DISSERTATION

ASIAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES: AN

INQUIRY INTO SUCCESS FACTORS, INSIGHTS, AND PERSPECTIVES

Submitted by

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ABSTRACT

ASIAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES: AN
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This qualitative, narrative inquiry study relied upon story telling to elicit key
notions and themes in an attempt to understand the success factors, insights, and
perspectives on leadership by the Asian American leaders in the community colleges.
Critical Race Theory (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Vargas, 1999) is used as both frame and
methodology to capture the individual experiences and voices of Asian American leaders
in the community colleges by focusing on the racialized experiences of the participants'
life and career.

A convenience sample of five Asian American participants was used in this study.
These participants occupied dean-level positions and above in the community college
organizational hierarchy. Loosely structured interviews were conducted to gather data
and a modified holistic content analysis approach was used to decipher the data (Lieblich,
Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber, 1998). Through the use of critical incidents in the re-telling
of the participants' stories about their journey to leadership positions and their lives, the
researcher is able to summarize a series of emergent themes, categorized into racial
insider and racial outsider related themes. Specifically three emergent themes were

discussed in greater detail and they are: (a) Asian American leaders in the community colleges travel a non-traditional career path to leadership positions; (b) community college boards seem to have a tendency to "re-tread" presidents, and thereby contributing indirectly and tangentially to a lack of Asian Americans in leadership positions in the community colleges; and (c) Asian American leaders seem to possess a rebelliousness that enables them to buck a trend, and not bow to parental or social pressures.

The central storyline of the participants' success stories is one of strong cultural influence on the leadership style of the Asian American participants. The people-centric, collaborative, open, and team-oriented leadership style is embraced by all the participants and has enabled their success on the journey and on the jobs as leaders in the community colleges. At this critical junction of the community college history when the existence of community colleges is questioned because of a lack of financial resources, this type of leadership style could potentially be transformative, hence effective for the community colleges. In addition, the participants' success stories help to debunk the notion that Asian Americans are not suited for leadership positions. Possible future research on the topic of Asian American leadership is to measure the effectiveness of the Asian American leadership style on the health and maintenance of the community college organization.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The generosity of my Asian American participants who gave me their time, and encouragement is gratefully acknowledged here. You know who you are and I dedicate this dissertation to the furtherance of scholarship on Asian Americans in higher education[1].

The faculty in the community college leadership program at Colorado State University and especially my dissertation committee, Dr. Tim Davies, Dr. Jim Banning, Dr. Keiko Krahnke and Dr. Thao Le, you truly are the best faculty any student could encounter for you want nothing less than the complete success of your students. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

My parents and my siblings who have been waiting for so many years for the little sister to get her doctorate—your sacrifices are noted and your love is appreciated by me. To my mother in heaven, I know you could see how far your daughter has come and will go! I owe you a karmic debt and may you find solace and peace in eternity.

To my son, Art, who travels this life with me with a smile and a wry sense of humor, I know you will do even greater things than your mother. But I want you to know especially that I stuck this one out mostly for you.

To my husband and best friend, Elmer, whose promise to help me through a doctoral program is what started us off on this journey and what a journey it has been. I wouldn't be here today without your undying love and your unwavering support. I love you and I'm grateful for your dedication and your perseverance.

This dissertation project is about much more than Asian Americans or leadership; to me, the process has been intimately intertwined with my own life. The journey, with its twists and turns, has enabled me to begin to appreciate the true meaning of life. Looking beyond the physical plane of this life, beyond *maya,* I struggle to make the right choices in life, to be nimble and to make positive changes. The greatest purpose and joy of my life, now, is the journey to discover the depth of my capacity to create and to express love, compassion, forgiveness, generosity, and wisdom. In this vein, I dedicate this dissertation to all beings who struggle to be awake, to live their best lives!

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

A Personal Beginning

It's been three years since I composed my initial research proposal for my

doctoral program at Colorado State University. In the intervening years, major events

occurred in my professional and personal life, which made it next to impossible to do

concentrated and focused work on my doctoral dissertation. In addition, lack of

application of personal willpower played a role as well. So here I sit in the late spring

2009, with the vagaries of the Northern California weather (a short heat wave interrupts

an unusually cool and rainy spring) playing upon my disquiet mind, I begin to ponder the

nature of my undertaking.

As asked by my husband and likely echoed by the reader, "What is Asian

American leadership"?

The Forming of an Inquiry

To answer this question properly, I need to get to the base of this question. What

is leadership?

The concept of leadership and the process of conceptualizing leadership are both fraught with uncertainty and varying definitions. In the popular culture of America, there appears to be an over-production of books and other published materials on leadership. A casual visit to the bookstore or Amazon.com will bear this out. For example, a quick search on Amazon.com produced hundreds of thousands of titles on leadership in all its facets from *Leadership for Dummies* to *Total Leadership*. It's almost as if leadership has replaced self-help as THE American topic of the day.

In the United States of America, we have a tendency to define leadership in the person of a leader: we are infatuated with charismatic leaders who are good looking and inspire devotion from their followers. In the political arena, this line of charismatic male leaders more or less started with JFK down to Bill Clinton, now Barack Obama. As Michael Elliott writes in the 2009 *Time* magazine special on leadership, Max Weber's rudimentary categorization of leaders into the traditional, the charismatic, and the legal-bureaucratic seems to hold true even to this day.

However, the conceptualization of leadership as embodied solely by a charismatic leader does not easily translate to or resonate with the rest of the world, not Europe, not Asia, not Africa, nor South America. There are all kinds of leaders in the world today; one size does not fit all leaders. Take the current UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon as an example. He regularly receives bitter attacks from the likes of *Foreign Policy* magazine for frittering away UN's influence when global leadership is urgently needed. Yet, Ban has been praised by the president of the UN Foundation as recognizing the horizontal nature of the United Nations. He has been noted as possessing great skills in negotiations, coordination, and finding consensus. Ban's leadership style appears to be a

good fit for the United Nations (Elliott, 2009). There is no question that Ban does not fit the American model of an outwardly charismatic leader, though.

The anxiety of definition and the centrality of the leader in the definition of leadership are both echoed in the scholarly literature on leadership. Yulk noted back in 1981 that the study of leadership is a relatively new discipline. James McGregor Burns wrote in his seminal book on *Leadership* that it "is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth" (p.3). From the classic works of the Greek philosophers to the Eastern philosophers, there have been musings, philosophizing or even theorizing about leadership. In the less ancient times, works by Weber, Simmel, Lasswell, and Erickson contained similar musings, philosophizing, and theorizing. Scientific research into leadership did not occur until the late twentieth century. Now there is a huge industry of publication on leadership, the percentage of which that is academic research remains relatively small.

Even with the growing body of literature on leadership, the definition of leadership is not agreed to or with universally (Stogdill, 1974; Burns, 1978; Kellerman, 1984; Rost, 1991). However, two concepts are perennially present in the definition of leadership: that it is a group phenomenon/process and that there is a leader exercising influence/power/coercion/authority over followers. There can be no leadership without a leader; hence, much of the research has been conducted on the point person in this phenomenon, which is the leader.

Banks (2006) summarized four major approaches to research on leadership: power-influence approach, trait approach, behavioral approach, and situational approach

(p. 302). The power-influence approach is a close by-product of Weber's theorizing of the traditional leader: power is accrued to the leader and he exercises power by exerting influence, persuasion, coercion, and other forms of indoctrination to make the followers take his lead. Trait theory of leadership is closely allied with Weber's concept of a charismatic leader. It assumes that a leader can be differentiated from his followers by his personality, character, or other qualities. Although trait theory is ostensibly no longer in vogue, the great men of history concept of leadership still holds sway, certainly in the American popular imagination. Personal qualities such as intelligence, self-confidence, high energy, and persuasive skills are associated with a great leader in trait theory. Behavioral approaches put credence into what leaders do. They are particularly concerned with identifying and understanding the effective behavior and activities of leaders. Situational approaches place effective leaders in context and are closely related to the contingency approaches.

No matter the approach, research on leadership is, in most cases, focused on the leader, even though there is a growing body of literature that discuss the group or the followers. However, the leaders being studied in these leadership researches have mostly been White and male. Given the value of multiculturalism, there is a need to expand the extant research on leadership to include non-White, non-male leaders.

Refining the Inquiry

While there is traditionally limited study on leadership that has as its subject leaders who are non-White and non-male, Asian Americans are the least studied, hence least understood leaders among them all. There is ample evidence in the literature that

few Asian Americans occupy top leadership positions, higher education not excepted. According to the American Council on Higher Education 2004 annual report on minorities in higher education, only 57 Asian American/ Pacific Islanders are presidents of colleges and universities. Almost all of them are men and most of them are in fact presiding at the community colleges, the campuses in the University of Hawaii system, and at for-profit, regionally accredited degree-granting institutions (ACE, 2004).

There is limited discussion in the literature so far on the structural factors such as institutional barriers, discrimination, and disadvantage accrued to a person of Asian American heritage seeking or obtaining leadership positions (Lum, 2005); there is suggestion, primarily in the works by doctoral students that the Asian cultural values of non-aggression, non-confrontation, collaboration, and relationship building are the very reasons why so few Asian Americans are at the helm of community colleges (Wong, 2002; Chong, 2003; Adrian, 2004; Somer, 2007).

To take off from the extant literature, I want to conduct a qualitative study that explores the experiences of success on the journey and on the job of Asian American men and women who have achieved leadership positions at the dean level and above in the community college system. The mode of inquiry is narrative based in my study— listening to the stories of these Asian Americans will hopefully yield new insights and perspectives on leadership. The goal of the study is to discern and summarize for interested parties the factors that enabled the research participants to be successful both in obtaining leadership positions and performing in these same leadership positions. An ancillary objective is to discover if any of these factors lead to conclusive insights on any discernible differences between these Asian American leaders and majority leaders in

style and in substance. The ultimate goal is to hopefully gain new insights and perspectives on leadership from the group of Asian American leaders.

I need to insert a brief note here to clarify for the reader my use of the term Asian American. In the course of literature review, I will some times follow the literature in using either Asian American or Asian Pacific American or APA. I follow the usage and definition of Asian American or Asian Pacific American or APA by the 2000 census and the subsequent adoption of the same definition and usage by the Office of Business Management (OMB) as the standard for all federal uses[1]. In some instances when my participants have used the term API (Asian/Pacific Islander), I follow their usage to denote Asian Americans.

Inquiry Questions

The central inquiry is the experiences of the participants on the journey to attain leadership positions and performance while in these positions. The primary research question is:

1. What in the participants' experiences made them successful on the journey to leadership positions and continue to enable them to perform while in these same leadership positions?

A related research question is:

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[1] See more detailed explanation of my adoption of the term of Asian American following the example of the federal government in Chapter 2: Literature Review and Chapter 3: Methodology.

2. What are the most important pieces of advice they would give to young Asian American professionals aspiring toward leadership positions?

Inquiry Limitations and Delimitations

Although Asian Americans encompass about 30 ethnic groups and about 300 different languages are used in the Asian American communities (Zhu, 2000), my study's participants fall into three groups: Chinese American, Japanese American, and Indian American. The majority of the participants are Chinese American with one Japanese American and one Indian American participant. While it would be a fascinating study to explore the reasons why Asian American leaders in the community college fall into the "top" three ethnicities in Asian America both in numbers and in the degree of success, it is beyond the scope of this inquiry. Further, the ethnicity of my participants is an aspect of the study that is minimally explored, if at all. In the course of using Critical Race Theory to explore the meaning of my participants' stories, the racial implications of being an Asian American leader in the community colleges are explored, but I do not drill down to ethnic differences between and among my Asian American participants. In addition, my study is primarily a celebratory inquiry focused almost exclusively on the success of my participants. The dual delimitation of not exploring ethnic differences between and among my Asian American participants, and adopting an intentional positive stance and tone to my narrative inquiry, while self-selected, nonetheless fulfills the primary goal of this inquiry, which is to discover new insights and perspectives on leadership from Asian American leaders in the community college system.

Significance of Inquiry

The lack of Asian Americans in leadership positions in the American community colleges is mirrored by an equivalent lack of studies regarding Asian Americans in leadership positions in the American community colleges. My scan of the literature revealed no published monographs on the topic of Asian American leadership in the community college. Doctoral students have been the ones conducting research on this topic. While there is some research being done on Asian American students, few have, as their research focus, Asian American leadership in the American community colleges (Wong, 2002; Chong, 2003; Adrian, 2004; Somer, 2007). Chong's (2003) dissertation is narrowly focused on Asian Pacific American trustees in the community colleges. Chong (2003) interviewed all 13 Asian Pacific American trustees in the California Community College system in order to better understand the experiences of these individuals with the conclusion of much needed, greater representation of Asian/Pacific Americans in higher education. Adrian (2004) uses an expanded version of Hong and Chiu's (2001) dynamic constructivist framework to study Asian American leaders. She posits that Asian Americans leaders, having exposure to multiple interpretative frames including ethnicity, multiple identities (bicultural and academic identities), and values such as personal, cultural, religious, and family values, organizational cultures and leadership styles, construct leadership in a dynamic and fluid fashion by switching between and amongst these interpretative frames. Somer (2007) conducted a narrative inquiry to explore the experiences and perspectives of five Asian American females who have sought vice president and/or president positions in the community colleges. Her study concluded with nine themes that these Asian American females faced as barriers and facilitators on their

career path: mother as role model, biculturalism and bicultural efficacy, unplanned pathways and not self-identifying, earned leadership positions, strong work ethic, stereotyping and assumptions, Asian physicality and invisibility, fracturing the glass ceiling, and positive attitude and strength. Somer's study is the closest in approach and design to mine; however, her focus is exclusively Asian American females whereas this study includes men and women.

The departure of my study from all previous studies is the intentional positive tone it adopts. In moving away from a language of deficit and barrier, I, instead, want to celebrate the success of Asian Americans on the journey to become leaders in the community colleges and on the job as leaders in the community colleges. This intentional laudatory tone is the most significant factor that separates my study from all the rest of the studies. While I'm not closed off to the negative experiences of the participants on the journey and on the job, my purpose is to celebrate their success and learn lessons from their success so that the future generations can benefit. I want to contribute to the literature on Asian American leadership in a positive way as well by conducting this study.

Further, the narrative inquiry stance adopted in this study means I turn away from the traditional formalistic studies in validating a particular theoretical construct offered to explain the phenomenon of Asian American leadership and why there are so few Asian Americans in top leadership positions or whether racial discrimination plays a central role in this phenomenon are secondary to the lived experiences of Asian American leaders, stories of their ascent, of their performance, and of their lives. Through the telling and

retelling of these stories, I hope to discern new insights and perspectives on leadership from the Asian American participants in this study.

Researcher's Perspective

There is no denying the personal significance of this study to me: I very much desire to use my study to bolster the positive image of Asian Americans as leaders and as potential leaders. I am vested in helping to increase the number of Asian Americans in senior leadership positions in the American community colleges. In addition, by adopting narrative inquiry as the primary mode of data collection and analysis, the researcher is at the center of this research enterprise. My experiences, perspectives, and insights as an Asian American administrator in the California community college system will come into play as I listen to the participants' stories and especially as I attempt to analyze the data and draw conclusions regarding Asian American leadership. It's imperative that I disclose fully about myself as the researcher.

I'm a Chinese woman born and raised in mainland China. I came to the United States to attend graduate school. I'm a naturalized American citizen. I have worked in the California community college system for more than fifteen years, first as a teaching librarian, then as an administrator in academic computing, and now as a senior administrator in charge of the library, media services, and distance education.

As a person, I firmly believe in equity and in the eradication of disparity. As a woman, I can personally attest to the differentiated treatment of men and women simply because of their gender. As a Chinese American, I believe that here in America, the land

of the espoused freedom and equality, a minority person, man or woman, still does not possess the same level of advantage and opportunity as a majority person. Skin color is a signifier of cultural inferiority that is buttressed by a political system that advances the interests of the Whites at the expense of non-Whites. I believe that race matters, so does gender, so does ethnicity. The intersection of all these factors in the construction of one's identify amidst the ever-changing cultural landscape would constitute an intriguing research study. However, I'm not a wild-eyed revolutionary intent on the overthrow of the existing regime. I personally find it unfair that Asian Americans are deemed somewhat deficient when it comes to leadership capabilities. Rather than being judged at an individual level, Asian Americans tend to have certain pre-conceptions attached to them by the majority. To debunk some of these pre-conceptions, I want to present narratives of success of Asian Americans as leaders in the community colleges. It is a small personal gesture for equity and justice for Asian Americans.

Equity and justice for Asian Americans constitute a social good as well. Increasing the number of Asian Americans in senior leadership positions is not only beneficial to the students (Pascarella et al, 1996; Chang, 1999; Hurtado, 2001), but also society as a whole (Tien 1998; Lum, 2008; Saigo, 2008). The lack of Asian American leaders in the community colleges is a phenomenon about which the whole society should care. Asian American leadership bring with them skills and insights to globalize collegiate education and "help in understanding the diversity and nuance in the vast regions of Asian and the Pacific" (Teranishi et al, 2009, p.65). The presence of Asian American leadership in the community college will help dispel myths about Asian American students so that our educational system and broader society can fully develop

and engage these students. In general greater representation of Asian American leaders will lead to changes that will better serve the needs of Asian American students and the educational system as a whole.

Chapter Summary

For those Asian American individuals who have been successful in cracking the bamboo ceiling (Hyun, 2006) and achieved the positions of deans and above in the community colleges, a research study on the factors that enabled them to be successful in obtaining these leadership positions and performing while in these same positions is needed. I plan on conducting such a celebratory study, not only to praise these individuals and their achievements, but to also debunk some of the popular myths about the unsuitability of Asian Americans for leadership positions. This study will yield new insights and perspectives on leadership from these Asian American leaders. It will allow majority men and women to understand and learn from those insights and perspectives. It will also give hope and affirmation to aspiring Asian American leaders in the community colleges.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In Chapter One I explained that there is a limited number of studies on Asian American leadership in the American community colleges; further, those few extant studies have focused on the barriers to more Asian Americans moving on to senior or executive level leadership positions in the community colleges or higher education in general. In moving away from studies on the barriers of Asian Americans attaining senior or executive level leadership positions in the community colleges or higher education in general, I instead chose to conduct a celebratory study of the positive contributions by Asian American leaders in the American community colleges. My study attempted to elicit that which in the experiences of these Asian Americans that enabled them to successfully obtain leadership positions and to perform while in these same leadership positions. My narrative inquiry project is to gain new insights and perspectives on leadership from the Asian American participants.

As this is an open-ended study, I offer the following literature review as contextual information. I will begin by providing background and historical information on Asian Americans in the United States followed by a review of the literature on Asian American leadership. I will then briefly review multicultural leadership coupled with the

philosophy, the tenets, and major themes of critical race theory (CRT). I will end the literature review by reviewing the state of research on Asian Americans in higher education, and how CRT could be a useful framework and methodology for research on Asian Americans in higher education.

Asian Americans: Background and History

Asian Americans: Basic Facts

Following the revised definition of "Asian" and "Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander" used in the 2000 census, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) of the US federal government adopted the revised definitions for official use by all federal agencies. The "Asian" category is defined as "a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent" (United States Census Bureau, 2002, p.3). Twenty-five different ethnic groups are considered to be Asian Americans by the United States Census Bureau and they include: Asian Indian, Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Indo Chinese, Indonesian, Iwo Jiman, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Malaysian, Maldivian, Nepalese, Okinawan, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Taiwanese, Thai, Vietnamese and "Other Asian, not specified."

Asian Americans experienced a 48% population growth between 1990 and 2000. Based on the 2000 census, Asian American population ranges from 3.6% (10,242,998 single race) to 4.2% (11,898,828 multirace) of the overall US population (US Census Bureau, 2002). By 2020, Asian Americans are expected to number 18.5 million, representing 5.7% of the US population. The high population growth rate for Asian

Americans is largely driven by immigration; it is estimated that six out of ten Asian Americans are foreign-born (Gudykunst, 2001; Wu, 2002).

Of the 10.2 million Asian Americans, the Chinese, the Filipino, and Asian Indian subgroups have the largest populations: 23.7% (2,432,585), 18.1% (1,850,314), and 16.4% (1,678,765) respectively. The Japanese Americans have the lowest subgroup populations among the six major Asian groups, representing 7.8% (796,700) of the total single race Asian American population. The top ten states with the largest Asian American populations are California (36.1%), New York (10.2%), Texas (5.5%), Hawaii (4.9%), New Jersey (4.6%), Illinois (4.1%), Washington (3.1%), Florida (3.1%), Virginia (2.5%), and Massachusetts (2.3%). The top ten cities with the largest Asian American populations in ranked order are New York, Los Angeles, San Jose, San Francisco, Honolulu, San Diego, Chicago, Houston, Seattle, and Fremont (US Census Bureau, 2002).

Census reports also indicate that Asian Americans have the highest average household income of any racial or ethnic group in the United States and are consequently regarded as a "far wealthier group" (US Census Bureau, 2002, p.7). Almost a third of the Asian American population falls under the age of 18, a much younger population than other groups in the United States. Asian Americans are generally more educated than the American average: 44% of the Asian Americans over the age of 25 have a bachelor's degree or higher, and 86% have a high school diploma.

In 2000-2001, Asian Americans have a total higher education enrollment of 978,000, which represents a 242% increase from 1980, and a 70.9% increase from 1990

(American Council on Education, 2002). More than 45,000 of the Asian Americans were enrolled in two-year public institutions. In the state of California, 16% (279,586) of the 1,745,583 community college students statewide in the Fall 2002 semester were Asian Americans. Community colleges in the San Francisco Bay Area and the greater Los Angeles area reported high percentage of Asian American students: Mission College, 52%; San Francisco City College, 47%; Ohlone College, 45%; Evergreen College, 43%; Alameda, 40%; Pasadena, 33% and Irvine, 30% (California Community College Chancellor's Office).

To summarize, Asian Americans are a heterogeneous group with little shared history, religion, or language across ethnic groups. There is cultural heritage that is somewhat shared by East Asians, although not South Asians or Southeast Asians. Other than a common dedication to education and working hard, there is little commonality among the different ethnic groups that America chooses to label as "Asian American." But there is an act of self-empowerment in the label as well. In the 1960s, as the civil rights movement led by Dr. King gained steam, Jim Crow laws were being repealed and the "separate but equal" doctrine to deal with the Whites and Blacks was being seriously challenged. This was also the moment in American history when Asian Americans as a political construct started to form. The third world strike at San Francisco State University and UC Berkeley circa 1968-1969 forced the birth of ethnic studies departments including Asian American studies programs. In that strike Asian students of various ethnic strands stood together with Whites and Blacks in protests, and suddenly the difference between Chinese and Japanese was dwarfed by the need to stand together (Zhu & Gatewood, 2000). So the label of Asian American is both externally constructed

and enforced, and at the same time a name that is used by Asian Americans to empower themselves.

Asian Americans: History of Discrimination

There is a long history of discrimination against Asians and Asian Americans. The Chinese were the first to immigrate to the United States, starting in the 1840s. The original immigrants from China provided the *coolie* labor to connect the transcontinental railroad, and yet when the picture was taken of the final connection in 1869, no Chinaman was in sight (Chugg, 1997; Steiner, 1979). The Japanese, Korean, and Filipino immigrants soon followed after the initial Chinese immigration. At that time, Asians were encouraged to immigrate to the United States as laborers, many of whom became plantation workers in Hawai'i and California, domestic workers, and railroad laborers. However, almost from the very beginning, racist sentiments towards the Asian immigrants were potent as represented by this phrase coined by a White laborer, "We have no Chinamen; we have no Japs; the Filipino is nothing, and the White man will not do the work" (Takaki, 1993).

That prejudice was also expressed in a series of Asian exclusion laws at the state and federal levels that were specifically aimed at disrupting the flow of Chinese and Japanese immigrants to the United States. Two of the major laws were the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and the 1907-1908 Gentleman's Agreement. Although the laws had some differences, they were quite similar and had similar impact in barring Asian immigrants from citizenship and ownership of property (Takaki, 1998). It wasn't until 1943 that Congress rescinded all the Chinese exclusion laws as a gesture of goodwill towards

China, an ally of the United States against the Japanese during World War II (Chan, 1991); however, only 105 Chinese immigrated to the United States that year. From 1907 to 1908, the Gentleman's Agreement specifically restricted the number of Japanese immigrants. But an exception was made for the entry of Japanese and Korean women into America to be picture brides (Lai & Arguelles, 2003).

In 1913 the state of California passed the Alien Land Law, specifically aimed at prohibiting Chinese and Japanese Americans from owning or even leasing land. Until the repeal of the Chinese Exclusionary Act in 1943, between 1924 and 1945, no immigration from China or Japan occurred at all. The executive order to place Japanese Americans, dubbed "enemy aliens" in internment camps was signed by President Roosevelt on February 19, 1942. Even those who were Americans by birth were placed in the camps. Japanese Americans were forced to give up their possessions and land, most of which were never returned to them even after the war ended (Takaki, 1998).

In a similarly discriminatory fashion, the Tydings-McDuffy Act of 1935 limited the number of Filipinos immigrating to the United States to 50 per year. To further decrease the number of Filipino Americans in the United States, the establishment of the Repatriation Act of 1936 encouraged them to go back to the Philippines by offering them free transportation with the explicit agreement that they would never ever return to the United States (Lai & Arguelles, 2003).

In addition to discrimination sanctioned and sponsored by law, Asian Americans also experience cultural discrimination because they look different and often speak with an accent. From the "yellow peril" to "Chinese menace" to "model minority," Asian

Americans are often times cast in the role of interlopers, therefore, legitimate objects of hate and attacks (Hune, 1998; Lai & Arguelles, 2003; Noble, 1995).

The Model Minority Myth

With the third world strike at San Francisco State University and University of California at Berkeley in 1968, and the creation of ethnic studies programs, the Asian American political identity was forming. Asian Americans overcame their internal differences by increasingly coming together as one political bloc. Asian Americans also started to join forces with the civil rights movement, spearheaded by African Americans (Takaki, 2002). It was during this moment in history that the "model minority" label was coined by the mainstream media. Prominent publications began printing articles about the successful assimilation of Asian Americans, specifically Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans. The December 26, 1966, article in *US News and World Report* entitled "Success story of one minority in the United States" is one example of this type of publicity on the comparable educational and financial achievement of Asian Americans and White Americans. Asian Americans are believed to have the cultural value of education and achievement passed down from the generations, and they are also hard working; therefore, their achievement in education and work should set examples for other minority groups to pick themselves up by the bootstrap (Zhu & Gatewood, 2000). In this *US News and World Report* article, the journalist explicitly compared Chinese Americans to African Americans and other minority groups by stating that the former group was able to achieve financial independence without any assistance from the US government. Similarly, an article in the January 9, 1966, *New York Times* entitled

"Success story, Japanese American style" lauded the Japanese Americans for assimilating successfully without any help from the US government.

The "model minority" myth gives the false impression that Asian Americans have achieved parity with White Americans both in educational achievement and financial success when it is patently not true (Hune, 1998; Lai &Arguelles, 2003; Montez, 1998). It is true that most Asian Americans live above the poverty line and have high household incomes. The reality is that these same Asian American households are multi-generational, oftentimes with adult children living under the same roof and contributing to the household income. Most Asian American households are not your typical nuclear family. The picture of financial success of Asian Americans is much more complex than was painted by the mainstream media; it is more cultural based than sociological or political.

The simplistic masking of the "model minority" myth also eviscerates the differences among the different ethnic groups in Asian America and causes divisiveness between Asian Americans and other minority groups. It enables the mainstream society to be free of their social responsibility to help other minority groups, African Americans in particular. The myth goes that if the Asian Americans could help themselves, so could/should the African Americans. The societal responsibilities of dealing with racial discrimination or the legacies of slavery are brushed aside in the trumping of the Asian American model minority. The damage inflicted by the "model minority" myth on Asian Americans who are not Chinese or Japanese American, is, in some ways, no less severe as that exacted on other minority groups for Asian Americans need help just as other minority groups. Asian Americans are discriminated against with equal measures as other

minority groups, the only difference being the ways in which different groups are viewed and treated. In addition the overlay of mostly East Asian, i.e. Chinese and Japanese cultural values on all Asian Americans creates anxiety of achievement among low achievers, and Southeast Asians in particular (Zhu & Gatewood, 2000).

Suzuki's 1989 study clearly demonstrates that the high educational achievement and higher household incomes are mostly limited to Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, and now in the 21st century, Indian Americans. Other groups in Asian America, including Vietnamese Americans, Hmong Americans, Filipino Americans, and Pacific Islanders, tend to lack educational achievement or high income (Hune, 1998; Lai & Arguelles, 2003). Even those groups of Asian Americans who have been claimed as a model minority including Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, and Indian Americans, the picture of success is not what it appears to be. These groups of Asian Americans are highly educated, over-represented on college campuses, and apparently academically successful and yet they are occupationally restricted, underpaid and under-promoted (Suzuki, 1989).

To summarize compared with other minority groups such as African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans, Asian Americans have successfully gained access to higher education, are pursuing graduate degrees, and are gainfully employed. These and other similar reports of accomplishment have led the media to label Asian Americans as the "model minority." Many scholars are working to point out the fallacy in this label for it gives the illusion that Asian Americans have achieved parity with the majority White population when there is ample evidence to the contrary. Asian Americans are disproportionately self-employed and have not been able to capitalize on their

educational success in the workplace. In higher education the participation and representation of Asian Americans decline as they attempt to move up on the academy hierarchy. In fact, the number of Asian American administrators is disproportionately low, especially in the senior management ranks (Lum, 2008; Saigo, 2008). This situation is similarly at play in the community colleges, even in the state of California where the Asian American enrollment in higher education is high, and the number of community colleges larger than any other state.

The Glass/Bamboo Ceiling

The representation of Asian American/Pacific Islanders (APA) students on college campuses is extremely high in proportion to the distribution of APAs in the general population and in contrast with other racial and ethnic groups such as African Americans or Latinos or Native Americans. This scenario is most spectacularly apparent on the West Coast. For instance on the University of California-Irvine campus, APAs comprise over 50% of the student population. Nationally, APA faculty members easily outnumber their counterparts in other minority groups, again according to ACE. In 2001, there were 38,026 APA faculty members, compared with 31,681 African Americans, 18,154 Hispanics, and 2,775 Native Americans. But the dearth of APAs in the senior leadership ranks of chancellors, presidents, and vice presidents is also apparent. When Dr. Chang-lin Tien was appointed chancellor of the University of California-Berkeley, there was not only elation in the Asian American community, but frankly astonishment for nobody believed that "one of us would hold such a title" (Lum, 2005, p.46).

Because of their relatively high educational attainment and representation in professional occupations, Asian Americans have been labeled the "model minority" for emulation by other racial and ethnic minority groups. Despite Asian Americans' disproportionate representation in technical and professional occupations, there are few of them in upper management, decision-making positions (Woo, 2000). Only 1% of corporate directors are Asian Americans. Even in Silicon Valley, where about 30% of tech professionals or their forebears hail from Pacific Rim countries, Asian Americans account for only 12.5% of managers; 80% of tech bosses are Caucasian (Hyun, 2005). Multiple studies have concluded that Asian Americans with the same level of education earn lower wages and hold fewer managerial positions than their non-Asian peers (Wong and Nagasawa, 1991; O'Hare & Felt, 1991; Duleep & Sanders, 1992; Woo, 2000).

The current wisdom in existing research on glass ceiling postulates the following reasons why Asian Americans are under-represented in leadership positions: lack of interest in upper management positions; language and communication problem; deficits in leadership skills; an absence of role models and mentors; not being a part of an informal professional network; bias in performance appraisals; inadequate outreach and recruitment practices (Hune, 1998; Neilson, 2002; Suh, 2005; Varma, 2004).

Asian Americans are not believed to possess whatever is needed to be a top administrator; they are perceived to be non-confrontational, politically passive, and not wanting to lead (Fujimoto, 1996). The view of Asian Americans not capable of being leaders is not limited to the higher education sector; it is prevalent in business and politics as well. "Traditionally, APAs have been less likely to seek positions in the upper echelons in large part due to cultural values that emphasize modesty over self-promotion

and silent acceptance of the status quo over aggressive calls for change" (Lum, 2005, p. 46).

However, Woo (2000) contends that new glass ceiling barriers are a combination of structural and cultural forces that limit the access of Asian Americans to leadership positions. In addition these forces are subtle but pervasive. In the literature these barriers are generally classified as cultural (Hune, 1998; Suzuki, 2002; Tang, 1997), and structural/organizational (Hune, 1998; Suzuki, 2002; Turner et al, 1999; Woo, 2000; Wu, 1997). In terms of cultural barriers the literature tends to examine this phenomenon either from an internal culture perspective, i.e. Asian Americans are limited from participating fully at the senior or executive level leadership due to cultural norms and values such as lack of assertiveness or focus on collaboration; or from an external cultural perspective in terms of the negative stereotypes of Asian Americans, the culmination of those stereotypes being the "model minority" myth (Cheng, 1997; Suzuki, 2002; Woo, 2000). As for structural/organizational barriers, they are broadly characterized under the notion of "glass ceiling." In the context of Asian Americans, this invisible yet impenetrable glass ceiling is due largely to discrimination and institutional racism (Cheng, 1997; Hsia, 1988; Hune, 1998; Suzuki, 2002; Tang, 1997; Woo, 2000). Asian Americans look different; act and talk differently; and present a cultural style that is different from the "norm" (Suzuki, 2002). It also has been documented in the literature that Asian Americans are not promoted to senior management positions because they are perceived to be "perfidious foreigners"; even second or third generation Asian Americans are perceived to lack English language skills, therefore not eligible to be part of senior management (Suzuki, 2002).

Asian American Leadership in the Community College

Lack of Representation

Many efforts have helped to increase the number of women and minority leaders in higher education, but Asian Americans have not kept pace (Lum, 2008). Some groups have increased their representation in higher education leadership in a pretty spectacular fashion. According to a 2006 survey of college presidents conducted by the American Council on Education, 23% of the presidents were women, up from 9.5% 20 years ago. Among minority presidents, Hispanics possess the largest gain, 4.6% as compared with 2.2% 20 years ago. Asian Americans have the smallest gain among the group, coming up at 0.9% from 0.4% (Saigo, 2008). Asian American presidents are barely replacing themselves as they retire. This fact appears even starker when taking into consideration the expanding pool of tenured faculty to produce executive leadership. Again according to ACE, in 2006 6.2% of tenured faculty are Asian Americans, compared with 4.5% African American and 2.9% Hispanic. In fact, between 1993 and 2003, Asian Americans have the largest increase among minorities in faculty positions, with an additional 15,864 positions, and their tenured ranks rose by more than 49% (ACE, 2008). Although the representation of Asian Americans as a proportion of all college presidents is pretty glaring, the raw numbers are even more astonishing: in 2003, there were exactly nine presidents in the community college sector of American higher education.

Opportunity for Leadership in the Community College

Community college is a unique American institution in being the two-year beginning to a four-year tertiary education. From the first public junior college in Joliet,

Illinois, in 1901 (Cohen & Brawer, 2008) to the formation of modern-day community

colleges in the 1960s, the relatively short history of community colleges provides a

fascinating backdrop to the evolution of leadership in these institutions. Twombly (1995)

delineates four eras of community college leadership: the period from 1900 to the 1930s

was when the "great men" theory dominated; in the 1940s and 1950s, community college

leaders sought to be independent from secondary schools and forge an identity of their

own; in the 1960s and 1970s, the modern-day community college was born with strong,

dominant leaders necessary for those pioneering days; and from the 1980s to the present,

attention to resource issues became increasingly necessary, and models from business

began to be used that emphasized efficiency and strategic planning.

In the early 2000s, it was revealed in the literature that community colleges were

facing a leadership crisis as roughly 80% of the community college presidents planned to

retire in 8 to 10 years (Evelyn, 2001; Schults, 2001; Weisman & Vaughan, 2002). By

2005, the leadership crisis in the community colleges had not abated:

> Approximately 50% of the current community college presidents will retire over
> the next 3 to 7 years and in the next few years, 700 new community college
> presidents and campus heads, 1800 new upper level administrators, and 30,000
> new faculty members will be needed. (Fulton-Calkins & Milling, 2005, p. 235)

The leadership crisis presents a potential opportunity to "bring in fresh new blood at a

time when two-year colleges face increasingly complex demands" (Evelyn, 2001, p.

A36). These demands include the continued decline in public support, shortage in

institutional resources (Johnstone, 1999), changing student demographics (Hurtado &

Dey, 1997), shifts in teaching to student-centered learning (Barr & Tagg, 1995), the

impact of technology on faculty roles (Baldwin, 1998), and the paradigm shift from an

industrial age to an information age (Dolence & Norris, 1995). These demands require a re-thinking, re-tooling, and re-philosophizing about leadership and its practices.

Eddy et al's (1997) summary of leadership challenges and opportunities in higher education is applicable to the community colleges as well. Eddy et al (1997) provide seven broad areas that require special attention from top leaders in higher education including chancellors, presidents, provosts, and boards of trustees. Ethical leadership is the first area in which leaders must set the tone for ethical behavior in the organization by promoting and following a set of clearly understandable and articulated ethical standards and by swiftly, authoritatively, and publicly dealing with the ethical violation within the top leadership ranks. Next, team leadership requires leaders to behave as lead partners, team leader, facilitator, and project manager by valuing and adopting the innovative, creative and forward-thinking ideas and proposals from team members and by rewarding joint efforts as often as they reward individual achievement. Third, leaders in higher education must respond to the call from legislators, parents, students, government, accrediting bodies, industry and business for a competent graduate by exercising accountability leadership. Fourth, the goal of the privatization of higher education is to achieve the balance between better service and lower costs. Privatization leadership means that leaders must carefully investigate this balance within the mission, scope and role of the institution, and selectively privatize or "outsource" certain services, activities, research or learning, even in the public higher educational institutions. "Privatization demands results in change in the organizational structure. The new paradigm of institution leadership calls for a special ability to wrench out of the traditional bureaucracy an attitude that accepts and thrives on change" (Senge, 1996). Fifth, in the

increasing globalized society, the education of international students in US institutions of higher education as future policy makers and key economic players in their home countries will have a heavy impact on peace, war and the economy. International leadership requires leaders in US higher education to recognize and embrace this role. Sixth, as the age demographics of America push toward an ever increasing older population, higher education leadership demands the full utilization of volunteers to offset the financial retrenchment currently in higher education. Seventh, leadership in higher education must learn to harness and control the rapidly advancing field that intersects communication technology and knowledge dissemination. Distance education will be commonplace in the future so leadership must understand and appreciate the interplay between education, technology, distance, time, and location. Lastly, "the effective academic leader of the future must negotiate the multicultural environment by fully recognizing diversity and difference while exercising leadership that unites all toward a common goal" (Eddy, 1997, p.330).

Multicultural Leadership and Critical Race Theory (CRT)

While there has been progress in increasing women in the leadership ranks in the community colleges, ethnic and racial minorities did not fare as well. The community colleges "have not been as effective as they need to be in diversifying their leadership by ethnicity" (Boggs, 2003, p. 16). In 1991, 89% of the community college presidents were male and 11% were women and minorities. A decade later, the situation was dramatically improved on the gender front: 28% of all presidents were women; however, only 14% were people of color (Weismann & Vaughan, 2002).

Contrary to the lack of racial and ethnic diversity in the leadership ranks of the community colleges, the increasing diversity in the study body in the American community colleges is well documented (Rendon & Hope, 1996; Rhoads & Valdez, 1996). Even the economist, Michael Paulsen (2001), recognizes the fact that expanded student services (as a contributor to rising tuition in public higher educational institutions) is directly linked to the increased diversity of our students: more non-traditional age students, more students attending part-time, more students from the traditionally termed minority groups, more students from highly varied social and economic backgrounds, and students greatly divergent in their academic preparedness and abilities (p. 223).

While this is true of perhaps all students in higher education, more so in the public sector than the private sector, this state of affairs is most pronounced in the community colleges. The community colleges take students who are usually shun by the four-year institutions: students who did poorly in high school; adults trying to juggle school, family, and work; new immigrants with language barriers limiting their career options; individuals from families who live in poverty. This diversity of the community college study body requires diversification of community college leaders by gender, race, and ethnicity.

Multicultural diversity as a reality cannot be dealt with solely on the basis of legal compliance or the business bottom-line. To manage diversity as change, institutions must view diversity as an asset and an added value. Only by doing that can these institutions engage in processes that allow them to take advantage of the diverse viewpoints, perspectives, processes, beliefs, and values afforded by diversity and to embody and

advance the values of a democratic, multicultural institution. To embrace and capitalize on diversity also requires that the collaborative process includes participation by all members of the institution, especially those who have traditionally been excluded from the substantive processes of the institution. This more inclusive and inherently more democratic process will allow the organization to tap into the leadership capabilities of diverse campus constituents.

Creating opportunities for a broad array of campus voices to be heard is also compatible with the new ideas on critical multiculturalism. As Rhoads and Valdez (1996) so eloquently put it, critical multiculturalism must go beyond understanding the cultural differences in our students and our staff and beyond the mere curriculum expansion into areas traditionally excluded from the curriculum to have our institutions of higher education embody the best principles of democracy and become critical multicultural institutions with integrity. Institutions of democracy in the context of critical multiculturalism mean that change and innovation be initiated, implemented, and sustained via the contributions of a wide array of constituents. In this vein, it has been proposed that our traditional views of leadership be reconceptualized. Leadership in this context of critical multiculturalism is no longer the sole domain of senior college officials; instead, leadership becomes an ability possessed by a wide variety of institutional participants including our staff and our students (Rhoads & Valdez, 1996).

However, collaborative does not necessarily equate multicultural. Kezar (1998, 2000, 2002) argues that a more collaborative leadership model such as servant leadership is not necessarily multicultural. In fact, because of the singular construction of leadership under servant leadership, there is a tendency for organizations to simply substitute one

dominant leadership model such as the traditional, hierarchical leadership with the more

participatory and inclusive model of leadership. While a collaborative model of

leadership is attractive to the academic culture as they are used to it (Birnbaum, 1992),

the lack of acknowledgement of positioned perspectives on leadership, or the power

conditions on and off campus has led to organizational misalignment, group think, and

miscommunication.

The theory of positionality assumes that people with different social experiences

might interpret or understand leadership differently (Kezar, 1998, 2000, 2002). The lack

of acknowledgement or awareness of multiple and different perspectives on leadership

results in individuals feeling that they do not fit within the organization; therefore, they

are unable or unwilling to contribute to organizational success. Even in the participatory

and inclusive models of leadership, there is an emphasis on shared goals, shared values,

and consensus to the exclusion of alternative or different perspectives on leadership such

as those that might be possessed by women or people of color (Kezar, 1998, 2000, 2002).

The enforcement of group think in this scenario creates a power structure, which also

goes unacknowledged. Further, exclusive, simplistic, and partial representation of

leadership leads to organizational miscommunication. The solution to these problems is

to embrace pluralistic or multicultural leadership models. "These models embrace

particular identities (such as "women's way of leading"), acknowledge difference, and

openly address power and positionality" (Kezar, 1998, p. 76).

Positionality is a central tenet of critical race theory (CRT) as well. Taylor (2009)

admonishes that positionality is a perspective that must be disclosed because" it identifies

the frame of reference from which researchers, practitioners, and policy makers present

their data, interpretations and analysis. Positionality is a core principle of multiculturalism and is, in a similar way, a central tenet of critical race theory" (p.8).

CRT is a child of critical legal studies…"its scholarship is…marked by a number of specific insights and observations, including society's acceptance of racism as ordinary, the phenomenon of White's allowing Black progress when it also promotes their interests (interest convergence), the importance of understanding the historic effects of European colonialism, and the preference of the experiences of oppressed peoples (narrative) over the "objective" opinions of Whites" (Taylor, 2009, p. 4).

CRT begins with the notion that racism is 'normal, not aberrant, in American society" (Delgado, 1995, p.xiv). Unmasking and exposing racism in its various permutations is the first order of business in CRT. CRT insists on a critique of liberalism that the civil rights movement is not one long, slow but inevitably upward pull for minorities; but in fact, Whites have been the primary beneficiaries of the civil rights movement. "CRT is an important social and intellectual tool for deconstruction, reconstruction and construction—deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruction of human agency, and construction of equitable and socially just relations of power" (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p.10).

CRT departs from critical legal studies by employing storytelling to "analyze the myths, presuppositions, and received wisdoms that make up the common culture about race and that invariably render Blacks and other minorities one-down" (Delgado, 1995, p. xiv). Experiential knowledge becomes the basis for the study of race and racialized society, one in which "Whiteness is positioned as normative; *everyone* is ranked and

categorized in relation to these points of opposition" (Ladson-Billings, 1999, p.9, emphasis original). Ladson-Billings (1999) goes on to explain that in a racialized society, conceptual categories such as educational achievement, middle classness, maleness, beauty, intelligence, science become normative categories of Whiteness and define the terrain of possibilities when other possibilities exist.

CRT has the following four premises: it posits that "race" is largely a social experience and that different racial groups experience and understand race in different ways; it theorizes that the racial experiences of racial minority groups are subordinate relative to a White racial experience; much of the work of CRT applies insights of how race functions to critique rules, norms, standards, and assumptions that appear "neutral", but which systematically disadvantage or "subordinate" racial minorities; and lastly, CRT describes and theorizes about the causes that maintain racial minorities' relative subordination in a post-Civil Rights American culture that has come to embrace the equality norm (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller & Thomas, 1995; Davis, Johnson, & Martinez, 2001; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000).

In terms of critical race theory and educational research, Vargas (2003) delineates two generations of development in this arena. First generation critical race studies are more generalized and systemic emphasizing the class and political components of racial discrimination and using materialist analysis of class conflict. First generation CRT studies were more damning of Whites' role in racial oppression and more singularly focused in this regard. First generation CRT studies tended to be less inclusive of other contextual elements such as gender. Second generation critical race studies place race in

context and tend to emphasize the discrete and contextualized ways in which race affects the educational system.

Scholarship on Asian Americans in Higher Education and CRT

The positionality of Asian Americans in the racial construction of the United States between Black and White has as one of its consequences the lack of any scholarly attention to this particular population (Hune & Chan, 1997; Wu, 2003). The myth of the model minority with Asian Americans portrayed to have achieved parity with majority White population in educational attainment and financial success also contributes to this lack of study on the Asian American population (Museus, 2009). In the higher education arena, this lack of attention is evident in the finding that, over the last decade, approximately only 1% of articles published in five of the most widely read peer-reviewed academic journals in the field of higher education have given specific attention to Asian American or Pacific Islander college students (Museus, 2009). Another contributing factor to this lack of research on Asian Americans in higher education is the relatively low number of Asian American faculty and graduate students in education and related social sciences disciplines who might pursue research on the experiences of members of their own racial and ethnic communities (Nakanishi & Nishida, 1995).

The number of studies on Asian Americans in higher education is low; they also invariably have to respond to the model minority myth in some way. To break free of the monolithic construction of the model minority myth, scholars have consistently written about the critical need to disaggregate data by ethnicity within the Asian American community (Museus, 2009; Suyemoto et al, 2009; Teranishi et al, 2009) in order to truly

understand the realities of Asian American students, families and communities. In addition to disaggregating data to better understand the diverse experiences of the different ethnicities within the Asian American population, scholars have consistently found in their research that Asian American students have to deal with a variety of social, emotional, and psychological challenges. Asian American students experience higher depressive symptoms and feelings of anxiety than their White peers (Okazaki, 1997; Lorenzo, Frost & Reinherz, 2000). Asian American students report more negative appraisals of social experiences than Black students and less desirable appraisals of academic experiences than their White peers in college (Chung & Sedlacek, 1999). Asian Americans also experience more social isolation, self-segregation, and exclusion and less satisfaction with social support than their non-Asian American peers (McCormack, 1998; Lorenzo, Frost, & Reinherz, 2000; Chen et al, 2001; Ying et al, 2001). Research also confirms that Asian Americans experience verbal and physical harassment, pressure from stereotypes of success and passivity, and educators minimize or ignore their experiences (Hurh & Kim, 1989; Kiang & Kaplan, 1994; Lee, 1994; McCormack, 1995, 1998; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004; Museus, 2008).

It's worth noting for the purpose of this project that few research studies on Asian American students in higher education address the increasing number of Asian Americans attending community college (Lew, Chang, and Wang, 2005). Liu's (2007) bibliography on extant research on Asian Americans in the community colleges clearly indicates the lack of peer-reviewed journal articles of recent years specifically focusing on Asian Americans in the community colleges.

Further review of literature reveals an even more startling picture: there is almost no scholarly work on Asian American leadership in the community colleges. Doctoral students are the only ones doing any study on Asian American leadership in the community colleges (Wong, 2002; Chong, 2003; Adrian, 2004; Somer, 2007). Chong's (2003) dissertation is narrowly focused on Asian Pacific American trustees in the community colleges. Chong (2003) interviewed all 13 Asian Pacific American trustees in the California Community College system in order to better understand the experiences of these individuals with the conclusion of much needed, greater representation of Asian/Pacific Americans in higher education. Adrian (2004) uses an expanded version of Hong and Chiu's (2001) dynamic constructivist framework to study Asian American leaders. She posits that Asian American leaders, having exposure to multiple interpretative frames including ethnicity, multiple identities (bicultural and academic identities), and values such as personal, cultural, religious and family values, organizational cultures and leadership styles, construct leadership in a dynamic and fluid fashion by switching between and amongst these interpretative frames. Somer (2007) conducted a narrative inquiry to explore the experiences and perspectives of five Asian American females who have sought vice president and/or president positions in the community colleges. Her study concluded with nine themes that these Asian American females faced as barriers and facilitators on their career path: mother as role model, biculturalism and bicultural efficacy, unplanned pathways and not self-identifying, earned leadership positions, strong work ethic, stereotyping and assumptions, Asian physicality and invisibility, fracturing the glass ceiling, and positive attitude and strength.

Whether it's Asian American college students or Asian American leadership in higher education, the lack of a knowledge base due to a void in research data on this population has led to faulty decision-making in key policy issues affecting higher education such as admissions, financial aid, and cultural literacy (Museus & Chang, 2009). Too often in racially charged debates in higher education, Asian Americans are considered irrelevant and sidelined as a result, or used as a wedge population to divide minority interests. As Wu (2003) has suggested, the inclusion of Asian Americans in these debates and related discourse will not necessarily settle the debates but will surely modify how the contentious policy issues are considered. In addition research on Asian Americans in higher education that contribute to increased levels of understanding about this population will make "an appreciable difference for equity and effectiveness in the delivery of academic, social, and psychological services not only to this population but also potentially to other groups as well" (Museus & Chang, 2009, p. 102).

The equity agenda in American higher education is informed in large part by critical race theory (CRT). Increasingly there is a call for the use of CRT in research on Asian Americans in higher education (Neilson & Suyemoto, 2009; Teranishi et al, 2009). Critical race theory has been applied to the study of racial stratification in higher education to challenge dominant paradigms and place the educational experiences of students of color in broader social, institutional, legal, and historical contexts (Delgado & Stefancic, 2000). According to Solorzano (1998), "critical race theory in education challenges the traditional claims of the educational system and its institutions to objectivity, meritocracy, color and gender blindness, race and gender neutrality, and equal opportunity" (p.122). CRT is particularly useful in critiquing deficit thinking and

offers an alternative perspective to normative framing in educational research (Teranishi et al, 2009). Deficit thinking frames racial inequities as individual deficiencies. CRT provides an alternative way to unlearn stereotypical thinking about race, which, in the case of Asian Americans, is especially needed as stereotypes and assumptions have largely driven the treatment of this population. Normative framing in educational research is used primarily to identify how different racial groups are unevenly distributed across a particular outcome, say participation in higher education or degree attainment. CRT infused research, instead, is focused on the experiences and needs of marginalized populations in higher education. One of the chief methods of this type of research is story telling (Teranishi et al, 2009).

Chapter Summary

To summarize I offer sketches of literature on Asian Americans, community colleges and their leadership opportunities, multicultural leadership and critical race theory (CRT) and scholarship on Asian Americans in higher education and how CRT could be used to frame and conduct research on Asian Americans in higher education. The literature review is intended as additional contextual information for my narrative inquiry study on Asian American leadership in the community colleges. It's not meant to be exhaustive, neither is it held up to be theoretical framework for my own research nor does it point the direction for my research. The literature review is offered as part of the evolving story on Asian American leadership in the community colleges as it may shed light on one or more aspects of this study.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

My research study is a narrative inquiry into leadership by Asian Americans who are in positions as deans and above in the community college organizational hierarchy. Critical race theory (CRT) (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Vargas, 1999) encourages the storytelling of people of color to better understand their individual experiences, which in turn contribute to understanding a more holistic reality. I have used CRT both as a frame and as a methodology to capture the individual experiences and voices of Asian American leaders in the community colleges by focusing the racialized experiences of my participants' life and career, and by providing rich, detailed descriptions of their stories on the journey and on the job. Each individual participant has a unique story to tell about his/her success and the accompanying journey. In this chapter I will elaborate on the process I experienced to gather such rich stories by discussing the rationale behind my research approach, the selection of participants, the process of data collection and data analysis, and trustworthiness of the study.

Research Approach

I have fully embraced Vargas (2003)'s philosophical construct that CRT- infused education research will contribute toward the discipline of education becoming less racist, less biased toward the White racial experience in its assumptions, norms, and established practices. My intentional re-telling of the stories of the Asian American leaders in the community colleges attests to my commitment to align my own research with the overarching goal of CRT research to open up minds and change hearts, perhaps…

Like any CRT researcher, I aim to be a change agent in this research process. As a change agent, I perform a dual role: doing research that speaks to the racial minority communities (insider), and at the same time use the research to inform the discipline of education, as racial outsiders (Vargas, 1999). Narrative is the methodology in any CRT research (Culp, 1996; Delgado, 1989; Vargas, 2003). Stories provide the necessary context for understanding, feeling, and interpreting (Ladson-Billings, 1999). The use of voice or "naming your reality" is a way that CRT links form and substance in scholarship. For the critical race theorist including myself, social reality is constructed by the formulation and the exchange of stories about individual situations and experiences. The stories serve as interpretative structures by which we impose order on experience and experience imposes order on us. Stories also enable psychic healing and self-preservation; they allow a minority person to realize the structural subjugation of minorities and stop self-condemnation at the same time. Stories can also give rise to minorities gaining a voice. Voice allows for communication of the experiences and realities of the oppressed, a first step in understanding the complexities of racism and

beginning of a process of redress. The focus on narrative as the key ingredient of my research means at least two action pieces: the Asian American participants will tell their stories to me; I will then re-tell their stories in this research.

While narrative is both the frame and the structure of my research, I do realize the singular, subjective nature of stories, told and retold. However, it is not my goal to universalize out of these singular narratives. The persuasiveness of my research will be based on its visible and substantive contribution to the discipline knowledge on racial experience. There is little in the current literature that is narrative inquiry research on Asian American leadership in the community colleges. The very undertaking of my research helps to augment the body of literature on Asian Americans, on leadership, and on the community colleges.

Vargas (2003) pointed out that the persuasiveness of narrative inquiry research is achieved in three ways: narrative must yield insights on the dialogue on race; the narrative must capture an aspect of racial experiences that quantitative data have not yet documented as a relevant common experience (subtlety that is missed by quantitative data); and narrative can anchor to qualitative analysis and critique (Vargas, 2003). My research yielded stories of Asian Americans in community college dean level positions and above whose insights and perspectives on race, culture, and leadrship are qualitatively different from what is currently documented in the literature. The stories of these community college deans, vice-presidents, presidents, and chancellors add richness of content to the racial dialog in America, a dialog that is often carried out between Black and White. Any addition of the perspectives of the Yellow and Brown peoples helps to increase the general canon of understanding on race in America. In addition, the Asian

American participants' often nuanced and thoughtful ruminations on race and leadership provided an anchor for me to start distilling the rich details of their stories to prominent themes that will contribute in a substantive fashion to the literature on race and community college leadership.

Connelly and Clandinin's (2000) conclusion that narrative is both phenomenon and method is therefore apt for my study. To further elaborate on the merits of narrative inquiry as a research approach and therefore locate my research in the tradition of qualitative research in education, I will be borrowing generously from Connelly and Clandinin as well as Creswell (2005). "Because we see experience narratively, we study experience narratively" (Clandinin & Huber, 2002, p.162). Even without having to do education research, we could safely say that stories are our lives, and we report our lives in stories. To combine narrative with inquiry enables me as researcher to examine the lived experiences of my participants in context, time, and place. It also enables reflective knowledge on my part and on the part of my participants, and more importantly, it brings about empowerment of my participants in the process of sharing their life stories. In narrative inquiry the relationship between the researcher and the participants becomes paramount to the research enterprise. In theory, the key concepts of narrative inquiry are experiences of an individual, chronology of experiences, historical impact, life stories, restorying, a context or place, coding of themes, tentativeness of the story, the understanding and certainty of the actions and situation and collaboration between the researcher and participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2005). In practice, I will put all of these key concepts in action by re-telling the Asian American participants' stories, by highlighting the critical incidents in the participants' life stories, by coding

themes speculatively at first but firming them up as I advance in the research process and most importantly, by not downplaying my role as the researcher. I do not consciously curtail the play of my own experiences, perspective, and interpretation of the stories in the overall construction of this narrative inquiry. As a matter of fact, I can confidently report at the conclusion of this research process that my experiences, perspective, and interpretation have become part and parcel of this narrative inquiry project that also uses CRT.

I have established in the preceding pages why a qualitative, narrative inquiry approach by way of listening to participants' stories is the most appropriate and effective approach for my study. I want to bring your attention to two additional salient factors of my CRT-infused narrative perspective: this study is culturally anchored and people centric. There are at least two grand narratives that I aim to counter: that of the culturally-deficient, positivistic approach to studying different races, ethnicities and cultures; and the other of prevailing research on Asian American leadership in higher education.

As I discussed in Chapter 2, while the studies on Asian American leadership have been few, their focus has been limited to exclusively identifying the barriers to Asian Americans advancing to leadership positions in higher education. None has been celebratory in tone or intent. The few studies on the issue of Asian American leadership, whether based on a singular context (Chen, 2003; Chong, 2003) or multiple contexts (Adrian, 2004; Balon, 2004), have all been conducted by doctoral students. Almost all of these studies have as their focus the identification of the barriers to Asian Americans advancing to top leadership positions. While I applaud these studies and their

contribution to increased and improved understanding of Asian American leadership in higher education and in the community colleges, I have adopted an intentional celebratory and laudatory tone to my study, partially based on my borrowing of the perspectives advanced by proponents of appreciative inquiry (AI).

Krahnke and Cooperrider (2008) echoed the need to shift away from a focus on "gap analysis," to a focus on the positive of organizational life, on what's working. (p.19) In their construction of AI, it becomes a model of possibilities in that it builds on strengths and emphasizes generativity. Consequently, hope is a generative agent; it enables people to be open to the infinite possibilities for the future. Krahnke and Cooperrider (2008) borrowed from Ludema in identifying the four qualities of hope: (1) born in relationships; (2) inspired by the conviction that the future is open and can be influenced; (3) sustained by dialogue about high human ideals; and (4) generative of positive effect and action. (p.22)

My study is such an AI-inspired undertaking by focusing on what's working for the Asian American leaders in the community colleges and by generating hope for the future generations. I ask the unabashedly positive question of what it is that made the participants successful in obtaining leadership positions in the community colleges and also performing successfully in these same positions. The active, affirmative engagement between the researcher and the participants validates and advances the AI agenda in this way.

In contrast to previous studies that examined how Asian American leaders operate in leadership positions through either a single lens (cultural values) or multiple contexts

(cultural values, ethnic identity, and leadership style), I eschew the use of formulated categories to examine Asian American leadership; instead, I present narratives of the participants' experiences on the journey and on the job so that themes, notions, insights, and perspectives can emerge out of their narratives.

The grand old tradition of positivist, reductionist research, which prides itself on replicability via anonymity, renders minorities even more invisible in the research and leadership landscape. Most minorities are not as visible, in sight or in mind, as most White individuals. It is arguable that Asian Americans are the least visible among even the minority groups. In a recent magazine article, Michael Hong, who is CEO of ImaginAsia TV, wrote about the lack of Asian American visibility in front of the camera, behind the camera, and in the executive suites in the television industry. He went on to say, "My peers and I would like to have our distinct cultural voices heard and our faces seen, while contributing on a larger scale to the fabric of this nation, the same as other minority groups" (p.78). In the quest for rigor and scientific truth, the positivistic research erased the participants' identity. When it comes to Asian Americans, this kind of erasure becomes even more pernicious as we are the invisible minority to start. My study attempts to give voice to a group of people who traditionally haven't had a voice, especially a voice in their own voice. This may seem tautological, but it is actually an important distinction. When the subalterns speak, they speak in their own voice, and they are going to be heard.

While the specifics of my participants' identity are not revealed, it is the Asian American leaders' stories that occupy center stage in this research theatre. Their voices are heard, loud and clear, whether addressed to racial insiders or outsiders. The narrative

inquiry approach permits me to render visible the traditionally invisible Asian Americans; hence turning on its head the traditional racial narrative of Asian Americans in the United States. The stories of success, on the journey and on the job, shared by Asian American leaders in the community colleges constitute the focus of this narrative study.

As informed by critical race theory, I use race and culture not just as variables to compare White and minority individuals and groups but also as "important considerations in choosing and developing frameworks that shape (the) research questions and methods;" in other words, a more flexible, open, constructivist-interpretivist framework (Neilson & Suyemoto, 2009, p.84).

The contrast between Asian American leadership style and White male leadership, in essentialist terms, is well documented in the literature: Asian Americans' style of leadership has been described as contextual, indirect, inner-directed, and self-reliant whereas White males' leadership style is commonly described as hierarchical, controlling, aggressive, and oriented toward win-lose outcomes (Neilson & Chang, 2009). Translate these differences into research approaches and practices, we find that positivist and post-positivist frameworks for research inevitably reflect ideologies of control, hierarchy of knowledge, privileging of the researcher as expert over the research participants as objects of study, and the goal of finding a single "truth" (win) and rejecting the "irrelevant" (loss). Instead the constructivist-interpretivist frameworks for research help me to locate my research questions and topic in race- and culture-relevant context, use race and culture to explain the individual experiences, and rely on participants as experts (Neilson & Suyemoto, 2009). The constructivist-interpretivist

framework requires me to constantly and explicitly consider the participants as whole persons in context and pay attention to race and cultural realities. My role as the researcher is highly scrutinized in the research process, and I also raise epistemological questions regarding the co-construction of knowledge between me, the researcher and the participants, the researched.

Participants

The research participants for my project, those Asian American deans, vice-presidents, presidents, and chancellors whose stories I'm re-telling are the single most valuable resource and indispensable to the fruition of this project. The participants provided me with my primary data source for this study in the form of in-depth, in-person interviews. The participants are Asian Americans at the dean level and above in community colleges. I should emphasize here that my use of the moniker Asian American follows the revised definition of Asian used in the 2000 census, subsequently mandated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) of the US federal government for official use by all federal agencies. The "Asian" category in the 2000 census is defined as "a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent" (p.3). Among the twenty-five different ethnic groups included under the Asian category, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese are the most prominent and numbered the largest in population in the United States.

Over a period of six weeks, twenty-three email invitations were sent to chancellors of multi-campus districts, presidents of single-campus districts, vice

chancellors of academic services and administrative services, presidents of colleges inside of multi-campus districts, vice presidents of instruction, vice presidents of student services and deans. Out of the 23 invitations, I received 9 positive responses. Out of the 9 positive responses, I interviewed 5 participants based on convenience of scheduling. This convenience of scheduling did not diminish my research project in any way as the participants were varied in gender, age, immigration status, and areas of experience as well as perspectives. The mixture yielded a collection of life stories that have similarities but also a diversity that is at time exhilarating for me to help unfold.

Data Collection

The primary way for data collection in my narrative inquiry project was via in-depth, in person interviews. Demographic data were collected using a written survey that was completed by the participants prior to the in-person interviews (See Appendix C). I conducted all five interviews at my participants' work sites. The interviews ranged from 45 minutes to over two hours. I created an interview guide to help me achieve some level of consistency of data among my participants. While I did refer to the interview guide, the interview process for all five of my participants was free flowing with liberal pursuit of follow up questions. My participants were free to share their stories, not constrained by the interview questions. The interviews were all taped and transcribed afterwards by a professional transcriptionist.

I have kept meticulous record of the interview process including obtaining signed formal consent forms from all of my participants. I have also kept a journal of the interviews that contains my impression of the interview immediately following the

interview. In one case, the tape recorder malfunctioned during the last five minutes of the interview, so I had taken notes in my journal for this particular interview.

Interviews

I conducted five In-depth, in-person interviews with the participants of the study. The interviews were semi-structured. I prepared an interview guide (Appendix D), and used it to guide the interviews, not to structure the interviews in a rigid fashion. Conversations were allowed to flow and participants were free to tell their stories. The questions were adjusted as the interviews unfolded so that the participants were able to share their rich personal stories. During the interview, questions and conversations were open-ended and free flowing, partially driven by the participants and re-directed by the researcher, which is in line with the practices of narrative inquiry (Gross, 2004).

I used a professional transcription service not affiliated with the study or the colleges to transcribe the interviews verbatim onto a word processor. I double-checked the transcripts for accuracy. None of the participants had the time to verify the checked transcripts. After I had determined that the written record was accurate, I then began the story telling by focusing on the critical incidents in my participants' lives and careers. In re-telling my participants' stories via the critical incidents in their lives and career, I let unfold the rough thematic coding process and analysis. At this time, no secondary interview was deemed necessary; hence, all the data came from the one in-person interview with each of the research participants.

Interview Journal

I developed an interview journal, noting my thoughts or observations made during each interview as soon as the interviewing process was completed for each participant. I recorded my personal thoughts and comments in the interview journal primarily as a "bracketing" mechanism. Although bracketing existing notions or preconceptions in order to suspend the researcher's judgments and interpretations for those of the participants' is necessary in "traditional" qualitative research (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 1990), I didn't find much need or use for bracketing in my narrative inquiry study. I as researcher was organically involved in the research and analysis. My bias, rather than needing to be bracketed, adds to the research and analysis as my perspectives on Asian Americans and community college leadership contributed to the overall story telling and thematic analysis. I was able to use the observations contained in the interview journals to provide more details, richness of content, and more complete context for the participants' stories, and in the process, further improved the overall trustworthiness and readability of my study (McMillian & Schumacher, 1997).

Data Analysis

An inductive analysis of data, meaning that the critical themes emerge out of the data was employed in this research (Patton, 1990). Qualitative data analysis requires some creativity, for the challenge is to place the raw data into logical, meaningful foci and themes; to examine them in a holistic fashion; and to find a way to communicate this interpretation of the themes by the researcher to others. These challenges were present in my narrative inquiry study as well. The interview data were voluminous and at time it seems that my participants' stories were all over the map; it was challenging for me to

corral the data into orderly themes. On the other hand, because story telling is the primary mode of reporting these rich data, I was able to capture some critical features of my participants' life and career. And that was satisfying to me and to the participants.

The specific inductive analysis used by me is holistic content perspective (Lieblich et al, 1998). I followed a modified holistic content analysis process. The raw data, whether interview transcripts or interview journals, were incorporated into a word processing program. I read the materials several times for "key issues, events or activities." The reading helped form foci of the entire story. I put my initial and global impressions of the stories told by my participants into writing, noting exceptions to the general impressions as well as unusual features of the story. Once the initial and global impressions were recorded, I then worked on special foci of content or themes that become the body of data analysis. I followed each theme through the materials and come to conclusions regarding each theme, all the while paying special attention to episodes that seem to contradict the themes in terms of content, mood, or evaluation by the teller. As much as feasible, I relied upon emergent coding. I used the participants' words and phrases as codes where possible to lend even more authenticity to the data analysis. As I developed codes and themes, I paid attention to the relationship and connections between and among them so as to increase the credibility and conformability of my analysis. Further, during all this back and forth process, I was constantly reminding myself of the purpose of study to anchor my analysis. Throughout this process, the data are used to "…try to understand the perspectives of the narrator, how they make sense of their worlds, themselves, others and how these meanings were shaped" (Bodgan & Bilken, 1998, p.59).

In keeping with CRT, I use race and culturally relevant interpretative schema to analyze the data. However, the constructivist-interpretivist framework also mandates that I eschew the borderline formalistic deductive analysis process by equipping myself with pre-conceived thematic categories as interpretative basis (Riessman, 2008). While it is true that I paid minimum attention to the local context of the narrative construction in the analytical process, it is also true that the larger social context is the framework, not the specific thematic categories to be use for analysis. I synthesize the thematic categories out of the narratives of the participants by the iterative process of holistic content analysis outlined above.

Since the raw data generated by the interviews were quite expansive, making sense of the participants' narratives and reporting on the sense making was challenging. In keeping with the constructivist-intepretivist framework of data analysis, I'm also not keen on generating thematic categories that can be applied across the participants' stories. In other words, individualized thematic categories derived from individual narratives were completely acceptable. However, in this scenario the reporting of narratives and their interpretations can be quite lengthy. To manage this appropriately, I used the "critical incident/event approach" to write up the research (Webster & Mertova, 2007). As the participants narrate their experiences in stories, they construct these stories around critical incidents/events. An incident/event becomes critical when it has the "right mix of ingredients at the right time and in the right context (Woods, 1993, p. 102). The criticalness of an incident/event is measured by its cognitive impact on the narrator; it has to engender some change in understanding and maybe in action by the narrator. These events/incidents are characterized as "unplanned, unanticipated and uncontrolled"

(Webster & Mertova, 2007, p. 77). Critical incidents/events was a useful tool in me being able to make sense of the participants' narratives. I used critical incidents/events as a reporting device for my narrative inquiry. Instead of constructing the participants' narratives chronologically, I constructed them thematically, using critical incidents/events as the primary mode of reporting such analysis. In re-telling my participants' stories, I start with a personal profile of each participant, based on the critical incident/event as told to me. Following personal profiles, I present the analytical data by theme.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness or verification (Creswell, 1998) of a research design lends credibility to its results based primarily on interpretative conclusion of participants' perspectives. It answers the question; am I close to get it "right"? This study's trustworthiness is supported by the research design, which is narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is the method of choice and the theoretical framework for this study, which is critical race theory. In addition, the trustworthiness of this study is bolstered by the logic behind the selection of participants, the constructivist-interpretivist perspectives I bring to method of data collection and analysis of data, which revealed the success factors, insights and perspectives on leadership by Asian American leaders in the community college. Specifically, I established trustworthiness by employing these two primary strategies: researcher reflexivity and rich thick details (Brantlinger et al, 2005).

Researcher Reflexivity

According to Creswell (1998), it is critically important to clarify my bias at the outset of a study; this way, the reader will gain an inkling of my position and the impact

this position might have on the inquiry. In Chapter 1 of this study, I have provided this information in the form of a Researcher's Perspective. My researcher's perspective will be discussed further in the Chapter 6: Discussion. As discussed in the data collection section of this chapter, I kept an interview journal with the original intent to reduce researcher prejudices and preconceptions during data analysis in other words, "bracketing." As it turns out, my narrative inquiry study with critical race theory as the framework did not require "bracketing" so much as it did the additional information contained in the interview journal. Instead of using the interview journals to "bracket" out my bias, I used the information in the interview journals to add to my story telling and analysis. In narrative inquiry, there is no need for me to "hide" my bias and perspectives; my bias and perspectives on Asian Americans and community college leadership became part and parcel of the analysis.

In addition to "non-bracketing" researcher reflexivity into the interactional process is another key ingredient of the qualitative, narrative inquiry study, an inquiry that is informed by critical race perspectives and employs constructivist-interpretivist frameworks. I need to constantly reflect on the interaction between me, and the participants because "the researcher affects the participants and the research process, just as the researcher is affected by the participants and the research process" (Neilson & Suyumoto, 2009, p. 89).

Rich Thick Details

Rich, thick details comprise the other primary strategy to establish trustworthiness in this study. The hallmark of a good narrative is rich, thick details that will give the reader a strong evocation of the setting, the context, and the details of the story. In this

study, I have strived to provide detailed description of the participants' stories, with critical incidents as the anchor of the reporting of my participants' stories. In addition, the CRT approach to this study means that story telling is the main mode of information transmittal. For stories to be evocative, rich, thick details comprise the foundation. Without rich thick details there would not be any story, certainly not any good story.

Chapter Summary

A narrative inquiry approach by way of listening to the participants' stories on their journey and on the job is the mode for this study. Telling and re-telling of stories constitute a crucial research methodology in critical race studies so that racial minorities will have an opportunity to communicate their lived experiences and contribute to racial healing. Through the selection of participants, and careful analysis of the data, I not only celebrate the successes of these Asian American leaders in the community colleges, but also discern new insights and perspectives on leadership by these Asian American leaders in the community colleges.

To tell the participants' stories with rich thick details, utilizing the critical incidents that happened in their lives, I proffer the Wu Xing, the five movements in Chinese philosophy, as names for the five participants. I will begin Chapter 4 by telling the stories of Mr. Wood, Mr. Fire, Ms. Earth, Mr. Metal, and Ms. Water. Following the personal narrative of the five participants, I will offer some initial speculative thematic analysis. Chapter 5: Further Finding will pick up where Chapter 4 left off by discussing three specific findings.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

Introduction

I encountered a few twists and turns in the process of trying to capture the stories of professional journey, leadership style, and the personal lives of Asian American leaders in community colleges. Just about the time I sent out the invitations to participate in this study, the economic downturn became more pervasive, and community colleges were feeling its ill effects; public financial support for community colleges was being cut drastically and resources to the community colleges were disappearing. Leaders in the community colleges were spending time and energy dealing with this state of affairs, and a large number of the potential research participants had to decline my invitation, citing lack of time or energy. Confronted with this situation, I had to update my research protocol so that I could have enough substance to tell the stories of Asian American leadership in the community colleges. The revision of the research protocol yielded nine positive responses from potential participants. For convenience of scheduling, I was able to interview five Asian American leaders in the community colleges toward the end of Fall 2009. The participants ranged from a chancellor of multi-college district to a president/superintendent of a single-campus district to a vice president of instruction to a

vice president of student services to an academic super-dean. In this chapter, I will be telling the personal stories of my participants by focusing on the critical incidents in their lives. I devote the majority of this chapter to the re-telling of the personal stories of Mr. Wood (木先生), Mr. Fire (火先生), Ms. Earth (土奴士), Mr. Metal (金先生) and Ms. Water (水小姐) via the narration of the critical incidents in their lives that were relayed to me. The five elements in Chinese philosophical and cultural imaginations are used as names for the participants not to be cute, but because they capture the relationship and movement of all that is interconnected in nature and in culture. The general characteristics contained in the description of the five elements also seem to correspond with the personality traits of the five participants whose stories I'm re-telling in the pages that follow.

A brief textual note on the way I will be using my participants' own words. As I tell my participants' stories, I will be using *italics* to quote from them in parallel, explicative structure for my way of telling their stories. When I use their words to complete my own sentences, they will be in quotation marks. Chunkier citations of my participants' words will be in block format.

Following the personal stories, I will briefly elaborate on the initial thematic findings of the study. In Chapter 5: Further Findings, I will focus on three thematic findings specifically: non-traditional career paths, re-treading presidents in the community colleges, and rebelliousness in Asian American leaders.

Mr. Wood (木先生)

Mr. Wood is a warm, open, and positive man. His eyes are twinkly and alert behind wire-rimmed classes, and he breaks into an easy smile every now and then as he talks.

Growing up in British-colonized Hong Kong, with a mother from Shanghai and a father from San Francisco, Mr. Wood has always been keenly aware of the middle status of his life, between East and West. *My father was a US citizen born and raised in San Francisco. My mother is from Shanghai, China.* He is also smack in the middle as far as sibling order goes: the middle child in a family of five children. *I have an older brother and an older sister and a younger sister and a younger brother in that order*. While the family, especially the parents emphasized education, and Mr. Wood looked up to his oldest brother, who performed the best academically, he himself was a middling student from grade school to high school, knowing from an early age that he was going to come to America for higher education. *Well everyone is supposed to be an 'A' student. Everyone in the family is supposed to place number one in the class*.

Mr. Wood's family, not untypical of a striving immigrant Chinese family anywhere, emphasized education, and placed a high expectation on the children to excel academically. Mr. Wood's oldest brother, the number one son in the family, rose up to the expectations and did excel, but Mr. Wood, as the middle child, rebelled against the notion of excelling academically, choosing instead to simply get by. *And at least in the five children, one of us did, was a very good student growing up. But that wasn't me. And I failed in that expectation. I did OK. I was the middle of the pack. I did enough to get by and not any more.*

Although there wasn't any specific expectation in terms of a career as a doctor, lawyer, or engineer, the children were expected to do well in school and to graduate to have successful careers. Mr. Wood's mother was a stay-at-home mother, who would take time to monitor the children's homework completion, and the completion of all school-related work. *And also, you know, there was a lot of support for children for education that was emphasized. Make sure we went to school. My mother would sit with us every day when we worked on our homework to make sure that it was done…*

Growing up in a part of Hong Kong that had a high concentration of immigrants from mainland China with only a smattering of British people, Mr. Wood was not exposed to any racial differences or strife. Even though there was language barrier, the Chinese and British children played together from time to time. However, as Mr. Wood matured, he became increasingly aware of the class distinctions in the Hong Kong society.

> And definitely as I became older, I was conscious of the class difference. That definitely was structured in the society. When I was growing up in my neighborhood, there were some British children. We played together and there was not a problem. Even though we didn't all speak the same language, there were interactions. But as I grew up, it became evident to me. And with kids growing up more, there was more of a divide.

As a teenager, Mr. Wood was especially incensed by the lack of democratic rights to the citizens of Hong Kong. Instead, authoritarian rule was the mode of government, which seemed rather oppressive to Mr. Wood.

> I think for me that awareness actually happened when I was in high school in Hong Kong. I became very dissatisfied with the lack of democracy in Hong Kong. The oppressiveness of the government in Hong Kong at that time. And the colonial rule where there was absolutely no…Basically there's no democratic rights to the people. It is the rule of law to a certain extent. But there's absolute decision by one person appointed by the British government. So ultimately it's

some kind of a dictatorship. So I was very dissatisfied with everything happening around the world on the human rights movement.

Armed with this righteous outrage at the lack of human rights in Hong Kong, Mr. Wood was ripe to receive the fervor that was stirred up by the civil rights movement when he came to America to pursue higher education. He was impressed with the "advancement in human rights and in democratic rights for the people." He firmly identifies himself as an Asian American, not just because he has roots in both cultures, but in the context of America with his ethnicity, he understands the mixing of the two, and how his ethnicity has an influence on his Americanness. Mr. Wood has experienced racism and prejudice, whether overt or subtle. He has been "called names, racial names by others." There have been "remarks…made that imply certain ignorance or some kind of remark to my race or ethnicity or my looks." Mr. Wood thinks that some times, there is a lack of understanding of issues being discussed; hence the easy way out is for people to call him names, racial names.

Mr. Wood freely acknowledges that hostility toward his race or ethnicity exists, overtly and covertly, and there are in fact times when there is differential treatment based on race. However, the more important question to him is how one responds to these circumstances. There is a range of options being laid out by him: "Does one try to learn to overcompensate for that? Or does one just ignore those and just move forward or does one confront those or does one, because of the obstacles, give up?"

In Mr. Wood's work experiences, which have been in the research, non-profit, and higher education fields, he felt that overt racism or prejudice is rare these days especially with regard to the regulations "outlining what we must do and what we must

not do." The strong institutional support makes it easy for him to "navigate through" these types of obstacles. *Because of the nature of the field (higher education) in and of itself, there's more openness to accepting and looking at the person and not pay attention that much to the ethnic origin of that person*. However, in the social settings, Mr. Wood is more cautious about his ethnic and racial identity. "I would feel more sensitive because of the signals and the overt or subtle signals that I was able to detect."

Mr. Wood's path to community college is not your typical path from department chair to dean to vice president of instruction to president. Instead, he had gone into research right after graduating from post-graduate studies in linguistics. After directing a small team of researchers for a few years, the theoretical nature of research became unsatisfactory. The basic research, even though it was interesting, was not "providing me the same emotional satisfaction. So the activist in me that was in the late sixties and the early seventies really was still driving my interest basically. So the turn to working in a nonprofit to head it up, really was a return to my original interest in working on addressing social justice issues using education. Using training to bring skills and opportunities to people who can use those to better themselves and to address social justice and other issues." Mr. Wood then became the director of a community non-profit organization, which "was focused on providing language training, job training and also internship experiences for persons who are unemployed, underemployed, and those who were immigrants or refugees or native born Americans who are of low income." After ten years in that position, he was recruited to work full-time for the community college, although he did teach part-time for a few years in the community colleges prior to that.

Although not specifically related to his community college position, Mr. Wood felt that the directorship at the non-profit provided "good preparation" because "it is a leadership position."

> *It's the top leader of the organization. I had to work with the board. I had to basically lay out program direction and carry out the philosophy, carry out the mission of the organization. I had to touch upon almost all aspects of any larger organization except it's on a smaller scale. So it's a full charge job. And so one is supposed to learn a lot of administrative skills and also have to make a lot of decisions…Making an ultimate decision for any organization is really a test of leadership. And I had to repeatedly do that.*

The buck had stopped with Mr. Wood. "And I had to report to not only a board every month, I had to report to the community as the ultimate person, as the ultimate responsible person in making sure that the organization is running from year to year based on the money I raised. Based on the control of expenditures. And based on the performance of the programs." He concluded by saying, "I had a lot of experience to exercise so called leadership abilities."

In addition to his leadership experience prior to working full-time at a community college, Mr. Wood felt that doctoral education helped prepare him to become a leader; the degree became more than just a "union card." The doctoral education provided the "training and the rigor of how to think, how to process and how to analyze." So Mr. Wood's education, his work experiences as a researcher, as a director of a community non-profit, and his acute awareness of a match between his interest, his personality and the institution over which he presides have landed him a presidential position that he very much enjoys.

> There is no one road to success. In every success story, there are a combination of factors. And there's no one personality type that will make one person to be successful. I think we have to find the positions that match our interests. We have

to make use of our skills that match our personality and find the best combination. I think that's important. Then to not give up easily and still find enjoyment doing that.

Persistence and enjoyment and joy are intertwined for Mr. Wood. "One can persist. But if one is not enjoying it, one doesn't find joy in doing that, then that's probably not a good match." Where leadership success goes, Mr. Wood thinks that the definition has been expanded.

> In this day and age in education, leadership is not just defined in terms of formal positions. Even though it's a convenient and traditional definition. Leadership these days can be expanded. One can become the leader of a union…One can become a leader in a scholarly area. That's a traditional one. That's important to recognize. And in community colleges particularly, it's not just in scholarly but pedagogical arena as well. So how does one become a very, very good teacher to the students, who can work successfully with the challenging students that they have? That's tremendously important.

Mr. Wood is beyond happy with his position as a leader; he is overjoyed. "I feel that I'm doing what I had wanted to do without knowing it when I was younger," even though the decision-making environment can be complex and challenging.

> Educational decisions are primarily driven by collective bargaining interests. And I think that is a problem. I think the governance structure is also so much influenced by collective bargaining interests. So it's hard to get to the bottom line of providing, talking about providing the best education for the students. So in this kind of environment, how one navigates through these restraints and constraints and still get to the doing educational work and providing student oriented services. It's a real challenge. And so I think that's the biggest challenges for us in doing that. So I think that an effective leader is to be able to recognize these and how to work or work in spite of these constraints. And the work with a board or a governance structure that is not always straight forward. So realizing the complex nature of decision making in this kind of environment.

Leadership is a topic upon which Mr. Wood has constantly reflected. He thinks that leaders have a tremendous influence on the overall atmosphere of the workplace; how the leader projects life sets the tone for the workplace. Everybody in the organization looks to the leaders for signs and clues to his/her mood and emotion.

"Management is not simply or solely about solving problems—oftentimes one needs to take the time to create an atmosphere of positive energy, creativity and joy in the work place."

But the joy in his work is palpable in Mr. Wood. I could feel the rising energy when he talks about exercising leadership in the global citizenship initiative.

> I'm operating at this level where I have little direct contact with what's happening in the classroom. But with my work, I was able to push for this global citizenship initiative…I feel that it's a deep-rooted interest that I have. And it's evolved all along to this point…I think in some ways it addresses a very strong point in my identity…You started the interview with asking me my identity of an Asian American. I think that I'm just taking that interpretation to an even broader arena, and to a global level. That how do we understand the conflicts and contrasts and interconnectedness or the happenings around the world and bring it to a deeper and a more comprehensive understanding. So that we can follow our students to see if from that perspective and make better decisions. Whether it's on the level of addressing the environment, addressing economic development. Addressing social justice. Addressing national security and peace…I think I'm fortunate that I had that experience with my upbringing. And so I bring to it my perspective and I'm very fortunate that I have a college and other people who see it the same way. And I continue to use my position to address what I feel the important issue of providing opportunities to students who can, because of what we provide, do better for themselves and for society as well. So I find tremendous satisfaction in what I do these days…I feel very fulfilled. This is one point in my life where I feel very fulfilled.

Mr. Fire (火先生)

At 5 feet 9 inches, Mr. Fire is an average-sized man by American standards, but considered to be a "giant" among his family and relatives. His features are smooth and his physique has the residual signs of having led an active sporty life in his youth. The

passion in Mr. Fire is evident in his steadfast gaze and his clear, deliberate enunciation when he speaks about Asian Pacific Islanders (APIs) in leadership.[2]

Mr. Fire's parents were immigrants from China. His father was a paper son, brought over from China under false papers to be a stranger's son so that he could work in his paper father's restaurant. Mr. Fire's paper grandfather was a railroad worker, but once the transcontinental railroad was completed, he had to find another line of work, so he opened a restaurant in New Mexico. Mr. Fire's father was brought over as a child to wash dishes in the restaurant.

Similar to his own paper father, Mr. Fire's father opened a restaurant when he had cumulated enough capital to do so. Mr. Fire himself worked in "the family restaurant from the time I was ten until I was eighteen," never having been paid a penny by his father. His father's reasoning is that he has provided for his son in every way possible including food, shelter, clothing, and schooling. It is only fair that his own son re-pay him by working in the restaurant for him.

Mr. Fire claims that his family is "country Chinese," realizing all too well the class status of his own family. However, with every Chinese family, whether country or not, the children are expected to excel in school. Mr. Fire has an older sister who did excel and received her bachelor's degree from UC Berkeley and master's from UCLA. Mr. Fire, being the younger child, wanted to emulate his older sister, but at the same rebelled a bit. *My sister was always a better student. Matter of fact, I always was being*

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[2] API is the term of choice for Mr. Fire, so I will be using API to refer to Asian Americans in Mr. Fire's story.

compared to my sister, and I rebelled by not doing homework and not getting good

grades. Mr. Fire recalls vividly his physical confrontation with his mother over his

grades.

> I still remember going through junior high school; I never even did homework. I didn't study; I just went to class, listened. I'd still get a C on the test… When I started high school, it was three-year high school. I remember my sophomore year, I think my first semester, I came home with a 3.2 GPA, the best GPA I'd ever gotten. I always got Bs and Cs, 2.5, 2.8. I was really proud; I came home and showed it to my mom. I went, look, Mom, and I showed it to her, and she looks at it, and she pulled out my sister's, who's like straight As or whatever, and then she yells at me in Chinese, why aren't you more like your sister? I reached out and grabbed the report from my mom; I tore it up and threw it down on the ground.

Mr. Fire feels to this day that his parents used his sister's academic success to put "undue

pressure" on him, and he went "the opposite" direction. But he is smart in his own way;

"I just didn't study. I'm not intelligent; I'm smart. I used to joke about it: she has the

book smarts; I have the street smarts. I tell people just so you understand my background,

I speak Chinglish with a Black accent." Mr. Fire had grown up in a predominantly Black

neighborhood in the Chinese Baptist church. "In the predominantly Black neighborhood,

the Chinese Baptist church was five houses from my parents' house, so I grew up in that

church from the time I was two years old…"

Over the years the neighborhood in which Mr. Fire grew up experienced dramatic

changes.

> I grew up in a predominantly Black neighborhood…I don't want to say it's a tough neighborhood. Growing up, all the families were really nice to us. But then as the good families moved out and other people moved in, our house got broken into twice in less than a year. My parents moved us out of there because it wasn't safe. When we were little kids, like five/six years old, we'd go trick or treating with our neighborhood kids and be fine. By the time I was in junior high school, I wouldn't even go out.

Mr. Fire's experiences with race and ethnicity have other interesting twists as well.

> When you look in hindsight, I never considered race or ethnicity because I grew up in a predominantly Black neighborhood, yet I grew up in a bilingual, Chinese-speaking home, and attending a Chinese-speaking church, where they had the sermon in English and Chinese. But most of my friends were third and fourth generation didn't speak [Chinese]. I did. An example, when I got to high school, there was the Asian club, and there was a Chinese club. The Asian club was all the people that were American born, Chinese and Japanese. The Chinese club were[was] the foreign born. This is back in the seventies, so everyone was into Bruce Lee. There were always fights. Everybody was kungfu fighting, as they would say.

However, "the fights were never between the Asian and the Whites, the Blacks or the Browns." The fights were between ABCs (American Born Chinese) and the FOBs (Fresh Off the Boat). Mr. Fire never engaged in any fights because he was friends with the ABCs and also spoke Chinese with the FOBs; he "had connections to both." When pressured to choose between the two camps, he joined the Spanish club instead, thus avoiding having to choose between the ABCs and FOBs.

Mr. Fire grew up a Chinese Christian; the family celebrated Chinese New Year and Christmas. After high school, he went to a community college, then transferred from there to a private Christian college for both his undergraduate and graduate degrees. Mr. Fire self-identifies himself as an Asian American with a Chinese emphasis. Even though he says that he has not experienced any overt racism or prejudice, he recounts one incident in Kentucky that seems to contradict his general statement. Mr. Fire went to a conference with a few White colleagues. The plane landed at the Cincinnati airport in Ohio, but the airport is actually located across the river in Kentucky. At one of the airport restaurants, Mr. Fire got to sit down first ahead of his White colleagues. Once he decided

what he wanted to eat, he couldn't get the waitress's attention. *She's walking by me…She would not come back and take my order…She wouldn't take my order…I'm waving at her, she just walked by me for half an hour. She ignored me.* So his colleagues all got their food, and Mr. Fire did not have any. Even so, he says, "I don't know if I would call it racism versus ignorance and prejudice." Mr. Fire goes on to say, "That's the most blatant. There have been subtle things that have been said. I've heard people say, oh yes, they refer to you as a Chink." Sometimes even when nothing is being said, "you can just sense some tension in the air."

Mr. Fire has been an administrator in the community college system for a number of years; currently he is a vice-president. He is heavily involved with leadership development for Asian Pacific Islanders (APIs). He tries to study leadership as well by reading at least one book on leadership a year; oftentimes he reads more than one book on leadership. He is "unashamed" of his "biased criticism" of lack of APIs in top leadership posts in higher education. "If Asians are so damn smart, then why is there only one vice president of academic affairs [in the state university system]? We're so damn smart. We are the model minority. No one's smarter, no one works harder at academics than Asians, so why is there no vice president of academic affairs [in the university of State system]?"

Mr. Fire readily agrees that APIs are invisible in every segment of higher education. He relates one story of Dr. Chang-lin Tien who gave a speech at one of the conferences Mr. Fire attended.

> He came and spoke. I was almost crying. I'm still moved because he spoke about the challenges and opportunities…He told his whole story about how he came to

America to study, and how he showed up in Louisville and he got off the bus after a long ride, and there's a Blacks and Whites for the drinking fountain, in the fifies. He's like, I didn't know which one to drink from. He talks about his commitment to diversity…I thought, here's man with a thick Chinese accent, and he's going to be Chancellor at Berkeley…in northern California, it's either Berkeley or Stanford. Those two are Mecca's for any Asian. He's a guy who had a thick Chinese accent who was going to be chancellor at Berkeley. I just thought, wow. I just remember I was in tears. I didn't cry, but I was completely watered up, going, wow; he's a chancellor at Berkeley. One of my own has made it.

Dr. Chang-lin Tien is one shining exception to the abysmal lack of APIs in higher education leadership. Since Mr. Fire works at a community college, he is particularly concerned about the pipeline issue, the issue of getting qualified, diverse candidate in the pipeline to succeed should leadership positions become open due to retirement or resignation. He gets upset when White folks talk about succession planning by "hir[ing] from the faculty. Ninety percent of your faculty are White; hello!" In practice, the community college leadership has become the "pro-sports of higher education," according to Mr. Fire. "Just like in pro sports, we'd rather hire a retread loser than hire an unknown. So I stand by my statement. I said, community college is the pro sports of higher education. We hire, fire, and retread coaches; we call them presidents."

Cultural values intertwined with leadership development constitute another topic in which Mr. Fire has a strong interest. He told the story of conducting a workshop for the Rising Star program, which is conducted by the Japanese American Citizens' League in the Little Tokyo area of [City]. High school students, mostly third and fourth generation Japanese Americans, were asked, "What do people say about Asians at your school?" The answer is, "nerdy, book worm, smart." The students were then asked to list the qualities of a good leader and discover how many of these qualities match the Asian qualities; very few of the qualities match. The bicultural struggle for Asian Americans

persists to the third and fourth generations. The Asian cultural values of "don't bring

shame to the family, work hard, don't draw attention to yourself" can make it hard for the

young Asian Americans to stand up and take up leadership responsibilities. Mr. Fire

teaches young Asian Americans to break out of their cultural mode, and learn to brag

better about themselves.

In his own professional work experience, Mr. Fire himself has been told that he

wasn't aggressive enough. He has had a hard time explaining to his superiors that this is a

culturally biased assessment.

> I grew up in a predominantly Black neighborhood, and I'm not afraid to speak my mind, but always try to be respectful. I said, aggressive compared to who[m], to egocentric White males like yourself? Do you know how culturally biased your statement is? I was brought up in a Chinese American home. I was taught to be respectful to my elders and to my superiors. You are both. So when you tell me I'm not aggressive enough because that means I don't challenge you. To me, that would be disrespectful. I said, let me ask you a question. In your office, behind closed doors when we speak, haven't I told you I disagree with you? Have I not said, I don't think you are right? One on one, in private, I will be respectful, but I will still challenge you. In public, I will never disrespect you.

The best preparation Mr. Fire had in becoming an administrator is his education in

business management. Even though he doesn't particularly care for the preparation and

monitoring of the budget, it's the one skill that enabled him to rise up through the ranks

from director to dean to vice president. Mr. Fire thinks his top three qualities as an

administrator are that he is loyal; he is also passionate and committed.

As a leader, Mr. Fire believes that it is critical one keeps one's ego in check. By

keeping one's ego in check, one positions oneself to help the staff perform their best.

Because he has not done much scholarly publication, Mr. Fire considers himself a

"pragmatic practitioner." As a leader who is a pragmatic practitioner, Mr. Fire "put[s]

others ahead of myself…I think that's real important that I really invest in the people I work with. And I think my ethnic background has something to do with that." Unfortunately for Mr. Fire, in the community colleges, "outstanding leadership means you have to be able to deal with the unions." By the same token, "to be a good leader means you have to have some backbone, and sometimes it means the unpopular decision."

For the future generations of APIs who aspire to be leaders, Mr. Fire has this advice. "In particular APIs, we're taught to be unselfish. We're taught to look out for others. If you are going to move up as an API in the field, not just in your job, in the field, sometimes you have to be a bit unselfish…And so my advice to increase API leadership is, one, don't be afraid to speak up, to get involved. Invest time in yourself."

Ms. Earth (土奴士)

Ms. Earth is a polished woman in her late 50s/early 60s with a warm smile and open demeanor. Not too long before the interview, she was promoted to be the chancellor of a multi-college district, and her schedule was highly impacted. Nonetheless, she made time for the interview as she wished to help. The interview was tightly structured so that she wouldn't miss her next appointment.

I was surprised to hear that Ms. Earth grew up in a rural part of Taiwan. The Ms. Earth who was sitting across the table from me is put together well with her coordinated fashion, gold jewelry and impeccable coiffure. *It's a very remote, small village. I grew up. Our house surrounded by rice patties. I watched water buffaloes work in the rice patties.* However, her father was not a farmer. He was "an engineer; he worked in the

city, but chose to locate his family in the country because he wanted to be a hermit. So he built this house." It was a simple life that Ms. Earth still cherishes to this day. *I wouldn't trade it for anything. It gave me a whole different sense of the world. I'm really very thankful for that childhood experience where I grew up, because life was simple. I had to chop wood. We had no running water.* Well water was what was available. "We had to pump the well water. I had to carry the water and purify it and all that. We had to chop wood and light the wood, and that's how my mother cooked every day. It was a lifestyle definitely chosen by my father, because we could've lived in the cities, but he chose otherwise. It was good."

The simplistic surrounding aside, Ms. Earth's parents were typical Chinese parents otherwise. They "sacrificed everything they have, and there was no other priority. Children were their priority." As to expectations of educational achievement, there were some differences between the two parents:

> My father wanted me to go to college… college was like kindergarten, of course. It's a given. And all along, I've always thought that I was going to go to graduate school. For my father, he had high expectations of our educational achievement. I don't think he expected me to go through a doctorate degree, but a Master's was minimum. My mother, on the contrary, watched me, how I worked so hard in school, wanted me to have the easier life. She always said, school is so hard; you work so hard! She, even when I was going through the doctorate degree, she says, do you have to? Because you are going to work so hard. There was a different expectation. Her heart was just so soft.

Ms. Earth started working hard early in life. The childhood hardships in terms of living on a farm and having to help the family chop wood and pump well water carried further into her teen years. Ms. Earth came to America to finish the last two years of high school education. She landed in the middle of America with "no English" and "no money," and being the only Asian in that high school. It was hard for Ms. Earth to even

"have a dream" at that time—life was "one day at a time" for survival. But at the back of her mind, there is the cultural pressure of educational achievement. "Education is first and last."

Because she spent her formative years in Taiwan, Ms. Earth will always self-identify as Chinese. She will only identify herself as a Chinese American when prompted/forced by somebody else. "And when I say I'm Chinese-American, rarely do I find that, unless somebody else wants to, aren't you a Chinese-American, and I have to always pause and say, yes, I guess, I suppose." Ms. Earth came to America for high school and for the longest time, her immigrant experiences defined who she was and caused an anxiety of having to choose between East and West.

> …in the first primary developmental years, all of my values and cultural inculcations were Chinese. And that part of it, I cannot shed. But there's a big part of me that's been inculcated by the Western culture as well. I think that I would be in denial if I say I'm 100% this way, east or west. So, while I'm having to choose many a times in the past of whether you are this way or that way, I have come at peace, where I say that I've come to peace with, I am both; I am both east and west.

Because she is in a bi-racial, bi-cultural marriage, Ms. Earth felt that she needed to be more "pronouncedly" Chinese in raising her children. In other words, she felt that it was important for her children to retain the cultural heritage of both races.

As an immigrant, Ms. Earth felt that racism or prejudice against her as a Chinese woman was quite frequent, "plenty of times, being an Asian woman" is her statement. However, the context of her immigration is post-Civil Rights.

> I came after the Civil Rights Movement had started. So a lot of the racial prejudices and racism are more covert than overt, and those, whether it's words, gestures, attitudes, are exhibited in many different forms, by many different

people…Most of the time it is at work. It's from those who report to me; like, who's she, now going to be my boss? As well as my colleagues…peers.

Ms. Earth believes that it is much more about her being an immigrant than her race that is at the base of the prejudicial language and behavior, but with the election of President Obama as the signification of the changes in racial attitudes and interactions, Ms. Earth does not believe that prejudices manifest themselves all that much anymore. …*more it's the fact that I'm an immigrant and not in the mainstream in terms of opportunities for success in having the bamboo ceiling if you will. But I don't believe that anymore. I don't believe that.*

It's almost like watching Obama become the president. You say, not any more. I can relate to it at the personal level, that I think even though I have navigated my own career path in the dark many a times in the early years…you get hired and you have no idea how the politics work and how does anything work. All you know as an Asian woman is you've been told, you work hard. That's all I knew was working hard. I had no idea about the environment, the institutional culture and everything else.

Working hard is how Ms. Earth ended up in community college administration.

I think that it wasn't something [community college administration] I planned. It was a result, by default, as a person who, the only thing she knew was to work hard. And I was taught that people would recognize good work, and that was a tradition in the Chinese history. You work hard; the boss recognizes you and rewards you. That was the programming I had. So when people came and gave me more responsibilities and more responsibilities, because we're dependable, we're trustworthy, and then when you deliver, more piles on top of your plate, and then when the plate is full, they say, how about the next level? That's really how it occurred, as a natural progression.

In terms of leadership training, Ms. Earth thinks unequivocally that there is no formal leadership training in the community colleges, but informal training does happen/exist. For Ms. Earth, all she's gotten in the community colleges is informal training. "…everyday is a preparation for the next day, doing something different, higher, better." That is the way for Ms. Earth to become the leader she is today.

…who I am as a leader is a combination of the many paths I have crossed, informal in so many different ways of the people who report to me, the people I have reported to. You have reported to good leaders, and then you have reported to leaders that you'd rather do without. Both are learning experiences for me, as well as those people who work with me and for me, because they're all individuals and I learn something from each person in working with them, and how to move them, and how to motivate them, and how they are inspired, and what is the result of the teamwork. All that is a culmination of day-to-day work. That's one. The other is by absolutely associating myself with those who are successful and those who I can relate to with similar backgrounds, such as…Like Kaleidoscope. We're able to share our challenges, and then we're able to learn from each other how we overcome the challenges as women of color, because that's a subtle challenge that a group of Caucasian men would not be able to help me with…Also leaders that I have worked with that have become mentors and role models are equally important to me.

As to what qualities and skill-sets that enabled her to rise to the leadership

position she is in today, Ms. Earth is emphatically clear:

My track record, because that's evidence. They're not going to hire because of what I look like and who I am. I think my track record both at the local level as a college president, the institutions that I helped build, and my track record at the national level. So I'm not just a local entity, but someone who has been active and provided leadership and contribution to the system itself, which is one thing that I've always looked at. I think I come from a collective culture rather than a very individualistic culture. In the collective culture, I've always been taught to look at the whole. I don't look at a college, a district; I look at the system. And what it is that I could do to help make one small difference to the system itself…I wanted to make a difference at the system level, at the national level, for the community college environment.

In addition, people skills, passion for unity, and a high level of integrity are the

qualities that enabled her to rise to the top.

I think, first and foremost, people skill[s]. I think I have excellent people skills. I've never measured my EQ [emotional intelligence]. I suspect, what I tell people how important EQ is. I understand the concept, and I think I must have a high EQ score because I love people. And I talk from their seat rather than from my seat. That's always one of the first things I try to do. So people skills. And secondly is my passionate desire and priority and emphasis on building unity, and whether it's one department, or one district, or one national board, that's something I've always strived for, building unity. And the third thing is a high level of integrity, because that builds the trust. If I don't have integrity, I don't have trust. I have no trust, I have no foundation for anything.

Ms. Earth characterizes her leadership style as "open, inclusive, fair, and consistent." She lives by "certain principles" that "will never change," so she is consistent. "If somebody had asked me that ten years ago, I would've had the same answer. It's a set of principles and value that were never altered." She believes that her race and ethnicity have "everything to do with" her leadership style "because I'm who I am. What I do is a combination of who I am, and who I am is, my race and culture, is 100%." In addition to her race and culture, the other biggest influence on her leadership style is her spirituality. "My religious faith anchors who I am in terms of those other principles I practice. So I practice what I believe."

As to the picture of an effective leader in the community colleges, Ms. Earth is equally as clear on the defining features of this picture.

> First of all, is a person who is absolutely passionate about the mission of community college, really understand what we are about. We're not a four-year system; we're not a research institution. That's first and foremost. Second, effective leadership is a leader who can make and insist on student-centered decisions, because we have all the constituencies. We all have constituency bias and agenda. But the effective leader insists on student-centered decisions. So that's an effective leader. And third is a leader who is courageous about change, because if we're not effective, that means we're not changing. And we are changing every day. So as a leader who can be, not necessarily change for change sake, but understand the necessity of change when the time is right, and must do the courageous thing, to do it. But without killing people, because you have to bring people along. A leader cannot be…you've got to look next to you or behind you. If there's not anybody there, you may want to lead the change and there's no one around.

Mr. Metal (金先生)

Mr. Metal is a third generation Japanese American, whose grandparents came to America to pursue a better life. Having grown up in a rough and tumble urban

neighborhood, Mr. Metal possesses a weathered, somewhat tough exterior, softened, though, by his gentle mannerisms including his speech.

Mr. Metal's father is 85 years old and a survivor of the internment camp during World War II. At that time, Mr. Metal's father was of high school age. *He had to go to high school in the camps. But it was just, I guess, back then, as he mentioned to me, pretty much priority was to try to get out and the way to get out was of course to enlist in the service...* Mr. Metal's father enlisted in the 442nd, the Nisei army in order to get out of the internment camp. However, his father's family lost everything during internment.

> They literally lost everything. They had a home over here in [XXX], and find out that they'd lost all their furniture, all their personal belongings, and that the home that they had was actually being rented out room by room. Somebody was making money on it. And of course, they trashed the place. When they came back, it was almost in ruins when they actually were able to come back and claim that.

Mr. Metal's father has a large family with a number of siblings. They all got sent to different internment camps, at Heart Mountain in Wyoming, camps in Colorado and elsewhere.

Mr. Metal's grandfather came to this country and found work as the middleman in the produce industry. His grandfather did well enough "to acquire property," which, according to Mr. Metal, "was very difficult back then for them."

After Mr. Metal's father's family got out of the internment camps from various locations through enlisting and release, they did the "typical Asian culture type of thing"—

> you work hard and save, and parents try to do everything they can for their kids. You know how it's just kind of passed down through the generations, and that was very strong at that time, that they were going to work, and work hard, and try

to give opportunities for their kids. In my dad's family, not everybody had an opportunity to go to college. A few dabbled in it but then got married and went on and did whatever they were doing with their lives. My dad did not have the opportunity to go to college. He ended up going to trade school. When he got out of the service, I think he went to [XXX] Trade Tech…and did some kind of automotive training thing.

Mr. Metal's father met his mother in the internment camp and married her. The parents have five children with Mr. Metal being the middle child, with two older sisters and two younger brothers. Mr. Metal's mother stayed home, and raised the five children while Mr. Metal's father worked and worked hard, even got a second job to support the family. The traditional Japanese American route to prosperity is through pooling money together among friends and start businesses. Mr. Metal's father was no exception.

> He had a couple friends…they pooled their money together; they actually bought a gas station and started a business…They had a station there, and really built it up. It was probably 15 years they had that location right there and did really well and worked hard, and got a lot of clients. But my dad worked six days a week, only took Sunday off, and was there. Those guys are there at six o'clock in the morning until six o'clock at night, pretty much worked straight through.

But his father also got a second job. "He ended up working over there at night, so he would do this job and then go to the [XXX]. He was the ticket taker there. He essentially had two jobs. Then he'd come home at ten o'clock and then the whole routine would start over again." Mr. Metal couldn't help but comment, "It's an incredible amount of discipline that you go through for really, when you look at it, just a regular routine on a day to day basis."

> The work ethic of his father seemed to rub off on his entire family.

> And, ironically, we had a very independent family…When we were 17 or 18, everybody left. Everybody kind of went on. And we all worked back then, even myself included, my sisters. They got [to] 18; they moved out, on their own, worked on their own, did everything on their own…For me, he[father] always paid my tuition, but I had

to pay for my own apartment and car. Whatever we wanted, we were on our own. So I was working. We all did that.

As far as education is concerned, Mr. Metal's family is typical of Asian families everywhere.

> In our family, again, because my dad didn't have the opportunity to officially go to a university and get a college education, it was really more vocational type of thing, but he stressed that all of us need to go to college. Again, this is not atypical. This is what we did, we're Japanese American. And in my neighborhood, I grew up in [XXX] area, there were a lot of Asian families there, so we had a lot of friends and a lot of us were in the same situation, exiting out of the internment situation, and young families settling and trying to make a go out of it in that area. There were a lot of Asians in that area. But my sister, my older sister was very bright, and she immediately, when she graduated high school, she moved out and went to college right away…She kind of set the example.

While Mr. Metal's parents did not provide any ostensible "outwardly support—they never would give you a lot of praise or show affection or any of those kind of things," they did provide very strong family support to the children, *more internal, family core support that you knew, you knew that they were there*. As to parental expectation of professional career and success, "it's like the stories you hear about, where the Asian parents want their kids to be doctors and whatever, but they are really more interested in being a pianist or something else…there's that pressure to go into a profession, be a professional, which back then was being a lawyer. Engineers were big…being a lawyer, be a doctor, engineer, those kind." It was almost like that with Mr. Metal's parents, but not quite like that, "My mom and dad were pretty cool about it; they knew we were going to do what we were going to do, so they ended up not making an issue of it…As long as we were making progress…"

Growing up in a diverse community with little emphasis at home on the Japanese culture and its traditions, Mr. Metal considers himself an American.

I always say Japanese American. Yes I always say Japanese American. Obviously, physically, you could look at me. But I'm very Americanized. And being very sheltered in the sense that I don't speak Japanese; I've only been to Japan twice. A lot of the cultural aspects…are not as strong in our family as I see in many other families with religion and other kinds of things. I would say Japanese American, but really, I could see, I'm very Americanized.

With regard to Japanese culture and its traditions, Mr. Metal reflected, "My family, I wouldn't call them necessarily traditional Japanese. My dad and mom spoke Japanese, but they didn't speak Japanese to us." The parent tried to send the children to Japanese school; it worked a little bit with the two older sisters. "But by the time it got to me and my brothers, we didn't want to go. They[parents] tried to maintain some level." About the only thing Japanese that the family does to this day is "to gather at New Year's," even though Mr. Metal's maternal grandmother was into the Japanese culture and tried to pass it on to the younger generations. "My grandmother was very into the culture of Japan, so she painted a lot and did a lot of these sand paintings…She tried to teach us all of that," but she was not successful. "Not with us. We were just, because you've got to remember it was in the sixties and seventies when we were…it was getting much more radical at that time." This state of affairs of not being too Asian was exacerbated when Mr. Metal was applying for college admission. "It was the beginning of that discussion of, they've got too many Asians at [XXX]. There's too many; you're not going to get in, so you don't want to mark you're Asian on your form." According to Mr. Metal, in order to gain access to higher education, one almost had to mark oneself as some other race, such as Filipino.

Growing up in the area where Mr. Metal grew up, it was a diverse area. "Lots of Asians…Japanese American. Not necessarily Chinese or Korean; it was Japanese Americans…they settled in that area right there. Right in that area, they just settled there.

But it was very diverse, and so along with Japanese-Americans were Mexican Americans…we had African Americans. It was really multi-cultural. It was really interesting…"

It comes as no surprise to Mr. Metal then that all of his siblings married people of various and different ethnic backgrounds. He also believes that he has not experienced any racism or prejudice of significance. He did relate one incident that he finds somewhat amusing. He and his friends, all Japanese American, were playing golf in South Carolina as a foursome. The play was slow. The foursome behind them were "older white gentlemen and probably in the service." In Mr. Metal's mind, these gentlemen were probably still thinking about the war time a lot; hence, what happened is not necessarily hurtful, simply amusing. The gentlemen in the back started to complain about the four Japanese American players, loudly. They probably thought these four Japanese Americans don't understand English that well. The language got out of hand. Finally, one of the Japanese American players "got pissed off and went over to them and cussed them out." Mr. Metal "thought it was hilarious." But he maintained that he's "never really experienced any kind of racism."

Mr. Metal also attributes his racial tolerance to his high school experience. He went to an inner-city high school, "it was a great place to go to school, because it was totally integrated. And you learned really a lot about life and a lot of street smarts and how to survive…" "The experience was very, very valuable" and he wouldn't trade it for anything. "It was a good training ground," where he learned "how to interact with people…it was multicultural…and I was in athletics, so my range of friends was everybody. It wasn't like I hung out with just Japanese Americans."

Even though Mr. Metal was good at sports in high school and in college and could have made a go with playing sports at the professional level, he chose to quit playing in college because "I knew that I wanted to coach, to go into coaching. That's what I really knew I wanted to do. I finished up and got a job coaching baseball."

His coaching job got Mr. Metal his first job in the community colleges, as a counselor. After a while, he was approached to become an acting dean of counseling, shortly thereafter made permanent dean of counseling. Later on he became dean of instruction and eventually vice president of instruction. The path to administration and leadership was completely by accident. "It just happened…I came in to teach at that level. I wasn't interested in doing this; it just happened."

Mr. Metal thinks that his coaching background "helped a lot" in him advancing in his administrative career in the community colleges. The transferrable skills of "organization and getting along" "help me move through these jobs here." In addition, the person who made him acting dean of counseling saw that Mr. Metal's "potential in that area," i.e. administration. The most important ability he possessed was "the ability to get along with people…[the counseling department] was this hodgepodge of different people there. And so I think he saw that I had the ability to be a leader, be respected, and do some team building, get along with people." Even though Mr. Metal professes to lack "management strategy," he "had the subsets, which he thought was more important. You could learn the other stuff, and he was right."

Building teams is something Mr. Metal has done throughout his management career, even though he openly professes that his race or ethnicity has no discernible

influence on his management style. "The fundamental thing is really trying to communicate with people and getting along, being a leader in terms of team building." When probed further, Mr. Metal elaborated some more on his leadership qualifies. Multitasking is something he added to his management repertory. He also thinks it important to "move quickly." *I get right on it. I'm compulsive about emails. I answer them like right now.* He also thinks that "people see me hopefully as an effective leader, because I think they feel they could trust me, that I'm organized, I'm going to follow up, I'm going to communicate back." He's "gained a level of respect because they know I'm going to follow through with things, and I'm going to listen, I'm going to be fair."

For his leadership style, Mr. Metal does not hesitate to proffer the following.

> I'm very collaborative. I like to get input. But I also want them to know that I'm not afraid to make the decision. I will make the decision. I will always step up, if it's a tough situation, like if we're going to fire somebody or if we've got some asshole out here, I'm going to go take care of it. I'm not going to say, will you take care of it? I will go do that. I won't jeopardize or put one of our managers in the situation if I can help it. I will be the front person, you know. I'll take the hit. So I work in collaboration, and I want them to know that I'm not afraid to make the decision.

Mr. Metal is also very clear about what he perceives as effective leadership in the community colleges. *At the community college level, I think it's somebody demonstrating a commitment and a passion to the institution.* He sees too many people who lack commitment and who move from institution to institution for whatever reasons. "It amazes me how these people keep getting jobs. I don't like that, that impression of somebody coming in here just to step on people to better themselves to get to the next level." He perceives commitment to the institution as an important quality in a leader. *I want people that are going to come in here that are going to really invest in the*

institution, and show a commitment and a passion to…And that way you'll get buy-in

from people.

Effective leadership also needs to demonstrate a commitment to students; *it is*

really a commitment to students also. "You have to center your decisions on the bottom

of what's going to be best for the students, because that's what we're here for, obviously.

And many times we don't do that. We're mixing the politics or the personalities or

whatever. So you need to always center things back on what's best for your students". He

adds, *so always keeping that in sight I think is really, really important*. The diversity of

the community college student population, what Mr. Metal calls "the range" is simply

astounding. While it may be impossible for a top-level administrator to get to know all

the varieties of student interests and challenges, it is imperative for that same

administrator to keep the students "in sight" as they make decisions that will impact

students. "I just see so many presidents detached and no idea that this decision they're

making, what the impact's going to be to our students."

Mr. Metal is committed to helping the younger generation of Asian American

aspirants in the community colleges. He helps out with various organizations that deal

specifically with Asian American leadership issues, not just in the community colleges.

He also thinks that it's imperative for aspiring Asian American administrators in the

community colleges to gain "multiple experiences in as many diverse areas as possible."

These diverse experiences are needed by the aspirants to match up with the diversity of

students we work with in the community colleges, "everything from older adults…to

high school students coming up. The range is unbelievable, let alone the cultural issues of

immigrants coming in, and for us, international students, and knowing all their sub-cultures..."

Mr. Metal himself went through a diverse set of experiences, starting out as a high school teacher, then a coach, then a counselor, then a dean of counseling, and then dean of instruction, culminating in being the vice president of instruction. Mr. Metal's diverse experiences built up his repertory of skills as a leader. "But getting out of the box, getting out of your comfort zone, so that's what I would tell them [Asian American aspirants], is to try to get as many diverse experiences as you're coming through as possible."

Ms. Water（水小姐）

When I went to the Office of Academic Services to interview Ms. Water, it was a warm November day. The office is located in a trailer, in a cluster of trailers off to one corner of the campus, across the street from the main campus. The office was scheduled to move to its new home in a brand-new building on the main campus the following day, so boxes were everywhere. When Ms. Water closed the door of her tiny office and we began to talk, there were no more distractions. She was completely focused on the task on hand.

Ms. Water's parents came from India and they have an arranged marriage. Ms. Water herself was born in England, lived in Africa between the age of 6 and 13, and experienced her formative years in Canada from age 13 on. Her father left India as a youngster to go to school in England, graduated from college at a young age, and started working as an engineer in the coalmines. Her father's jobs took the family first to Zambia then to different parts of Canada.

Ms. Water's mother possesses two master's degrees. Except for a short stint teaching school in Africa, her mother was never able to utilize her graduate education. Part of it is pressure from her father to stay home. However, when it comes to his children, even though he has two girls, Ms. Water's father had high expectations. "My father was very strict about checking report cards, checking grades, even up till the time we were in universities. So there was that fear there to always perform. I think academically, those expectations were pretty much in line with what Indian parents expect, as many Asian [parents do]."

> …as far as school, there was a very clear expectation that you would go to university and you would do a higher degree. There was sort of no choice there. As far as pursuing that goal, it was just understood that we would, and that's what we did. One thing that was a little different is, Indian parents, it's like, just go to school; we'll support you, we'll pay for you, we'll do whatever you want. My dad was a little different, I think, because he left India when he was so young and he supported himself. There was the expectation that we would support ourselves, so we did not get any financial help from our parents. Basically, we were on student loans and scholarships. Both my sister and I put ourselves through school that way.

For Indian parents, "there's basically certain areas they want their kids to go into: doctors, lawyers, engineers. And if you're not going to do that, then you have to go on and do a PhD in something. And that's basically it." Ms. Water's father is an engineer, "so when I actually finished high school, he wanted me to go into engineering, and I basically took a year of classes in engineering, and I really hated it and it wasn't my strength." After that first year of engineering classes, Ms. Water went home and told her father that she was changing her major; the conflict that decision created added to the problems the family was already experiencing at that time.

Ms. Water's parents have an arranged marriage, and it wasn't going well. Her parents fought constantly while she was growing up. Her parents simply didn't get along and drifted apart as the years went by. Ms. Water and her sister thought that it would have been better for their parents to be divorced, but of course being Indian, they would never say as much to their parents.

Ms. Water became quite rebellious as a teenager. When her father told her that he "was under the impression that [she] was paying her own way" in university, she felt justified in changing her major from engineering to English literature. At age 16, Ms. Water met a man older than she and not Indian. She started to date this man, in secret almost. She definitely hid it from her father. Her mother would help her cover her tracks.

According to Ms. Water, her parents are traditional in different ways, her mother being more traditional in the religious way, and her father, the cultural way.

> My mom was very traditional, so there were special occasions throughout the year, religious functions that we did celebrate. Certain days of the year you don't eat meat; certain days of the year you go to the temple. My dad did not believe in any of that. He was very traditional in terms of who he expected us to marry. No dating, no going out, all of that. But as far as religion, it wasn't important to him, so we would go to the temple and do all those things with my mom.

Ms. Water's mother was interested and invested in maintaining family connections.

> She emphasized, she was really adamant about not missing anyone's birthday, writing to your aunts and uncles, writing to your grandparents. Always family, family, family connection. I think that had a lot to do with, I think, the way we turned out, considering we grew up in a different country, and our friends. I think the values that were transmitted from my mom, she was very much about family. And I think my sister and I saw a lot of value in that, and we saw that as being very Indian, because we didn't see that with, we often didn't see with our friends.

However, during her teenage years between 16 and 19 years of age, Ms. Water rebelled against being an Indian. "There were university parties and there are people

going out. Or even high school, there was the prom, and there's graduation. All of those things. My father was very strict, and so we were not even allowed to go to those events. I think my mom felt really bad for us, but she was quite subservient."

Even still, Ms. Water considers herself very much Indian, "despite the fact that we've never lived in India, despite the fact that my father was not traditional in the religious sense. We did celebrate certain events with my mom, but even then, it wasn't frequently." It's the strong sense of community among her parents' peers and her own peers that provided the glue to her feeling more Indian. "But I think there was that strong sense of community in terms of friends. There was a similar ideology. Everybody wanted their kids to excel. And even at university, we'd all hang out together." She goes on to say,

> I do consider myself to be very Indian…despite the fact that I was extremely rebellious. I really do think that if I were to have kids and…I really would raise my kids to have those same kind of values. I don't think that I would be comfortable with the dating and the openness…There's certain things I wouldn't be comfortable with, and I know that would show up in the childrearing. In that sense, the culture, ethnicity, had a lot to do with, somehow, because of the community, definitely. And the expectation in the home about education and getting a higher degree.

> Ms. Water added emphatically that despite the fact that she and her sister paid their own way, she would pay for her child's education. *I don't think that I would expect my child to do that.*

Even though Ms. Water does not waver today in her conviction of herself as Indian, she did wish between the ages of 16 and 20 to be less Indian. "So a lot of sneaking out of the house and doing things you're not supposed to do and all of that." Although she claims to not having experienced any overt racism, she did recall going to

school and being called Paki or when she moved to another school in a different area, being called Blackie. She was rather appalled by the ignorance of teachers who supposedly are teaching in diverse environments with diverse students. With her first job, one teacher asked her where she was from. When she responded that she was Indian, the questioning teacher immediately followed up with, "what tribe?"

No overt racism aside, there was a lot Ms. Water and her family had "to deal with in terms of being Indian," especially her father.

> Being very educated and being really good at what he does, very smart, having those leadership qualities, he wasn't able to get to VP position or a CEO position or whatever, because those higher positions still went to the White guy. I think a lot of Indians were able to succeed in the business environment, having their own business, becoming doctors, becoming dentists, lawyers, environments where you are your own boss.

It was "hard," but "with the younger generation, it's different." It is a matter of "more opportunities." Certainly when Ms Water looks at herself, with her age and her ethnicity, to be in a leadership position in a community college is testament to the greater opportunities accorded the younger generation of Indian Americans.

Even with the greater opportunities, there is subtle racism that Ms. Water experiences on a fairly regular basis. To use a personal story to illustrate,

> it's a gated community where I used to live, and the guy at the gate wasn't there, and I waited and waited, and then finally I decided to go through. And I live there; I should be able to go through. He's not there; how long can I wait? And then he came running, and he said something really rude, and the way he addressed me. I actually stopped the car that day because I was really mad, and I looked at him, and I said, you know what, if I was a 60-year-old White man, you would not be addressing me that way. I was furious that day. I have sensed certain things like that. Now, can one really point to someone and say, you were being racist? No. But you know what, it's probably something that I think people who experience understand more fully than someone who has never dealt with those experiences.

In the community college work environment, racism comes in even subtler form.

> And they will talk to you almost as if you're a child, or in a sort of condescending way. And it's interesting…it's like they almost have to get to know you. It's almost like you have to prove yourself in order for them to change the way they interact with you. I sometimes do think, if I had come in as maybe even the same age but maybe not Indian, maybe a different gender, maybe a different gender and older, I do think that really does make a difference.

She has also noticed that initially when she stepped up to this leadership position,

the administrator in charge of the meetings would be joking with his colleagues or use a

four-letter word. "He would look at me, only me, and say, I'm sorry, I don't mean to

offend you…He would address those comments to me. I don't know what he assumed

about my culture." Ms. Water goes on to explain why she felt the way she felt in these

types of situations. "I'm here…I'm in the United States; I work just like anybody else.

You don't have to come in with all these assumptions about how I might react or what

I'm thinking, or, oh my God, how could you say that to me? I'm an Indian woman. So

there's a lot of that, too."

Being a community college administrator was never part of the career goal for

Ms. Water. She had wanted to teach at the four-year level, but because of familial

conditions, ended up teaching part-time in a community college.

> When I started the job here, I was completely disheartened. The level of the students-it was a complete change from what I was used to…I think my first year I went into a depression. I was completely unhappy, and I couldn't go anywhere because of the X situation…So the whole time I was teaching, I maintained that university contact. So during that time, I wrote a book; I was still presenting at conferences. I made it a point to…I started and founded a journal. I made a point to stay in that environment, thinking at any point in time I would return to that.

But of course Ms. Water stayed in the community college system, came to love

her students and be loved by her students. When an interim dean position became open,

she gave it a shot because she felt like she was "not using her skills" as an instructor. She

felt she was ready when she became the permanent dean. "I felt like I was good at

organizing, time management, delegating, working with people. So at that time, I just felt

like it was the time to actually move into administration."

While formal preparation for the move into administration was non-existent, there

were informal preparations along the way. Teaching definitely prepared Ms. Water; so

did having a doctorate.

> Teaching in a department where maybe there's two people who had the PhD, you
> take on a leadership role anyway, and so people turn to you for all sorts of things,
> teaching expertise, theory, organizing professional development workshops, all of
> that. In that sense, I had a leadership role among the faculty in that department.
> My father also, it's interesting, he organizes conferences in different parts of the
> world every year. It's sort of outside of his job. I was involved with him, and even
> at the point where I moved out, and basically setting up, organizing and helping
> him with that since the time I was 15 or 16. In fact, he just finished his last one
> this November. So I think through all those experiences, it helped me develop
> some of those other skills that I otherwise may not have gotten".

Teaching and connection to students were foremost in the preparation process. When

speaking of her former students, Ms. Water had this look in her eyes that said that she

made a difference in their lives. "I have to say that I really enjoyed my time there

[teaching]…I think I connected more to my students. Definitely much more." Ms Water

had done work on Generation 1.5, and worked with the faculty in professional

development. Ms. Water was committed in being that faculty member who steered the

ESL students away from the mindset of adult education. Instead, she taught them to focus

on the academic pathway. "I worked really hard in the courses on research, and taking

them to the library, and really honing and developing those kinds of skills that would

really allow them to move forward."

Since being on the job, Ms. Water had come to find out those qualities of hers that got her in the leadership position and continues to enable her to be successful. "I'm good with people." Ms. Water is organized; knows how to bring people together and move a project or an agenda forward. Ms. Water is also flexible.

I think I'm really efficient. I think I'm very good at delegating. I think I'm really organized. I think that I really focus on what needs to be done and come up with a plan of action…There are other people to pay attention to the details, but I think, sometimes in this position, what you need is a person to really understand the big picture, and then bring the other people in that can help you get to that big picture. I think a lot of people try to do everything themselves, when it's actually about really stepping back and thinking about what needs to be done, and then going around and finding the best people in each of those areas to actually help you get something done. I think that's a real strength. I think the other thing is people skills. If someone sends me an email, I respond, and I try to do it as quickly as I can. I make it a point to actually go to people's offices or have people come here. I think that people skills are really important. I also think the teaching background is really important, because there's a lot of administrators who haven't worked enough with students…I've had those relationship with students, so everything that we do in this job has to connect, has to have an impact or connects to the student in some way. And even for me, it's less direct, because I'm not an instructional dean. But I think always keeping that in mind and bringing that forward to every discussion is really important. And you know what, I think I'm just really good at doing my homework and doing my research, which a lot of people don't do.

As to what effective leadership in the community colleges looks like, Ms. Water has no hesitation.

I think effective leadership is really about getting buy-in. You can't just sit in your office and expect things to happen. First, it takes effort for things to happen. You have to recognize that there's an issue, a problem, or an area that needs change. And then you work with the different groups to get that buy-in. And then you continue to work with those groups and more individuals to help actually get to a point where you can actually see something come to fruition.

To sum it up, Ms. Water thinks that effective leadership is "getting the buy-in; it's communicating with others; it's collaborating with others. It's gathering all the information that you need. It's doing your homework and having that knowledge base

behind the seams." On top of that, it's also "respect for individuals that you're working with. And then with all of those components, being able to therefore move an agenda forward." She adds that leadership can't always be about process; one needs to be able to make things happen. "You need some wins in your leadership."

To drill down further, I asked Ms. Water to elaborate on the specific leadership styles in the community colleges. "I think you need to get everyone's input before decisions are made. It's not one is afraid to make a decision, but I think you make a better informed decision if you get input from a number of different areas and constituencies." She adds, "I also think communication is extremely important. I try to have a very open relationship with my staff. I don't micro manage. I do delegate, and I have very clear expectations. If I do see a weakness, I don't wait until evaluation time to address. We address it. And it's not just addressing it; it's also having a set of solutions ready so I can help that person actually overcome those obstacles." Leaders have to help their staff develop. Couple that with open communication and no micro-managing, Ms Water believes that the leader will be able to establish a healthier work environment because the leader has taken the time and energy to create that trust. Ms. Water creates that trust in her staff so that staff gains confidence and are able to carry out the delegated task in a manner consistent with her expectations and college standards and practices. "We don't work as dean and staff; we work as a team."

The collaborative, open, and team-oriented leadership style is important in the community colleges. "When everybody feels like they have been heard, it works to one's advantage…People respect you then because there's transparency. They've had a chance to voice their opinions, you've taken everything into consideration." At the same time,

it's equally important for the leader to do his/her homework. What Ms Water means by that is that leaders can delegate the detailed tasks to staff but can never lose sight of the big picture. Leaders need to see and understand the picture; that's another important component of effective leadership style.

Ms. Water believes that her race, ethnicity and culture have influenced her leadership style.

> Sometimes people will say, it's just everyone has a different personality and so much is a result of that. But what develops personality? And there are so many answers to that also, but I think culture plays a huge part, and I think, just again, going back to cultural ideas and those values that were instilled in us, the importance of family, the importance of that human connection, and the importance of respect, regardless of where you are on the totem pole. The importance of listening. The importance of warmth in a relationship.

All these cultural values have influenced her leadership style in some ways.

Sadly though, Ms. Water does not believe that open, communicative, and ultimately effective leadership is in operation in the community colleges. Ms. Water believes that leaders need to work harder at getting buy-ins into their decisions. She also believes that leaders need to stop complaining, but instead offering solutions by communicating and educating the staff about the changes and moving forward that way.

For future API leaders in the community colleges, Ms. Water's advice is to network, go to conferences so that one gets an opportunity to dialog with colleagues who share similar concerns. It is also important to recognize one's weaknesses and strengths, and always work to turn those weaknesses into strengths. Doing homework on oneself is necessary and ultimately helpful in the development of one's leadership capabilities.

Initial Findings

The stories of the participants are riveting as they reveal truths about being Asian American leaders in the community college. As I read and re-read these captivating stories of ascent and being the Asian American leader in the community college, I was struck by the rich diversity of the participants in terms of their ethnicity, background, work experiences, and attitude toward being an Asian American leader in the community college. This diversity is but one of my initial findings. In Chapter 5, I will be further elaborating on my findings, specifically on three themes: non-traditional career paths; re-treading presidents in the community colleges; and rebelliousness in the Asian American leaders.

Diversity of Background and Career Paths

This diversity mirrors what has been discussed in the literature. In terms of ethnic background, the participants include Chinese American, Japanese American, and Indian American. Three out of the five participants are immigrants by way of Asia, Africa and Canada; two are native born. Three immigrant participants speak at least one language other than English but all including the immigrant participants were able to communicate in English clearly. The adult immigrants among the group speak English with a noticeable accent, but the language usage and articulation are both impeccable. All of the participants, whether immigrants or native-born, consider themselves Asian Americans with further differentiation of being Chinese or Indian. The notable exception among the group is the Japanese American, a sansei, who does not speak Japanese, nor does he

explicitly identify himself as Japanese. Even though he identifies himself as Japanese American when pressed, he really thought of himself as American period.

None of the participants except for Ms. Earth experienced the typical career path for a leader in the community college that consists of being a faculty member, a department chair, a dean, a vice president, and then president in that sequence. Ms. Earth became chancellor of a multi-college district after working through the ranks as a counselor, a director, a dean, a vice president and a president. Even Ms. Earth's traditional career path is non-traditional in the sense that she came out of the student services side of the community college organizational structure, not instruction. But she came the closest to the traditional path for a community college leader. Mr. Wood came to leadership positions in the community colleges, having worked for years in a community based non-profit organization, but has a keen and deep interest in research. Mr. Fire came to the community college from a private, denominational college. Mr. Metal came to academic leadership positions from working in the high schools as a coach, then athletic director for a community college before becoming dean of counseling. From dean of counseling, he was promoted to be dean of instruction and eventually became vice president of instruction. Ms. Water was keenly interested in being a faculty member in a four-year, research institution but personal circumstances landed her as an adjunct faculty member, then a full-time faculty member in a community college. From a classroom instructor, Ms. Water became a super-dean in charge of curriculum and enrollment management, rather than a typical instructional dean in charge of departments and instructional areas/clusters.

Two notable, related themes worth mentioning in the career path discussion are: all the participants spent many years working in the community colleges before landing leadership positions, and all of them share a deep and abiding commitment to the mission of the comprehensive community college.

The stories of the participants' lives are varied and their career paths also diverse, but there is no mistaking the voice of these Asian American leaders in the community colleges. The initial themes of their life stories and career paths will be presented with those that address racial insiders versus those that address racial outsiders in observation of some of the analytical parameters of critical race theory. Vargas (1999) states succinctly that any CRT researcher is a change agent in the research process, performing a dual role: doing research that speaks to the racial minority communities (insider), and at the same time, use the research to inform the discipline of education, as racial outsiders. I have attempted to organize my initial findings according to this particular division of racial insiders versus racial outsiders with regard to Asian American leadership in the community colleges.

Racial Insider Themes

in-betweenness. The construct of Asian American gives rise to a sense of in-betweenness for all Asian Americans including my participants, between Asia and America. In the case of Mr. Wood, this sense of in-betweenness includes between East and West, his father having been a US citizen, born and raised in San Francisco, and his mother having come from Shanghai, China. When asked how he would self-describe his own racial and ethnic identity, Mr. Wood did not hesitate one bit by calling himself an

Asian American. He chose this label for himself not just for the fact that he has roots in both cultures, but also in the context of American society with his ethnicity. Mr. Wood possesses a unique understanding of the mixing of the two cultures and how his Asianness influences his Americanness and vice versa. His Asianness consists in part of work ethic, emphasis on educational achievement and career success, and focus on family. His Americanness, simply put, is a strong sense of justice and fairness. He was incensed by the lack of democratic rights to the people of Hong Kong while he was growing up there and readily joined the civil rights movement once he came to the United States to pursue higher education. Ultimately this in-betweenness contributes to his leadership style in the way of being, especially with the people who directly work for him. Leadership goes much beyond simple problem solving for Mr. Wood but a leader needs to "take the time to create an atmosphere of positive energy, creativity and joy in the work place." Further, his Asian American in-betweenness gives him a basis to have a true global perspective in the way we understand conflicts and at the same time, interconnectedness of all that's happening in the world today. The richness of being an Asian American allows Mr. Wood to help students gain a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of global conflicts by appreciating the interconnectedness of the people, the history and the present; thereby, training the future generations to make better decisions for world peace. The global perspective is also a way for Mr. Wood to address the environment, economic development, social justice, national security, and world peace as a leader in the community college.

Mr. Fire's story of having to choose between the Asian Club and the Chinese Club in high school is illustrative of his in-betweenness as well. Back in the seventies, the

Asian Club at Mr. Fire's high school consisted of American-born Chinese and Japanese, and the Chinese club consisted of those Chinese who were foreign-born. At Mr. Fire's high school, the fights were never between the Asians and the Whites or the Blacks or the Browns; the fights were between the ABC's (American Born Chinese) and the FOB's (Fresh Off the Boat). Mr. Fire, having grown up in a bilingual Chinese American household, his parents being immigrants from China, has sympathy and affinity to both groups. When pressured to choose between the two, he joined the Spanish Club instead; thus avoiding having to choose between the ABC's and FOB's. Another example of Mr. Fire's in-betweenness is the fact that he grew up a Chinese Christian; the family celebrated both Chinese New Year and Christmas.

The in-betweenness also manifests itself in Mr. Fire's leadership perspectives. On the one hand, Mr. Fire freely admits that his cultural heritage influences his leadership that he is not overtly White-boy aggressive. Mr. Fire is all about respecting authority, never telling off the boss in public but being firm in private with his superior. Mr. Fire is also intent on developing staff and investing in people. On the other hand, Mr. Fire believes equally as firmly that Asian Americans need to brag better, to learn to talk themselves up so that the mainstream society will see them as leadership material. Mr. Fire is dismayed at the generational persistence of Asian stereotyping (e.g. Asians are perceived as "nerdy, book worm, smart" but not aggressive enough to be a good leader) and wants young Asian Americans to stop being "unselfish' but instead, to look out for their own best interest. The irony in this seems somewhat lost on Mr. Fire. It seems that while Mr. Fire firmly believes in the validity and efficacy of his Asian-influenced leadership style in being publicly respectful to one's superiors, he had to concede that all

Asian Americans, especially those who are in pursuit of leadership opportunities, need to publicly brag about themselves. In fact, it is an indispensable skill of a potential, a future or a current leader who is of Asian American heritage.

Having spent her childhood in rural Taiwan, Ms. Earth used to always self-identify as Chinese; however, as she has been in the United States since high school, she is always asked if she would consider herself Chinese American. She's had a difficult time having to choose between East and West. In her pivotal developmental years, all the value and cultural inculcations were Chinese, so that part of Ms. Earth is deep and strong, so deep and strong that she can never shed it. However, a big part of her has been inculcated by the Western culture as well. So she would be in denial were she to state that she continues to this day to be 100% Chinese; the Western influences on her life and her values are undeniable. Ms. Earth has finally come to terms with her in-betweenness; she's come to peace with being both East and West.

Mr. Metal is staunchly American, even though he would tell people that he is Japanese American. He believes that he is completely Americanized, being unable to speak Japanese and having only visited Japan three times. His parents did speak Japanese but only to each other; the children were told to speak English only. The Japanese culture has little impact on the family; about the only thing Japanese the family ever does is to gather together at New Year's. Mr. Metal did acknowledge wryly that to look at his external physical appearance, there is no mistaking him being anybody other than Japanese; yet he is Americanized. Mr. Metal's hesitancy in fully identifying himself as Japanese American also had roots in the time period and the neighborhood in which he grew up. Having grown up in a multi-ethnic urban neighborhood, Mr. Wood seems much

less insistent than the rest of the participants in affirming his ethnic identity. Since there is no mistaking his ethnicity via physical appearance, it therefore is not important for Mr. Wood to be insisting on his ethnicity. The melting pot that was the neighborhood in which he grew up has left its mark on Mr. Metal as he truly believes that being American means his ethnicity is irrelevant. Whether this is blind optimism or clueless unreality is not certain; I will try to dissect this phenomenon further in Chapter 6: Discussion.

Ms. Water's journey to reconciling her Indian identity and her Western identity took several twists and turns, and she is today much more culturally Indian than perhaps any time in her life. Born in England and having lived part of her childhood in Africa and her formative years in Canada, Ms. Water was never comfortable in identifying herself as Indian for a long time. Her father is not particularly close to Indian culture and values; her mother tried to keep up the Indian religious traditions in the household. To Ms. Water, growing up, being Indian was much more an ideology, a community that defined Indianness for her. During her teen years, she was actively rebellious against the Indian tradition of no dating, no boys. Yet today, partly because she lives in a diverse, multicultural environment, she appreciates her Indianness more, and would in fact raise her children (were she to have a few) as Indian rather than American.

Except for Mr. Metal, all the participants acknowledged the influence of their Asian cultural values on their leadership style, in embracing people, in developing and cultivating people, in creating a team-orientation, in listening to people, in bringing people along to make positive changes, and in creating a work environment that is positive, creative and filled with joy. Perhaps Ms. Water puts it the best, "Sometimes people will say, it's just everyone has a different personality and so much is a result of

that. But what develops personality? And there are so many answers to that also, but I think culture plays a huge part, and I think, just again, going back to cultural ideas and those values that were instilled in us, the importance of family, the importance of that human connection, and the importance of respect, regardless of where you are on the totem pole. The importance of listening. The importance of warmth in a relationship."

   racism and prejudice. Three of the participants (Mr. Wood and Ms. Earth excluded) state that they have not experienced overt racism, certainly not recently, and not in the community college environment. Mr. Wood, on the other hand, recalled being called names, racial names by others, and remarks about his looks, his ethnicity. Mr. Wood had no problem acknowledging both overt and covert racism. However, he did take the time to distinguish between the higher education environment and the social milieu. In the higher education environment, people are more aware, and educated on the issues and the complexities related to race and racial identity. In addition, the highly regulated nature of higher educational institutions makes overt racism almost a thing of the past. However in the social context, Mr. Wood tends to be more cautious in terms of how he talks and acts because there are overt and subtle signals that communicate a sense of unease, non-acceptance and at time, downright hostility toward him because of his race and ethnicity. As for Ms. Earth, she freely acknowledged that racism or prejudice against her as a Chinese immigrant woman was frequent. Post Civil Rights, however, racial prejudice and racism became more covert than overt. But covert racism, whether they are words, gestures, attitudes, are exhibited by many different people in many different forms. For Ms. Earth, racism and prejudice came mainly in the workplace, both from her subordinates and her peers.

For the other three participants, even though they state that they have not experienced any overt racism, all of them recount incidents that strongly support the existence of overt racism. For Mr. Fire, the incident involved a waitress in Kentucky who simply would not take his order while serving the rest of his traveling group, who happened to be all White. For Mr. Metal, it was a golf trip to South Carolina during which the good ole Southern boys thought that the group of Japanese American players in front of them were in fact Japanese, who would not be able to understand English. Hence the language used by them to talk about the Japanese Americans became quite crude and offensive, in a racial way, which eventually made one of Mr. Metal's fellow players so incensed he had to go back and tell them off. Ms. Water was not even allowed to pass the gate of the gated community in which she lived. It is plain to me that these were acts of overt racism, but the degree to which the majority of the participants do not want to use the label of "overt racism" is astoundingly high. The two immigrant participants who belong to the baby boomer generation (i.e. Mr. Wood and Ms. Earth) have no problem identifying overt racism; the native born participants along with the much younger immigrant participant were loathe to openly identify the existence of overt racism. This in and of itself is significant. Certainly in contrast to the constant and ostensible cries of racism by other racial minorities in this country, this group of Asian Americans seems quite reticent in leveling charges of racism. This topic will be further explored in Chapter 6: Discussion.

Before I move onto racial outsider related findings, I find it appropriate to bring up an in-between theme of rebellion since the theme of rebellion speaks both to the racial insiders and racial outsiders. It is also interesting to note that those Asian Americans who

did rise to the top have not necessarily been those stereotypically docile Asian Americans. The rebellious streak seems to be part of the DNA for an Asian American leader. The rebellion by both Mr. Wood and Mr. Fire against the cultural and parental expectations of doing well in school is noteworthy as is Ms. Water's teenage rebellion against the strict cultural norm of no dating, no partying. However, the rebellion against Asian cultural norms were either transitory (as in the case of Ms. Water) or not necessarily an affirmation of the American cultural norm either. It does, however, speak to a streak in these Asian Americans who were willing to buck a trend at a young age, and this willingness seems to have contributed to their ability to be leaders. This particular finding will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 5: Further Findings.

Racial Outside Themes

To continue on with the theme of racism, one type of racism that was discussed at length by Mr. Fire is structural/institutional racism. The diatribe by Mr. Fire against the lack of Asian Pacific Islanders in leadership positions in higher education is delivered with passion and a strong conviction of its rightness. Community college leadership has become the pro-sports of higher education for just as in pro-sports, the boards much rather hire a retread loser than hire an unknown. "So I stand by my statement. I said, community college is the pro-sports of higher education. We hire, fire and retread coaches; we call them presidents." The quintessential question for Mr. Fire is one that turns the Western logic of merit on its head: if Asian Americans are so smart and no one else works harder at academics than Asians, why is it that so few leadership positions in higher education are occupied by Asian Americans?

Mr. Fire is the most vocal one among the participants on the structural/institutional racism making it impossible for Asian Americans to occupy top leadership positions in higher education, but all the participants share his rage at injustice.

social consciousness. All the participants seem to have developed a social consciousness at an early age. For Mr. Wood, it came in the form of strict class divisions in Hong Kong at that time. As he matured, he also became incensed by the lack of democratic rights in Hong Kong. The authoritarian mode of government seemed oppressive and outdated. The virtual rule of one person over the people was not only backward but also bordered on dictatorship. Mr. Wood was thrilled to see the advancement of human and democratic rights for the people after he came to the United States. As a college student during the civil rights era, he was moved to join and contribute. Perhaps the best way in which this social consciousness is demonstrated is via the participants' vocal and strong support of the mission of the community colleges.

To a person, all of the participants in my study voiced his/her strong concern about the commitment a leader in the community colleges must exhibit and embody to the comprehensive mission of the community college. Mr. Wood states, "And I continue to use my position to address what I feel the important issue of providing opportunities to students who can, because of what we provide, do better for themselves and for society as well." For Mr. Fire, being passionate and committed is a top qualification to being an effective leader in the community colleges. Ms. Earth is abundantly clear when she delineated the qualities of an effective leader in the community colleges. "First of all, is a person who is absolutely passionate about the mission of the community college, really understand what we are about." She goes on to add, "we're not a four-year system; we're

not a research institution." I take that to mean that the community college's mission is to help student advance in whatever educational goals they have set for themselves.

student-centered leadership. The participants were not bashful about what they see in the community colleges today and feel that leadership is lacking in different channels and at different levels. In their view, the commitment to the mission of the comprehensive community college is a must for a successful leader in the community college. The desire to serve students, to put students in the center of the decision-making process becomes the hallmark of a successful community college leader. The flipside of this is the careerist, whom all the participants abhor. According to Mr. Metal, for instance, a leader who puts his/her career ahead and above the mission of the comprehensive community college to serve students will invariably lead the institution astray, and damage the institution in some way at some level. For Ms. Earth, as another example, the passionate commitment to the mission of the comprehensive community college also translates into the desire to make student-centered decision.

It is not uncommon for other interests and agendas to dominate the conversation on community college campuses. It requires deft skills from leaders to navigate this environment and still bring the discussion/conversation to center on what's best for students. Recognizing the complex environment of a community college in which the board and/or the governance structure may not be entirely straightforward, leaders are pushed to navigate through these restraints and constraints and still get to the educational mission of the college and provide student oriented services. According to Mr. Wood, as another example, the biggest challenges facing a community college leader today is to recognize these constraints and still make student-centered decisions despite of them. For

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Mr. Metal, the commitment demonstrated by a leader in the community college is also a "commitment to students." "You [the effective leader in the community college] have to center your decisions on the bottom of what's going to be best for the students, because that's what we're here for, obviously. And many times we don't do that. We're mixing the politics or the personalities or whatever. So you need to always center things back on what's best for your students."

leader as a change agent. An effective leader in the community colleges must also be a champion of change—not change for change sake, but to be effective is to be courageous about change. According to Ms. Earth, when the time is right, a leader must do the courageous thing to lead change; otherwise, the institution will be stagnant and moribund. However the leader must also be able to bring his/her people along in the way of changes. If a leader wants the change, but there is nobody around him/her or behind him/her to bring about the change, then it is not going to be effective.

emotional intelligence and people skill. People skills are therefore an indispensable quality of an effective community college leader, and not just in leading change but in all aspects of leadership. Almost to a person, every one of the participants elaborated on their people skills, the ability to listen to people, to build teams and unity, and to seek input from people before making decisions. It's not that leaders can't make decisions on their own; they understand that making people feel that they have been heard is an integral component of the decision-making process. In the community colleges, leaders must exercise a collaborative leadership style in order to be successful. All the participants elaborated on the need to be collaborative, with the faculty, with the staff, and with the students in order to make the best decisions for the students and for the

institution. For Mr. Metal, for instance, what defines a leader is his ability to get along with people and to build teams. Ms. Water had much to elaborate on this topic. She thinks that leaders have to help their staff develop. Coupled with open communication and zero micro-managing, the leader will then be able to establish a healthier work environment because the leader will have taken the time and energy to create that trust. Ms. Water feels that the collaborative, open, and team-oriented leadership style is critical to the community college. Leaders gain respect and trust from people if they take the time to let everybody provide input.

Ms. Earth also agrees. According to her, having high emotional intelligence by possessing the ability to talk from their seat rather than the leader's seat is critical to the success of a leader in the community college. A leader has to love people, and be able to deal with people openly and honestly. On top of that, a good leader needs to be passionate and committed about building unity, whether it's one department, or one district, or one national board. Ms. Earth also believes that having a high level of integrity provides a foundation of trust, which then allows the leader to build on top of that foundation. Mr. Wood extends the concept of building unity and having integrity even further to pinpoint the particular responsibility of the leader to take care of the people. He believes that leaders have a tremendous influence on the overall atmosphere of the workplace; how the leader projects life sets the tone for the workplace. Everybody in the organization looks to the leader for signs and clues for his/her mood and emotion. Leadership, to Mr. Wood, is about much more than problem solving. It's about the leader taking the time to create an atmosphere of positive energy, creativity and joy in the workplace.

leadership in all. All the participants discussed how they are always learning, keeping their eyes open for leadership effectiveness. It's not just that they learn from their superiors; they learn from everybody: people that they report to, people they work with, and people who report to them. As Mr. Wood said, "In this day and age in education, leadership is not just defined in terms of formal positions, even though it's a convenient and traditional definition. Leadership these days can be expanded. One can become the leader of a union…One can become a leader in a scholarly area…So how does one become a very very good teacher?" A good leader in the community colleges learns from everybody; he/she is not closed to learning from anybody at the college.

joy at work. Challenges notwithstanding, all the participants talk about joy at work and the joy of working in the community colleges. It is a cliché, but being able to work to make a difference in the lives of the students and the lives of future generations is both a motivation and a joyful reward of working and leading in the community colleges for all the participants. Nobody, including Asian Americans, can be successful without this basic understanding and commitment.

Chapter Summary

The participants were open with their life stories and their work experiences. Through the recounting of some of critical incidents in the participants' lives and work, I was able to provide several initial findings that are categorized under the broad categories of racial insider themes and racial outsider themes.

With racial insider themes, the thread of in-betweenness for Asian Americans, how the position of an Asian American in between East and West, Asia and America,

was explored to discover the influence of in-betweenness on the Asian American participants' leadership perspectives and style. In addition, the theme of racism and ethnic prejudice was explored. While the majority of the participants seemed loathe to bring up the issue of overt racism, none denied the existence of covert racism and prejudice. There is a distinction though between some of the participants in terms of racism in the workplace versus racism in the social milieu.

In between racial insider themes and racial outsider themes, the issue of rebelliousness was briefly discussed both by way of the Asian American participants' rebellion against stereotypical Asian parental expectations of doing well in school as well as rebellion against the Asian cultural emphasis on no dating or partying. Rebelliousness seems to be a pre-requisite for these Asian Americans to become successful leaders.

As to racial outsider themes, there were multiple themes related to leadership in the community colleges in terms of commitment to the mission of the comprehensive community college; putting students in the center of decision making; exemplifying a collaborative style of leadership by seeking input from different people in the organization, by investing and developing people and by working as teams, by recognizing the leadership capacity in all levels of the organization; and by the leader's special responsibility in promoting joy at work.

In Chapter 5: Further Findings, I will discuss in greater details three themes that surfaced in Chapter 4: Findings: non-traditional career paths for all the participants; the issue of re-treading presidents in the community colleges and how that contributes to a lack of APIs in leadership positions; and rebelliousness in the Asian American leaders.

In Chapter 6: Discussion, I will locate the following key concepts in the context of existent literature, discuss them and offer some suggestions for future research. The key concepts include the racial formation of Asian Americans, the complex racial realities of Asian Americans and the cultural influences on the leadership perspectives and styles of Asian Americans. I will conclude Chapter 6 with a collation of advice given by my participants to future generations of Asian Americans who will be pursuing leadership positions in the community colleges so that we may see a day when there will be more Asian Americans in leadership positions in the community colleges.

CHAPTER 5 FURHTER FINDINGS

Introduction

In Chapter 4: Findings, I was able to provide stories of rich, thick details regarding my participants' career, lives, and leadership perspectives with brief elucidation of the demographic characteristics, racial insider themes, and racial outsider themes. In re-telling my participants' stories, I focused on the critical incidents in their lives. In categorizing the initial findings, I used insights garnered from critical race theory. In this chapter, I will expound upon three specific themes in greater detail: (a) the theme of these Asian American leaders progressing through a non-traditional career path; (b) the theme of community college boards re-treading presidents in the community colleges, and how that contributes to a lack of APIs in leadership positions; and (c) the theme of rebelliousness in these Asian American community college leaders.

Non-traditional Career Paths

One striking theme that emerged after re-telling my participants' stories is that all of them have had a non-traditional path to a leadership position in the community college. A number of studies in the literature attempted to document and solidify what has been called the traditional pathway to a community college presidency (Amey,

VanDerLinden, & Brown, 2002; Cejda, McKenney, & Burley, 2001; Kubala & Bailey, 2001; Moore, Martorana, & Twombly, 1985; Wessel & Keim, 1994; Vaughan, Mellander, & Blois, 1994). In 1974 Cohen and March first proposed the notion of a career pathway to the presidency in that there are five positions that individuals typically travel through to get to the presidency in the community colleges: (1) faculty member, (2) unit/department chair, (3) dean, (4) provost or vice president for academic affairs, and (5) president. Cohen and March's (1974) original conceptualization of this typical path to the community college presidency was tested, elaborated upon, and solidified by a number of studies since 1974. Paralleling and supporting Vaughan's (1986) study on the community college presidency, Kubala (1999) designed a national study of recently appointed community college presidents from 30 states by culling 52 candidates from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the *Community College Times*, and the *Community College Week*. His finding was that 72.2% of the presidents had come to their position through the academic route with only 11.1% of the participants having traveled through the student services route. In 2001, Kubala and Bailey replicated Kubala's 1999 study of recently appointed community college by surveying 101 newly appointed presidents. Their conclusion regarding the typical career pathway to a presidency was strikingly similar to that of the 1999 study: the dominant route to a community college presidency is through the Chief Academic Officer position with 56.4% of the participants coming through the academic route, and 11% through the student services route. Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) used survey data collected in 2000 in a partially replicative study of Moore et al.'s 1985 study on community college presidents, and their conclusion was almost exactly the same as those of Vaughan's studies: "Some differences exist between the career paths of

presidents in 2000 and those of presidents in 1985, although the largest percentage from both studies followed traditional academic administration career paths" (p.3). In fact, "the most likely previous position of community college presidents was provost (37 percent), followed by president of another community college (25 percent) and senior academic affairs/instruction officer (15 percent)" (p.1). Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) went on to report, "the percentage of past presidents and provosts are higher in the current study than those found in the Moore et al. (1985) study (17 percent were past presidents and 9 percent were provosts in the 1985 study), whereas the percentage of presidents being promoted from within the hierarchies of chief academic officer in 1985 was 27 percent" (p.2).

While there is no double that a traditional pathway to a community college presidency exists, there is little research on the racial, ethnic, and gender distribution among the presidents on the traditional path. Bugg's (2010) study seemed to indicate that the traditional career path for a community college president did not apply to African American males. Among the 5 participants in his study, none had traveled a straight traditional pathway to the presidency, even though a couple of them had gotten to the position of vice president of academic affairs somewhere on their journey. Munoz's (2010) study on Latina community college presidents reached a similar conclusion in that the traditional path to the presidency was not traveled by the Latinas in her study. Out of the 6 women presidents in Eddy and Cox's (2008) study, only 2 had traveled the traditional path.

While the mainstream studies on the community college presidential pathways confirmed the existence and efficacy of a traditional pathway from faculty to dean to

provost to president, none of them gave any indication of the racial, ethnic, or gender applicability of this traditional pathway. The few studies by African American, Latina, and women researchers seem to indicate little applicability of this traditional pathway to the community college presidency. My own study unearthed a finding that is consistent with these studies: as far as Asian Americans are concerned, the traditional pathway does not seem open to them either. I'll briefly recap the journey to a leadership position by my participants to further demonstrate how the traditional pathway did not apply as effectively as it did/does for White, male presidents.

Mr. Wood came to the community college presidency after having worked for years in research and in the non-profit sector. He was recruited to become a dean in charge of economic development at a community college and from there became a president at a college within a multi-college district. He is now superintendent/president of a single campus community college district having the responsibility to work with the board of trustees. Ms. Earth is the only one among my participants who comes close to having traveled the traditional pathway to a presidency. She stayed in the same district for years, first as a counselor, then a director and a dean in student services, became vice president of student services at the college in which she started and eventually became president of the same college. She was promoted to the chancellor of the district not too long before my interview with her in Fall 2009. While the positions occupied by Ms. Earth on her journey to be a chancellor seemed typical enough, she traveled an untypical path because she came out of the student services side of the community college organizational structure, rather than the typical academic pathway. Mr. Metal is currently a vice president of instruction, but he started out as a coach, then dean of counseling, and

to dean of instruction before becoming vice president of instruction. Mr. Metal does not possess a doctoral degree, and he does not expect to ever become a community college president. Mr. Fire has been with the student service side of the community college structure throughout his career in the community colleges, first as dean and now as vice president of student services. Like Mr. Metal, Mr. Fire does not possess a doctoral degree, and has therefore excluded himself from even being considered for a presidency. Ms. Water has so far traveled a fairly typical path, from faculty to dean, although hers is not your typical division/cluster deanery; rather, she is a dean in charge of enrollment and curriculum. She does possess a doctorate, and if she continues to advance to the provost position and then onto a presidency, then she will have traveled the traditional, academic route to a presidency. However, Ms. Water is the exception among my participants. Similar to the findings of Bugg's (2010), Munoz's (2010), and Eddy and Cox's (2008) my participants do not have the traditional pathway open to them. For non-White, non-male administrators in the community colleges such as African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino Americans, and female presidents, the atypical path is the route they travel to a top leadership position. While the career pathway to a presidency seems not so important in and of itself, the fact that non-White, non-male candidates in the pipeline are not on the traditional pathway to a presidency means that they don't ultimately show up in the ranks of presidents. The pathway has a direct correlation to the number of non-White, non-male presidents currently in position in the community colleges because it is closely associated with the pipeline to the community college presidency.

Re-treading Presidents in the Community Colleges

In 2002 Amey and VanDerLinden reported no significant improvement in the number of administrators of color in the community colleges since the mid-1980s, "when Moore et al. (1985) found that 90% of their survey respondents were white" (p.9). In the 2000 survey, 84% of the respondents were White. Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) went on to conclude, "Because the percentage of administrators in nonwhite racial or ethnic categories was so small, a separate analysis of career paths and career issues was not feasible" (p.9). In this particular case, administrators include chancellor, president, provost, Chief Academic Officer (CAO), Chief Student Services Officer (SSAO), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Director responsible for continuing education (CE), Official responsible for occupational and technical programs (OVE), and Official responsible for developing partnerships with local business and industry (BIL). Out of this group, only 6% were African American, 4% were Hispanic, 1% each for Asian American, Native American, and Multiracial (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002, p.9). Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) further reported that women have made gains in administrative positions in the community colleges since the mid-1980s; however, they are still lagging in the positions of presidents, CFOs, and OVEs.

Given this context of the lack of administrators of color in the community college system, and the fact in 2000, more and more presidents were either hired from within their own institution or other community colleges, Mr. Fire's passionate diatribe against community college boards' propensity to "retread presidents" makes sense. Again according to Amey and VanDerLinden (2002), "22 percent of presidents were promoted from within their present institution, whereas 66 percent were hired from other community colleges" (p.3). The factual data gleaned from the survey in 2000 validated a

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pipeline issue in that the small number of administrators of color exist in positions that feed into the presidency, and therefore, not nearly enough presidents of color.

In my interview with Mr. Fire, he was passionately vocal regarding the dire state of the pipeline for community college presidents. He stated that even in the feeder positions of provost or chief academic officer, there are not nearly enough Asian Americans. "If Asians are so damn smart, then why is there only one vice president of academic affairs [in the state university system]? We're so damn smart. We are the model minority. No one's smarter, no one works harder at academics than Asians, so why is there no vice president of academic affairs [in the university of State system]?"

Since Mr. Fire works at a community college, he is particularly concerned about their pipeline issue, the issue of getting qualified, diverse candidates in the pipeline to succeed should leadership positions become open due to retirement or resignation. He gets upset when White people talk about succession planning by "hir[ing] from the faculty. Ninety percent of your faculty are white; hello!" In practice, the community college leadership has become the "pro-sports of higher education," according to Mr. Fire. "Just like in pro sports, we'd rather hire a retread loser than hire an unknown. So I stand by my statement. I said, community college is the pro sports of higher education. We hire, fire, and retread coaches; we call them presidents." So in addition to the pipeline issue, Mr. Fire's diatribe speaks more to the intentionality of the boards in the community college system in that they seem unwilling to reach out to minority candidates and give them an opportunity at the presidency. Mr. Fire indicts the community college boards for taking the safer bets by hiring known quantities, even if it means hiring somebody who has proved to be a failure at another institution.

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Three factors are stacked against increasing the number of presidents of color in the community colleges including Asian American presidents: not enough administrators of color in the pipeline; boards do not veer off the pipeline in their hiring; even if the administrator of color is in the pipeline, the boards' tendency to "retread" presidents means s/he does not get a chance. The pipeline issue coupled with the community college boards' reluctance to take a chance on non-White, non-male candidates for the presidency accounted for the lack of presidents of color; in the case of my study, the lack of Asian American leaders in the community college.

This lack of Asian American leaders in the community colleges and higher education in general is not new; I'm certainly not the one to discover this issue. However, my study does shed some light on the reasons behind such a lack. It also points out some areas in which work could be done to improve the situation. I will discuss this improvement work in Chapter 6: Discussion. However, while this finding is useful and important, it is not the primary purpose of my study. The ultimate goal of my study is to celebrate the success of Asian American leaders, on the journey and on the job. One of the factors that seemed to enable my participants' success is rebelliousness.

"I am All About Rebellion"

The Asian American leaders in my study who had successfully pushed through the "bamboo" ceiling seem to one characteristics in common—rebelliousness. From Mr. Wood to Ms. Earth to Mr. Fire to Mr. Metal to Ms. Water, rebelliousness in bucking a trend, taking a stand or holding firm to one's beliefs is a theme that ran amongst all of their life stories. This characteristic of taking a stand, bucking a trend or not bowing to

parental or societal pressure seems to have stood my participants in good stead when it comes to leadership.

"I'm all about rebellion" is the defiant declaration by Korean American comedian, Margaret Cho. It sums up well the emotional resolve it takes an Asian American to survive, thrive, and lead in this culture. After her show "All American Girl," the first-ever Asian American sitcom in prime time, was canceled, Margaret Cho went through a four-year "hell" of alcohol- and drug-induced oblivion (Pan, 1999). She came back into the national limelight in 1999 with a one-woman show called "I am the one I want," in which she declared her rebellion against the Hollywood's stereotype of an Asian woman as only being meek, quiet, and slim. Margaret Cho proudly and loudly declared that "I'm none of that;" at the same time, in additional to not being apologetic for who and what she was, she was determined to make a success out of her non-stereotypical body type and character type.

A success she has been, and so have my participants in this study. While they may not have been "all about rebellion," certainly rebelliousness was a needed emotion in my participants' journey in life and in career. Mr. Wood conducted a minor rebellion against his parents in their expectations of his academic success. Unlike his older siblings, especially his oldest brother, he was determined to get by as a middling student in middle school and high school by not exerting himself. The willingness to buck against the trend played into his indignation against social injustices and his efforts throughout his career to address social justice issues using education. From his non-profit work of providing training to non-native English speakers to his current leadership in the global perspectives

initiative at the community college he leads, they've all been about "social justice," so that everybody has a better opportunity at success in life.

For Mr. Fire, the turn away from the traditional parental expectation of becoming a professional such as an attorney, an engineer, or a doctor is the most obvious way that he rebelled against tradition. In addition to rebelling against traditional, Asian parental expectations by choosing to work in education, Mr. Fire is the most vocal among all the participants in lodging diatribes against the system in not staffing the pipelines with minority candidates and further, in community college boards being invested too much in playing it safe by "retreading" presidents rather than giving minority candidates a chance at the presidency. Mr. Fire's rebellion is both personal and political.

Ms. Earth, on the other hand, seemed to be the most "traditionally" Asian participant in that all she professed to believe in is working hard. It also seemed from her story that hard work got her to where she is today, as chancellor of a multi-college community college district. But she is also the lone participant who is the most vocal about suffering from racism and prejudice in the workplace. In this regard, she does possess a strong backbone in taking a stand on an issue from which most of my other participants shied away.

Ms. Water is ostensibly the most rebellious among my participants. Early in her life, she rebelled mightily against her father's strict cultural rules of "no dating, no boys." She continued this rebellious streak in her personal life to this day. However, in the workplace today, she feels like she is being treated differently by her colleagues on some occasions because she is an Asian woman. She wants her colleagues to treat her like

everybody. While it does not quite qualify as "rebellion" in the traditional sense of the word, her desire to not be singled out for differential treatment because of her ethnicity and gender is an extension of her rebellious acts in her personal life. In both arenas, she does not want to be restricted simply because she is an Asian woman.

Mr. Metal, having grown up in a rough, urban neighborhood, possesses "street smarts" and the ability to deal with all types of people. As a leader, he brings this ability to deal with people in fostering teams and building collaborations. However, the "buck" stops with him, and he is more than willing to be the front person dealing with difficult personalities rather than leaving his staff out front. While it is not necessarily rebellion in the traditional sense, Mr. Metal's toughness in taking a stand, in dealing with difficult personalities, and thereby protecting his people is one that is traditionally against the norm for an Asian American. Rebellion, in the case of Mr. Fire, is associated with assertiveness.

It's a refrain heard often in popular media and scholarly studies that Asian Americans are not assertive, not aggressive, too compliant to be effective leaders (Sue, Ino & Sue, 1983; White & Chan, 1983; Sue & Sue, 1987). That non-assertiveness is a global personality trait of Asian Americans is very much in dispute these days. As early as 1983, Chin (1983) pointed out that personality differences on tests are interpreted negatively from a Western perspective. Instead of reading the personality tests as indicative of positive Asian cultural values of filial piety, modesty, and respect for authority, the Western interpretation invariably assigns negative conclusions to Asian Americans as introverted and lacking in self-confidence. Sue and Sue (1987) reached a similar conclusion, "a person who behaves in a nonassertive fashion because of

socialization to cultural values involving modesty and interpersonal harmony is surely different from a person whose nonassertiveness is derived from or associated with insecurity, lack of confidence, or passive aggressiveness" (p. 481). In other words, Asian Americans are not by essence nonassertive beings; their nonassertive behavior is based on cultural values of modesty, interpersonal harmony, and respect for authority and is often times situational. In situations where Asian Americans are interacting with authority figures such as parents or professors or supervisors, they may act in a more deferential manner whereas in situations where they are interacting with friends and in informal settings, Asian Americans can and will act in a more assertive or aggressive fashion. Mr. Fire gave the perfect example of going behind closed doors to tell his superior that he would/could not be White-boy aggressive in public by disagreeing with his superior but had no problem in speaking his mind to his superior in a private setting.

The life stories of my participants also bolster this theory that Asian Americans are assertive or even aggressive. None of them had any problem in taking a stand, bucking a trend or simply not bowing to parental or societal pressure to behave differently than exactly who they are. That kind of behavior is not blindly applied in every situation; rather, the behavior is couched in cultural values of filial piety, interpersonal harmony and respect for authority and applied in situations where appropriate. But the rebellious characteristic is present in all of my participants and it seems to be a personality trait that is needed by an Asian American to be a leader.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I elaborated on three specific thematic findings of my study: (a) all of my Asian American participants (along with other administrators of color) travel a non-traditional path to a community college leadership position, indicating a lack of Asian American candidates in the pipeline for top leadership positions in the community colleges; (b) community college boards' "re-treading" of presidents has a serious impact on the small number of Asian American presidents or presidents of color; and (c) for the successful Asian American leaders in my study, rebelliousness in the ability to take a stand, buck a trend or simply not bowing to parental or societal pressures seems to be a key personality trait that enabled their career success. In Chapter 6: Discussion, I will discuss further the whole issue of community college leadership and Asian Americans by locating the following key concepts in the context of existent literature, discussing these concepts and offering some suggestions for future research. The key concepts include the racial formation of Asian Americans, the complex racial realities of Asian Americans, and the cultural influence on the leadership style of Asian Americans, especially in their propensity to collaborate and to listen to people. I will conclude by collating the wisdom of my participants with regard to their advice to future generations of Asian American leaders in the community colleges.

CHAPTER 6 DISCUSSION

Introduction

In Chapter 5: Further Findings, I elaborated on three findings that demanded more explication. I provided more context and initiated brief discussions on these three findings: (a) while there is a documented career pathway to a community college presidency, the Asian American participants in my study, akin to other minority and women, traveled a mostly non-traditional pathway to ascend to leadership positions in the community colleges; (b) community college boards have a propensity to re-tread presidents, and that propensity partially contributes to the lack of APAs in leadership positions in the community colleges; and (c) the somewhat curious characteristics of being rebellious seems to reside in all of my Asian American participants.

In this chapter, I'm getting to the central storyline of my participants' stories in observation of my narrative inquiry stance. I am interested in exploring in detail the meaning of my participants' stories of success-what do their stories say about them as Asian Americans, as Asian American leaders in the community colleges, and what in their stories of success yields insights on leadership that could be of benefit to future generations of APA leaders in the community colleges. In the course of this discussion, I

will elaborate on the nature of racial formation in Asian Americans and how my participants have dealt with racial prejudice and/or racism. I will also expound upon the merits of Critical Race Theory in understanding the complexities of the Asian American racial reality and how that understanding will enable the majority to appreciate and promote Asian Americans to leadership positions in the community colleges and beyond. I will further discuss the cultural influences on the leadership perspectives and style of the Asian American participants and highlight the potentially transformative power of the Asian American leadership style especially in this critical junction of the community college history. Lastly, I will demonstrate how my Asian American participants play it forward with their advice and mentoring of future generations of Asian American leaders in the community college by collating their collective wisdom on this topic.

Between Black and White: Asian American Racial Formation

Mr. Fire was moved to tears when he heard Dr. Chang-lin Tien speak at a conference. Dr. Tien served as chancellor of the University of California, Berkeley, from 1990 to 1997. An immigrant who spoke heavily-accented English, Dr. Tien was nevertheless a much-revered figure in the history of Asian Americans in higher education. He had ascended the highest echelons in American higher education yet his beginnings as a foreign student in the 1950s in Louisville, Kentucky, were foretelling the ambiguous racial formation of Asian American. In Louisville, Kentucky, as Dr. Tien stepped off the bus on American soil, he literally couldn't choose which drinking fountain to use, the choice being White or Black, no Yellow.

Asian Americans occupy an ambiguous racial position in the construction of the racial identity spectrum in the United States: between Black and White. There are four levels of meaning in the Asian American being between Black and White. First of all, Asian Americans are absent in the racial construction in America. It is no wonder then that there is not much literature, scholarship, or research on Asian Americans in general and in higher education in specific. My review of literature in Chapter 2 confirms the lack of scholarly attention to this particular population (Hune & Chan, 1997; Wu, 2003). The myth of the model minority with Asian Americans portrayed to have achieved parity with majority White population in educational attainment and financial success also contributes to this lack of study on the Asian American population (Museus, 2009). In the higher education arena, this lack of attention is evident in the finding that, over the last decade, approximately only 1% of articles published in five of the most widely read peer-reviewed academic journals in the field of higher education have given specific attention to Asian American or Pacific Islander college students (Museus, 2009). Another contributing factor to this lack of research on Asian Americans in higher education is the relatively low number of Asian American faculty and graduate students in education and related social sciences disciplines who might pursue research on the experiences of members of their own racial and ethnic communities (Nakanishi & Nishida, 1995).

Second of all, with little attention being paid to the Asian Americans in the racial formation of the United States, the racial identity of Asian American is ill-defined. It is certainly not defined on its own merit but in relationship to the Black and White racial identities. In this murkiness of racial identity formation, the issue of "other" is added uncertainty. Third of all, the complexity of the Asian American racial identity is in large

part due to the sheer number of ethnicities that are included in this racial category (United States Census Bureau, 2002). On top of that, the Asian American racial formation came out of an era in which the need for the Asian American geopolitical construct was great and the usefulness of Asian Americans as a geopolitical bloc was put to practice (Zhu & Gatewood, 2000). Fourth of all, this in-betweenness of the Asian American racial formation engendered a perception of the Asian American as being the *"eternal other"* (Takaki, 1998). Because of the way Asian Americans look, speak, or act, they are never fully embraced as Americans but somehow "other."

The renowned Asian American scholar, Ron Takaki, shares his "othering" experience in his book, *Strangers from a different shore.* He recounts the frequency with which he is asked the question, "how long have you been in this country?" when his family has been residing in the United States since the 1880s. This particular "othering" experience is common for all Asian Americans including my participants. Asian Americans are never quite made to feel completely American, but alien in some way shape or form. Suzuki's (2002) study reached the conclusion that not only do Asian Americans look different; they are perceived to act and talk differently as well. In addition, they are perceived to be "perfidious foreigners"; even second- or third-generation Asian Americans are perceived to lack English language skills, and therefore, they are not qualified to be part of senior management. This act of "othering" perpetuated on the Asian Americans leaves an indelible mark on the Asian American racial formation. It's a form of racial discrimination that is specific and almost exclusive to the Asian Americans. It also informs the way that Asian Americans respond to racial prejudice in a generalized way.

Mr. Wood feels more comfortable in the higher education environment because the legal mandates explicitly prohibit discrimination, but he is much more cautious in social situations because he is not sure how people will react to his race and ethnicity. He has been called unflattering racial names and also been the recipient of looks that make him feel uncomfortable in social situations in which the majority of the participants are White. Mr. Fire has been denied service at a restaurant in Kentucky when his White colleagues were served. Ms. Earth believes that her status as an immigrant gives ground to people's prejudicial language and behavior, people including those who work for her, and those who are her peers. Mr. Metal's encounter with racial othering is achingly comedic since he is so staunchly American. While playing golf with his buddies in South Carolina, the "ole boys" behind their foursome, started using racial slurs and talking trash about the Japanese American foursome ahead of them, thinking that the Japs didn't understand English. One of Mr. Metal's playing partners had to go back and give the "ole boys" a talking-to. Ms. Water couldn't even pass the gate at the gated community in which she lived. She finally had to say something forceful to the gate attendant that if she were an older White person, she wouldn't have been treated the way she was.

Whether it's immigrants (Mr. Wood, Ms. Earth and Ms. Water) or second-generation (Mr. Fire) or third-generation (Mr. Metal), Asian Americans are subject to "othering" experiences. The degree of this "othering" experience ranges from differential treatment (Ms. Water's boss apologizing to her for 'off-color' joking), to discrimination (Mr. Wood being called racial names or Ms. Earth's subordinates grumbling about her lack of proper American credentials to be their supervisor), to downright racism (Mr. Fire being refused service at a restaurant in Kentucky when his White colleagues were served

or Mr. Metal's golf playing experience in South Carolina or Ms. Water being refused entrance to the gated community in which she resides). The range of discriminatory language and practices toward my Asian American participants is broad, and seems to represent the Asian American experience in general in that Asian Americans are always made to feel that they are somehow the "other," not fully belonging in the American cultural, political, or educational landscapes. This "othering" phenomenon with Asian Americans could be seen as the modern-day re-incarnation of the "Yellow Peril" and the Asian anti-exclusion laws, certainly not as blatant, more muted and subtle, but the effects on social impression formation perhaps just as severe (Abreu, Ramirez, Kim, & Haddy, 2003; Lai & Arguelles, 2003; Takaki, 1998, 1993). All of the participants struggle to reconcile the signification of their physical appearance as Asian with their desire to be "no different" from anybody else; this desire to be "no different" from everybody else is more pronounced with the younger generation age-wise (as in Ms. Water who is in her late 30s/early 40s) and in the second-generation Japanese American (Mr. Metal). Mr. Fire, the first-generation Chinese American, has almost the opposite desire. Instead of desiring the mainstream culture to treat him differently, he desires for the Asian Americans to be more assertive, to "brag" better about themselves.

As leaders in the community colleges, however, the participants were much more interested and invested in responding in a positive way to these "othering" experiences than wallowing in them. Mr. Wood puts it in a succinct way, "Does one try to learn to overcompensate for that? Or does one just ignore those and just move forward or does one confront those or does one, because of the obstacles, give up?"

Mr. Wood's questions present a range of options in Asian Americans' ability to deal with the "othering" experience. Rather than letting the othering experience dominate their life and career, Asian Americans have choices in responding to the othering experiences. The choices represent conscious decision-making on the part of Asian Americans in an attempt to construct their own reality. One of the original proponents of Critical Race Theory, Richard Delgado (1990) has argued for the need of people of color to name their own reality. Delgado (1990) and other CRT theorists have uncovered and challenged the processes by which racial paradigms have been, and are, manifested in legal discourses. In the process of that deconstruction, Delgado and others have also afforded legitimacy to the multiple voices of others, including those of Asian Americans. In the participants' conscious, deliberative efforts of "naming their own reality," by responding to othering experiences in a positive way, they demonstrate self-knowledge, strength of character and emotional intelligence that are quintessential to their success as Asian American leaders in the community colleges. The construction of their own agency in dealing with racial discrimination and racism is a valuable and positive manifestation of my use of CRT to analyze the participants' stories.

Critical Race Theory and the Complexities of Asian American Reality

Critical Race Theory outlines a process of deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruction of human agency, and construction of equitable and socially just relations of power. Mr. Wood's questions not only presented the Asian Americans with a range of options but also highlighted the centrality of agency in the construction of the Asian American racial identity. The process of Asian American racial

formation is constructivist and dynamic in that the outcome is contingent upon the agency response of the Asian Americans to the status of between Black and White.

CRT theorists have also made us understand that reality is socially constructed and that stories are a powerful way of destroying and changing mindsets. The key in the deconstruction in order to reconstruct is the context provided by story telling. With Asian Americans, this contextualization is even more critical as the complexities of the Asian American reality is often distorted by limited, incomplete documentation and a limiting overarching trope of viewing Asian America through the lens of the "model minority." The stories of my participants with their multiple dimensions of context function to enhance critical race theory scholarship on the Asian American experience.

Critical Race Theory employs storytelling to "analyze the myths, presuppositions, and received wisdoms that make up the common culture about race and that invariably render Blacks and other minorities one-down" (Delgado, 1995, p.xiv). CRT has the following four premises: it posits that "race" is largely a social experience and that different racial groups experience and understand race in different ways; it theorizes that the racial experiences of racial minority groups are subordinate relative to a White racial experience; much of the work of CRT applies insights of how race functions to critique rules, norms, standards, and assumptions that appear "neutral," but which systematically disadvantage or "subordinate" racial minorities; and lastly, CRT describes and theorizes about the causes that maintain racial minorities' relative subordination in a post-Civil Rights American culture that has come to embrace the equality norm (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller & Thomas, 1995; Davis, Johnson, & Martinez, 2001; Delgado & Stefancic, 2000).

In the area of educational research on Asian Americans, CRT is particularly useful in critiquing deficit thinking and offers an alternative perspective to normative framing (Teranishi et al, 2009). Deficit thinking frames racial inequities as individual deficiencies. CRT provides an alternative way to unlearn stereotypical thinking about race, which, in the case of Asian Americans, is especially needed as stereotypes and assumptions have largely driven the treatment of this population. The success stories of my participants provide ample evidence to debunk the "unsuitability" of Asian Americans to be leaders. Fujimoto's (1996) study concluded that there is a generalized perception that Asian Americans are non-confrontational, politically passive, and not desirous of leadership positions. My participants were none of that. Not only are they desirous of leadership positions, they are also actively rebellious in bucking a trend, or not bowing to parental or societal pressures.

Their individual experiences as immigrants, second-generation, or third-generation Asian Americans, with richly varied educational background, belief systems, employment experiences but largely consistent culturally-influenced leadership style, led to their success in the community colleges. Their success as individuals helps to deconstruct the myths about the "unsuitability" of Asian Americans to be leaders. On the other hand, their collective success speaks more to the hospitable environment of the community college as a place of work for all minority individuals. Their collective success story affirms the data collected by American Council on Education (ACE) in that the few Asian American leaders in high education are mostly located in the community colleges (ACE, 2008). Culturally speaking, Asian American parents tend not to look upon the community college as "good enough" for their offspring to study or to work.

The sense of elitism among the Asian Americans in their choice of location for higher education or employment (Mr. Fire brought up this point specifically in his story) has tended to exclude community colleges from the range of options being considered. My participants' stories should help to dissipate this misplaced sense of "elitism;" community colleges provided ample opportunities to my participants to advance and be successful in their leadership career.

In addition to deficit thinking, normative framing in educational research is used primarily to identify how different racial groups are unevenly distributed across a particular outcome, say participation in higher education or degree attainment. CRT infused research turns away from this mode of research, but is instead focused on the experiences and needs of marginalized populations in higher education (Teranishi et al, 2009). In re-telling my participants' stories with this study, I have followed closely this particular major tenet of Critical Race Theory. In rejecting the normative framing in educational research but instead focusing on the experiential stories of my participants, I have not only provided a voice to their reality; I have also inserted "race" back into the deracialized Asian American voice. Even in their tentativeness in voicing racialized concerns about their treatment as Asian Americans[3], my participants did not shy away from talking about their racial identity and their racial reality. It was a deliberate part of my research design to adopt the constructivist-interpretivist frameworks for research so that I could locate my research questions and topic in race- and culture-relevant context, use race and culture to explain the individual experiences, and rely on participants as

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[3] See discussion regarding Asian American racial formation in previous section of this chapter.

experts (Neilson & Suyemoto, 2009). Under the constructivist-interpretivist framework I was able to constantly and explicitly consider the participants as whole persons in context and pay a great deal of attention to race and cultural realities.

The complexities of the Asian American racial experience do not just entail the diversity of my participants; they also include stories of how my participants respond to racialized treatment and how they actively use their race and culture to form their leadership perspectives and demonstrate their leadership capabilities. The varying experiences of my participants growing up in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Sacramento, San Francisco, Canada, Africa, and Great Britain lend credence to the intra-racial diversity of Asian Americans. The ethnic diversity of my participants that includes Chinese American, Japanese American and Indian American adds another layer to the complexities of the Asian American racial experience. In addition, the general status of my participants from immigrants (3 out of 5), first-generation and second-generation Asian Americans in this country gives another twist to the Asian American racial reality.

Almost to a person, all the participants affirm the influence of their race and culture on their leadership perspective and style except for Mr. Metal. The melting pot that was the neighborhood in which he grew up has left its mark on Mr. Metal as he truly believes that being American means his ethnicity is irrelevant. He believes in a collaborative leadership style, in getting buy-in from people before making decisions, and in building teams. Yet he would not attribute any of this to his race or culture. If anything, he thinks that his coaching background is what gives him the preparation to be a good leader in the community college: the ability to communicate, to get along with people and to build teams. Even with his vehement denial of the influence of his race and

culture on his leadership style, I could see where the confluence of his race and culture and his coaching background made him a superior candidate for leadership positions. It is regrettable to me that Mr. Fire is so adamant that his race and culture had nothing to do with his leadership style for the story of his father's collaboration with his friends to open up a gas station is but one indication of the influence of his race and culture on his leadership capabilities.

All the other participants have no hesitancy in voicing their conviction that the Asian American culture values influenced their leadership perspectives and style. The collaborative, open, and team-oriented leadership style was articulated and embraced by all the participants. The source of this particular leadership style is partially the Asian American cultural values. Ms. Water is on point when she stated, "culture plays a huge part." The cultural values that were instilled in the Asian American participants include the importance of family, the importance of the human connection, and the importance of respect, regardless of where one is on the totem pole. Additional cultural values include the importance of listening and the importance of warmth in a relationship. The Asian American cultural values informed my participants' leadership perspectives and influenced their leadership style.

The Transformative Value of the Asian American Leadership Style

When my participants were asked the question, "What do you see as an effective leadership style for the community colleges?" they did not hesitate. The surety and speed with which they responded to the question bespoke their conviction in their own

leadership style for the effective leadership style they think is good for the community college is very much their own leadership style.

For Mr. Wood, this entails a people centric leadership style in that the interplay of the leader and the overall atmosphere of the organization is paramount to the creation of a creative and joyful work place. The leader must know that s/he has a tremendous influence on the overall atmosphere of the workplace; how the leader projects life sets the tone for the workplace. Everybody in the organization looks to the leader for signs and clues as to his/her mood and emotion. A leader therefore must take the time to create an atmosphere of positive energy, creativity, and joy in the workplace.

For Mr. Fire, a leader must first and foremost keep his/her ego in check. By keeping one's ego in check, a leader will then be able to position himself/herself to help the staff perform their best. A good leader also needs to put people first. It is extremely important to invest in the people, and he readily admits that his ethnic background has "something to do with" this people-centric leadership perspective.

For Ms. Earth, excellent people skills constitute a must for an effective leader. She readily admits that she understands the concept of emotional intelligence and her high EQ (emotional IQ) has something to do with the fact that she loves people. A good leader also needs to be passionate about building unity. At whatever level of the organization, unity and harmony will engender good fellow feeling and a cohesive spirit so that if a leader promotes unity and harmony, then the organization as a whole becomes more effective.

For Mr. Metal, the ability to get along with people is the foremost requirement for an effective leader. Second to that is communication, which needs to be often and timely. Thirdly, building teams is another effective leadership strategy that will carry the leader a long way in terms of building organizational capacity to carry out its work. Fourthly, getting input before making a decision and listening to people will create an environment in which collaboration is the norm.

For Ms. Water, first and foremost, a leader needs to get everyone's input before making a decision. It's not that a leader is afraid of making a decision. On the contrary, if a leader seeks input from a number of different areas and constituencies, then a leader will be able to make a better-informed decision. Secondly, it's important for the leader to have an open relationship with his/her staff. While micro-managing is frowned upon, delegating and setting clear expectations for staff are to be the norm. The leader and staff could/should work as a team. In addition, open relationship that is team oriented also entails open communication. This way, the leader will be able to establish trust with the staff and create a healthier work environment overall.

The ideas that my participants voiced on an effective leadership style for the community college are generally congruent with the provisions of what Rost (1991, 1993) terms as postindustrial leadership. In the conceptualization of postindustrial leadership, Rost (1991, 1993) puts forward a leadership style in which the relationships and processes of leadership are emphasized, instead of exclusively exalting the leader above the followers. The leader-follower relationship is one based on persuasion rather than coercion; influence flows from leader to followers and from followers to leader.

Postindustrial leadership is communitarian: leaders and followers combine to define and then pursue the common good of shared values in a process of mutual influence.

The specific form of postindustrial leadership that my participants come closest to is servant leadership, primarily because both the Asian American leadership style and servant leadership are informed by a value system. Servant leadership "emphasizes increased service to others, a holistic approach to work, promoting a sense of community, and the sharing of power in decision making" (Spears, 1998, p.3). Servant leaders seek not only to treat followers with respect, but also to serve while building a community of participation and solidarity. Servant leadership requires leaders to be individuals in a community of individuals possessing self-awareness, reflection, compassion, and high moral orientation. Servant leadership advances the notion of leadership as a communal process of mutual influence between leaders and followers, of leaders being able to share power with followers, and of leadership being centered on something greater than self-interest (Greenleaf, 1977; Spears, 1995). Greenleaf's (1997) model of servant leadership puts primary emphasis on the needs and desires of the followers before the needs of the leader; persuasion and example are the preferred methods in servant leadership. Servant leaders build people through service when they genuinely put people first, viewing them as humans worthy of dignity and respect. Success is measured by growth in the people served and the positive effects on the least privileged in society.

According to Johnson (2001), the advantages of the servant-leadership model are its altruism, simplicity, and self-awareness. It puts emphasis on the moral sense of genuine concern for other, reducing, even eliminating the complexity of leaders putting their personal desires in conflict of those of their followers. It requires reflective thinking,

or moral imagination, grounded in sensitive awareness of oneself and of followers who interact in a continuous process of mutual influence. The leader talks, listens to others, and from the ongoing dialogue emerges a shared vision and a better one (Keichel, 1995). The top-down leadership pyramid representing the modernist models of leadership is turned upside down in the servant-leadership model. Instead of the leader being considered responsible and the followers responsive; instead of authority given by position and enforced by control and dominance; and instead of exalting the leader as the individual indispensable to the success of the organization, servant leadership puts the leader at the bottom of pyramid, receiving information and guidance from the rank and file. Authority is granted as a result of the relationship between the leader and the led. The servant leader creates and maintains this positive relationship by demonstrating trust in and respect for those being served (Spears, 1998).

The confluence of Asian American leadership style and servant leadership lies in the dedication to people, to trust people, to build people up, and to turn the power relationship in an organization upside down. The specific values that inform the Asian American leadership style and servant leadership are different in that Asian American leadership style is informed by Asian cultural values whereas servant leadership is informed by spiritual values. There is not an emphasis on self-reflection in the Asian American leadership style, for instance. Where the two meets is their potential to transform community colleges.

Community colleges are facing a fundamental challenge to their mission and existence. With the economic crisis and the finance-driven assessment of the need for and effectiveness of the community colleges, leadership in the community colleges needs to

truly embrace and enact the concepts of shared governance, shared values, and participatory decision-making. Leadership in the community colleges needs the participation of every single person in order to make it through this epochal transition.

The management guru Stephen Covey looked at organizations outside of the community colleges but still organizations faced with the speed and ferocity of change driven by technology and a global economy and came to the conclusion that the traditional, top-down, heavy on external control style of management simply isn't working any more. To be successful in this highly volatile and competitive environment, a new approach is needed, an inside-out approach. The "strange attractor" in chaos theory—"a sense of vision that people are drawn to, and united in, that enables them to be driven by inner motivation toward achieving a common purpose" will be the foundation of this new style of leadership (Covey, 1998, p. xii, italics original). In other words, shared vision. Unlike the traditional manager who drives results and motivation from the outside in, the postindustrial leader is one who "seeks to draw out, inspire, and develop the best and highest within people from the inside out" (Covey, 1998, p. xii). The postindustrial leader who adopts the inside out approach will engage the entire organization to create a shared vision and will then "inspire each individual to stretch and reach deeper within themselves and to use their unique talents in whatever way…necessary to independently and interdependently achieve that shared vision" (Covey, 1998, p. xii).

Both the Asian American leader and the servant leader embody this type of postindustrial leadership in shared vision, and empowerment. From a leadership perspective, empowerment means building a trustworthy organization that fosters and

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supports shared power and participatory decision-making. A servant leader and an Asian American leader create and articulate a vision, then enable, ennoble, and empower those around them to work for the attainment of that vision. A servant leader and an Asian American leader also give away power as we traditionally understand it; instead they share power by recognizing and valuing the leadership capacity in all. "Opening the organization to many leadership roles at all levels invites an infusion of varied perspectives, a multitude of options and solutions from which the best actions (as these are understood in the moment) can be determined." (Sturnick, 1998, p. 193, parenthesis original)

The literature affirms again and again that this process of giving away power is a process of building trust when members of the organization are involved early in the game and genuine empowerment happens. In the mode of empowerment, the servant leader and the Asian American leader cultivate a spirit of innovation, experimentation, and creativity by providing a "safe" environment in which organizational members are free to fail but with learning as an outcome (Melrose, 1998, p. 292). The value of shared vision and empowerment is their transformative power to help the servant leader and the Asian American leader deal with change.

Burns (1978) contrasts transformational leadership as differentiated from transactional leadership. Instead of motivating by appealing to Marslow's (1943) lower-level needs such as food, shelter, safety and association, transformational leaders focus on the higher levels of needs of their followers such as esteem, self-fulfillment, and self-actualization. Transformational leaders use less coercion or positional power; instead they use the power of their person or authentic power to influence their followers to a

course of action that leads to success. Transformational leadership influence with their charisma and inspirational motivation, challenging their followers to be creative in problem solving and provide a learning environment tailored to each individual (Bartol & Martin, 1998).

In managing change, the power of the transformational leaders lies in their ability to recognize the need for change and to communicate their vision of change to the constituencies. There is no doubt that the community colleges are facing a grave threat at this time in history. The response of the Asian American leader, like that of the servant leader, is to trust the people to work together and solve this communal problem in a collective way (Jackson & Dutton, 1988). Now is not the time for the traditional leader who exerts positional power and serves his/her own self-interest. Now is the time for the Asian American leader and the servant leader, a leader who will serve the community by tapping into the talent and commitment in each and every single member of the organization. Herein lies the true transformative power of the Asian American leadership style.

One area of future research is to explore further the value-based leadership styles such as the Asian American leadership style and servant leadership, to discover where they congeal and mesh and where they differ and diverge from each other. Given this time of great change for the community colleges, research should also be conducted as to the efficacy of the Asian American leadership style. Does it truly help an organization like a community college navigate trouble waters?

Playing it Forward

Because Asian American leaders are people centric and because they have first-hand knowledge of the lack of Asian Americans in leadership positions in the community colleges, they were ready to help the future generations of Asian American leaders in the community colleges with advice and assistance.

Mr. Wood advises strongly in finding a match between one's personality and interests with the needs of the institution. The journey to leadership could be long and hard, but one cannot give up easily; one has to persist. Even in persistence, a future leader needs to still find joy in what s/he does. Without joy, a good match cannot exist. In a good match, then an Asian American leader will be able to use their leadership position to address the issue of providing the students with the mindset and skill-sets so that they may be better able to pursuit opportunities in life.

Mr. Fire is passionate about the leadership issues facing Asian Americans and is incensed at the community college boards' refusal to give minority (including Asian American) candidate an opportunity at a top leadership post. He is dismayed by the persistence of the bi-cultural struggles of Asian Americans. Young Asian Americans need to break out of the "traditional" Asian cultural mode of "don't bring shame to the family, work hard, don't draw attention to yourself" and take up leadership responsibilities. The aspiring Asian American leaders need to stop constantly looking out for others without looking out for themselves; they need to be a bit selfish in bragging about themselves and investing in themselves.

Ms. Earth's advice to future Asian American leaders in the community colleges boils down to two key points: adopt a learning stance in one's everyday work, and associate with those who are successful. In one's day-to-day work, an Asian American leader needs to be open to learning from everyone whose paths they come across at work including people that report to them and those to whom they report. To learn from every individual and every interaction, positive and negative so that an Asian American leader might learn how to move people, how to motivate people, and how people are inspired to do good work. Most importantly, the learning stance will help an Asian American leader discover the outcomes of teamwork. In addition, mentors and role models are those with whom an aspiring Asian American leader in the community colleges should associate and from whom they should learn to deal with the challenges as a leader.

Mr. Metal is personally involved with a number of organizations that deal specifically with Asian American leadership issues. According to him, the first imperative for an Asian American leader in the community colleges is to gain "multiple experiences in as many diverse areas as possible." These diverse experiences are needed by the aspirants to match up with the diversity of students in the community colleges. In addition, the diverse experiences will help build up a repertory of skills for the aspirants. Mr. Metal recommends the Asian American aspirants to get out of the box, get out of their comfort zone, and to try to get as many diverse experiences as they are coming up through the ranks.

Ms. Water advises future generations of Asian American leaders to first of all network by going to conferences so that they might have an opportunity to dialog with colleague who share similar concerns. Second of all, doing homework on oneself so that

one knows one's weaknesses and strengths. The objective is to constantly work on turning one's weaknesses into strengths. This to Ms. Water is the ultimate strategy in developing one's leadership capabilities.

Journey's End/New Beginnings

I have come to the end of this journey of writing my dissertation. Today, March 8, 2011, I'm finally able to understand viscerally and intellectually why I needed to go on this journey. It is not acceptable to me to have so few Asian Americans in leadership positions, especially not acceptable in the community college environment. As the most open and diverse sector of American higher education, community colleges should include more leaders of color including Asian Americans. As the sector of American higher education facing a crisis of existence, community colleges could use the open, collaborative, communicative, inclusive, and people-centric leadership style of Asian Americans. The Asian American leadership style brings out the best in people and advances a model of collective problem-solving and institutional advancement. Hence the celebratory story telling of my participants' lived experiences in their career in the community colleges was the perfect choice of a research methodology and I couldn't have been happier with the "outcomes" of my research. To be able to distill wisdom on leadership from the stories of my Asian American participants has been most gratifying for my ultimate objective is to use the distilled wisdom to demonstrate to the majority population that Asian Americans are eminently hirable as top leaders for the community colleges. Not only that but the potentially transformative power of the Asian American leadership perspectives and style in this time of need for the community colleges made

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my journey so much more worthwhile than I ever would have thought possible at the beginning of this journey in 2006.

I consider myself one of the aspiring Asian American leaders in the community colleges. This journey has garnered me so much more knowledge and insights about Asian Americans, the community colleges, and Asian Americans as leaders that I'm literally a changed person today than when I started this journey in 2006. This has also been a journey of hope, for both my participants and myself. This journey of positive reflection and future action has been most inspiring.

I'm ready for new beginnings as an Asian American woman who aspires to be a leader in the community colleges.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Invitation to Participants

W. Cherry Li-Bugg

Date_____

Dear_____,

My name is Cherry Li-Bugg. I'm a Ph.D candidate in the program of Community College Leadership in the School of Education at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, CO. I'm interested in researching the success factors that enable people like you to obtain top leadership positions in the community colleges and those factors that continue to enable you to perform in these top leadership positions. In addition, through your stories, I hope to learn new insights and perspectives on leadership. As an Asian American myself, this topic engages me on a personal, intellectual, and emotional level. I think the stories of Asian American leaders in the community colleges are worthy stories that have yet to be told.

Your stories cannot be told without your participation. Your participation is indispensable to this project. I'm therefore writing to seek your participation. Please respond to this email to indicate your interest and initial consent to participate in this study.

I will be conducting an interview with you in person that will last from 60 to 90 minutes. Prior to the interview, I will send you a brief written survey to be completed by you and returned to me before I conduct the interview. The survey is a means to garner basic demographic information from you. I will be bringing a formal consent form with me to the interview so that you may sign off on it. The interview can occur at your work site or at a location of your choosing. The interview will be taped and transcribed as this is principal method of data collection for my project.

I hope to complete my research this semester (Fall 2009). Once I have checked the interview transcripts for accuracy, I will forward it to you so that you may choose to further verify the accuracy of the information given. It is perfectly alright if you choose not to engage in this part of the research process.

If you have any questions regarding my research and/or your role in it, please contact me either at home telephone number (925) 685-2872 or mobile telephone number (925) 876-1853 or via email at clibugg@sbcglobal.net.

I thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

W. Cherry Li-Bugg

APPENDIX B

Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Colorado State University

TITLE OF STUDY: Asian American Leadership in the American Community College: an Inquiry into Success Factors, Insights and Perspectives

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Wenying Cherry Li-Bugg, Ph.D candidate, Community College Leadership, School of Education, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523 Tel: 925.685.2872 Email: clibugg@sbcglobal.net

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. Tim Davies, Professor, School of Education, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523. Tel: 970.491.5199. Email: timothy.davies@colostate.edu

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH? I am asking for your participation in this study because you are a leader in the California community college system. If you agree to participate in this study, I will ask about your perspectives in two private, confidential interviews, one over a meal and the other at your worksite. The first interview may last up to two hours. The second interview may last up to one hour. You will be asked a series of open-ended and focused questions about the success factors that enable to obtain a top leadership position and to perform in these positions.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY? This study is being conducted by Wenying Cherry Li-Bugg. Ms. Li-Bugg is a doctoral student at Colorado State University and is conducting this research as part of her doctoral dissertation. Dr. Tim Davies is the Co-Principal Investigator in this study. Dr. Davies is Professor in the School of Education at Colorado State University. Dr. Davies is Ms. Li-Bugg's dissertation advisor and is the Co-Principal Investigator in this study.

Page __ of __ Participant's initials _____ Date _____

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY? The purpose of this qualitative study is to discover the success factors that enable Asian Americans to advance to top leadership positions in the community colleges and same or different success factors that enable these Asia American presidents and chancellors to perform on the job. Participants will be interviewed to understand their insights and perspectives on leadership. Private, individual, face-to-face interviews will be conducted, and transcript data will be analyzed to identify emergent themes reflected in the participants' stories. The interviews will be open-ended and in-depth to discover the unique, layered experiences and allow the participants to discuss relevant and perhaps unanticipated topics related to Asian American leadership. A narrative inquiry approach will be adopted in the interpretation of data.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST? The study will take place in the state of California, close to or at the participants' worksites. The study is scheduled to run from September 1, 2009 to April 31, 2010.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO? This study will collect data through an analysis and interpretation of interview transcripts. If you agree to participate in the study, we will interview you in private at a data, time, and location that we both agree upon. You will be asked to participate in a semi-formal interview over a meal and a formal interview at your worksite. Your identity and your institution's identity will remain confidential.

ARE THERE REASONS WHY I SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY? There are no known reasons why you should not take part in this study.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS? There are no known risks or discomforts to you in this study. It is not possible to identify all the potential risks in the research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? There are no known benefits to you if you agree to participate in this study.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY? Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

WHAT WILL IT COST ME TO PARTICIPATE? The only cost to you for participating in this study will be the time needed to conduct your interviews. We estimate the first interview to last approximately two hours and the second interview will take approximately one hour.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE? The information that you give will be seen by the Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigator and a professional transcriber. Selected excerpts from your interviews may be reviewed by the members of my dissertation committee. They may also be included in my dissertation or incorporated into journal articles or conference presentations. In all such cases, pseudonyms would be used to identify you and your institution.

CAN MY TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY? We are unaware of any reason why your participation in this study would be ended once your interview begins.

WILL I RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? No, you will not receive any compensation for taking part in this study.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM INJURED BECAUSE OF THE RESEARCH? The Colorado Governmental Immunity Act determines and may limit Colorado State University's legal responsibility if an injury happens because of this study. Claims against the University must be filed within 180 days of the injury.

Page ___ of ___ Participant's initials _____ Date _____

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?   Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, ___Wenying Cherry Li-Bugg___ at _925.685.2872___. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Meldrem, Human Research Administrator at 970-491-1655. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW? Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing four pages.

_____   _____

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study   Date

_____

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

_____   _____

Name of person providing information to participant   Date

_____

Signature of Research Staff

APPENDIX C

Demographic Survey

Name (will not be used in the study)	
Age	
Gender	
Ethnicity	
Current Title	
Years in current position	
Immediate past position	
Years in immediate past position	

APPENDIX D

Interview Guide

Background information

1. Let's start with growing up. Can you describe your family? Talk to me about your family origin. What about your family structure?

2. Can you talk about your sibling(s)?

3. Where did you grow up? Can you describe your neighborhood?

Family Background

4. Do you have a strong and supportive family structure? Please elaborate.

5. Was race and ethnicity important to your family? What are some traditions celebrated by your family?

6. What is your view on interracial relationship/marriage? What are your family members' views on this issue?

7. What is your family's expectation of your educational achievement and career path? Please elaborate.

Race and Ethnic Identity Issues

8. How do you define yourself in racial/ethnic terms?

9. What influenced your response to Question 8? (In other words, why do you call yourself an Asian American man or woman?)

10. Can you think of any specific times in your life when being a Chinese or Indian is more or less important to you?

11. As an adult, have your experienced what you believe to be racism or prejudice?

12. Have you personally thought that being a Chinese/Indian was a hindrance to fully participating in American society?

<u>Education</u>

13. Where did you go to high school? Can you describe the racial make-up of your high school? Who did you associate with in high school? Can you describe their race or ethnicity?

14. Think back to high school. What were your hopes and dreams for the future? Do you have or are you doing the things you dreamed about? Why or why not?

15. Who were your strongest influences in finishing high school and pursue further education beyond high school?

<u>Professional Preparation</u>

16. Why did you decide to enter community college administration?

17. What kind of administrative preparation did you receive?

18. In what way did this preparation assist you in becoming a leader?

19. Did any of your administration training experience deal with race and ethnicity? If so, in what specific ways?

<u>Journey to leadership positions</u>

20. Tell me about the hiring experiences you went through to get to your current position.

21. Did anybody in the hiring process inform you about the specific qualities and skills that made them hire you? Be specific.

22. What do you feel are the qualities and skills that enable you to get to this position?

<u>Leadership styles</u>

23. What do you think are the qualities and skills that make you an effective leader? Are they the same or different from those in Question 22. Please elaborate on the sameness and/or differences.

24. How would you describe your leadership style? Does it have any relationship to emerging leadership styles such as transformative leadership, shared/distributed leadership, servant leadership or appreciative inquiry?

25. What influence does your race, ethnicity and culture have on your leadership style?

Leadership in the community colleges

26. What does effective leadership in the community college look like to you?

27. Do you see this type of leadership in operation?

Future recommendations

28. If you were in a position to encourage more Asian Americans to become top leaders in the community colleges, what would you suggest?