
-To create an opportunity for high school graduates to complete their undergraduate degree.
-To provide necessary facilities to assist students in achieving their educational goals as well their personal goals.
-To extend the opportunity for higher education to those who would not get the opportunity of university education .
-To offer training programs for employment in specialized fields.
-To involve the community to in  learning and the expansion of knowledge.
-To offer continuing education programs and courses to assist community members to retrain, upgrade skills and career advancement.
-To encourage all new managerial policies that enhance the educational process.
- To prepare students to get suitable jobs.
Supportive goals of the Najran Community College: The supportive goals require dealing with the question: What is changing in the environment, which could adversely affect the Najran Community College? Specifically, consider all external threats to the college; social, cultural, demographic, economic, political, legal, local, state, national, global. Najran Community College supportive goals can be represented as:
-To gain public confidence and acceptance and acclaim from the community.
-To get support from members of the community and its institutions.
-To polarize material and moral support, participation and cooperation with various institutions.
-To encourage all new managerial system and policies that enhance the educational process.
- To improve the college services of the through continuous evaluation and revision of goals and objectives, instruction, programs.
- To get accreditation of local and international institutions (the college get accreditation from the COE•).

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• The American Council of Education) COE) is an enterprise specialized to monitor the academic performance of the Supreme institutes and colleges across the specialized body for academic accreditation granted accreditation after ensuring the availability of academic efficiency

Competitive goals of Najran Community College: These goals are represented in college efforts to achieve excellence, and college efforts to take advantage of every opportunity offered by the surrounding environment. Community's competitive goals can be represented as:

-Student Focus - in all things.

- Minimal Credit Hours to achieve certification.

-Academic Advising: help students to integrate into the social and academic life altogether, and give it a sense of security.

-Individualized Education; fit some community college students, especially in the therapeutic development courses where they focus on individual differences in learning speed.

-The community college organization continuously adapts to a changing environment.

-Accessible to students and visitors with disabilities.

- Excellence in physical facilities and student support services.

**Conclusions**

The most difficult challenge facing the community colleges is how to achieve the survival, growth and development in the light of the steady increase of these colleges, especially in KSA, which imposes follow new philosophies and new visions to ensure the survival of community colleges. Practically, we must rethink their mission, goals, a way that ensures its survival and growth. In this context, this study has provided a conceptual framework for the (goals – system) of the community college, according to the concept of the relationship between the community college and surrounding environment. The conceptual framework for the goals system of the community college in the context of its role in the local environment includes three elements: productivity goals, supportive goals, and competitive goals. (Productivity goals) related to the justification of community college existence, reflects the needs of the environment from the college, (supportive goals) related to the justification to stay continuously in the environment, reflect the needs of the college from the environment, and (competitive goals) represented the efforts to achieve excellence, reflect the efforts to take advantage of every opportunity offered by the surrounding environment.

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