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DISSERTATION

**TRACING THE NON-TRADITIONAL JOURNEY OF SELECTED COMMUNITY
COLLEGE PRESIDENTS**

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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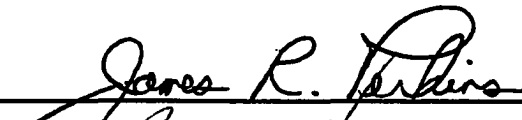
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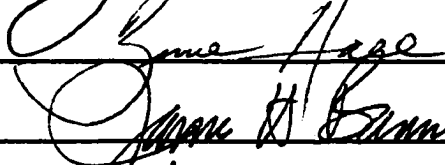
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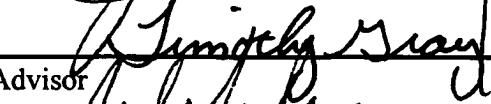
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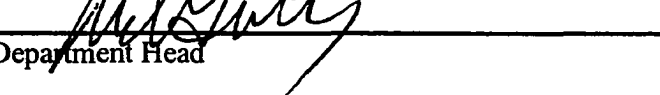
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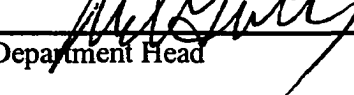
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As I reflect I realize it is impossible to acknowledge in the space provided here the many people who have contributed to the success of this accomplishment. Those special words of encouragement and support came so often and from so many. My gratitude is beyond words.

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with their intelligence and depth of knowledge; and Rich, his memory will live on in all of us. I can never acknowledge everything that Dr. Tim Davies, my advisor, my mentor, and my special friend has been to me. He allowed a Virginian the opportunity, I will be forever grateful for his incredible support, encouragement, and friendship. I also want to thank my committee members and the presidential participants that helped to make this accomplishment a reality.

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION
TRACING THE NON-TRADITIONAL JOURNEY OF SELECTED COMMUNITY
COLLEGE PRESIDENTS

Historically the traditional pathway to the community college presidency has been through the academic ranks. According to recent studies, only a little over four percent of all current public community college presidents come to the position from pathways outside of higher education. The purpose of this study was to explore the non-traditional pathway and experiences that brought six leaders to the community college presidency between 1990 and 2001; to analyze the skills and experiences these presidents drew upon from their non-traditional journey to lead their respective community colleges; and, the challenges, disappointments and rewards they encountered since assuming a community college presidency.

A phenomenological approach provided a level of depth and substance necessary to understand their particular journey as a distinctive process. Six participants representing approximately 20 percent of the total non-traditional community college presidency were identified for the study and represented prior career categories of Business/Industry; Government/Political; Public Schools; and Governmental Education.

Qualitative methods for gathering and analyzing data were used. Along with in-depth interviews with each participant in their respective offices, additional interviews were conducted with governing board trustees, employees, and colleagues of the participating presidents. In addition, the researcher's observational journal notes, presidential position announcements, newspaper articles, and speeches by the participants rounded out the data gathering.

Findings revealed common traits among the six participants included: 1) strong, proven leadership skills; 2) persuasive interpersonal skills; 3) positive political relationships and influences; and, 4) a passion and appreciation for education, particularly the community college and its mission.

Challenges and disappointments expressed by the participants included a lack of adequate resources; productivity and priorities; decision-making processes; bureaucracy and politics; and adjustments to change. Common rewards cited by the presidents included the ability to share in the successes and make a difference in the lives of students. These presidents who followed a non-traditional pathway did draw from their past experiences particularly in the areas of public relations and interpersonal skills; political relationships; and business orientations. Yet, the non-traditional participants in this study did not reveal unique qualities, attributes, challenges, disappointments or rewards different from those documented in the literature related to their traditional presidential colleagues.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Beyond the horizon of time is a changed world, very different from today's world. Some people see beyond that horizon and into the future. They believe that dreams can become reality. They open our eyes and lift our spirits. They build trust and strengthen our relationships. They stand firm against the winds of resistance and give us the courage to continue the quest. We call these people *leaders* (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 317).

Leadership Crisis

Although the country's oldest community college—Joliet Junior College in Illinois—opened in 1901, most were founded in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Given a typical 30 to 40 year career span, many of the community college founders are beginning to approach retirement. According to a 2001 report by the American Association of Community Colleges nearly 80 percent of their current presidents plan to retire during the next decade (Kelly, 2002, p. 9). This further substantiates findings that 45 percent of two-year college presidents would retire in the next six years, and 34 percent in the next 7 to 10 years (Evelyn, 2001, p. 1). Many experts view this as an approaching leadership crisis in the community college environment.

Yet to many this is not a surprise. In fact, nearly two decades ago, Elsner (1984) warned of a developing leadership crisis in the American community college movement, and in 1992, Nanus stated, "The need for effective visionary leadership is becoming so great as to pose a critical challenge to all concerned with education, including parents, schools, universities, and in-house training programs" (p. 181).

Without question, today's community colleges have evolved into "large, complex organizations with hundreds of employees, sprawling physical plants, and multimillion

dollar budgets” (Murry & Hammons, 1995, p. 207). Cohen, Brawer, and Associates (1994), Roueche, Baker, and Rose (1989), Vaughan (1989 & 1986) and others clearly support the idea that development of a new generation of senior leadership for America’s community colleges is imperative if these institutions are to successfully operate in such an increasingly challenging, complex, and ever-changing environment.

Traditionally the most successful career pathway to the community college presidency has been through the academic ranks (Vaughan, 1989). According to Lively (2000), some trends revealed by a 1999 American Council on Education (ACE) study indicate that “colleges are still playing it safe in choosing presidents” (p. 1). Chief executives are increasingly likely to be experienced, into their second or third presidency, and colleges seem to be hiring more career presidents. Multiple presidencies, coupled with an increase in presidents’ average age (57.6 up from 52.3 in 1986), suggest “an increasingly conservative approach taken by governing boards in filling college presidential positions” (p. 4). “Even though everyone talks about how we are looking outside higher education for presidents, those numbers don’t substantiate that. Boards are hiring the tried and true,” stated Ross, director of the ACE study (p. 5). Similarly, Vaughan stated, “There’s this rumor going around that we’re hiring outside of academe—people with business and industry backgrounds, for example.” He went on, “Whether that’s good or bad I don’t know, but it’s certainly not true” (Evelyn, 2002, p. A38).

Further, according to Evelyn (2001), community college academic administrators, such as vice presidents and deans of academic affairs are approaching retirement age nearly as fast as the presidents, and aging faculty only compound the perceived crisis.

“There’s no question that the large turnover in the faculty ranks is one of the most pressing problems community colleges are facing. Most people don’t go into administration off the bat. Many start out as faculty, so if there’s a faculty crisis, you can bet there will certainly be a leadership crisis,” stated Stephen G. Katsinas, Director of the Bill J. Priest Center for Community College Education at the University of North Texas (Evelyn, 2001, p. 3).

Addressing Different Avenues

But not everyone considers the turnover a crisis. Many people see it as a chance to bring in new ideas and fresh perspectives at a time when community colleges face increasingly challenging demands. Vaughan believes that new pathways to the presidency are exactly what are needed. His research has revealed that roughly a third of presidents are just recycled, moving from one presidency to another and by continuing to shuffle presidents around without considering alternative ways to bring new people in, a leadership crisis would likely occur (Evelyn, 2001).

Yet, a trend toward diversity is starting to be reflected in recent community college presidential appointments. The American Council on Education’s most recent survey of presidents found that only 22 percent of community college presidents are women and 13 percent are members of minority groups (Lively, 2000). The same survey in 1986 reflected both numbers at 8 percent. But a recent survey by a community college association found that 34 percent of presidents hired from 1995 to 1998 were women, and 15.7 percent belonged to minority groups (Lively, 2000).

Beyond gender and ethnic diversity, many boards are being urged to select leaders with different styles and even different professional backgrounds than the retiring

presidents, who many complain have a “state of mind stalled in the 1960s and 1970s” (Evelyn, 2001, p. 5). “Boards tend to look for people who can solve problems they are having at the time,” said George R. Boggs, the community college association’s president. “As more of them have fiscal problems, they might look at someone who came from the fiscal ranks” (p. 5). Likewise, other observers advocate finding leaders who understand and embrace the field of technology or have exhibited expertise in the fund raising arena. Consequently, the talents and expertise from other areas within and outside the college community have emerged for consideration in recent presidential searches.

As related by Vaughan (2000, 1999, 1986) and other educational researchers (Weisman & Vaughan, 2002; Kubala, 1999; Kanter, 1994), the traditional career pathway to the community college presidency typically begins with a college faculty position, then on to program head, division chair, vice president of academic affairs and ultimately president (or some variation of these typical positions). Consequently, the researcher in this study has straightforwardly defined a *non-traditional pathway* to the community college presidency as one that had not included a full time faculty position or a formal community college leadership position prior to accepting the community college presidency.

Problem Statement

Leadership characteristics and traits have been extensively researched both in the business and academic worlds. Many studies have focused on the overall issues of effectiveness, leadership, and skills and characteristics necessary for success as a community college president. Yet, research appears to be deficient in tracing the

presidential journey of those community college presidents who followed a non-traditional route. No major studies exist that explore the non-traditional pathway to the presidency, and once in the position, the challenges, rewards, and disappointments the presidents have experienced. With this void in the current literature, a need exists to provide an understanding of what the journey was like for non-traditional community college presidents, the experiences and accomplishments along the way that ultimately led them to the community college presidency, and what the position held for them upon assuming the role.

Research Questions

The study focused upon the following basic research questions:

- ❖ What was the journey like in following a non-traditional pathway to the community college presidency?
- ❖ What has the experience been like as a community college president?
- ❖ Collectively, what do these data reflect about the president who followed a non-traditional pathway?

Contextual Definition of Terms

Before going further it is imperative that a number of terms and phrases be defined as they are used in this study. The *traditional pathway to the community college presidency* is one that typically begins with a faculty position, then on to program head, division chair, vice president of academic affairs and ultimately president. For the purpose of this study, a *non-traditional pathway* is one that prior to the community college presidency did not include a full time faculty position or a formal community college leadership position. The *community college presidency* is defined as the CEO or

official with overall responsibility for an accredited, public, 2-year community and/or technical college or system, offering the associate degree as its highest degree. The positions titled, *Vice President of Academic Affairs* and *Dean of Instruction* in reference to the *traditional academic pathway* are synonymous and are used interchangeably throughout this dissertation. Likewise, the phrases *non-traditional journey* and *non-traditional pathway* in reference to backgrounds outside of the community college academic realm are used interchangeably.

Delimitations

Clearly, there are many college and university presidents throughout the United States; however, the scope of this study was focused only on current and past community college presidents who assumed the role since 1990 and who had not ascended to the presidency through the traditional academic ranks. Although it would have been a richer study to interview 100 percent of the identified non-traditional population, given the time and geographic constraints of the researcher, it was not realistic. Consequently, this research was specifically interested in exploring the pathway and personal experiences that led six individuals to seek and obtain the community college presidency by way of a non-traditional route, and what experiences they have drawn from in facing the challenges and rewards of leading a community college in today's complex environment.

Limitations and Assumptions

The scope of this qualitative study involved aspects surrounding the experiences along the journey that brought the non-traditional leader to the community college presidency. As in all research, it was beyond the control of the researcher to assess the authenticity or accuracy of the participants' memories, thoughts and reflections.

This study was based on universal assumptions that act as a foundation to all qualitative research. The assumption of the genuineness and integrity of the interviewee responses was based on the humanistic values and principles of each respondent. Likewise, it is the assumption that although the researcher was the instrument for gathering these critical data, and clearly the biases of the researcher could not be totally removed, it was the intent of the researcher to strive to remain as neutral as possible, in gathering and analyzing data, and ultimately reporting the results of the study. There was also an assumption that understanding emerges most meaningfully from an inductive analysis of open-ended, detailed, descriptive, and qualitative data gathered through direct contact with the participants (Patton, 1990). This qualitative research study was based on humanistic values and principles that included: 1) that each person was unique and deserved respect; 2) that people should be understood holistically and in context; and, 3) that equity, fairness, and mutual respect should be part of the foundation of human interactions (Patton, 1990).

A pathway completely removed from the community college environment was considered a non-traditional pathway. Conversely, for the purpose of this study, a former academic administrator from a 4-year college or university now serving as a community college president was considered to have followed a traditional pathway although the career pathway indeed fell outside of the community college environment.

Significance of the Study

Community colleges are vital to the future of this nation. It will be the community college that will keep America working. It will be the community college that will be able to transfer the technology, developed in partnerships between the American corporation and the American university, into operational reality (Roueche, Baker, & Rose, 1989, p. 5).

Today community colleges are operating in an increasingly complex environment; consequently the preparation of the next generation of leaders is critical (Kubala, 1999). Harris (1996), Cohen, Brawer, and Associates (1994), Hammer and Champy (1993), Vaughan (1995, 1989 & 1986) and many others support the idea that development of a new generation of senior leadership for America's community colleges is imperative if these institutions are to successfully operate in this complex environment.

Although much literature is available related to the qualities of leadership and the study of the community college presidency, little data appear to be available regarding career pathways that have followed a non-traditional route to the presidency. This study explored the experiences, accomplishments, and lessons learned from the journey in guiding this unique group of individuals in their role as community college presidents.

As related by McFarlin and Ebbers (1997), "the scarcity of up-to-date research relating to community colleges makes each completed effort more valuable" (p. 68). It is the researcher's expectation that this study will make a contribution to the currently sparse literature regarding this topic and spark interest for further studies in this area.

Researcher's Perspective

I have served as a community college administrator for more than five years and am currently the Vice President of Financial and Administrative Services at a small, rural community college in Virginia. Community college leadership has intrigued me for many years. In fact, my fascination with the varied aspects of the subject brought me to the Colorado State University (CSU) Community College Leadership Program. Through leadership studies during my first year at CSU, I began to recognize a common theme present in the literature. It seemed to indicate that the successful pathway to the

presidency was by way of the academic ranks. I questioned—Why would administrators with a dedication and commitment to the philosophy and mission of the community college, and the traits of strong leadership be excluded from a presidency simply because their career pathway did not follow the academic route? Could they possess strengths and knowledge critical to the success of the presidency?

As my career with the Virginia Community College System began to turn in an administrative, yet non-academic, leadership direction, my interest in non-traditional pathways was further challenged. Without question, I have a bias for the acceptance of qualified, effective leaders for consideration in the role of community college president in spite of their not having academic experience. I personally feel the qualities of strong leadership could outweigh a traditional academic background. In fact, I feel in some cases that following the academic pathways could cause an individual to fail to recognize and appreciate the broad focus necessary for success as a president and that experience is limited if the individual has only followed an academic pathway throughout his or her entire career. Yet, in informal conversations and debates with colleagues and as my role as an administrator afforded me the opportunity to serve on community college presidential and academic vice presidential search committees, I came to realize that indeed an overwhelming majority of individuals involved in community college leadership felt that the only successful way to the presidency was by way of the academic ranks.

However, on occasion stories of mavericks from the non-traditional route who had been successful in obtaining a community college presidency fascinated me. Again I questioned—Why were these individuals successful? What experiences or characteristics

or outstanding qualities allowed them to break into this restricted area? Do their views of effective leadership differ from those following the academic pathway? Consequently, my education, my career, and my overwhelming desire to know more about this intriguing subject brought me to this point. It should be noted, that although I have bias related to the acceptance of presidents who might have followed a non-traditional pathway, I have no experiences with presidents who have followed non-traditional pathways from outside of higher education, as defined in this study. Certainly this study did not provide answers to all of my questions; however, my passion for the topic and my desire to broaden my perspective of the journey of the president who followed a non-traditional pathway has brought me to this point in my educational pursuits.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A crisis is developing at the leadership level of the American community college movement. We need a crystallized definition of the characteristics and skills that the next crop of leaders must possess (Elsner, 1984, p. 39).

Introduction

The purpose of this review of relevant literature is to explore the research related to various leadership perspectives, with particular emphasis on community college presidential leadership; the current and future career pathways to the community college presidency; the daily tasks of today's community college president and the role of the community college president in the 21st century. In addition, educational training suggested for success in preparing for a community college presidency has also been examined.

Leadership

"...I define leadership as leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations—the wants and needs, the aspirations and expectations—of both leaders and followers" (Burns, 1978, p. 19). Bennis (1973) related, "Leadership is the capacity to infuse new values and goals into the organization, to provide perspective on events and environments which, if unnoticed can impose constraints on the institution" (p. 84). But perhaps Vaughan (1986) said it best, "Defining leadership in any context, however, is somewhat like trying to lasso an eel, once you feel you have it in tow, it slips away. Yet to ignore leadership is to ignore much of what the community college presidency should be about" (p. 179).

Schein (1980) says that leadership is “best thought of as a function within the organization rather than the trait of an individual” (p. 251). He relates further that leaders must understand three important points about organizations in order to grow as leaders. First, people have a natural desire to share experiences with each other in the form of formal and information organizations. Second, organizations are incredibly complex, and no matter how effective the leader is he cannot on his own fully understand every aspect of the organization and how it relates to its environment. A leader must have the capacity to engage others for leadership to function within that organization. Third, visionary leadership in organizations begins with the leader promoting the engagement of two significant components, creating an envisioned future and fostering a sense of shared values.

Cornerstones of Exemplary Leadership

Four cornerstones have been identified by many researchers as contributing to exemplary leadership in today’s community college environment: shared governance, shared vision, shared values, and shared decision-making (Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Roueche, Baker & Rose, 1989; Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Each in its own right is important; however, as cornerstones, each must also be supported by the other.

In a simplistic, yet insightful model, Kouzes and Posner (1995) developed a list of five primary practices that guide an individual toward exemplary leadership. The following simple statements expand the ideas and concepts of shared governance.

Leaders challenge the process.

They search for opportunities to change the status quo. They look for innovative ways to improve the organization. They experiment and take risks. And since risk taking involves mistakes and failure, leaders accept

the inevitable disappointments as learning opportunities (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 318).

Leaders inspire a shared vision.

They passionately believe that they can make a difference. They envision the future, creating an ideal and unique image of what the community, agency, or organization can become. Through their strong appeal and quiet persuasion, leaders enlist others in the dream. They breathe life into the shared vision and get people to see the exciting future possibilities (p. 318).

Leaders enable others to act.

They foster collaboration and build spirited teams. They actively involve others. Leaders understand that mutual respect is what sustains extraordinary efforts; they strive to create an atmosphere of trust and human dignity. They strengthen others by sharing information and providing choice. They give their own power away, making each person feel capable and powerful (p. 318).

Leaders model the way.

They create standards of excellence and then set an example for others to follow. They establish values about how constituents, colleagues, and customers should be treated. Because complex change can overwhelm and stifle action, leaders achieve small wins. They unravel bureaucracy, put up signposts, and create opportunities for victory (p. 318).

Leaders encourage the heart.

Getting extraordinary things done in organizations is hard work. To keep hope and determination alive, leaders recognize contributions that individuals make in the climb to the top. And because every winning team needs to share in the rewards of team efforts, leaders celebrate accomplishments. They make everyone feel like a hero (p. 318).

Certainly a community college president has many responsibilities and obligations. In designing a model structure, particular actions by the president are critical. First, as related by Baker (1992) and Vaughan (1989), a leader must appreciate the culture of the college. Culture consists of those attributes that make an institution

distinct: its history, its traditions, its values, and its interaction with the large environment, its ceremonies, how it renews itself, including recruiting and selecting personnel, and how it evaluates itself. Culture is generally described as the collective mutually shaping pattern of norms, values, practices, beliefs and assumptions that guide behavior of individuals and groups (Kuh & Whitt, 1998, p. 3). When viewing the culture of an institution, it is often described as a “kind of organizational glue” (Kuh & Whitt, 1998, cited in Johnson, 1998, p. 37).

Conversely, as defined by Baker, “Informal day-to-day behavior, with its underlying attitudes and values, makes up that aspect of organizational life that is referred to as the climate of the organization” (p. 17). A president must also create a campus climate that preserves institutional integrity while maintaining a reasonable balance among institutional, community, and individual concerns and needs. Obviously this cannot be accomplished alone; however, it is the president’s obligation to model the standards of expected excellence.

Shared governance is on the opposite end of the spectrum from the top-down autocratic and sometimes militaristic leadership style frequently in place during the early years of the community college. It is a decision making process that contributes to the best interests of the students and institution because those affected by the decisions participate in an environment of cooperation and trust (Alfred, 1994). Shared governance provides empowerment of participants, the development of collegial relationships, and shared ownership of policies that often stimulate a strong motivational force (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Administrators successfully work in harmony with faculty and staff to allow creative alternatives for discussion prior to decision-making. The scope of

responsibility and authority must be clearly defined with the introduction of the task.

Even when shared governance and empowerment are present, it is imperative to identify specific areas of responsibility and authority before decisions are made and actions taken.

The concept of shared governance exhibits a caring, nurturing, empowering environment that encourages participation and creativity and recognizes the integrity of the individual as part of the entire college.

During the last several decades, the general idea of a form of shared leadership which is participative in nature has been primarily discussed in the general literature on organizational leadership, focusing on the corporate context (Wheatley, 1992; Kanter, 1983; Senge, 1990; Helgesen, 1995; Yukl, 2001). Yukl (2001) stated, “participative leadership involves efforts by a leader to encourage and facilitate participation by others in making important decisions” (p. 81).

Helegesen (1995) provides a unique description of the shared governance relationship in an organization. Imagine a spider’s web.

The structure is roughly circular in shape, with the leader at the central point, and lines radiating outward to various points. The points form loose concentric circles, which are bound together by an irregular interweaving of axial and radial lines that crisscross the structure in a kind of filigree. The interweaving make the structure inextricably integrated and connected—thus, patterns of relationships. The leader strives continually to bring everyone at every point closer to the center—to tighten ties, provide increased exposure, and encourage greater participation (p. 20).

Just as a spider’s web, the structures are continually being built up, stretched, altered, modified, and transformed within the community college.

Shared governance cannot be effectively implemented until the college culture has developed shared values and a common vision. As related by Kouzes and Posner (1995) the behavior inspiring shared vision involves not only the leader’s envisioning and

communicating a positive future but involving others in creating a common vision. Once the vision is determined, the leader is charged with articulating the general vision of where the group wants the institution to be and to try to give all employees a sense that they can be part of the vision and help to get the institution to that point. Yet it is through appealing to others' values, aspirations, and dreams that an astute leader inspires and enlists others in a common vision (Roueche, Baker & Rose, 1989; Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Indeed, visionary leadership is one of the most important aspects of presidential leadership (Fisher & Koch, 1996).

In order to ensure successful shared decision-making, the leader must trust the judgment of employees, generally not second-guess their contribution, and continuously provide positive feedback (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). If the president has been successful in articulating the strategic direction, establishing the parameters for decision-making, and the individuals have consensus regarding the vision and where they want to go as a college, shared decision-making likely occurs with few instances of conflict.

Presidents must model ethical decision-making. As related by James Perkins, President of Blue Ridge Community College, "not every decision by committee will be the same decision the president would have made, but if the president is dedicated to the concept of shared governance, and ultimately the decision will not affect the health of the organization, the president should honor the decision of the group" (Perkins, 2000, personal interview). On the other hand, the president does have the ultimate responsibility to keep a healthy organization, keep it moving forward and ensure that decisions are in line with the mission and vision of the college. Perkins further related that if a conflict does occur, critical to preserving the integrity of shared decision-making,

it is the president's responsibility to meet with the group and explain why he or she feels the decision would jeopardize the health of the organization and explain why it is that the recommendation of the group cannot be accepted. Again, everyone having a clear image of the shared vision and values, clearly defining the parameters of the task, and maintaining a culture of trust and respect, will aid in the ultimate success of shared decision-making.

For the health of the organization there is constantly a need for diverse opinions and the need to share power. Individuals must feel their opinions are valued and genuinely wanted to be heard. By giving people the opportunity to be involved, by giving them the feeling that they are in charge, the president strengthens the entire institution and also his or her role.

Visionary Leadership

Many leadership researchers have noted the importance of creating a vision for the organization and gathering people with a sense of shared values in order to achieve the vision (Senge, 1990; Goodstein, Nolan, & Pfeiffer, 1993; Kouzes & Posner, 1995; Bennis & Nanus, 1997). The two components necessary for visionary leadership are shared values and envisioned future. Nanus (1992) says vision is the "indispensable tool without which leadership is doomed to failure" (p.10). A leader's sense of or ability to assist in providing a vision aids in creating a sense of direction and purpose for other members of an organization (Sashkin, 1986; Bennis, 1989; Senge, 1990; Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Conger and Kanungo (1990) define a vision as "some idealized goal that the leader wants the organization to achieve in the future" (p. 85). Bennis and Nanus (1997) define vision as a "mental image of a possible and desirable future state of the organization" (p. 82).

Bennis and Nanus (1997) add that when a leader focuses on a vision he or she then “operates on the emotional and spiritual resources of the organization, on its values, commitment and aspirations” (p. 85). Creating a vision that releases the emotional power described by Bennis and Nanus requires the capacity to reason. Having a vision without the capacity to think critically on how to pursue the vision is nothing more than a dream (Crume, 2000).

According to Keller (1995) vision requires the process of combining an institution’s “tradition, culture, and core values with the emerging conditions in society and with the public’s expectations about higher education’s role and behavior in the new environment” (p. 14). Complementing the ability to develop an envisioned future is a leader’s understanding of and ability to foster a sense of shared values (Sashkin, 1986). Green (1992) expressed the importance of both when she wrote:

A president’s vision is only as effective as the number of constituents who embrace it. Presidential vision is produced by an unusual alchemy of the hopes, aspirations, strengths, and fears of many different people (p. A48).

Kouzes and Posner’s (1995) research shows “when there’s congruence between individual values and organizational values, there’s significant payoff for leaders and their organization” (p. 213). Kouzes and Posner (1993) describe the importance of shared values:

Shared values are the foundation for building productive and genuine working relationships. While credible leaders honor the diversity of their many constituencies, they also stress their common values. Leaders build upon agreement. His efforts are not to get everyone to be in accord on everything—this goal is unrealistic, perhaps even impossible. But in order to take a first step, and then a second, and then a third, people must agree on something. There has to be some common core of understanding. If disagreements over fundamental values continue, the result is intense conflict, false expectations, and diminished capacity (p. 121).

Spiritual Leadership

Much has been written recently on the subject of spirituality in leadership. Autry (2001) said, "It has the potential to bring about enormous changes in the workplace, in the lives of employees generally, and in your own life specifically" (p. 7). Kyle (1998) wrote, "Spiritual leadership is the capacity to generate for followers the conditions in which they together (both leader and followers) experience a feeling of connection, rapport and mutual identification with some transcendent purpose" (p. 129).

"A sense of spirituality provides a leader with an internal source of strength to remain true to the leader's personality and values," and ultimately the various organizations which the leader serves (Crume, 2000, p. 85). Pintus (1998) reported that the three most essential elements of spirituality in leadership for college presidents were having a personal mission in life, recognizing that life has meaning and purpose, and serving others. Visionary leaders build upon this because they realize that "who I am does not depend on what I do" (Palmer, 1990, p. 15). Shared values have a relationship with spirituality for a visionary leader, and the visionary leader builds on shared values to assist others with spiritual growth (Kyle, 1998).

Sanders (1994) listed sixteen specific attributes of spiritual leadership:

- Discipline
- Vision (foresight and insight)
- Wisdom (combining knowledge, intelligence and discernment)
- Humility
- Decision (capacity to make a "swift and clear" decision)
- Courage

- Integrity and Sincerity
- Humor
- Anger (intense focus and action oriented at injustices without carrying over into abuse)
- Patience
- Friendship (capacity to foster meaningful relationships)
- Tact and Diplomacy
- Inspirational Power (power to inspire others to service and sacrifice)
- Executive Ability (capacity to organize)
- Therapy of Listening (capacity to listen often and long, and talk short and seldom)
- Art of Letter Writing (desire for intimate communication)

Interestingly, these sixteen attributes parallel closely many of the attributes listed in recent community college presidential vacancy announcements. For example, several of these traits are included in the vacancy announcements for the specific community college presidencies filled by the non-traditional participants in this study.

Servant Leadership

Autry (2001) stated the characteristics most important in a leader should include “fairness, honesty, trust, sensitivity, respect, integrity, openness, and authenticity” (p. 45). He related that certain behaviors flow naturally from these characteristics. Similarly, Greenleaf (1996) stated “the essential abilities required to lead—values, goals, competence, and spirit—expressed in two sets of requirements: the ability to set and articulate goals and reach them through the efforts of other people and the ability to satisfy the people whose judgment must be respected even under stress” (p. 295).

Autry (2001) contends that “true leadership, unlike management, is not just a set of skills and learned behaviors. What you do as a leader will depend on who you are. And regardless of your own perceptions of yourself, those around you in the workplace—colleagues and employees—can determine who you are only by observing what you do” (p. 1). In other words, the only way you can manifest your character, your true person, and your spirit in the workplace, is through your behavior.

There are six concepts Autry (2001) believes about leadership:

1. Leadership is not about controlling people; it’s about caring for people and being a useful resource for people.
2. Leadership is not about being boss; it’s about being present for people and building a community at work.
3. Leadership is not about holding on to territory; it’s about letting go of ego, bringing your spirit to work, being your best and most authentic self.
4. Leadership is less concerned with pep talks and more concerned with creating a place in which people can do good work, can find meaning in their work, and can bring their spirits to work.
5. Leadership, like life, is largely a matter of paying attention.
6. Leadership requires love (pp. 20-21)

Autry (2001) straightforwardly relates the key to successful leadership is to be authentic, be vulnerable, be accepting, be present, and be useful. Simply stated, to be *authentic* means,

Be who you are. Be the same person in every circumstance. Hold to the same values in whatever role you have. Always be your real self. Authenticity means much more than being technically truthful. Being authentic is, first, knowing yourself, and then being yourself (p. 10).

To be *vulnerable* means “being honest with your feelings in the context of your work; being open with your doubts and fears and concerns about an idea, an employee’s performance, or your own performance, and being able to admit mistakes openly, particularly with your employees. Simply saying, ‘I was wrong,’ and meaning it, embracing it, is an expression of vulnerability and, I believe, is a sign of being spiritually attuned and aware. Our power comes from realizing that we can’t be in control and the we must depend on others....The paradox in being vulnerable is that it also requires you to be courageous” (p. 15).

To be *accepting* “does not imply that you accept everyone’s ideas without critical analysis, discussion, and judgment-only that you accept the ideas as valid for discussion and review, and that you focus on the ideas themselves, not on the person who presented them. Acceptance is more important than approval” (p. 17).

To be *present* is “not just being here or there, but having your whole self available at all times—available to yourself as you try to bring all your values to bear on the work at hand, and available to others as you respond to the problems and issues and challenges of team members, colleagues, managers, employees, vendors, and customers” (p. 18).

To be *useful* “is the fundamental concept of being of service to others. Another way to think of this is as a resource for your people. One of the primary functions of the manager/leader is to assure that people get the resources they need to do the job. To be a leader who serves, you must think of yourself as—and indeed must be—their principal resource. The most important thing you can be as a leader is useful” (p. 20).

A primary function of the servant leader is to assume that an organization’s people are instilled with a clear understanding of vision. Beyond that, the leader must help people relate that vision to their own vision in a way that directly aligns their work with the goals they want to accomplish and the goals of the organization.

In an essay, Greenleaf (1970) said,

The servant-leader is servant first.... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead.... The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant—first to make sure that other people’s highest-priority needs are being served. The best test and the most difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to

become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit or, at least, not be further deprived (p. 7)?

Greenleaf related, “authentic leaders are chosen by followers, that the ability to lead with integrity depends on the leader’s skills for withdrawal and action, listening and persuasion, practical goal setting and intuitive prescience” (p. 2).

Leaders must also trust the people and, in turn, must be trustworthy. Autry (2001) relates that creating a trusting environment means a workplace in which people are part of the decisions about the goals to be accomplished, then are trusted to do their work without constant supervision, in which rewards and recognition are based on results and not on favoritism, in which rules and policies are as few as possible and as flexible as possible in accommodating individual human needs.

One of the basic foundations of servant leadership is trust. Often managers try to operate without trust between managers and employees as a basic value. “Understand the need to be among the people, providing resources and serving, while at the same time never losing sight of the fact that he or she is responsible for the well being of those people and is accountable for their performance as well as for the results they achieve” (Autry, 2001, p. 43).

True power comes from the people. It comes from gaining the trust and support of the people who then give you the power. “Power is like love. The more you try to give it to others, the more it just seems to flow to you naturally” (p. 21).

This review of literature related to various perceptions of successfully leadership is broad. However, simple basic concepts such as vision, trust, respect, and integrity surface in one form or another in most all leadership literature. Real leadership begins on the inside with a commitment to inspire the best in others (Autry, 2001).

The Pathway to the Community College Presidency

Introduction

Pathways to the community college presidency are defined in a variety of ways in the literature related to the community college presidency. The traditional pathway is typically described as evolving from the academic or instructional area within a community college. Whereas, the non-traditional pathway in various studies include non-academic pathways within the community college, as well as positions that fall outside of education such as business and government (Weisman & Vaughan, 2002; McFarlin & Ebbers, 1997). This section will first examine the traditional academic pathway and then explore the many different ways that the non-traditional pathway is addressed in the current literature.

Traditional Pathways

Cohen and March (1974) suggested that the normative presidential career path began with a faculty position. However, while it still may be a commonly shared belief that college and university presidents come almost entirely from the faculty ranks, the origin of two-year college presidents is less cut and dried. Presidents of two-year colleges a quarter of a century ago were most likely to move directly to presidencies from dean of instruction positions, which are centrally involved with the academic mission of community colleges. The history of the two-year college movement is punctuated by a tremendous growth spurt in the 1960s and 1970s, which brought about an increased demand for administrators to staff the new and growing colleges. Moreover, according to many recent studies in the last decade of the 20th century and into the 21st century the trend continues with chief academic officers filling the majority of community college

presidential vacancies. In 1998, over 96 percent of current community college presidents had held a position within higher education immediately prior to becoming president (Ross & Green, 2000, p. 33).

During a personal interview with former community college president and noted community college researcher, Vaughan (1999) related that historically the instructional deanship has been the most important single stepping stone to the community college presidency, and the most successful pathway for aspiring future community college presidents is to get in the “academic pipeline.”

In 1986 Vaughan predicted,

“By knowing who occupies the dean of instruction’s position, community college leaders can look into the future and get some indication of who will be leading the nation’s community colleges in the year 2000 and beyond, assuming the past is a prologue to future presidential hiring practice” (p.111).

Kubala’s (1999) study of 52 community college presidents from 30 states, appointed between May 1995 and February 1997, revealed that 72.2% of the participating presidents in his survey had come through the academic pipeline, again supporting the earlier research of Vaughan.

The prediction was substantiated once again in Weisman and Vaughan’s (2002) study. “Since 1984, the most common pathway to the presidency has been through academic administrative positions. Consistent with this trend, the 2001 Career and Lifestyle Study (CLS) showed that about 55 percent of the presidents had served in academic administration prior to their first presidency” (p. 6). “About one-third of the presidents (almost 34 percent) said they had been an internal candidate for their first

presidential position and more than one-quarter (about 27 percent) stated that they had moved into their current position from another presidency” (p. 8).

Most often academic deans have risen through the ranks from teacher to administrator (Kanter, 1994). The dean of instruction’s role is to deal daily with college-wide issues; pass professional judgment on all teaching faculty; report to and advise the college president; be responsible for the college’s programs of study and schedule of classes; help with long-range planning; work with the college’s public relations program; plan, monitor, and spend a budget; deal with external agencies; and in general have their finger on the pulse of the entire college in a way that is equaled only by the college president (Vaughan, 1986). In short, according to Kanter (1994), a dean of instruction’s duty is to “manage the aspects of the curriculum as a whole so the institution can maximize its resources” (p. 230).

Kanter (1994) said, “Instructional administrators must work collegially with the academic senate, the classified staff, students, and the collective bargaining agents in an environment where the stakeholders of the institution clearly understand the scope of responsibility and authority of each of the constituent group” (p. 230). However, deans of instruction at community colleges do not typically work closely with political leaders, a skill that is required of the successful president. Neither, as related by Vaughan (1986) is the dean of instruction expected to have any great depth of knowledge about resource development and fund-raising, other activities in which presidents are deeply involved.

As expressed by Vaughan (1986), educational leadership should not be equated with academic leadership. Vaughan states it is a mistake for presidents to abandon

educational leadership for academic leadership. He contends that the function of the institution's academic leadership rightly belongs to the academic dean, not the president.

Yet, according to Vaughan (1989), the cliché old habits die-hard is never truer than when speaking of a dean who assumes the presidency. The academic dean may well enjoy working on curriculum and instruction more than anything in the world. If this is the case, Vaughan reflected, he or she should remain an academic dean, for the effective president cannot spend a great deal of time working directly with curriculum and instruction. The same is true to even a greater degree of the financial and student services deans. Once someone from these positions assumes the presidency, he or she must shed the preoccupation with the relatively narrow focus of the former position or will find it impossible to develop the broad perspective necessary in the community college presidency.

Vaughan (2000) believes that the following six steps are important in obtaining a community college presidency:

- Earn a doctorate
- Secure a position in a community college
- Get in the academic pipeline
- View the college from a broad perspective, not just from the current position
- Find a good mentor
- Establish a peer network

For the most part, community college leaders come from positions within the community college and frequently have selected doctoral programs that support their ambition to become a community college president. Rocklin (1999) revealed that

community college presidents continue to be drawn from the traditional line of succession—instruction and academic services—yet, increasingly they are appearing from other positions within community colleges such as continuing education, student services, and fund raising. Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) suggest that “when a president is hired today, even from the most traditional stepping stone position, he or she will probably have a different background from a president who was newly hired in 1985” (p. 13).

Non-traditional Pathways

Vaughan (1986) related,

Although entering the community college academic pipeline clearly increases one’s chances of becoming a community college president, that route is not the only one leading to the office. Nor should it be. By closing the door to more and more outsiders such as four-year college deans, public school superintendents, and internal candidates such as deans of community services, deans of student services, and financial deans, the community college may lose much diversity among its leaders, a diversity that is desirable in any healthy organization (p. 117).

Weisman and Vaughan (2002) indicated that the most common nonacademic community college positions held prior to the first presidency were chief student services officers, campus CEO’s, and chief business officers. According to Kubala (1999) in addition to the academic affairs area, the student development area was also a frequently cited route to the presidency with 11.1% of participants coming from this type of background. In what was called the “other” category, 16.7% of respondents followed a variety of routes, including serving on the board of trustees for the college. Continuing education, administrative services, institutional development, planning, and marketing were positions previously held by those in the *other group* (Kubala, 1999).

In 1998 only 3.5 percent of community college presidents had been selected from among K-12 public-school superintendents, private business, federal, state, and local government and the non-profit sector (Ross & Green, 2000, p. 33). With the rapid institutional growth and rising rate of administrative turnover that characterize the current community college environment (Shults, 2001), the career pathway of occupational or vocational educators and business and industry liaisons requires closer examination. “Administrators in these two areas of organizational growth and increasing status often assume senior leadership roles in the future and move into the presidential pipeline” (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002, p. 6)

Rocklin (1999) stated that the most successful administrators, regardless of position—president, vice-president, or campus dean—possess a global view of the institution. She stated that during her research, one successful administrator maintained that the two individuals within an institution who have the most global view are the president and the director of building and grounds.

Vaughan (1989) related, “it is very difficult to obtain a community college presidency from a position outside of the community college field” (p. 126). At that time approximately 90 percent of the community college presidents had come from within the community college ranks, and Vaughan predicted this might be even higher in the future. Vaughan and Weisman’s (2002) most recent study continues to support this prediction.

Shirley Pippins, President of Thomas Nelson Community College, expressed that becoming a president is often difficult for people, particularly women, who come up through a nontraditional route, as she did, having begun her career in early childhood

education. "People tend to replicate themselves," she observed. "They look for candidates with similar experiences" (Brown, Van Ummersen, & Phair, 2001, p. 19).

For this study the non-traditional pathway was strictly defined to exclude non-academic community college leadership experience. In the review of literature, no specific non-traditional journey to the community college presidency, as defined by the researcher had been studied. The small amount of literature that was found had come from major studies with different focuses that just briefly mentioned the non-traditional pathway, and typically included non-academic community college experience as non-traditional. Consequently, the literature continues to strongly support the theory that the academic pipeline is the most successful route to the community college presidency.

How Community College Presidents Spend Their Time

"I have concluded that community college presidents spend too much time and energy dealing with day-to-day affairs and too little time standing back and examining the enterprise they are leading and their roles as leaders" (Vaughan, 1986, p. 32).

Although it is difficult to clearly define the numerous daily tasks of a community college president, research indicates that planning, fund raising, dealing with personnel issues, and budgeting were the responsibilities on which presidents spend the most time (Ross & Green, 2000). "Beyond question, raising money in various forms does consume presidential time and energy, to the detriment of other pursuits" (Lovett, 2002, p. 1).

Weisman and Vaughan's (2002) Career and Lifestyle Study (CLS) revealed that about 56 percent of a community college president's time is devoted to internal activities such as administrative tasks, college meetings, and informal meetings and interactions. About 31 percent of presidents' time focused on external relations, such as community,

legislative, and fundraising activities, and about 13 percent of their time was spent on professional development and other activities.

One of the most important characteristics of the presidency revealed through the Weisman and Vaughan (2002) CLS is the strong emphasis on external relations. “In addition to leading their institutions internally, community college presidents are called upon to be leaders in their communities, including working with leaders of business and industry, leaders in other sectors of education, and representatives from various government agencies” (p. 14). In the Weisman and Vaughan (2002) study, 69 percent of the presidents said they met with top business and industry leaders between one and five times per week. Similarly, “nearly all respondents to CLS 2001 (92 percent) said they had visited legislators during their state’s last legislative session for the purpose of promoting the interests of their community college” (p. 13). More than half (about 52 percent) of the presidents said they spoke with the state representative for their community college’s district more than 10 times per year, and about 48 percent reported having conversations with the state senator representing their college’s district more than 10 times per year. In addition, more than 53 percent of the presidents said they spoke with the governor’s office 2 to 10 times per year (Weisman & Vaughan, 2002).

Mintzberg (1968) conducted a study observing CEOs at work in an effort to define and clarify the roles and responsibilities of these leaders. Hammons and Ivery (1998) conducted a similar study using Mintzberg’s three major identified roles: 1) interpersonal roles; 2) informational roles; and, 3) decisional roles, to define or clarify the roles and responsibilities of community college presidents.

Their study revealed that within the interpersonal role, presidents were identified as playing three distinct roles: figurehead, leader, and liaison. In the category of informational tasks the presidents served three distinct jobs: monitor, disseminator, and spokesman. Lastly, the decisional functions were separated into four positions: entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, and negotiator.

Research indicated what the role and tasks of the community college president has been to this point in time; however, it appears with the ever-changing nature of education in America, and particularly in the community college system, the role of the community college president is expected to change significantly in the 21st century.

The Role of the Community College Presidents in the 21st Century

Stoke (1959) wrote, “the most important qualification a college president can bring to his job is a philosophy of education...I mean nothing more than that he shall have thought about why the institution he presides over exists at all, for who it is trying to provide education, and what kind of education it is trying to provide.... A college president without a philosophy of education is a pilot without navigation charts” (p. 161).

Dodds (1962) observed, “obviously, to succeed, a president must be fired by a deep concern for education,” and a president’s first responsibility is for the institution’s educational growth and scholarly vigor (p. 8). Emphasis is being placed upon re-examining the core functions of the institution within an environment that has grown more complex socially, demographically, politically and technologically. Community college leadership must consider key factors that include the decrease in fiscal allocation to higher education, changing demographics of the community college population, the impact of technology and political positioning (Shults, 2001).

Vineyard (1993) described the responsibility and accountability of the president according to the expectation of the position. The president is at once a manager, spokesperson for the college, leader of the administrative team, and judge-arbitrator. The president is generally held responsible for all that transpires within the organization. "The role of presidents, in particular, continued to be depicted as critical to the health of an institution" (Schuster, Corak, & Yamada, 1994, p. 19).

Community college leaders today must possess a clear understanding of the role of technology in learning, teaching, administration, and management, as well as being technologically literate themselves. They are expected to understand the fundamentals and nuances of work-force training and economic development, welfare-to-work programs, enrollment management, student assessment, and performance-based funding (Rocklin, 1999). Further, they must be politically savvy, able to develop alternative sources of money and be fiscally responsible and prudent. Perhaps most important of all, as related by Rocklin (1999), they must be seen as the institution's academic leader and have the respect of the faculty. As observed by Kubala (1999), it appears that "like the colleges they lead, they are asked to be all things to all people" (p. 16).

Many studies have been conducted (Stogdill, 1974; Hammon & Keller, 1990; Twombly, 1985; Moore, Twombly & Martorama, 1985) in an effort to identify the ideal list of competencies and personal characteristics needed by the community college president of the future. Likewise, numerous studies have been conducted in an effort to reveal the true role of the community college president.

Hammon and Keller (1990) predicted the profile of the community college president of the future as:

One of a strong leader with good skills in group dynamics who also possesses a number of personal skills. ...tomorrow's CEOs will need to be visionaries with a knowledge of, and commitment to, the community college mission. They will be very competent as leaders, as planners, and be expected to be writers. They will need to be adroit at communicating their vision and motivating others and will be distinguished by a number of very observable personal skills. In particular, tomorrow's successful CEOs will need to possess the following: high integrity and sense of responsibility; persistence to follow through on those things to which they are personally committed; and, at the same time, they will need to have the good judgment to know when to be flexible. And finally, tomorrow's community college leaders will be individuals with high energy levels, who are able to maintain physical and psychological well-being and who can maintain a positive attitude (pp. 39-40).

The April 1978 edition of the *Community and Junior College Journal* carried a series of articles about the various roles played by community college presidents. These articles, which were written by practitioners (i.e., presidents and chancellors), examined the roles of politician, manager, money manager, marketer, mentor, and manipulator (Bickford, 1978; Greenfield, 1978; McClenney, 1978; Sims, 1978). Certainly, times have changed over the past two decades, yet many of these roles remain the cornerstones for defining the demands of the community college president of the 21st century. Sims (1978) foresaw the need for the president to "become more of a money person in order to preserve the core values of the open door and access to the community college while maintaining the margin of excellence necessary to serve the diverse needs of the community college" (p. 20-24.)

Stoke (1959) described the nature of presidential synergy when he wrote:

In the mastery of college administration, one of the most difficult and most important tasks for the president is to assess his own position in the web of organization and power of which he himself is a part. He needs something of the capacity, which the accomplished actor has of seeing himself while at the same time taking an important part in the play. He has to find out what he can and cannot do. The picture in the minds of the public, and even of many faculty members, of a college president as a man

who can give commands, which shape all the things for which he is held responsible, is quite unreal. A college is always a going concern. It is full of habits and practices to which it is accustomed and a new president cannot suddenly change them; in fact, he will not even know what they are. The institution is staffed by personalities of varying strength who are in positions of varying influence. A touchy faculty member, a thorny dean, a secretive business manager, can put detours in the otherwise straight path the president would prefer to follow. In addition, there are the factors of his own character, experience, convictions, shortcomings and aspirations. The impact of these upon a going concern creates resultant forces, which are entirely unpredictable. No legal description of his authority will tell him what he can do vigorously and "safely," what he can propose with confidence, what he will have to fight for in order to do at all, and what he had better not try (p. 36).

Today, presidents are watched closely; their comments are interpreted and reinterpreted, their body language scrutinized, and their mood is rated as a measure of the state of the college (Green, 1992). The need for private time and space is great, but those are scarce commodities.

As reflected by the research of Green (1992), an important aspect of leadership that receives too little attention is the importance of strong leaders throughout an institution. Presidents must develop strong leaders not only among senior administrators but also among department chairs, committee heads, faculty and staff members, and students. These people are the engine of change; without healthy, positive, and responsible leadership from the ranks, presidents are paralyzed. Among other things, presidents must understand that they critically need faculty support in particular. As expressed by Fisher (1984) only faculty can transform the president's vision into reality. Chieffo (1992) contends that leadership is vital to the health and success of a community college, and the middle- and upper-level administrator is best suited to display this leadership.

The literature reveals that a deep concern for education and a desire to make a difference; being an educational leader; being a community leader; being a fund raising; and, being a good communicator are key roles of the community college president in the 21st century. But many question from what sources will these presidents be obtained and how will they be prepared to assume the role? The following section explores the plans and possibilities for preparing the next generation of community college presidential leaders.

Education and Leadership Training Initiatives

“In the next 10 years, community colleges will need to replace 800 of the current 1150 presidents. Yet the preparation of presidents and other community college leaders has declined, and the number of people prepared to step into leadership roles at higher levels, including the presidency has dramatically diminished. The number of advanced degrees conferred in community college administration decreased 78 percent between 1983 and 1997” (Leadership Task Force of the American Association of Community Colleges, 2002, p.1).

Creating Leadership Programs

Programs that trained community college leaders for years have recently been drying up, along with their financial support. Even if foundations and other sources of funding help revive community college leadership training opportunities, one issue remains—just as with the administrative leadership crisis due to aging leaders, many faculty members administering the community college leadership programs say they too are on the verge of retiring (Evelyn, 2001).

Consequently, many institutions are establishing leadership models to help guide the development of programs to advance institutions and individuals. “There are two basic approaches to leadership in higher education in the United States: authoritative and collaborative” (Brown, VanUmmersen, & Phair, 2001, p. 19). With the collaborative model, a president will organize leadership work in terms of people—individuals and groups. Astin and Astin (2000) take this concept a step further, noting the emergence of transformational leadership—change-oriented leadership with those with whom the president interacts in order to effect change. This approach includes leadership programs, collaboration, authenticity, respectful disagreement, and empathy with the role of the president, both symbolic and functional.

Community colleges will need to focus on finding and developing qualified leaders to replace those retiring. The new American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) mission statement, therefore, includes leadership development as a strategic action area and goal, asserting “diverse, qualified leaders are available at all levels of our nation’s community colleges. They understand the community college mission, values, and vision and have the ability to implement them” (American Association of Community College Leadership Programs, 2002, p. 1).

“In March 2001, AACC CEO George Boggs convened a Leadership Summit for community college leaders to come together to discuss the leadership crisis. Participants included college presidents, AACC board members, members of leadership programs, and representatives of university doctoral programs” (p. 1). They addressed issues including: 1) the leadership pipeline; 2) diversity; 3) leader skills and knowledge base; 4) leadership programs; 5) program delivery methods; and, 6) partnerships.

The resulting action plan was for AACC members to recruit, prepare, and support substantial numbers of diverse leaders through a variety of effective program paths, focusing on middle- to upper-level administrators, especially CEOs (p. 2).

The task force identified the following strategies for recruitment:

- **Create a Web-based registry similar to America's Learning Exchange.**
- **Design and implement a leadership-program database and present it on the AACC Web site.**
- **Recruit new faculty and potential new middle- and upper-level administrators by developing an awareness campaign for university discipline-based departments.**

All of these recruitment strategies will emphasize the importance of creating a diverse pool of candidates for middle- to upper-level positions in community colleges, especially the presidency (p. 2).

The task force also addressed the issue of preparation for middle to upper level leaders, especially CEOs, and identified the following strategies as the most immediate activities. These include:

- **Develop a resource of available and effective program paths through a leadership-development program Web page.**
- **Create an AACC-sponsored certificate process for middle-to upper-level managers and presidents.**
- **Identify local, state, and regional college leadership programs and share the models on the AACC Leadership Database.**

- Create a list of characteristics needed by community college presidents and identify essential program content for effective leadership programs.
- Create partnerships with a variety of groups to implement effective programs.

Lastly, the task force addressed specific outcomes related to ongoing support for community college presidents and middle- to upper-level managers, and identified a variety of strategies to assist in achieving these outcomes for support:

- Create programs that support current CEOs and assist them in staying current with trends.
- Create a partnership between the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) and the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) to work with presidents who are in trouble.
- Work with the AACC Affiliated Councils to replicate their strong mentoring programs and to gather and disseminate information on the mentoring process.

Governing boards should be sensitive to the need to bring a number of perspectives to the community college presidency and should work with the faculty to view positions other than the dean of instruction as legitimate training ground for other positions (AACC Leadership Programs, 2002). In addition, AACC and ACCT plan to collaborate in providing training for trustees and search committees regarding the selection process and presidential support.

Essential Community College Leadership Characteristics

In addition to the AACC Leadership Task Force's focus on leadership development programs, they also developed an outline of essential leadership characteristics. They were divided into the following five areas: 1) understanding and implementing the community college mission; 2) effective advocacy; 3) administrative skills; 4) community and economic development; and, 5) personal, interpersonal and transformational skills (AACC Leadership Programs, 2002).

Understanding and Implementing the Community College Mission

Understanding the community college mission, with its sense of serving the community through serving the common good, is crucial for successful community college presidents. Some specific areas of focus in professional development programs should be:

- Understanding and implementing the role of the college within its community
- Developing a strong orientation toward community colleges
- Creating a student-centered environment
- Valuing and promoting diversity

Effective Advocacy

Effective advocacy with communities, with philanthropists, and with legislators is a crucial area of competence for community college presidents. The following are specific abilities identified by the AACC Leadership Task Force:

- Approaches to legislative advocacy
- Philanthropic development through friend- and fundraising
- Effective use of data and research

Administrative Skills

Administrative skills include working with people, working with specific areas of the college, and governance. The following skills were judged by the task force to be the most important:

- Competent governance and organization skills

- Understanding and implementing effective organizational development
- Strategic planning, setting priorities, and then delegating and empowering others
- Managing technology
- Implementing diversity
- Creating and leading a learning college
- Facility management, budget skills, understanding legal issues, and media and marketing programs
- Addressing personnel issues
- Appreciating the CEO role in academic leadership

Community and Economic Development

Given the emphasis of community colleges on workforce issues and economic diversity, the following are skills deemed crucial for community college presidents:

- Understanding civic engagement on the part of students, staff, and the institution
- Developing strategies for community development
- Ability to implement workforce-development strategies and to understand the role of workforce development in the community college mission
- Ability to develop strategic alliances with business, industry, and government
- Developing linkages within the community and strengthening partnerships

Personal, Interpersonal, and Transformational Skills

Personal skills involved in presidential leadership are extensive. The following list is the task force's set of priorities:

- Job application and interviewing skills are essential to get the presidency
- Understanding the overwhelming nature of leadership is essential to keeping a presidency
- Maintaining a code of personal ethics
- Having political savvy, including the ability to build coalitions and to manage scarce resources
- Flexibility and negotiation skills
- Public speaking skills
- Being a "risk manager" and picking battles wisely
- Ability to "look" like a leader

- Ability to model diversity and to survive when you look different
- Ability to function in a way that demonstrates self-mastery, and to operate at the highest level of personal transformation (p. 1-2).

Similarly, Hammons and Guillory (1991) developed distinct listings of personal and professional skills needed by community college leaders. They felt personal characteristics of the effective administrator included: responsibility, integrity, creativity, self-control, intellectual efficiency, personal relations, leadership, and a motivation to achieve. Their professional skills list included planning skills, knowledge about the position, organizational skills, office management skills, sound judgment, human relations skills, and an ability to recognize quality performance. Further, Shults (2001) identified important skills for future leaders including the ability “to bring a college together in the governing process, the ability to mediate, a good command of technology, and the ability to build coalitions” (p. 1).

In order to be an institution’s educational leader, Vaughan (1999) contends that the president must be a scholar of higher education, regardless of what discipline is brought to the presidency. He believes that a community college president should have at least a master’s degree in an academic discipline or in a field such as business, but preferably a doctorate in the leadership field. “It may be viewed as a personal bias, but from a practical point of view it seems important for the educational leader of an institution to meet the minimum requirements for teaching in the college which he or she is leading” (Personal interview, April 1999). Vaughan (1989) related that “with the increasing number of doctorates granted each year, governing boards do not have to, and few will, consider candidates without the doctorate” (p.126).

Other studies of community college leadership have looked not at skills but at the traits a president must have to be effective. *Community College Leadership in the New Millennium*, a paper commissioned as part of the AACC New Expeditions project, identified important traits for community college presidents including: 1) the ability to develop a vision of where the college should go; 2) integrity; 3) confidence and courage; 4) technical knowledge; 5) a collaborative spirit; 6) persistence; 7) good judgment; and, 8) a desire to lead (Hockaday & Puyear, 2000). Hockaday and Puyear (2000) also point out that these traits need not be inherent but can be learned or developed.

McFarlin and Ebbers (1997) conducted a study to identify and explore preparation factors that may contribute to the development of outstanding community college leadership skills. Through 125 survey responses (85% return rate), they determined nine preparation factors that may contribute to the development of leadership skills appropriate for a community college setting. “These factors are: a) an earned terminal degree; b) a major within the terminal degree focused on the study of higher education community college leadership; c) a research and publications agenda; d) specific preparation as a change agent; e) identification as a community college insider; f) participation as a protégé in a mentor-protégé relationship; g) involvement with a peer network; h) leadership development activities outside of their graduate program; and, i) knowledge of technology” (p. 3).

In addition, McFarlin and Ebbers (1997) used a peer rating method to divide the respondents into two groups: outstanding and normative. The peer-selected outstanding leader group was 100% Caucasian, predominately male (94%) and without exception, married. The outstanding leading presidents displayed a higher rate of having earned a

terminal degree (94% versus 80%), a higher rate of having majored in a higher education emphasis on community college leadership (53% versus 32%), a higher rate of both publishing and presenting scholarly work and more involvement with both peer networks and mentors. The data collected in their survey indicated that more than half of the presidents identified as outstanding by their peers had followed *non-traditional paths* to their presidencies. McFarlin and Ebbers (1997) defined those who held an academic position immediately prior to assuming the presidency as academic or traditional and all others as non-academic or non-traditional. "Presidents identified as outstanding/leading were much less likely to have held academically oriented immediate previous positions than were presidents in the normative sample (23.5% versus 64.8%)" (p. 10).

Conclusion

"Perhaps a key to setting the tone and pace for the campus community lies in maintaining the delicate balance between student needs and faculty/administrator needs and, at the same time, assuring that the college serves the needs of society in general" (Vaughan, 1978, p. 10). Vaughan (1989) describes a metaphor that captures perhaps the greatest challenge to the community college president:

The community college president is standing on top of a seesaw, directly above the fulcrum, with feet apart, legs slightly bent for balance and weight shifting gently from leg to leg, from one side of the seesaw to the other. On one side of the seesaw are students, faculty, administrators, support staff, and other internal constituents; on the other side are politicians, members of other coordinating agencies, business leaders, board members, alumni, special interest groups, and other external constituents.

The primary role of the president is to keep the seesaw in proper balance, thereby ensuring good management, a positive climate, and a mission that is understood and supported by members of the college community and the community at large. Proper balance does not mean a lack of

movement; to the contrary, it means keeping the seesaw constantly but gently moving at all times without permitting either end to become overloaded, for the college is not functioning properly when either end of the seesaw hits the ground too often or stays on the ground too long, or when movement ceases for a long period of time (p. 12).

This is a thought provoking metaphor. Regardless of the background, the career pathway, the educational accomplishments, or the varied roles of the community college leader, striking that delicate balance is one of the most important tasks of a successful president. Vaughan (1989) continues,

Indeed if the seesaw is out of balance for a prolonged period of time, the president ultimately loses his balance and slides down the seesaw. (The imagery of the president sliding from leadership is more accurate than falling, for the descent is usually gradual rather than sudden). Once the slide begins, the president is no longer able to control his destiny, much less the destiny of the college. Yet, through applying pressure, the president rights the balance as quickly, efficiently, and painlessly as possible and keeps the seesaw in motion when external or internal forces attempt to bring it to a halt (p.13).

Conversely, the lack of motion can be just as detrimental to the presidential leadership as improper balance. Applying pressure to maintain the proper balance is indeed a delicate undertaking, often requiring the warmth of an artist, the alertness of a commanding officer, and the skills of a labor mediator. Yet, according to Vaughan (1989), the greatest danger to the college and the most telling signal that the president is not providing effective leadership is when the seesaw stops—when there is not enough activity (or tension) to keep it moving.

The community college president is in a powerful position to influence the activities and direction of the college.

If things are going well, the president can exert just enough dynamic tension to keep things interesting and exciting; if things are going poorly with any segment of the college, the president can shift the weight of the office to create just the right amount of tension to correct the problem.

From atop the seesaw, the president can lead, effect compromises, keep things running smoothly, ensure that the college is fulfilling its mission, and bring a focus to the presidency (p. 15-16).

In conclusion, certainly whatever the career pathway, the educational achievements, the structure of the presidential daily tasks or the role of the community college president in the 21st century, leadership is key. Without effective leadership the presidential challenge of striking the perfect balance within a community college organization would be lost.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe (Patton, 1990, p. 278).

Introduction

For this study, the definition of a community college president who followed a non-traditional pathway is one who prior to the community college presidency had not held a full time faculty or formal community college leadership position. Although the literature addresses the community college presidency in a variety of ways, very little research examines specifically the community college president from a non-traditional pathway. No major study exists that explores the non-traditional journey and the experiences of community college leaders along their pathway to the presidency. Given the void in the literature, a need existed to provide an understanding of what the non-traditional journey was like for a sample of community college presidents assuming the presidency during the past decade (1990-2001)—to explore the journey, and the challenges, rewards, and disappointments experienced once in the position.

The purpose of this research was to explore the non-traditional pathway and experiences that ultimately brought six leaders to the community college presidency between 1990 and 2001 and to analyze the skills and experience these presidents have drawn upon from their past in leading their respective community colleges in today's challenging educational environment.

Research Design

Qualitative inquiry methods permit the evaluator to study issues in depth with the researcher acting as the instrument (Creswell, 1994). The investigator must adopt a

stance of empathetic neutrality toward the open-ended interviews and collected data. In other words, the researcher brings to the study a commitment to be true to emerging complexities and multiple perspectives and a willingness to report all evidence that is collected (Patton, 1990).

Because the *non-traditional journey* is a phenomenon, the phenomenological study was the most desirable qualitative method. As defined by Creswell (1994), the phenomenological approach is one in which human experiences are examined through the detailed descriptions of the people being studied. It provides a level of depth and substance necessary to understand the particular journey as a distinctive *process*. Therefore, this research was developed as a qualitative, naturalistic inquiry using in-depth interviews as the primary source of data collection. Presuppositions were carefully examined and cautiously guarded against as reflected in the *Researcher's Perspective*, (Chapter 1) and by bracketing conducted during the analysis to ensure the study was open and receptive to the participant's voice. This phenomenological approach provided a richer understanding of the *process* because data were gathered directly from a sampling of presidents who followed a non-traditional pathway and drawn from their collective experiences both during their journey and after assuming the presidency.

According to Patton (1990), qualitative research enhances the understanding and evaluating of a *process*. For example:

- 1) Interviews can produce in-depth descriptions that can reveal a great deal of detail concerning a *process*.
- 2) Typically a *process* varies from one individual to another. Interviews can capture unique differences.
- 3) A *process* is fluid and dynamic—necessitating a research method that can capture nuances and differences.

- 4) Perceptions are critical consideration when assessing a *process*. Qualitative inquiry can investigate and respond to informal patterns and unanticipated interactions.

This study centered on three significant aspects of qualitative research: emerging design, purposeful sampling, and interaction with participants in the study. Emerging design allowed the researcher the freedom to investigate a phenomenon without the constraints of existing theory (Patton, 1990). As the researcher pointed out there was not a theory or model in the existing literature that explored the non-traditional journey to the community college presidency; consequently, the researcher selected presidents who fit the definition and could speak personally of their journey. Through this process their story emerged from their experiences and the researcher was not hampered by any preconceived notion of the phenomenon from existing literature.

Purposeful sampling requires the selection of information-rich cases, which are “those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research” (Patton, 1990, p. 169). The interaction with the participants resulted in the collection of information-rich data by the researcher. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated, “Purposeful sampling and emergent design are impossible to achieve without interaction” (p. 102). This process of critically examining the pros and cons of both perspectives are referred to as “methodological appropriateness” and it is an important initial step in the research process (Patton, 1990, p. 39).

Once the research design was selected, colleagues serving as informal peer reviewers assisted the researcher with the examination, critique, and substantiation of various aspects of the interview process. This provided the researcher with valuable

perspectives and insight regarding the interview questions, pace of the interview, as well as critical issues related to the process.

In preparation for the final dissertation research, the researcher also interviewed a community college chancellor to gather his perspective on the study, the questions, and what he had experienced in hiring presidents who had followed a non-traditional pathway. Similarly, the researcher interviewed a community college president, who had followed a traditional pathway to the presidency to ensure that the researcher had examined as many diverse elements as possible regarding both the traditional and the non-traditional pathways. In addition, the researcher relied on the expertise, direction and advice of the dissertation committee who assisted in refining the research questions, definitions and processes for the study.

The following questions guided the research:

- ❖ What was the journey like in following a non-traditional pathway to the community college presidency?**
- ❖ What has the experience been like as a community college president?**
- ❖ Collectively, what do these data reflect about the president who followed a non-traditional pathway?**

Sample

“In 2001, 6.1 percent of community college presidents came from the government, the military, educational institutions other than community colleges, or business and industry. That figure actually declined from 9.8 percent in 1996,” (Evelyn, 2001, p. 38). Therefore, it was clear from the beginning of the study that the population for this study was relatively small.

Ultimately, the presidents were selected by a variety of means. First, using the 2000 American Association of Community College (AACC) Directory, the community college system offices in each state were contacted to obtain a listing of presidents in their systems who met the research criteria: a) a past or present community college president appointed to the position since 1990; and in an effort to keep the sampling as purely “non-traditional” as possible, b) an individual who prior to obtaining the job as president had never served in a full time faculty or formal community college leadership position. This effort yielded only four individuals who possibly met the outlined criteria because many of the system offices did not maintain this type of information about their current and former community college presidents. For those states that did not have centralized offices the individual community colleges listed in the 2000 AACC Directory were contacted. Unfortunately, the process generated only two names that met the established criteria for the study.

Realizing that the entire population for this group was very small, the researcher made personal contacts with various college presidents, chancellors, community college administrators, a presidential search consultant and political figures asking for leads of current or former community college presidents who followed a non-traditional pathway to the presidency. This proved to be the most successful avenue, generating seven leads.

In addition, following the six interviews the researcher obtained a listing of presidents who followed a non-traditional pathway compiled by Weisman and Vaughan (2002) from their survey, "2001 Community College President: Career and Lifestyle Survey." Their study had generated a response rate of over 70 percent of 936 community college presidents. Yet, their list included only forty names of individuals who reported

holding positions immediately prior to assuming the presidency that fell into non-traditional categories. These categories included: 1) Business/Industry; 2) Government/Political; 3) Military; 4) Other Post-Secondary Education; 5) Governmental Education; 6) Public Schools; and, 7) Community College State Systems.

The baseline criteria established for this study included current community college presidents who followed a non-traditional pathway to the community college presidency. Specifically, the major criteria for this study also included community college presidential appointments between 1990-2001 and those presidents having never served in a full time faculty or formal community college leadership position prior to the presidency.

The criteria for inclusion in the non-traditional category in the Weisman and Vaughan (2002) study were less restrictive than what had been designed for this study; consequently, potential participants from the “Other Post-Secondary Education” and the “Community College State Systems” categories on the Weisman and Vaughan (2002) list were removed. This narrowed the population from forty to twenty-nine and reflected that only 4.4 percent of the 659 respondents to the Weisman and Vaughan (2002) study possibly met this researcher’s definition of presidents who had followed a “pure” *non-traditional journey* to the community college presidency. Of the twenty-nine, only three women were noted.

In addition, the Weisman and Vaughan (2002) study identified the non-traditionals only by their reported position held immediately prior to assuming the presidency. It is possible that of the 29 remaining even more could have been excluded if somewhere in their career they had held a full time faculty or formal leadership role in a

community college. Clearly, the evidence provided undeniable support of the extremely small numbers of current *non-traditional* community college presidents.

The Participants and Access

Eight presidents were chosen for this research. One declined and one failed to respond to various contacts. Consequently six, or approximately twenty percent of the identified population were interviewed to develop the depth and richness desired of the study. Participants represented the career categories of Business/Industry, Government/Political, Military, Public Schools, and Governmental Education. In addition, participants represent three of the six regional accreditation regions. As a final criterion, convenience sampling was utilized given the time and travel constraints of the researcher.

The interview process was broken into two phases. Phase One consisted of interviewing the six presidents who followed non-traditional journeys to the position, identifying patterns and categories while analyzing their data and developing emerging themes. During one interview, the president invited two of his administrators to join in the interview. These administrators were encouraged by the president to offer comments throughout the interview process, and consequently information rich data were obtained from them as well as the president. Another president invited one administrator, who was also a doctoral student, to join in the interview; however, her presence was basically as an observer and she offered very few comments during the interview. The other four interviews were conducted only with the president. Phase Two included follow-up telephone interviews with the participants to ensure member checking; and, interviews with trustees, employees, and colleagues of the participating presidents were conducted.

These interviews helped to establish triangulation and build upon the essence of the phenomenon. The trustee interviews were structured and followed a protocol similar to that of the presidents, with consent forms signed by the trustees prior to their interviews. The dialogue with employees and colleagues of the presidents was unstructured, casual conversation that occurred either in person or by telephone that aided in the total analysis; however, no specific quotes were used from this group of individuals.

An initial email correspondence (see Appendix A) was sent to the identified sample. This correspondence explained the study and requested their participation. After the presidents agreed to participate, the researcher scheduled an on-campus visit. A letter confirming the interview (see Appendix B), along with the Question Protocol (see Appendix C) was then sent to the president. An Informed Consent Agreement (see Appendix D) was also included with the letter packet. Following the interview, a thank you letter was mailed to each participant (see Appendix F). Once the transcripts were prepared, a copy with an accompanying letter was electronically sent to each president for review. During the time the president had the transcript, the researcher contacted the president's office to schedule the follow-up interview by telephone.

The presidents were asked to participate in this study with the assurance of confidentiality and were given pseudo names in the data analysis section. The only descriptions of the presidents were demographic characteristics, such as gender, race, number of years in the position, education, accreditation region, and institutional enrollment. The important aspect of the research rested with the journey and experiences related by each president on his way to the presidency rather than the institutional contexts. Many elements related to their personality, career, education and environment

emerged from the transcripts and are the central element of the data analysis section.

Data Collection

The primary data came from the on-campus presidential interviews and follow-up interviews by telephone. The interviews were used to discuss their respective journeys that ultimately lead them to the community college presidency and their experiences since assuming the presidency. The rationale for conducting the first interview on each president's campus was to generate thick descriptions, not only from the president's interview, but also by observations made by the researcher regarding the environment and demeanor of the presidents. Patton (1990) describes thick description as "solid descriptive data" (p. 375). Similarly, Lincoln and Guba (1985) related that the collection of thick description is an essential foundation for data analysis.

Conducting the interviews in person greatly enhanced the data collection in at least three different areas. First, it permitted the researcher the opportunity to collect data on the physical environment, which included features such as size and style of president's office, as well as cultural artifacts and personal objects within the president's office. This information was triangulated with the president's comments and is included in the results in Chapter 4. Patton (1990) defined triangulation as "the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomena" (p. 187). As related by Creswell (1998) this process draws in corroborating evidence from different sources to shed light on a theme or perspective.

Second, it allowed the researcher to observe the nonverbal and interpersonal behaviors of the presidents. The researcher looked for demonstrations of openness and trust or non-verbal behaviors generally associated with a lack of these traits, such as

defensive postures like crossed arms, failure to lean forward to create intimate conversation or resistance to sustained eye contact. The researcher also observed how the president greeted the interviewer, facilitated the seating arrangement for the interview, and how he interacted with his staff.

Third, the in-person interviews created a level of familiarity and comfort between the researcher and the president. This not only created a positive environment for the first interview but also fostered a comfort level between the participant and researcher during the phone interviews. Each on-campus interview lasted between one and one-half to two hours, and the phone interviews required between fifteen and twenty minutes.

During the period between the first and second interview, the president was sent an electronic copy of the transcript from the first interview and was asked to review it for any inconsistencies or suggested additions or deletions. Copies were also sent to the two administrators who participated in one of the interviews for their review. This process referred to as member checking, enhanced data collection by providing confirmation to the researcher that the answers were valid and key elements were captured in the responses (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This member checking process prepared the participants for the second interview by allowing them to review their comments from the first interview.

The second interview was conducted by telephone. During the interview the researcher provided the president an opportunity to comment on or suggest changes for the transcripts from the on-campus interview. Two presidents returned electronic copies of their edits while the administrators and others presidents provided verbal comments only during the telephone interview. The suggestions consisted of minor edits such as

spelling or occasional rephrasing. No president or administrator asked for anything to be added to or deleted from the original transcript. The second interview typically took place two to three weeks after the initial interview to give the presidents ample time to review the transcripts before the phone conversation, as well as to accommodate their busy schedules.

All interviews were recorded on audiotapes. The presidents were promised confidentiality regarding the on-campus interview, transcripts of the first interview, the follow-up interview, and all audiotapes used to record the interviews. This was done in order to promote a level of comfort with the president and encourage each to provide thick descriptions of his experiences along his particular journey. Specific examples and personal anecdotes were encouraged; therefore, the researcher conveyed immediately, and reinforced throughout the interviews, the ultimate assurance of confidentiality and that the use of specific names and institutions would not occur. Pseudo names were assigned to each president and were used throughout the remainder of the study.

To further contextualize the study, permission was requested from each president to contact at least one trustee serving on the board at the time of his appointment. All presidents granted permission and offered names and telephone numbers of trustees. Availability was often difficult; however, three telephone interviews with select board of trustee members serving at the time of a the presidential appointment were conducted. These interviews explored the historic reflection of the board members' experiences in the selection of a non-traditional pathway president. Assurance of confidentiality was promised and an Informed Consent Agreement (see Appendix G) was signed by each trustee and returned to the researcher prior to the interview. Each trustee was also

provided a copy of the Question Protocol (see Appendix E) prior to the interview. In addition, employees and colleagues were interviewed on the campus or by telephone to establish further triangulation.

Data Analysis

Moustakas (1994) states that analysis of qualitative data is difficult because open-ended responses are neither systematic nor standardized; yet, they help reveal the meaning of the participant's experience. Direct quotes, as the basic source of raw data, reveal respondents' depth of emotion as well as the organization and perceptions of their experience. During the analysis, the researcher served as the "tool," and provided a framework within which the respondents could accurately and thoroughly represent their perspective (Patton, 1990).

As related by Moustakas (1994), in phenomenological research there are two descriptive levels of the approach. Level I occurs when the original data, comprised of naïve descriptions obtained through open-ended questions and dialogue, are completed. In Level II the researcher describes the structures of the experience based on reflective analysis and interpretation of the research participant's account or story.

To aid in the Level II process, data analysis development included a review of the researcher's reflective journal. The reflective journal featured the researcher's observations before and after each on-campus interview. It was reviewed before the researcher performed the interview transcript analysis and also during the process connecting the president's comments with the journal notes. Patton (1990) cites the importance of researcher observations during the data analysis process, and two of

Patton's recommendations used for this research are mentioned below. The italicized parts describe how these perspectives were incorporated into this research.

1. Various settings – describing the aspects of the physical environment of the interview (*observe size and style of the president's personal office space, cultural artifacts and personal objects within the office*).
2. Processes – describing issues such as decision-making, socialization, communication, etc. (*non-verbal and interpersonal actions of the president, interactions between president and office staff, how the president greeted the interviewer and facilitated the seating arrangement for the interview, attention of the president to other occurrences or potential interruptions during the interview*).

After the six interviews were transcribed and edited to achieve accuracy, analysis was performed using a cross-interview analysis method. Patton (1990) related,

If a standardized open-ended interview is used, it is fairly easy to do a cross-case or cross-interview analysis for each question in the interview. With an interview guide approach, answers from different people can be grouped by topics from the guide, but the relevant data won't be found in the same place in each interview. The interview guide actually constitutes a descriptive analytical framework for analysis (p. 376).

In the six interviews the question protocol was used as a guide to aid the grouping of the topics. This cross-interview analysis was conducted using the responses to each question. In addition, each president's personal and professional background was described from the interview as well as press releases, and other appointment related articles, further developed the cross-case analysis. Patton stated case analyses were most appropriate when "variations in individuals are the primary focus" (p. 376).

Consequently, this method of analysis proved helpful in identifying the variations and similarities among the participants.

Each interview content was color-coded in a Microsoft Word (2000) word processing program. A different color was selected for each of the emerging categories and themes. Then same color sections were placed together in separate pages to assist with initial data analysis. Finally, the interviewee's coded comments were assembled in a cross-interview analysis in order to provide further development of question protocol for the final interview. This same color-coding and analysis process occurred with the researcher's journal notes and trustee, colleague, and employee comments. Once completed, all of the groups were blended in a further effort to identify common patterns, themes, similarities, and differences.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is a process of ensuring the findings of the research to be substantive and relevant (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The issues of validity, reliability, along with creditability were addressed in a number of ways.

The first procedure the researcher followed to improve the study's validity involved clarifying the researcher's bias (Creswell, 1998). From the outset it is important for the reader to understand the researcher's position and any biases or assumptions that impacted the inquiry. The researcher's past experiences, bias, prejudices, and orientations that might have shaped the interpretation and approach to the study were identified in Chapter One, *Researcher's Perspective*.

The second procedure was compiling the reflective journal which traced the schedule and logistics of the process. In addition it was the place that notes were

recorded describing the process itself. These reflections on activities included interviews, environmental observations, and summary conclusions about activities. The researcher took notes regarding initial impressions of the facility and surrounding environment upon arriving at the college. Then immediately following the interview the researcher recorded observations from the interview and any conversations with staff, as well as the environment of the office area. Often during the researcher's return trip home, or hours after the interview, observations would come to mind and be recorded in the journal. In addition, accounts of sessions with peer reviewers were also documented in the reflective journal.

The third method was the process of member checking. Member checking included presidents reviewing their transcripts and the researcher beginning the second interview by providing an opportunity for the participants to provide any recommendations or to suggest changes in the transcripts. Also, the entire second interview was a form of member checking because the researcher's questions focused on the expansion and clarification of perspectives shared in the previous conversation. Additional member checking techniques were applied during both interviews by the researcher using techniques such as parroting (e.g. *What I'm hearing you describe is...*) and restating (e.g. *You mentioned earlier that you prefer participative leadership, could you please explain again why that is important.*) (Crume, 2000).

The fourth procedure was the peer review. Lincoln and Guba (1985) define the peer examiner role as a "devil's advocate"—an individual who keeps the researcher honest. The examiner asks hard questions about methods, meanings, and interpretations. This procedure was accomplished in this research through the engagement of the

dissertation committee as well as the peer reviewers. A traditional community college president served as a formal peer reviewer, and in addition, colleagues and cohort members provided informal input. The dissertation committee advised on the process for collection and examination of the data, while the peer reviewers enhanced the data collection process by sharing insights on issues and interview techniques.

Reliability was addressed by the use of an audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Although original audiotapes and verbatim transcripts have been destroyed, field notes used to record the researcher's ideas, observations, interpretations and impressions at the outset and also following each interview and throughout the process are available for other researchers to evaluate. Journal notes also include an account of council sessions with the dissertation advisor, peer reviewers, and the dissertation committee. Similarly, written notes and papers from data gatherings along with data reconstruction and synthesis products such as the review of literature, and the dissertation proposal established the audit trail. This trail would allow another individual to trace the steps of the researcher to verify and/or understand the sources of the reported results.

Lastly, triangulation is the use of multiple sources and methods to improve the probability that the results are credible. In this study, triangulation occurred by the use of the two-interview process (i.e. one on-campus, in-person interview and one telephone interview); observations made by the researcher before, during and after the interviews; the review of inaugural and opening addresses made by the president; newspaper articles and press releases; and review of the vacancy advertisement announcing the presidential search. Further triangulation occurred through interviews with trustees, colleagues, and employees of the presidential participants. As with the presidential interviews, these

participants were promised confidentiality in order to maintain the integrity of the data and to create a climate conducive to honest and information rich responses.

Conclusion

This study made effective use of naturalistic inquiry in conducting a phenomenological qualitative study tracing the journey and experiences of six individuals who selected a non-traditional career pathway that ultimately led to the community college presidency. As a final note, phenomenological research holds no objective truth as its goal, but rather, truth is found for each individual through personally held knowledge and experience.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

A president must be seen as the champion of the institution and its constituencies (Vineyard, 1993, p. 14).

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the study of six presidents who followed a non-traditional pathway to the community college presidency, and the challenges, rewards, and disappointments experienced by these men after assuming the position. First, the participants are introduced by demographic information, followed by a detailed review of the settings and the environment where each interview occurred. The findings are presented largely by direct quotes from the participants to provide the rich, thick, context so critical in a qualitative study. In addition, raw data from trustee interviews; colleagues and employee interviews; documentation related to the participants such as presidential position announcements, inaugural addresses, welcome back speeches to the faculty and staff; newspaper articles about the participants; and, researcher's journal notes aided in completing the analysis and findings (see Table 1).

The findings reported in this chapter separate into five sections: a) participant and site; b) the journey to the community college presidency; c) the experience as a community college president coming from a non-traditional background; d) how these non-traditional community college presidents draw from their past experiences; and finally, e) the collective profile of a non-traditional community college president as reflected by this sample population.

Table 1**Data Sources Other Than Participant Interviews**

Data Sources	Michael	George	Steve	David	Mark	Larry
Trustees		X		X	X	
Administrators			X			X
Colleagues	X	X		X	X	X
Inaugural Address	X					
Vacancy Announ	X	X	X	X	X	X
Newspaper Art.			X	X		
Stmt of Qualif.			X			
Rationale for Appt.			X			
Welcome Speech					X	

Participants and Site**Introduction**

Of the eight presidents identified for this study, six presidents enthusiastically agreed to participate, one declined to participate, and one failed to respond to numerous contacts. The six participants were interviewed, and then data were transcribed, coded, and analyzed to identify emerging categories, patterns and themes.

The presidents were promised confidentiality in order to maintain the integrity of the data and to create a climate conducive to candid, as well as information rich responses. First name pseudonyms were randomly generated and assigned to each president to facilitate consistency and context of the narrative and to ensure participant confidentiality. Overall, the presidents responded well to this assurance and provided candid descriptions of their journey to the presidency and the challenges, disappointments, and rewards they had experienced since assuming the position.

Table 2 provides the age, sex, race, and education of the participants. Five of the six presidents were white males in their mid to late fifties or early sixties and had served

in the position for three to six years. The youngest participant, 44, was also the only minority president and had served in the position the least amount of time, only seven months.

The participants' educational emphasis and level varied. Two presidents had Juris Doctorates, traditionally not found among most educational senior leadership, while two had Ed.D.'s, and one had a Ph.D., terminal degrees much more common among community college presidents. Lastly, one participant's highest earned degree was a Master's of Public Administration. According to Weisman and Vaughan (2002), currently 88 percent of community college presidents hold a doctorate.

Table 2

Demographic Information of Participants

Pseudo	Age	Sex	Race	Education
Michael	58	Male	White	J.D.
George	55	Male	White	Ed.D.
Steve	58	Male	White	MPA
David	59	Male	White	Ed.D.
Mark	44	Male	Hispanic	J.D.
Larry	61	Male	White	Ph.D.

The colleges ranged in size from campuses with an unduplicated headcount of less than 1,500 students to a multi-college system with more than 300,000 students. The participants represented three of the six regional accreditation regions (see Table 3).

Table 3**Demographic Information Regarding Position and Former Career Area**

Pseudo Name	Yrs. in Position	Institution Headcount	Accreditation Region	Former Career
Michael	4	>300,000	Southern	Attorney/Political
George	3	3,000	Southern	Public Schools
Steve	4	10,000	Middle States	Government/Political
David	4	<1,500	Southern	Business/Industry
Mark	<1	12,000	North Central	Attorney/Political
Larry	6	<1,500	Southern	Bus/Military/Gov

The career categories of these presidents include law, politics, K-12 education, business, military, hospital administration, and state and federal government.

Setting and Environment

The presidents were interviewed in their respective college campus offices. All participants were extremely gracious, candid, and cooperative in responding to the questions. Qualitative research methods pay particular attention to the interview setting and the researcher's observations. Therefore, the following section outlines each participant's physical environment as observed by the researcher, which included features such as size and style of the president's office, cultural artifacts and personal objects within the president's office. In addition, this section also addresses the nonverbal and interpersonal behaviors, as well as the overall demeanor of the presidents during the interview. The researcher looked for demonstration of openness and trust, outgoing or defensive postures, attitudes, and overall appearance of the participants. Through this

process corroborating evidence from various sources was drawn upon to support data revealed during the personal interviews.

Michael's College

Michael, president of a community college system, was located in a relatively large urban area. The grounds were well kept and trees and shrubs gave a pleasant invitation to the five-story red brick building. Upon entering the building, guests were asked to sign-in. While waiting for the president to return from a meeting, the researcher noted several beautiful quilt samplers and paintings on the wall, numerous pottery and art objects on tables and tastefully displayed on the floor in corners. In what appeared to be a board or seminar room, a small metal airplane hung from the ceiling. The suite, as well as his office, was tastefully decorated with upholstered chairs and sofas, with side tables holding college related materials. Although not extravagant, the area looked quite professional. There was a computer on his desk, along with paperwork that reflected work in progress. His office walls were decorated with watercolor prints and art objects.

The president, dressed in a suit, was friendly, personable, and professional. He appeared to enjoy the opportunity to help by participating in the study. Similarly, his office staff was very friendly and helpful in retrieving requested documents for the researcher. He interacted very casually with his staff. They appeared comfortable, yet respectful in working with him. His recognizable southern accent and easy smile contributed to what he exhibited as southern hospitality and charm.

As the researcher was leaving following the interview, she casually inquired as to the airplane's significance. Michael quite proudly explained that each year he requested photographs of art objects created by students from all of the community colleges in the

system and then selected from the photographs pieces to be displayed throughout his office complex for one year. He appeared very pleased to give the researcher a tour of his office as well as the office complex, pointing out the various artworks and giving a background of several of the pieces. The uniqueness of this initiative exhibited to the researcher Michael's pride in the accomplishments of community college students.

George's College

It is interesting to note that when calling to arrange the initial interview with George, he answered his own telephone and made the appointment himself. Due to anticipated inclement weather on the day prior to the interview the researcher called to schedule the time later in the day and again George made all of the arrangements and even offered his home phone number so the researcher could check the weather in his area before leaving her home.

Although just off an interstate highway, George's college is located in a rural setting. Arriving in the small town early for the interview, the researcher stopped at a McDonald's restaurant and was surprised to observe a very large photograph of the college on the wall as part of the restaurant's decorating scheme. This initially signaled to the researcher that the college likely played a major role in the community.

The campus grounds were beautiful with trees lining the drive, giving a park-like atmosphere to the campus. Benches and picnic tables were distributed throughout the grounds. There was a lot of activity; students were walking, talking, laughing, and cars were going by playing music. Students appeared to be in their late teens to early twenties and the atmosphere seemed typical of a traditional four-year college. Later, during the interview the researcher learned that George's college drew over 60 percent of the

graduating seniors in its service area who were going to college. Therefore, the large numbers of traditional age college students was not unusual, but again emphasized to the researcher that the college did indeed play a major role in the area.

The president's office was located at the far end of the campus, so guests have an opportunity to drive by several classroom and student support buildings before arriving at the administration building. His office, located in a new building, provided a very attractive and professional-looking work environment. Large windows surrounded two sides of his office and provided an abundance of natural light. It was decorated with large upholstered chairs and sofas with tables holding magazines and college related materials.

Dressed in a suit, he was professional, extremely gracious, and willing to help with the study. The researcher immediately felt comfortable in talking with him. Likewise, his administrative assistant was friendly and helpful. The researcher was seated in a chair near his desk, but George came from behind his desk to sit in a chair opposite the researcher. His office door remained open during the interview. Although this was a bit distracting to the researcher, it seemed to be a natural arrangement for George. This action revealed to the researcher that he was comfortable with his environment and the professionalism of his immediate support staff seated directly outside his door.

Steve's College

Steve's college was a large urban school in the outskirts of a capital city. Upon entering the grounds it was apparent that new construction was underway because of the freshly moved earth and heavy construction equipment. Substantial parking areas

indicated the large numbers of students the school could accommodate. The researcher noted a number of athletic fields and an ice rink on the campus. The interview was conducted during the Christmas holiday break, consequently no students were observed.

Upon entering Steve's office suite, the researcher was surprised by the large number of beautiful, live flower arrangements decorating the area. When the researcher complimented the administrative assistant regarding the flowers, the assistant related that the flowers had been used in a holiday event at the college the prior night and had been brought to the office suite for others to enjoy.

The office suite was very large and gave the researcher a feeling of entering a corporate suite rather than a community college presidential area. Pictures of current board members were tastefully displayed on the wall. Likewise, Steve's office was quite spacious and very professionally furnished. In his office he had a desk, but also a large conference style table and upholstered chairs to seat approximately 12-15 people. The interview was conducted at the table. Steve had invited two of his administrators to join in the interview. In comparing the settings, being seated at the large conference table was a bit more formal than other interviews had been; however, Steve and his staff quickly helped the researcher feel at ease.

Steve was dressed in a dress shirt, sports jacket and a Christmas necktie, in keeping with the season. At the beginning of the interview the researcher noted Steve wearing a very large ring. During the interview the president proudly related that the ring was a championship ring given to him by one of the sports teams on his campus. It appeared to the researcher that Steve was actively involved with student activities, particularly sports.

David's College

David's college was situated in an extremely rural area. The last thirty minutes of the researcher's drive was spent winding around hillsides and climbing to an elevation of over 2,500 feet. First impressions indicated an economically depressed area. Numerous out-of-business stores were evident by vacant buildings and vacant parking lots. However, clerks, waitresses, and gas station attendants with whom the researcher interacted were friendly, courteous, and very helpful.

A winding entrance road lined with trees led to the college. The buildings appeared to be carved into the hillside, with virtually no more space available for new construction or expansion. A very large childcare center was prominent among the modest, older buildings that made up the campus. Swings, sliding boards, and riding toys gave a youthful feel to the campus. David proudly said during the interview, "we are extremely proud of our five-star childcare center. That is one of those highlights we brag about given every chance!"

Although this interview was conducted close to the Christmas holidays a few adult students appearing to be in their late twenties, were observed walking around the campus. Interestingly, for such a small rural campus with less than 1,500 students, a security guard was on duty and guests were asked to sign in. The interior of the administration building reflected an older building with painted block walls and modest furnishings. However, what the building lacked in aesthetics the president and his staff compensated for in hospitality. Everyone was very friendly, helpful, and pleasant. The president had on a dress shirt and necktie, with his sports jacket draped over the back of his desk chair.

The researcher and the president were both seated at a small round table in the end of the president's modest office. The receptionist was seated in an open area just outside the office. The walls of his office were decorated with black and white pencil drawings of trees. His bookcase was filled with numerous policy manuals and reference books. There was a computer on his desk, and the repeated chime of incoming email was apparent on many occasions throughout the interviews. Also on his desk were papers indicating work in progress, along with a large glass swordfish paperweight, and a small United States flag. Evidence of construction projects was apparent by architectural drawings displayed on a table and leaning against the wall for convenient access. The president shared during the interview that a new site had recently been constructed in a neighboring county and another site was also underway.

David exhibited much pride in the college and the accomplishments of his faculty and staff, as well as a genuine love for the community college system. He was modest in taking credit himself for any of the recent events and accomplishments of the college.

One sign particularly struck the researcher as she exited the campus grounds, it stated--*Buckle up for safety, Buckle down to a great career!* Although certainly a message supporting wearing safety belts, it very subtly reflected for the researcher much of what David had shared during the interview about hard work, motivation, hope, and accomplishments.

Mark's College

The first thing the researcher noted about Mark's campus was the diversity of the student population. There were large numbers of students representing Asian, African American, Native American, Caucasian, and Hispanic descent. Likewise, students

appeared to range in age from the late teens to the late forties, and Mark shared during the interview that the childcare center located on the campus was an important addition for many of the parents on campus.

The campus was located on the outskirts of an urban area and had several large buildings. The president's office was located on the second floor of a building that housed classrooms, faculty and administrative offices, and a number of student service functions. The building had very large floor to ceiling windows on the first floor that provided an abundance of natural light. The president's office was located at the end of a hallway with the receptionist area just outside his door. The reception area offered a comfortable upholstered sofa and chairs, with nearby tables holding college publications and related materials.

The researcher waited in the reception area for about ten minutes prior to the interview. The administrative assistant was extremely professional, friendly, and helpful. She immediately retrieved all requested data for the researcher. She appeared to have a relaxed, yet very professional working relationship with the president. Upon inviting the researcher into his office, Mark immediately apologized for the delay and explained he had been tackling a snow policy decision issue that had become controversial among the faculty and staff.

The president's office was well lit on one side with large windows offering natural light. The walls were sparsely decorated with plaques and awards. No pictures were noted. Photographs of family and/or friends were placed on a side table adjacent to Mark's desk, initially reflecting to the researcher the importance he placed on family and

relationships. He had a computer on his desk and a number of stacks of papers on the desk and side counter. The furnishings were nice, but far from extravagant.

Mark, dressed in a white dress shirt and necktie, remained seated at his desk with the office door open during the interview and the researcher was seated directly across the desk in a nearby chair. Mark's friendly manner helped the researcher to feel comfortable and immediately at ease.

He was very pleasant, courteous, and professional. The researcher was surprised with the amount of varied knowledge he exhibited about community colleges given that he had only been in the position for seven months. He spoke very candidly about his strengths as well as his weaknesses. He took a number of measures to be helpful in providing the researcher with as much information as possible. In fact, during the interview he spoke of a web article that might prove helpful to the researcher in the study. He was unable to locate it during the interview, but following the interview, as the researcher was touring the building with the administrative assistant he was able to retrieve the article and came looking throughout the building to personally give it to the researcher.

Larry's College

Larry's college was nestled near what appeared to the researcher to be a white-water tourist community. Being winter there were few tourist activities; however, an abundance of establishments with rubber rafts and fishing equipment were noted.

The researcher was particularly impressed by the excellent signage present on the campus. The lettering on the buildings was large and the directional signage was clear and concise. The buildings were fairly old and lacked the crispness of any new

construction or recent renovation. The grounds were fairly sparse, with buildings consuming the majority of the available space.

The reception area gave the feel of a typical student services or high school principal office area, rather than a college presidential area. Furnishings were adequate, but aged. Block walls were painted. A modest table in the corner beside a vinyl sofa and chair held copies of the college catalog. The catalog cover was particularly striking, and on the wall was a very large “window-box” print of the same picture. The wording was motivational and the picture stirred excitement. The researcher later learned that the president had a marketing background and marketing was still a primary area of interest to him.

There were several employees sitting or standing around in the reception area. Two men introduced themselves as deans and were very friendly and hospitable. They joked among themselves in a very relaxed and comfortable way. Everyone was casually dressed, with some in blue jeans, and others in casual slacks and sport shirts. They were gracious and acted as if they had been expecting the researcher’s arrival.

After waiting only a few minutes the president came out to greet the researcher. He, too, was dressed in blue jeans and looked very casual. He appeared to interact with his staff in a comfortable way. He was very friendly and led the researcher down a hallway to his office. The president’s office was located in the corner of a building facing the highway. The roadway traffic and noise from a loud heating unit proved to be somewhat distracting during the interview. The president’s office was small with a desk, chairs and a small sofa adding to the aged furnishing. On one wall was a picture of a

military unit along with awards and framed certificates. Stacks of papers covered Larry's desk and a computer rested on a nearby stand.

The president had invited an administrator to sit in on the interview. She was also a student working on a doctorate in education and someone the president revealed that he had been mentoring since shortly after he joined the college. Although the president was negative in many of his comments regarding the community, staff, and trustees, he appeared to have a genuine interest in providing opportunities for women in higher education. He explained that he had gone against several members of the staff and trustees in placing the young administrator in her current position. He explained that the culture of the college had until recently been rooted in the 1960s. Women had been excluded from administrative or decision-making positions. He appeared proud of his mentoring role and expressed great confidence in the abilities of the young woman. In addition, he had printed for the researcher prior to her arrival, an article he had read that morning related to the increase in women in the community college presidency. Clearly he supported the increase.

Although Larry related that he enjoyed the area, he was critical of the politics of the community and within the college. In addition, he appeared disgruntled with funding and the resulting "run-down" nature of things at the college. He also spoke of his displeasure with his state salary and the lack of any additional supplement to his income. He said that supplemental funding was typical in most all other community colleges in his state. Larry was very outspoken regarding his opinions, often quite colorful in his responses, and appeared to take pride and pleasure in taking a stance against the majority.

In summary, each president had his own distinctive attributes; yet, all were similar in their hospitality, their willingness to speak frankly, and their genuine desire to help in this research endeavor. The campuses differed greatly in size and environment and the researcher was fortunate to have selected participants from colleges in locations ranging from large metropolitan areas to small rural communities. The environment and interior furnishings, although quite varied among the six colleges appeared to the researcher to be consistent with the size and geographical location of each individual college and following the interviews, it was apparent to the researcher that the setting and environment reflected much about the presidential focus and image of the college.

The Journey to the Community College Presidency

Introduction

This section explores the non-traditional journey to the community college presidency for these six men. For the purpose of this study, a non-traditional journey is one that never included a full time faculty or formal leadership position in a community college prior to assuming the community college presidency. During the interview, participants “relived” their careers, educational experiences, personal and professional relationships, and the internal drive that ultimately led them to the community college presidency. Analysis of the six journeys revealed: 1) *what* various experiences and relationships influenced each man’s desire to become a community college president; 2) *how* their various presidential hiring processes evolved; and, 3) *why* these men ultimately believed they could successfully lead a community college.

Experiences and Relationships

Undoubtedly career experiences had a tremendous effect on *how* and *why* this group of presidents came to assume a community college presidency. Positions held by these individuals over their lifetime range from school custodian, to trash truck driver, to member of the State House of Representatives, U.S. Congressman, Head of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Regional Representative for Department of Housing and Urban Development, Commissioner of Labor, Director of State Dormitory Authority, Hospital Administrator, County Executive, a JAG in the U.S. Navy, a Training Administrator for a nuclear power plant, School Superintendent, and practicing attorneys. Appreciating the varied experiences, Michael stated,

We are all the sum of our experiences, and if I had spent the last thirty years in community colleges and come to this job, I would have been a different person than I am because I have spent the last thirty years practicing law and being involved in politics. So it is hard for me to imagine how I would have been different as a president if I had spent my whole career here. Because to be honest, my personal skills, though I'm sure there is at least some genetic factor in it, most of my personal skills have been developed because of my experience at what I have been blessed to be able to participate in.

Ironically, one of Steve's greatest influences was his education at the community college where he now serves as president. This early introduction to the community college gave him first-hand experience that developed into a life-long appreciation for the community college and its mission. He explained,

I was just out of the service, looking for some place to go, some direction and I came to (this institution). And what it did for me is what it does today and what we are trying to do for everyone--just kind of help people get that direction--a little nurturing, a little guidance. And it was very successful for me.

All presidents agree that they felt experiences from their non-traditional backgrounds contributed greatly to their abilities to lead a community college in the 21st century.

David, a former nuclear power plant administrator stated, "I personally believe that (my time at the nuclear power plant) is the best experience I have had for being a president."

Along with their extensive range of educational and career influences, it was evident to the researcher that family had an influence on these presidents. The sense of pride could be felt when Mark related,

The story I like to tell here is that my mother who had always wanted to go to college and had never had the chance, started at Northern Virginia Community College when she was 57 and ended up getting her 4 year degree from George Mason (University) at the age of 62 or 63.

Through his family, he had experienced and gained an appreciation for the mission of the community college, long before he assumed the presidency. He went on,

So you know it is never too late, and the community colleges are the front door for a lot of folks who come from the non-traditional, who follow the non-traditional path. But I have followed some weird paths myself. I wanted to be a truck driver, got out of college and was driving trash trucks in Washington, and then went to (Harvard) law school. I have a lot of relatives who have not had an opportunity to pursue a degree and I see the enormous difference it has made in our respective lives. To me the idea that education is the great equalizer, that whole notion really hits home. My wife's family is much the same way. Those who were able to get an education have been able to do remarkable things and those without it haven't.

Similarly, four of the presidents admitted that their initial interest in community colleges was sparked by the educational careers of their spouses. These wives were community college or university instructors or were involved in education in some capacity; thus, one of their first experiences of higher education and its rewards came through the eyes of their spouses.

Just as their wives had given more than half of the participants their first introduction to the collegiate environment, friends and colleagues in many cases were the first to introduce the participants to the idea of applying for a community college presidency. Five of the six presidents stated that prior to being approached they had never really even considered a career as a community college president. George shared,

I had never thought about a community college and quite frankly the thing that prompted me was a call from someone saying, hey, there is going to be a vacancy and we would like for you to think about this. My first thought was, not me, I'm not interested in that. I don't know enough about a community college or the system or anything else. So I started researching it, and finding out some things about it and it was enticing. I thought it would offer the right challenge, the right mixture of something different, so I just really got enthusiastic about applying at that point. So I followed through, applied and fortunately got the opportunity.

Mark had a similar experience,

I got a call from someone I knew from the (governor) administration, who said here is the perfect job for you. Did you know that the position is open for the president of (college)? Why don't you apply? I said, because I don't have a Ph.D. and I have no educational background. But I looked at the application, and again, I thought it was clearly focused on somebody who had been in a leadership position at a community college, but it was not limited to that.

Similarly, regarding seeking the community college system presidency, Michael stated, "I did not seek the job, it sought me. Three of the state board members came to see me who knew me from my political past and said we think you would be good (for this presidential opening)." Steve echoed a similar experience of trustees, faculty and staff reaching out to him, asking if he would be interested in the presidency if it were to open. Yet all agreed, once the interest was sparked, each indeed became extremely motivated to seek the position. Although the motives were different, the drive for successfully obtaining the presidency was similar.

Again reflecting personal desires as well as an appreciation for the mission of the community college, Steve shared his motivation for wanting the college presidency. He said,

I was probably in one of the most influential positions in state government because when you do financing you are handing out hundreds of millions of dollars worth of deals. I was Santa Claus on Wall Street. It was big, it was pressure, but I lost a sense of reality, of being out of touch with people. And this place so helped me and the teachers here so helped me. That's the profound impact this place had on me, and one or two specific individuals. So I wanted to come here because I thought I would be that kind of a model for a young person here and just be able to provide the kind of direction that this school could use. Plus I loved the place, and if you don't, that shows.

Although these six gentlemen had different education and career experiences, as well as personal and professional relationships, the resulting influences ultimately led them to the community college. The love of education through personal experiences, the appreciation for education through the eyes of relatives, and the internal spark that ignited once each was introduced to the idea of serving in a community college; all influenced these men to ultimately seek a community college presidency.

Presidential Selection Process

As reflected in Table 4, many of the criteria for the presidential position are similar, yet several warrant particular attention. For example, Mark's position announcement was the only one requiring only a bachelor's degree with a master's degree preferred. Michael's position, president of a community college system, did not address educational attainment at all as a criteria for the position; whereas, George's position required a doctorate.

All announcements mentioned administrative experience and an ability to work with the community, and five out of six referenced a commitment to the community

college mission and an ability to work with business and industry. Similarly, four out of six spoke of planning, communication and interpersonal skills, and an ability to work with government agencies.

Table 4

Position Announcements

Criteria	Michael	George	Steve	David	Mark	Larry
Masters prefer.					X	
Masters required			X			
Doctorate prefer.				X		X
Doctorate req.		X				
Admin. exp.	X	X	X	X	X	X
CC exp. prefer		X		X		X
Exp manage lrg. org.	X				X	
Work w/ community	X	X	X	X	X	X
Work w/ bus/ind.	X	X	X	X	X	
Interpersonal skills	X	X		X		X
Communication skills	X	X		X		X
Commit to CC mission	X	X	X	X		X
Work w/ govt. agency	X	X	X			X
Workforce needs	X	X				
Fiscal mgmt.		X	X	X		
Planning		X	X	X	X	
Coll bargaining exp.			X			
Commit to diversity		X	X			
Distance learning					X	
Fundraising		X			X	
Personnel development					X	
Commit to students		X		X		
Team building	X		X			
Public relations		X				
Facilities mgmt.				X		
Ed. leadership	X		X			

A few criteria were mentioned in only one vacancy announcement and usually it was a requirement unique to the college. For example, only Steve's vacancy announcement mentioned experience in collective bargaining. Steve's college was the

only one in the group of six that had a union environment on the campus. Only George's announcement addressed public relations, and during the interview George related that in his opinion the trustees were indeed looking for someone with public relations experience, which was a strong attribute for George. The researcher found it interesting that distance learning was only addressed by the vacancy announcement for Mark's position, yet clearly, that announcement had the strongest slant in support of candidates from the business community. In fact, the title caption on the ad stated, "Seeking a Visionary Leader from the Business or Educational Community." It appeared that George's, Larry's, and David's boards were looking for traditional candidates and just happened to select a president who had followed a non-traditional pathway, whereas, with Michael, Steve, and Mark, interviews with trustees and employees revealed that someone from outside the traditional pathway was a strong consideration, if not a favored candidate.

Interestingly, Steve's position announcement called for ten personal traits in addition to the more typical criteria reflected in Table 4. These personal traits include: 1) capacity for hard work; 2) strength of character; 3) intelligence; 4) integrity; 5) sound judgment; 6) flexibility; 7) warmth; 8) openness with people; 9) common sense; and, 10) a sense of humor.

Additional qualities listed in Michael's position announcement included motivational ability, organizational skills, technical orientation and consensus builder. Similarly, George's announcement addressed very specific preferences: experience at the Vice President level in higher education, and a resident, or a willingness to become a resident of the county of the college location. In addition, the advertisement stated that

the college was looking for a candidate who had a “fair, ethical, honest approach to all areas of life.”

Five of the six colleges conducted searches. Vacancy announcements were advertised nationwide, a search committee was formed, and screening was conducted. Candidates were then invited for interviews, recommended candidates were selected by the committee and their names were forwarded to the appropriate State or Local Board, additional interviews were sometimes conducted at the state level, and then a president was ultimately selected. In one case, after months of debate, the college chose not to have a search, but to appoint the interim as the president. The next sections will explore these two diverse processes.

Search Process

Although the process was somewhat similar among the five colleges conducting searches, the most significant variance was the make-up of the local committees. The search committee at Mark’s college had representation from every aspect of the college and included faculty, staff, students, foundation members, advisory committee, local trustees and community representatives. It was a very broad, participatory process with the candidates speaking to classified staff committees, student groups, faculty committees, and of course the search committee. Interestingly, the fact that they selected a wide range of participants to make up the search committee reflected to the researcher a college culture of shared governance and participatory decision-making. Similarly, Mark revealed many times during the interview his strong commitment to shared governance and participatory decision-making. Likewise, his trustees spoke of his strength in this form of leadership. This revealed to the researcher that this newly hired president’s

philosophy was representative of the culture of the organization. One trustee said, "Recognizing that he does not have the educational credentials, he involves a number of the campus members. People are now saying they understand why business people are successful. I have been very impressed. (Mark) asks for help by saying 'help me understand.'"

In George's and Larry's case, only the local board members and one employee from the college served on the interview committee. No other areas from within the campus, such as student groups or classified staff were represented. Only one faculty member participated in George's search, and only one administrator participated in Larry's search.

The interview processes were varied as well. Mark's search committee required an initial video taped introduction by the final candidates. Once those were reviewed, selected candidates were invited for personal interviews with the committee.

David's committee was largely made up of non-educators. He was able to structure his responses in order to capitalize on this feature. He stated,

One thing you quickly realize when you look at a college is the vast majority of the people doing the hiring are not educators and so you very quickly recognize that you relate to them because they are generally in business. (During the interview process) I drew on the experiences that I had in the private sector to respond to issues they would raise and questions they would raise, and bring to them the kind of experiences I have had in private business where the bottom line is important, that making every activity that you're involved in targeted toward the bottom line, toward making a value added to any activity that is going on and they responded to that. Very clearly they understood exactly what I was talking about. Now the few educators that were on the committee did not have a clue what I was talking about. It was very clear that the perspective of the business people on the board of trustees differed from the educators.

Similarly, Michael related a specific incident during his interview process that addressed his ability to meet the challenges of the position,

In the interview one of the state board members said to me, without any education background do you think you can lead an educational agency? And I said, well I am not an engineer, but I am now the head of the largest engineering firm in the world. So if I have provided appropriate leadership to that agency, then I think I can provide appropriate leadership to community colleges. And they ultimately hired me. There were three finalists for the job and the other two were community college presidents. So they had a choice between a traditional choice and me.

The presidents offered various reasons why they felt they were ultimately selected for the position. David said,

I think when all was said and done; both the faculty and the trustees believed I would be good for this institution. Maybe based on different reasons. The trustees, I think they clearly based it on the fact that they believed that my business experience would be valuable to the institution. That faculty and staff, knowing that I had classroom experience and that I had been involved in some extremely high tech training programs, not in community college but outside (influenced their decision).

George responded,

I think the board had a couple of things they were keenly interested in and that was public relations of course, so again, my background and experience in public schools probably gave a battlefield look at that. Secondly, I think they were looking for someone who was going to get out and make contacts in the community, particularly business and industry and get to know people and be there to offer the college up as a service institution. Naturally they wanted somebody, who in their opinion had the ability to lead, to work with people here and that sort of thing, but I think those were the two highlights that they probably had a focus on.

Mark related, "I think they just wanted to focus on someone who, or at least consider people who were outside of the educational mainstream. They may have been successful in business or just with management experience, but not with classroom experience."

David shared similar thoughts,

I think that people in the community, particularly business people have felt like I could relate to them. It seems that it is just purely the perception that they have that I have been out there in private business and industry and at least I know what they are going through and what their lives are like and what their experiences are.

In an effort to further explore the search process and the reasons these specific individuals were selected for the positions, the researcher contacted three trustees and one system level executive who had served on the respective presidential search committee. When asked if the committee was specifically looking for a president who followed a non-traditional pathway, trustees echoed a similar response, the committee was certainly open to a president who did not come through the community college ranks, but it did not specifically look for such a president. One trustee said, we were looking for “qualities of leadership and we realized we could find those qualities in the private sector too.” Another trustee related,

So often with a new president, they come from somewhere else anyway and the campus has to adjust, so we didn’t really look at whether they were a college president before; didn’t really look at whether they were from within the community college. We didn’t want to exclude the president of GM or Bill Gates or someone like that because there may be some of those people out there. But we went out there looking for someone that had presidential experience in some way, shape or form.

Regarding recent searches, the chair of a State Board of Community Colleges stated,

If the right candidate has a Ph.D., that’s terrific, if the right candidate comes out of higher ed, that’s terrific, if the right candidate comes out of the community college that’s terrific, but what we don’t want to do is load up these jobs with so many qualifications that we have to disqualify people that otherwise might be terrific for the job just because they can’t check off a box from their resume (in order to meet a requirement).

He also noted that for the past two years, his state has not routinely required a Ph.D. when advertising for a community college president. In fact, he related that

recently a candidate with a Master's degree was hired for a presidential vacancy in his state.

No Search Process

Steve's selection process was much different from the other five processes. In fact, a search was not conducted, an unprecedented event within his state at the time. First, Steve was appointed interim president after the former president's contract was not renewed. According to newspaper articles, Steve had been rumored to be the favorite for the position for several weeks prior to his appointment. Once named, he resigned his former position and assumed the interim presidency within approximately a week. Again, according to newspaper accounts, the college was reported to "be in crisis" at the time of his appointment.

A few months after he assumed the interim position, Steve related that an unusual process started to occur. He said,

(The college) was kind of in turmoil and people reached out while I was the interim president and there was an interesting process internally that took place. It was questioned whether the campus should go out for a national search. Some folks questioned why they should do that when the person that is here today has kind of restored the balance of the school's confidence with the political and local arenas both here and in government. So the chairman of the board and the board of trustees created a committee comprised of community leaders, and folks on campus, trustees, chaired by our personnel officer. And they held public hearings on campus inviting anyone who wanted to come and speak on the issue of should we go for a national search or should we offer a contract to the person who is here.

Steve related that members of his campus community were asking,

Why should they go to all this expense of a national search, and the other side of that is, is it fair to do that, to invite people to come in and participate, have that expense, raise expectations as well, when in fact you were skewed to the incumbent? So the university system came on board. The board of trustees asked for the involvement of the state university as

well as the chancellor. So they assigned their attorney to kind of help us legitimize this thing.

Newspaper articles reported that for several months the board mulled launching a full-scale search for the presidency. They formed an ad hoc committee on the presidency and the personnel committee recommended against a search, saying (Steve's) performance had been so strong that a search would be disruptive and unnecessary. It was reported that some faculty and community members argued that forgoing a search would send a message that (Steve), who had ties to high-ranking state and county Republicans, was being appointed as a political favor rather than because he was objectively judged to be the best candidate. But the trustee, who chaired the two committees, argued that a clear consensus in (Steve's) favor among staff, faculty and community members made him the best choice to lead the college, apart from his political background.

One of the administrators sitting in on the interview with the researcher and who had been involved in the non-traditional selection effort related her view regarding the process. She stated,

Just slightly before the open hearing the chairman of the board had a vote. He polled everybody on campus. The vote was 4 to 1 that we didn't need a national search, we didn't have to search. We were very happy with the incumbent. Faculty and staff, everyone got a ballot, everyone who wanted to, had a chance to vote. And so when we had the public hearings they had that sense of support from the campus and people came and spoke on behalf of their support. Actually most people supported (Steve) but (some) felt that maybe a search would legitimize (the process).

In support of the non-traditional process she further related,

In my lifetime of professional work wherever I have been, the number of searches that have resulted in successful candidates versus the number of searches that have resulted in people who on paper looked like they were going to be successful, and then they didn't work out the way you had

thought, the difference is tremendous and the latter is more common. I think a lot of time searches don't uncover what it is like to work with and for that person.

Another administrator from Steve's college provided input regarding the non-traditional selection process,

Because of the age of community colleges, and what is out there right now, people are not seasoned through the ranks, so there is a tendency to not be dishonest, but to exaggerate the extent of responsibility and authority. And in the academic areas, when I interview for these jobs, I know what to say to make people feel good. And believe me; people out there now are much cleverer than I am. They come in here and they dance to every audience. In a non-traditional route, an incoming president, he can't dance. You're managing the institution day by day and people are watching you. Good, bad, or indifferent, they are watching you. So by the time we got to this process, (Steve) was managing it. So they had something to measure on. I just think traditional searches now, the way the complexity of funding formula, the need for any president to be somebody people can trust as a good community president, I think traditional searches are finally going to go farther and farther by the wayside.

He spoke further about the non-traditional process,

We did it with oversight from (the university system) to provide the legitimacy that some of the people thought we needed. We were in concert with the regulations, and the guidelines for the hiring of a president. So although in the process we didn't get the resumes and all, we had (the) process pretty well delineated. It was very well communicated. Everybody knew every day what was going on with this process. So there was no notion of collusion going on, it was a good cross section of people. Everybody had the chance to say anything they ever wanted to say and it worked out fine. It takes a strong campus to do that by the way. I mean things have to fall into place and things have to be right.

After several months of working through this non-traditional process, Steve was eventually offered the position and assumed the presidency. Steve said that a form of this unprecedented process has now been exercised by other colleges within his state since his appointment.

Without question, search processes are different. In Mark's case the college-wide participatory process appeared to the researcher to generate a president with a strong philosophy toward shared governance. Similarly, although all interviewed trustees agreed that the board was open to non-traditional candidates, it was evident from the vacancy announcements and the qualities each board was looking for in a candidate that some boards were looking for a president who followed a non-traditional pathway while others were clearly looking for the traditional community college president and just happened to select a president who had followed a non-traditional pathway. This was reflected in such things as the ad for David and Larry's position listing *community college experience preferred*, or more specifically in George's position announcement, which called for experience at the *Vice President level in higher education*. Conversely, in Mark's position announcement, the requirement for a bachelor's degree, rather than a master's or doctorate, and the title caption on the ad stating, "Seeking a Visionary Leader from the Business or Educational Community," signaled that indeed an individual with a business background could certainly be considered for the position.

The lack of a traditional search process as exhibited in Steve's appointment, although unprecedented in his state, was strongly supported by his board. In a *Rationale for Appointment* document Steve's board strongly supported their actions with statements such as, "To proceed with a full and open search at (the college) at this juncture would really be a mockery of the process since the college's trustees are fully satisfied that the interim president fulfills the profile of the person they wish to appoint. The college must have continuity of leadership. A search process at this time would once again greatly disturb the campus."

In spite of the varied hiring processes, strong leadership was obviously one of the critical factors in all appointments. The participants felt their proven leadership skills, along with their other individual attributes had prepared each of them to lead in the community college environment.

Why They Felt They Could Lead

According to Cohen and Brawer (1994), the overall objective of the community college is to enable people to achieve a better life. In this sense, community colleges “serve as agents of hope for all people regardless of their past experience with the educational system” (p. 20). Roueche, Baker and Rose (1989) defined leadership as “the ability to influence, shape and embed values, attitudes, beliefs, and behavior consistent with increased staff and faculty commitment to the unique mission of the community college” (p. 18).

In every case the participants felt they had the qualities to successfully lead a community college. Although they each recognized that they did not have some of the traditional skills and attributes often preferred in a presidential search, they felt they brought the appropriate skill set for success in the position.

During his interview process, Mark addressed not having a Ph.D. immediately. He said to the faculty, “I am not here to argue that I am an experienced instructor; I have taught as an adjunct. I understand that perspective.” He related further to the researcher,

I think it helped them a lot to know that I had lived with a faculty member, my spouse for many years. And at least, I think they imagined me at least hearing the faculty person’s point of view, which is true. But I think it helped to say I am not going to be here to tell people how to teach, but just what we expect from the organization and how to operate the organization efficiently, and how to manage it well; so that we can best serve our customers, in other words, the students in the community. I think it helped with some of them that I had a terminal degree, even though it wasn’t a

Ph.D. or an Ed.D. I think the more I talked to them about my view of leadership and management, where I really talked a lot about collaborative decision-making and shared governance issues really worked well with the faculty. They were very much responsive to that. I think they appreciated the way I talked about education and what it has meant in my own perspective, what it has meant to me and people in my family who have been able to get an education. I think they could see that that was something I was passionate about.

Michael felt his ability, as a persuader would prove beneficial in the position. He said,

My whole life has been spent in persuasion. As an attorney and as a congressman, I had to persuade folks to vote for me and then I had to convince my colleagues to pass initiatives that I was interested in and to support initiatives that I was interested in and that is what I am doing here.

David also related experiences and strengths he would bring to the position when he spoke with the committee during the interview process. He said,

.... I pointed out very clearly to them the role and the activities I had played with the power company were very, very similar to what (this college) does. I was a training administrator for a nuclear power plant and we had curricula, we had accredited programs, we had instructors, we had classrooms, we had training buildings, everything that a community college has the nuclear utilities have. What we were doing there was extremely similar to what a community college does particularly in your technical and vocational programs.

Regarding Steve's time as interim, one of his administrators spoke of his leadership qualities. He related,

Many of the people here looked to the more senior people. What the other president (Steve's predecessor) failed to do was to surround himself with the people who had been here for a very long time, who people may not have agreed with every time but at least knew they had the best interest of the college. When Steve came on board, he was measured on his ability to manage this resource. Independent of who was here or who he wanted on his team. And he managed it very well coming from a non-traditional background. And he was willing to listen. I know when I spoke at the open meeting, he was the first president I had ever worked for who didn't want to be a dean. My presidents have always known more than deans about academics. He was willing to listen. That was important. And he understood the healing process. He was sensitive to people who had been here a long time. He gave us a chance to see if we could work on his

team. I think people liked that. Community colleges are a culture. If you are not sensitive to the culture you won't survive. Obviously through his expertise in managing billions of dollars, thousands of employees, this fit in real well to the strengths that we needed.

Steve demonstrated his support of servant leadership when he stated to the faculty,

I am not the academician, you are. You folks are. I will provide you with the resources so you can teach, and that is what I want you to do, and that is kind of our agreement. We're doing it. They teach well and we help provide the resources and manage.

"I guess in fact the most important (characteristic) is external, how you relate to the various publics that are important to community colleges," explained Michael. He added,

We see business and industry as very important. So my being able to relate to CEO's and chairs of corporate boards and that sort of thing is important. It is important that I be able to relate to legislators, the governor, and the congressional delegation. But I guess the most important is the leadership aspect. To be honest, I am a good Presbyterian, and I think all of these things are preordained; it is as if all my life experiences were leading to this job. First the political background in the House and the Congress, but then my experience with the Corps of Engineers was directly related to this job in terms of experience. In the Corps of Engineers I was dealing with highly educated, highly motivated, very independent minded, big ego colonels and generals who wanted me to get them what they wanted out of Congress and then leave them alone. Well that is exactly what I have with community college presidents. They're all highly motivated, well educated, big egos, who have local constituencies, who simply want me to get them what they want out of the legislature and Congress and leave them alone. But just as in the Corps, where I had to lead by the force of my ideas, and the force of my persuasion, the same is true here. So it really was very good preparation for this job.

Ultimately each man was successful in convincing the respective selection committees that he indeed had the necessary qualities and could successfully lead a community college in the 21st century. Collectively these skills as identified by the participants themselves, include: a) an understanding and appreciation of the skills of the faculty and staff; b) support of collaborative decision making; c) shared governance; d)

the ability to listen; e) the ability of persuasion; f) risk taking and vision; g) an ability to relate to various constituencies and build relationships; and finally, h) a demonstrated ability to lead.

The Experiences as a Community College President

Introduction

After assuming the community college presidency, these individuals experienced many challenges, disappointments and rewards. This section explores how these presidents who followed non-traditional pathways were received by their presidential colleagues; the similarities and differences in their challenges, disappointments, and rewards; and, how they have drawn from their past in serving as a community college president.

Reception by Presidential Colleagues

Obviously a proper fit within a college culture is a key ingredient to successful leadership. Similarly, the climate among colleagues is very important. Steve spoke of how he was initially received by his fellow presidents. He said,

I don't believe I was received very well. I thought they raised their eyebrows a little bit; this person doesn't have a Ph.D., (which is typically required of community college presidents in this state), we'll have to keep our eye on him. He's a politician. And I think there is still some of that, but I also think now there is jealousy because of what we are able to do and how we are able to manage...and get things done while they sit and ponder.

Mark, the youngest participant in the study revealed,

I think they were polite and curious. Here was this guy, a little bit younger than some of them and certainly all of them had careers in education, institutional administration. But they have been very helpful and supportive. They all have a great deal more experience than I do and they are very, very good. I haven't met a single one of my colleagues that

I have not been impressed with, and yet I am at the second largest school in the state. I think they just think it is a little weird. But so far they have been nothing but supportive and helpful.

Similarly, Michael and David echoed George's sentiments regarding how their presidential colleagues received them. George stated,

Most of them said welcome to our group. I've never detected any sentiments there that, you're not qualified to be in this group. They're very professional and very encouraging and a good group to work with. I feel good being a part of that group.

Larry smugly expressed, "my colleagues have accepted the fact that I have different views about some things. What you don't want to do is agree just because it is easy. So we have kind of made peace with each other. I certainly am non-traditional...and I like it that way!"

With the exception of Steve, overall the presidents indicated that they felt they were fairly well received initially by their colleagues and in their opinion have established a positive working relationship with them. The majority of the participants indicated a respect for their fellow presidents.

Challenges and Disappointments

Many challenges and disappointments faced these new presidents as they started their new career pathway. Some of them included: balancing priorities, the lack of adequate resources, productivity, decision-making, bureaucracy and politics, and change. Although each president faced challenges and disappointments unique to his particular college, many of the challenges and disappointments were similar among the participants.

The lack of adequate human and fiscal resources was certainly a challenge for these presidents. George shared,

There are so many things you want to do in a service capacity and you can't do them all, obviously because of resources, because of not having the right people at the right time and of course, certainly the money. ... You don't like the thought of having to limit what your institution can do and certainly when you've got people wanting certain services.

George continued, "You are not going to have a bottomless stockpile of resources, and you have to really dig to get what you need and generally you are only getting minimally what you need." David said,

The biggest disappointment of all is the lack of adequate resources, that is, a real lack of adequate local resources. I have been extremely disappointed by the inability to raise money from the huge numbers of extremely wealthy here (within the community).

Michael echoed,

Well I guess the only disappointment is that I have not been able to accomplish all that is needed especially on the budget side. It's a disappointment that the resources were not there, and secondly, I guess a disappointment in myself that I have not been able to articulate effectively enough to get the resources anyhow. So I am disappointed that I have not been able to get all that we needed.

Although the lack of adequate fiscal resources was indeed a challenge, other challenges and disappointments noted by the presidents relate to change, decision-making and productivity. David was frustrated with the rate of change. He said,

I have been very disappointed in the rate of change. I was really disappointed that it took me four years to get a new salary pay plan in place. Our institution had a salary plan put in place when the institution was formed. It gave credit for educational degrees and for experience when you came in; it gave no credit for experience here. It was just totally inadequate. But no one here recognized that. They said, well it has always been here, well it's worked. It wasn't working very well as far as I was concerned. In fact, practically all of our staff could have left the college and come back tomorrow and made more money. They would have gotten credit for their employment outside, but they didn't get credit for their employment here. You could go to work for McDonald's and you come to work here and you get credit for that but you are here and you get no credit. So it took a little over four years to get the salary plan in place.

David related further,

It was here, a total lack of recognition of a problem. They didn't have a clue that there was anything wrong with our salary plan. Trustees, faculty, staff, they knew that our salaries were the lowest in the state but they didn't seem to have any comprehension as to why. Totally no recognition.

Communication and change have been also been disappointing for Larry. Having served in the position for a little over six years, he stated,

It took years for me to get people to talk to me here and tell me what they really thought. A president's challenge is to find out what the hell is going on in time to do something about it. ...Don't tell me you are doing it because that's how things have always been done. If you have a better way let's talk about it and I really don't care if you work in the maintenance department and you have a better way to run my office, please come and tell me.

Mark revealed his desire to change the attitudes of adjunct faculty, and to help them to feel ownership in the college and to become ambassadors in the community. He stated,

It seems our biggest challenge, the thing I need to get my arms around, is how do we convince people that a community college can be a place for high performers. We need our adjunct faculty who are all respected professionals in the community and who know the jobs and know the kids, we need them to feel a part of this institution enough such that they are out there talking about it.

Again related to attitudes, one sincere disappointment that Mark expressed involved some members of his staff. He related,

It is frustrating to face people who are so negative right from the start--so that was disappointing. When you see people who are in a position to have such an impact on student's lives and yet they are so unhappy with where they are and are not interested (in changing).

Steve related a productivity challenge that was immediately obvious to him when he assumed the presidency. Steve said, "I started in July and there was nobody around."

One of his administrators continued,

It was July, and I can remember (Steve) calling me and saying where the hell is everybody. I said, well from this point forward you have got to get used to May 21st. Things get to be real quiet real quickly.

Mark and Larry had similar experiences regarding productivity. Mark shared,

We have a lot of faculty, instead of teaching classes like when I went to college, Monday, Wednesday, Friday or Tuesday, Thursday, it's Monday, Wednesday or Tuesday, Thursday, but nobody teaches on Friday. The place is dead on Friday. It seems to me that's not necessarily the best way to serve our students and maybe there is a reason we may need to get more utilization of our physical facilities on Friday. But that is also one (a challenge) that my VP's have said don't rush into that one.

A recent AACC survey asked presidents to identify aspects of the job for which they had not been prepared. "The most frequent response was that they had not fully understood the overwhelming nature of the job" (Shults, 2001, p. 8). Similarly, Mark shared that the most difficult challenge when he joined the community college was not having anticipated how many different priorities he would be faced with—"and all of them high priorities."

In addition, George felt continuous improvement throughout all areas of the college was an important and ongoing challenge. He stated,

The challenges have been for us to continue to improve, to do a better job of everything we are doing, to again prioritize our services and then to help with, in our area particularly, to help with the economic development in our area. And that of course, is a major challenge.

Decision-making was certainly a challenge experienced by these presidents who followed non-traditional pathways. Mark indicated,

People want to be included in the process, and will disagree with an outcome even if they agree with the outcome, if they don't like the way you got there. They don't feel you touched enough of the bases and yet that is not real different from when I was working in state government. That was more of a transition from practicing law and going to a public

position, where before you try to introduce a bill for example, you make sure you talk to everybody who might have any interest in it and gotten them to sign on to it and feel like they are part of writing that bill. (I understand) the need to talk to people in advance and let them know that you really do care what they have to say and that you will try to address it in whatever decision you try to make.

Similarly, Steve saw the challenge in decision-making among the other presidents. He stated,

I mean they (his presidential colleagues) just go on, and on, and on, and on, and what they are talking about is what they talked about the last time and the time before, they just don't move on. Some of them are good, some of them are outstanding and have a good sense of their colleges and the community college in general, but I tell you what, it is tough to make decisions (among the presidents).

Steve continued regarding the decision-making process on campus,

I wasn't really expecting the idealism of the academic community, the purity that some of them feel. The process of the whole engaging event. To me for them to feel that they are the academy. I'm used to 'let's get it done.' I'll hear what you have to say and let's move on. You must engage this community!

Similarly, bureaucracy and politics present challenges especially for two of the presidents. George noted one area of bureaucracy that was more complex in the community college system than in the public school system. He related,

The bureaucracy that is involved in facility construction and the physical capital kinds of things that we do with capital monies, tends to be a little more bogged down and bureaucratic at the community college level than they were at the public schools.

For Larry, the local politics proved challenging. He said,

By far the overwhelming one (challenge) was politics. The local politics were much more intense than I realized. I thought everyone was pretty much for the college and what we needed to do was get clarity as to where we were going and everyone would be on board and we would go forward. It turned out that there was great competition here for resources. Not good relations between public schools and the college. The school board and the college would fight over the same dollars from the county.

Larry shared another interesting challenge. He was distressed with the degree to which his institution was “inbred, the run-down syndrome.” He said,

You need new energy in an organization. If ever there is an example of what happens when a system is closed and continues to recycle the same energy over and over again, this is it. Many of the people got their degrees from the (long-term) president that was here before. He hired all the people. The same knowledge being spun over and over again, the same people had the same ideas because those were the ideas when they came here in 1962. The chief administrators had never been anywhere else.

Indeed, there are challenges and disappointments in today’s community college environment. Most expressed by this group of non-traditional community college presidents were similar: the lack of adequate resources, the slow rate of change, the academic decision-making process, productivity, politics, bureaucracy, as well as the on-going challenge of balancing a multitude of priorities.

Rewards

Although the challenges and disappointments were varied among the presidents, the rewards were very much the same. Every interviewee revealed strongly the participant’s sincere desire to make a difference in the lives of students. Each participant quickly addressed the rewards of being a community college president in a similar manner. Without question, the success of the students was the pinnacle of rewards for every participant. George related,

The rewards have been one of the greatest things. In public schools it is really hard to ever see your rewards. A lot of people may say I am where I am today because of public schools, but the people who help them get there may never realize their victory. Whereas, here I think victory is so much shorter term and you can see it. Particularly the folks who may be displaced workers; they’ve lost their job, possibly graduated from high school fifteen, twenty, twenty-five years ago. Certainly they don’t have a job but they’ve got to work and they are very reluctant to even think about

going back to school and getting any additional training or more education and they are scared to death. But watching those folks come and watching our people take the care and the patience and provide the nurturing that they need to get them over that uncomfortable hump to where they are feeling comfortable and then they really start learning and that all happens fast. Then to see them walk across the stage with a certificate, or a diploma, or a degree, and being a new person, and going into a whole different world, sometimes doubling and tripling the salary they had before has influenced or improved their ego tremendously. They will have a much better quality of life and they know it. Their smile and disposition illustrates that. That is rewarding! So I think that is one of the great things about community colleges is the fact that people who work here do see and feel what they have accomplished because it happens so quickly.

Larry said students would stop him on the street, hug him and say ‘you saved my life.’

Smiling, Larry said, “That feels good!” Michael shared,

Because I had seen the rewards my wife enjoyed as a teacher, I knew the kind of reward I could expect. To change lives, people who have gotten a second or a third, or a fourth chance, that finally made it work, who are now providing for their families or are in rewarding and enjoyable careers and that sort of thing. And that is the real joy of this job. As I see how community colleges affect lives....that is a joy, but not an unexpected joy.

Mark related,

People come up to me and say I went to (his college) and it was so great for this reason, and they will tell me about a particular faculty member, they’ll talk about small class size, they will tell me that they didn’t feel at the time that they were college material and no one else did either, they’ll tell me they didn’t have the financial resources, or they had small children. They came here and because of that support, they had more confidence about themselves and then went on to a four-year school and did these great things. That is by far, that is number one as far as rewards.

Mark continued,

We have a very diverse student body. When we talk about diversity here, it is not simply, race, ethnicity and gender, it’s age, it’s class, it’s profession and for the most part, it’s ambition. They all want different things. It’s not just to try to get all of them an undergraduate degree to move on, we try to get them certification, a different class, something that is either a hobby or that is an adaptation of their vocation. We really try to be so many things.

According to Daughdrill (1988), many people refer to serving as a president as a “calling.” He stated that passion, stewardship and vision are what shape a president’s character. Likewise, Steve echoed a common sentiment among all of the participants when he stated,

I think that is one of the reasons that we are successful here is because we do love the place. People know that. It’s not a job, it’s not a job, it’s a calling almost, and when we have a problem with some folks, they know that what we are doing is out of love for this institution, not any personal agenda.

All of the presidents appeared to sincerely recognize and appreciate the successes of their students. They all exhibited a special love for their college and a passion for the mission of the community college system. And lastly, five of the six presidents exhibited a high degree of contentment with their recently chosen profession.

Drawing from Past Experiences

Introduction

Each president brought to the position a skill set unique to his particular journey to the presidency. However, many of the experiences drawn upon by each participant revealed parallels with those expressed by the others. Political relationships and business processes were two areas that participants appeared to draw from the most. These skills were acquired because of their specific journey. Another skill many of the presidents demonstrated in various ways was their strong interpersonal skills. This trait was more individualized and was exhibited in areas such as public relations, employee motivation, and even in the passion they conveyed for the institution and its mission.

Political Relationships

Mark felt the relationships he had established during his political career would prove beneficial in his new career as a community college presidency. He said,

...by working with state government and knowing what you need to do, those are past experiences that have helped me. I think that helped in being able to talk about what I knew their legislative interests were, what had been the areas they were focusing on during their legislative career, and trying to tie that in to what we were doing here. A lot of it is relationships. I had a lot of those relationships and some of those people have moved into the same areas as well. So I think that has helped, to have those relationships.

Steve felt he had already tapped on his prior political connections to improve the financial position of the college. He stated,

It was a matter of being able to produce by going to the county legislature and for the first time getting an increase and a sponsored share of the funding. My immediate predecessor was unable to do that and there was controversy. And there were problems with the county executive and legislature and name calling, which is never healthy to someone who in fact governs your treasury. So I was able to go in and get some money back here using the connections I had, and the state government to provide some things to the campus.

Michael felt his considerable political experience would aid him immensely in his roll as a community college system president. He related,

I think I brought an understanding of the political process that was important, that might not be something that a campus president would have brought to the job. That certainly is important. And I think I brought people skills that have been important to the job that are not necessarily political. But just how I work with presidents who I can't tell what to do but whom I have got to help them see that my ideas are good and that they should embrace them. And that perhaps relates as much to my being a lawyer and using persuasion on behalf of a client. Here I use persuasion on behalf of the system.

Mark indicated that his experience at the state and federal government level contributed to experiences he now tapped on as a community college president. "In a lot of ways this is a political appointment. You are appointed by a board that is politically appointed and

you serve at their pleasure, so it is really a step away from being appointed by the governor.”

Using Business Practices

Although not all of the presidents came from a business background, there was a common business sense, as contrasted with an academic sense that the presidents brought to the position. An administrator from Steve’s college shared examples of how Steve had utilized his business orientation to enhance customer service and improve efficiencies within the college. She said,

I think there has been a consistent message that (Steve) has given out which is two fold and it stems from a business orientation. One is effective use of facilities and resources and the other is customer friendliness. And the issue of (Steve) coming in that summer and having the empty campus has led to really thinking about how we can use our facilities better. How we can be more productive. And early on there was customer training. And whether the training itself did any good you can debate, but what you can’t debate is the fact that there was a raised consciousness about it. The effective use of resources has led to the consideration for Weekend College and we are really pressing hard to expand the number of people taking summer programs. Again, the whole notion is improving productivity.

David exhibited his strength in fiscal analysis that he obtained from the public sector. He said,

One of the things that I think the faculty and staff here recognize from my business experience is I talk about we can make so much money doing this or so much money doing that, of if we put this much money into something, we will get this much money back from it. And that came out of the business background. Here, we talk about return on investment. We’re going to put this much in and as a result of that we get this much out. I would never have done that prior to being in industry. We are doing significantly more new business and industry training than (this college) had done previously.

From David’s time in the business world he realized the importance of a business plan.

He added,

I was surprised I guess by seeing that so many of the presidents didn't have a real business model for where their institution needed to be going. You don't know what it is, you don't really care, and things are going okay. Another thing too, in business you do realize that what you did last year doesn't matter. It's not what you did five years ago, or what you did last year, it's not even what you are doing today necessarily, it's where are we going to be tomorrow.

Similarly, David said when he joined the organization it did not have a master plan or a master facilities plan. He continued,

We had not even looked at what we were doing in our service area in terms of meeting the needs. ...We were tremendously under-serving the high school population. In 1997 our high school enrollment was 22 and this spring (2002) it was 286. We were tremendously under-serving huge numbers of retirees. (In 1997) we were doing little to support the major industries in the area. (As a result) we spent a lot of time out in the community letting them know what we could do for them in terms of programs.

Larry was quite proud of his non-traditional background and the strengths he feels he brought to the position as a result of his journey. Regarding being a non-traditional, he firmly stated,

...I think that is a strength. Of course, that is self-serving, but the reason I think that is a strength is because of my association with the other presidents. There are those who have been raised here forever and don't have the slightest idea what goes on outside this system. Some of them still think their business is generating FTE's. They don't understand that FTE's are byproducts of serving students. If you do that well, then the FTE's will come. They don't even know how to be progressive. They have this long corporate memory of the community college system. This system, like all systems need a certain degree of new energy. They have great wisdom about things that can happen, but we could use new ideas, a few rabble-rousers. People who have been in this system forever in my view are too conservative, by and large and too FTE driven and not enough customer service. Out in the world, marketing and innovation are your lifeblood. You have to keep moving and trying new things.

Larry passionately continued, as he pounded his desk for emphasis,

Colleges measure outputs in terms of graduates, they don't understand to this day that they are not in the business of producing outputs! They are

producing inputs. If you go outside and you make your living outside in the world where your inputs have to be successful or they won't give you their business, and you charge hundreds of dollars a credit hour, people want their return on investment. A lot of folks have never been there, they've never met a real budget, they've never made a business plan in which the top line, not the bottom line, but the top line is the point of most concern. My background is in business.

By introducing their business savvy the presidents felt they were able to positively affect areas throughout the college. According to the presidents, by blending a business sense with an academic sense, eventually mindset changed and observable improvements to their overall campus climate resulted.

Interpersonal Skills

The presidents draw from their previous backgrounds in serving as leaders in a number of capacities. Their strong interpersonal skills were exhibited in a variety of ways. George spoke of public relations,

I think my experience in public schools is a great advantage for public relations. Public schools today, and over the last couple of decades it has been a time when people were much more prone to voice their criticism. And in essence organize their ranks to attack any issue that they were not comfortable with or didn't like in the public schools. So public school systems had to try to be progressive and to be defensive to the point that you weren't just making up excuses, that you had to defend what you were doing. And that takes a certain public relation skill that you don't acquire until you have experienced it. I think that my dealing with that sort of thing, particularly as a superintendent as far as that goes is real helpful in what I do now with the public. It is a much easier task for the community college in the areas of public relations. People like what we do. Any of the little things that typically come up in that area, that might seem big to people who had never experienced what I had experienced previously, I think I find it easier to deal with.

Accomplishments that Steve felt he had experienced because of his non-traditional background were varied and included,

Fiscal stability. Emotional stability. The fact that they know that I am comfortable with myself in managing. The fact that I was able to bring

some rather extraordinary resources to the campus in a short period of time. I think opening the campus up so the community again feels very positive, extremely positive about this place. I think that is because we are communicating with people and we are reaching out.

One of Steve's administrators spoke of Steve's love and passion for the college,

Everything (Steve) did was going to be under scrutiny when he was here and he passed the test. He loved the place and they knew it from his opening speech. It wasn't a job for him. They like someone who has a passion for the school.

Similarly, David stressed the importance of motivation. He said,

When I came (here) I tried to get people to recognize that if they wanted to be perceived as a leading institution, that they had to be innovative, creative, and just assume that everything they had ever done could be changed to something better. Fortunately in my case, I found a bunch of people here that were creative, innovative and when you turned them loose and praise them for doing innovative things, they took off. I am still amazed at how much (this institution) has been able to accomplish just by turning people loose and just encouraging them to do things, encouraging them to take risks, and not sit on them when they take a risk and are not successful. We haven't been successful on all, but what we have been successful on, we have certainly made sure that everyone knows and everyone recognized that it is great to be innovative. If you are innovative and creative you will be recognized and that hopefully they will get just reward. We have got some terrific people!

In conclusion, Larry shared, "What is the perfect analogy? The answer is some traditional stuff, some new stuff, and a form of experiential diversity. Just as diversity is solving other ways, it is a *strength* to have that." These presidents indeed draw from their past in addressing the day-to-day needs of their colleges. As expressed by the presidents, as well as trustees, colleagues and employees, their leadership skills, their political relationships, their business savvy, and the strengths of their interpersonal skills have resulted in positive developments and changes for these six colleges led by presidents who followed non-traditional pathways.

Collective Profile of Selected Non-Traditional Community College Presidents

Introduction

Three striking, yet simplistic discoveries were revealed from this study that contribute to the collective profile of these non-traditional community college presidents. First, strong leadership characteristics are evident in each of the six participants. Next, an interesting similar succession of former presidents emerged among five or the six presidents. And lastly, the basic discovery that in spite of their non-traditional journey, overall they did not have qualities that made them unique among their traditional community college presidential colleagues. This section will explore each of these common discoveries about this select group of presidents.

Leadership

Many of the attributes of strong leadership have emerged as qualities exhibited by these presidents. Several of these qualities appear to be based on the four cornerstones of exemplary leadership—shared governance, shared vision, shared values, and shared decision-making.

As stated by Kanter (1994), “shared governance simply means collegial decision-making” (p. 229). It was obvious to the researcher that the presidents had a strong conviction toward shared governance and the importance of open communication and empowerment of their employees. Mark related,

My preference is more of shared governance, collaborative decision-making, open sort of providing information. Some of the things we have had here, complaining about the budget, why do you make decisions that way that you do, so I got the budget officer to provide budget seminars. It's no secret; this is how much money we get, this much from tuition, this much from the state, this much from the federal government, here's where it goes, salaries, operations. But it let people see there is nothing mysterious about it.People used to complain a lot about what they call

cabinet here. The president and cabinet, where all these secret decisions would be made. I said let's open that up, let's post our agenda on the intranet, let's post our minutes of those meetings so people will know exactly what we talked about, we don't have anything to hide. But that is just my own way of doing things, some traditional college presidents I'm sure do exactly the same things and some are a bit more autocratic. I don't think it is tied directly from where I came from.

George stressed the importance of empowerment regarding the development of their strategic plan,

We have revised it significantly and I think made it more applicable. I think in order to get faculty buy-in and the input, and you've got to have (it). You really don't have anything if you don't, except something to stick on a shelf. But you've got to get it to be really applicable and really initiated at the grass roots level and this is something kind of different (here). We have tried to take it out of the top, so to speak, and not have it as just a manual sitting on the shelf, but give it back to the faculty and just what is it that you really *are* doing with students and what you *want* to be doing with students.

Similarly, George expressed his practice of shared governance and shared decision-making,

I guess that may be another thing I brought to the college. I like a very democratic kind of management style. There are going to be some decisions I have to make, especially decisions that have to be made quick. But I operate through what I call a president's council, which consists of all the deans and directors, and vice presidents. With a lot of things, we try to communicate well and cover all the bases. And then I meet with my cabinet. I have four vice-presidents, one for instruction, one for physical facilities and budget, and one planning and research and one for student affairs. So we have covered everything right there, and I meet with them every week for about a two-hour period and we deal with everything. They help make the decisions. So I have never been either as a superintendent or here, an autocratic leader. I like to have a leadership team.

Empowerment was important to Steve. It was clear that experience had given him an appreciation for the need to empower his staff. He shared,

Age is an experience that you bring to some entity that allows you to help manage and you feel comfortable with yourself. You're not (trying) to be

the dean also. I mean you have people who are good at what they are doing and you let them do it and get the hell out of the way. And you don't micromanage.

Steve went on,

It is interesting that when situations come to this office, you deal with it, you manage them. It is just experience in dealing with critical issues over the years in other capacities....When someone comes to me with a crisis, (I say) sit down we will talk about it, we'll get it resolved, and they are on their way. It is not a crisis. There is nothing here that I haven't experienced someplace else in a more intense fashion. If you survived like I have survived through those things, then you know how to bring people together. You know how to try to be inclusive, develop consensus.

Steve felt knowing the culture was very important. He shared,

(Community college presidents in this state) have to deal with local elected officials, and power bases, power brokers within all that, and a board of trustees. And if you come in from outside, and it is very political. This state is extremely political, extremely political. If you don't know that, you're going to get eaten up. You've got to know where their lines are and how to maneuver through that.

Mark felt although there were attributes such as new energy, a fresh perspective and various political and community relationships he brought to the position, there really weren't a lot of unique qualities he brought to the position simply because of his non-traditional background. He said,

One of the things I think I have is a lot of connection with minority organizations and minority businesses in town. But a traditional could have had that. I think sometimes there is a fresh perspective or a new energy, but again, a lot of these traditional presidents are able to maintain their energy level and a fresh outlook. Connections to some of the elected officials in the state, having worked with the mayor and city council, having worked with the state and federal government, and having had this free council with mayors and the former governor and to an extent the present governor, those are all good things, but things a traditional person could have had as well. In fact, many of the current community college presidents have strong political connections. So I don't think there is anything special (about the attributes he brings to the position).

For clarification, the researcher said, "What I hear you saying is that it is more the

person, and what he brings as a total package rather than what is labeled as traditional, non-traditional, or to strive for one or the other.” Mark replied,

Yes, that is what I would say. When I talk to some of my colleagues who are presidents, I am very impressed by them. They obviously know their stuff. Being non-traditional, it gives people an opportunity, it gives them ammunition to criticize you if they don’t like your decision, what does this schmuck know about community colleges. He’s never worked at one, he doesn’t know anything about them, he’s clueless. People can always find reasons to criticize you. I would prefer they do it based on actual decisions you have made rather than your background.

A colleague of David’s triangulated the researcher’s initial impression of David’s strong interpersonal skills. He said,

David has really had to turn a board around that had become polarized; had become very partisan. He is in a part of the state where it is truly a two party political system, where you had very sharp divisions between republicans and democrats and partisanship had infected board proceedings. Everything had become political. The board imposed themselves in hiring decisions to reward political supporters and to punish political enemies.

Likewise, Michael shared his broad view of the qualities for leadership. He said,

I have been reasonably successful in our legislative efforts both financial and policy. And as a politician, I think that I related well to people, that is part of it. It is just recognizing what they want out of the relationship and trying to give it to them, but at the same time, provide vision, ideas, and leadership for the system.

The importance of creating an atmosphere of trust, human dignity and recognizing team successes was important to the presidents. Steve’s dedication to mutual respect was reflected when he commented,

We hold everyone here in the highest esteem, custodial workers, food vendors, whatever they are, they work here and they want to be respected. I get quite outraged when someone breaks that contract. And people know that. My ego isn’t that big. I don’t need people saying nice things about me, because in my other life I used to be elected. I had all that crap. I

don't need my name in the paper. I would rather folks give credit to the folks that truly do the thing. I've got a great staff here and I use the word *we* an awful lot. We try to suggest that respecting is great. Creative respect is great, important and if well balanced will pick you up.

Recognizing and rewarding employees appeared to be very important to many of the presidents. David indicated,

The institution's average raise this year was 10 ½ percent. Do you think employees recognize that they did something and know they made a contribution when they get a 10 ½ percent raise? Yeah they care. They managed to produce an 18 percent growth last year and as a result our budget increased this year by \$786,000. We plowed a tremendous amount of that increase back into raises. The institutional average was 10 ½ percent, but there were a significant number of raises higher than that. The minimum raise we gave was 8 ¼ percent. They're happy!

Similarly, Steve related his recognition of the importance of identifying student needs, having a student focus, and being accessible. He said,

We make sure that we are following in the life of the student. I attend the basketball, the baseball, the football, the soccer, and the hockey games. I am involved with them. I allow myself to be at lunch for people to come and talk to me. And I think people feel pretty comfortable coming in. But you're accessible; the kids go by and say hey *prez*, and some even wave at me here with more than one finger.

Steve related that one of the proudest accomplishments since he had been on board was,

Having minority students (approximately 15 percent of his student body) feel comfortable here. I go out of my way to make sure that they feel comfortable and that they get all the resources they need to help them be successful. This might be the last opportunity for some of them to be successful in life and break out of cycles of poverty and welfare.

During the interview process, the presidents revealed their use and support of many leadership characteristics, such as the qualities of shared governance, open communication, empowerment of employees, consensus building, mutual respect and strong interpersonal abilities. In addition, a variety of these characteristics were again

stated by trustees, colleagues and employees in describing the various participants' leadership qualities.

Succession of Predecessors

An interesting and common parallel among five of the six presidents who followed a non-traditional pathway was that at their respective institutions, a long-term successful president was followed by a short-term fairly unsuccessful president or interim president, who was then succeeded by the non-traditional participant. It should be noted that these former presidents were labeled as unsuccessful by various sources other than the participants. One trustee shared his personal opinion as to the reason for this progression of presidents at the college in which he was associated. He said, "We had a very, very, very outstanding president at that school and it seemed to me when we went out for the search that there was going to have to be a 'fall guy' come in afterwards. Quite frankly, our interim handled that very well."

An administrator from Steve's college shared the differences he viewed between the former president and Steve. He said,

The predecessor was in the position about a year and a half. I don't think the former president left willingly. I don't think he was able to leave willingly because he still wasn't able to understand what caused this position to be where it was with the board of trustees and the general community at large. But at some point I think the board of trustees exercised their right to suggest that they were not going to pick up his contract. He did not go easily as you can imagine, and he didn't because he is a traditional academic. We don't measure academics on their performance, we measure them on what we think they are going to bring through some foolish interview process, where anybody who has been in this business six months can tell through the platitudes, 'I'm going to give you low teacher loads, I'm going to make all kinds of committees, we're going to all participate.' What this president had to do was deliver from day one. We already had metrics about what he was capable of doing. What you get in a traditional search is what you know, what people say they are going to do.

Steve added,

The board of trustees was very active on this campus during that period of turmoil, if you will, with my predecessor. The chairman was here all the time; they were basically helping manage this place. (Now) they have given to us, the management team on this campus, absolute authority to manage. I mean before, they would hire a custodial worker. I knew many of them, they knew me, I was a known quantity in this community, in this area, both as county executive and working in the office with the governor and it wasn't as if I was some untested person.

Michael simply stated, "I followed an unsuccessful presidency."

David appeared to strongly support the sentiments of Gibson-Benninger, Ratliff and Rhoads (1995) to "create an environment in which diverse qualities and abilities of students and staff make positive contributions to the organization" (p. 1). David said,

When I came here I think morale was fairly low. We had a large number of fairly creative people who felt they weren't appreciated. They had not been encouraged to be innovative, they had suffered through some long periods of time when the administration and the trustees were fighting with each other and the public image was bad, just all kinds of things that caused them to want to kind of slide back into a hole and not be visible, not attract any attention and stay out of sight. So really all that I had to do was to encourage them to come out of those dark holes and be themselves and be creative.

Steve stated, "There were some things going on here with my immediate predecessor. They were looking for somebody to kind of bring the place back down. It was kind of in turmoil." Similarly, Larry shared, "The traditional way had not worked, the board didn't trust anybody and they wanted someone to come in and bring a little fresh air."

Michael followed a president that had come from a university system. He related,

Being an outstanding university administrator does not necessarily make you a successful community college administrator. Our community college system is very independent with almost all authority vested in the local trustees and the local president. From day one he tried to impose the university model which was not supported either politically or by statute. So he was in trouble from the beginning. He served for three years;

ultimately he and the board came to a mutual parting of the ways. They wanted somebody who could turn things around with the legislature. My predecessor had not only been unpopular with the presidents and the trustees but also with the legislature. And as a result the last couple of budgets had been pretty bad.

Mark related,

The interim ended up being here longer than anyone had really planned at the beginning. They had had one search that ended unsuccessfully and they had to start all over again. So he ended up being here about a full year. And in that year he made some decisions I guess that weren't real popular. In looking at those decisions, they all seems to me to be the right decisions, in fact, most people here would agree that they are the right decisions, but they were just ones that people didn't like, controversial things.

There were certainly similarities in that five of the six presidents came to an organization that as related by several sources, had experienced turmoil in recent presidential leadership. This is indeed an area that demands further study.

Qualities Not Unique to Presidents Following a Non-Traditional Pathway

Perhaps the most striking discovery about these presidents who followed a non-traditional pathway was that they really did not have qualities that made them unique. Although all of them exhibited a number of strong leadership qualities, none of these qualities were unique or exclusively obtained through their non-traditional journey to the community college presidency. In fact, most of the presidents were quick to admit that the characteristics they brought to the presidency were characteristics shared by a number of their traditional colleagues.

None of the presidents felt their non-traditional backgrounds made it easier to introduce changes than someone that had followed the traditional route. Steve said, "It's just a different look at things, that's all. It is a different perspective that someone like myself could bring to bear."

Conversely, Mark shared an interesting personal view regarding the matter of non-traditional versus traditional candidates,

I think there is a lot of talent in the pool already. So I think while search committees and state boards may say we are open to non-traditional candidates, ultimately it is safer to go with folks who actually know how to do, who have been here and can say I know how it works. I think to find people who have the kind of management experience they want, when they say have managed an organization at least the size of this college; the people that are out there in the private sector positions are making a lot more money. I don't know why they would make that switch from running a 600 person private business to running a community college where their salary undoubtedly would be racketed down, unless they really have an interest in education. And I don't know how many people who are not in education, have that passion, especially when they are not actually educating, but are just administrating. But I just don't think that, as small as the pool may be, or if it is shrinking, within community colleges including college administration there is still a much bigger pool of interested applicants in the college, than if you go beyond it. I just think that not many weird folks like me have not figured out yet what they want to do when they grow up. They know, so they are doing it. Of course, I have found something that I hope I can do forever. I enjoy it here very much.

Without question, one attribute that was most evident with every participant was the true passion, the love, and the pride that each one has for the community college, its mission, its students, its faculty, and its vision. Likewise, each appeared to feel a very strong responsibility for his college. Steve humbly shared, "This place is like a family and I am the father, and I take that very seriously. They look to me."

Conclusion

Common themes that emerged throughout the various aspects of the study included: 1) demonstrated leadership qualities; 2) how various relationships and influences impacted the presidents throughout their journey and in their presidential role; 3) an observed and demonstrated passion for the community college and its mission by the participants; and 4) how these presidents were not unique in their leadership,

experiences, challenges, disappointments and rewards in serving as community college presidents.

These presidents did not come to the position with a wealth of knowledge and experience from within the community college system, but they did come with proven leadership skills. These leadership skills were demonstrated through empowerment of their employees; their confidence in their personal abilities that allowed them to admit that they did not come with all the answers and needed to rely on the strengths of their faculty and staff, thus encouraging collaborative decision-making; their vision of what the community college could offer; and, their ability to persuade others to join them in bringing reality to that vision.

Various relationships and influences impacted these presidents. Each of the presidents related examples of relationships that influenced and helped to develop his appreciation for the community college and ultimately guided him toward the presidency. Five of the six men did not initially seek the community college presidency, and only after being approached and encouraged by others did they explore the possibility. They each had strong personal and political relationships that likely aided in their successful appointment, although the selection processes of the six participants were vastly different.

The reward of seeing students grow and succeed appeared to have given these men a personal contentment that ultimately contributed to the perceived success of their leadership. Each president had a commitment to the mission of the community college and the success of the students. Throughout the participant interviews the researcher observed the excitement and enthusiasm demonstrated by the presidents when they talked

about the success of the students and the unique abilities of community colleges to offer various opportunities to its students. Similarly, some trustees and employees talked about the passion that three respective presidents had for the community college mission.

But these presidents were not unique. Aside from being members of an extremely small population of community college presidents, this study revealed to the researcher that these men as non-traditional community college presidents were not unique in their leadership, their experiences, their challenges, their disappointments or their rewards. In conclusion, as observed by the researcher and supported by the participants, there was nothing significant about having followed a non-traditional journey that emerged as unique traits, characteristics, or abilities in these six community college presidents.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

To shepherd the institution successfully through times of change and disorientation, the CEO of the future will need to exhibit both 'charisma' and 'moxie.' While empowering others is crucial to the success of the twenty-first century leader, change also brings conflict and confrontation. Effective leaders will need to be able to face confrontational issues 'head-on' and bring them to a satisfactory resolution (Duncan & Harlacher, 1991, p. 44).

This final chapter is separated into five sections. The first section outlines a short summary of the study. Next, findings of the study are linked to the review of literature; followed by a section suggesting additional implications to the community college presidency revealed from the study. Lastly, recommendations for further research and the conclusion complete the chapter.

Summary of the Study

The literature indicates that there is a potential for an upcoming leadership crisis within the nation's community colleges due to a substantial number of presidential retirements within the next decade (Cohen & Brawer, 1994; Nanus, 1992; Vaughan, 1989). Historically the traditional pathway to the community college presidency has been through the community college's academic ranks. According to a recent study, (Weisman & Vaughan, 2002) only 4.4 percent of all public community college presidents come from pathways outside of higher education.

Problem

Many studies have focused on the overall issues of community college leadership, the presidency, and the leadership skills and characteristics necessary for success in the

community college environment. There is very little research tracing those current community college presidents who followed a non-traditional pathway to the community college presidency. No major studies exist that explore the journey to the presidency, or the challenges, rewards, and disappointments the presidents experienced once in the position. Likewise, no major study exists that takes a collective look at the extremely small population of non-traditional community college presidents and determines what skills and experiences these presidents draw upon from their past to lead a community college in today's challenging educational environment. The purpose of this qualitative research study was to explore the non-traditional pathway and experiences that brought six leaders to the community college presidency between 1990 and 2001, and to analyze the skills and experiences these presidents have drawn upon to lead their respective community colleges, and what challenges, disappointments and rewards they have encountered since assuming the community college presidency.

The study focused upon the following basic research questions, "What was the journey like in following a non-traditional pathway to the community college presidency?" "What has the experience been like as a community college president?" "Collectively, what do these data reflect about the non-traditional community college president?"

Methodology

Given the complexity of this phenomenon, *the non-traditional journey*, a phenomenological approach was selected as the most desirable method to use for this study. As defined by Creswell (1994), the phenomenological study is one in which human experiences are examined through the detailed descriptions of the people being

studied. It provides a level of depth and substance necessary to understand the particular journey as a distinctive *process*. This study made effective use of a naturalistic inquiry method in tracing the journey and the experiences of six individuals who selected a non-traditional career pathway that ultimately led to the community college presidency.

Six presidents represent 20 percent of this total population (Weisman & Vaughan, 2002). These men were identified through contacts with state community college system offices; a community college presidential search consultant; a community college system chancellor; and recommendations from researcher colleagues. The criteria for participants included: a) must be a current or past community college president appointed between 1990-2001; b) must have followed a non-traditional pathway to the community college presidency; and, c) must have not served in a full time faculty or a leadership position in a community college prior to assuming the presidency. Participants represented the career categories of Business/Industry; Government/Political; Public Schools; and, Governmental Education.

Along with in-depth interviews with each president, additional interviews were also conducted with trustees, employees, and colleagues of the participating presidents. In addition, researcher journal notes were kept throughout the entire process.

Analysis

Qualitative methods for gathering and analyzing data were used. Personal interviews, lasting between one and one half and two hours in length, were conducted in the president's office at their respective campuses. Once the initial interview transcripts were prepared a copy was forwarded to the participants and follow up telephone interviews were conducted to verify the accuracy of the first interview transcripts and to

ask the presidents any follow up questions. In addition, interviews with trustees, colleagues, and employees were conducted either in person or via telephone and typically lasted fifteen to twenty minutes. Lastly, the researcher's journal notes and various related documents such as newspaper articles about the participants, as well as copies of speeches and addresses by the participants rounded out the data gathering.

After the interviews were transcribed and edited by the participants to achieve complete accuracy, analysis was conducted using a cross-interview analysis method. A similar process occurred with the journal notes. Then clustering was conducted and patterns and themes were identified in preparation for interpreting and reporting of the findings. (See Chapter 3 data analysis for a more complete description).

Relating the Findings and Interpretation of the Data to the Literature

Introduction

This section explores four major findings revealed through the study: 1) common skills and attributes acquired during the non-traditional journey of these six community college presidents; 2) the challenges and disappointments of these six presidents and how they compare to those reported in the literature; 3) the rewards of these six presidents and how they compare to those reported in the literature; and 4) additional observations related to this specific group of non-traditional community college president as revealed by the study.

Common Skills and Attributes

The similarity of characteristics among the participants indicated that with certain skills and attributes, individuals from a non-traditional background were successful in ascending to the community college presidency. These traits included:

- Strong, proven leadership skills
- Persuasive interpersonal skills and an ability to “sell” themselves and their ideas
- Positive political relationships or influences
- A passion and appreciation for education, particularly the community college and its mission

It is the researcher’s belief that these traits are essential for an individual from non-traditional pathway to be selected for a community college presidency.

Leadership Skills

Roeuche, Baker and Rose (1989) identified through their study of fifty presidents a set of common leadership traits. These included teamwork, shared decision-making, empowerment, valuing people, focus on students, understanding motivation, having a strong value system and a vision for the college. These traits are indicative of a form of presidential leadership that is clearly participative in nature and are consistent with the general definition of participative governance. The study revealed that collectively, the presidents strongly supported and utilized these traits consistently in their leadership.

The leadership skills of the participants often mirrored many of the traits and characteristics designated in the literature as skills of an exemplary leader. Each participant had a strong belief in shared governance, participatory decision-making, and empowerment of his staff. With the exception of one participant, each also had a sincere respect and appreciation for all employees.

Kouzes and Posner (1995) developed a list of five primary practices that guide an individual toward exemplary leadership. These are:

- Leaders challenge the process (p. 318).

- Leaders inspire a shared vision (p. 318).
- Leaders enable others to act (p. 318).
- Leaders model the way (p. 318).
- Leaders encourage the heart (p. 318).

The participants challenged the process. They all spoke of ways that they had already changed or wanted to change the status quo at their organizations. David talked about innovation and how he had encouraged and motivated his staff to be creative and innovative in their ideas. Mark spoke about opening up communication related to things that had often been preserved as secretive such as budget and presidential staff meetings. Each president recognized that he was taking risks, but he was willing to take those risks in an effort to improve the college.

They inspired a shared vision. All of the presidents felt passionately about making a difference. They knew coming in that they “marched to a different drummer,” but they perceived themselves to be visionary leaders, and believed that they had demonstrated their abilities to convince others to join them in their vision. Colleagues talked about David’s ability to bring a local board together that had been sharply divided, to work for a common goal. Likewise, Steve’s administrators spoke of Steve’s keen awareness of the healing process that needed to initially occur at his college following the departure of the former president, but also during that process how he was able to persuade the college to “join his team” and support his vision. Similarly, Michael was successful at presenting his vision and acquiring increased funding from legislators who had not always been supportive of the needs of the community college system in past years.

The presidents enabled others to act. They developed collaborative decision-making and demonstrated trust and mutual respect through empowerment. Harris (1996) described empowerment as the key to developing, cultivating, and building leadership in the community college. Steve's administrators talked about how Steve had listened to them and the faculty and allowed them to do their job. Mark spoke of how he had told the faculty even during his interview that he respected the role they played and was not there to tell them how to do their job, only to support them. Larry talked about how he had encouraged his people to speak up and make suggestions, from custodians to administrators. George talked about his presidential cabinet and their collective decision-making as a "leadership team."

These presidents modeled the way. Their business orientation proved helpful in viewing the broad perspective of community college leadership. Michael, George, David, and Steve's customer, student, and employee focus, Mark, Steve, and Larry's focus on efficiency, and the creative vision of each of the six participants were examples of how they modeled the way for others. Kouzes and Posner (1995) described the presidential leadership role when they stated, "They set the example for others to follow. They understood and modeled how constituents, employees, and students should be treated. They created opportunities for victory" (p. 318).

These men encouraged the heart. The presidents recognized and celebrated the accomplishments of their people. The researcher was impressed by David's modesty when he talked about the successes of his college. He gave the credit for the accomplishments to the faculty and staff. Similarly, Steve spoke of "we" in his organization. He wanted to recognize the successes of his employees. Larry took great

pride in the accomplishments of members of his administrative staff. All six of the presidents spoke of sharing the rewards of team efforts.

Each participant was successful in convincing the respective selection committees that they had the necessary qualities and could successfully lead a community college in the 21st century. Collectively these skills as identified by the participants themselves, included: a) an understanding and appreciation of the skills of the faculty and staff; b) support of collaborative decision-making; c) shared governance; d) the ability to listen; e) the ability of persuasion; f) risk taking and vision; g) an ability to relate to various constituencies and build relationships; and finally, h) a demonstrated ability to lead. Many of these practices are reported in the literature as contributing to the four cornerstones of exemplary leadership: shared governance, shared vision, shared values, and shared decision-making (Roueche, Baker & Rose, 1989; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

Without proven leadership skills prior to applying for a community college presidency, it is the researcher's opinion that it would have been difficult for these individuals to "break into" the role of community college president. Nonetheless, it is also the researcher's opinion that five of the six gentlemen clearly exhibit the skills of exemplary leadership, and the sixth participant also possessed a degree of the characteristics that contribute to exemplary leadership.

Interpersonal Skills

It is the perception of the researcher that these presidents had to be articulate, persuasive, and convincing to have made it through the search and interview process. They were confident and able to "sell" their skills and attributes to the committee

members; thus, convincing them that they were the best candidate to lead each respective college. According to the presidents and also trustees, they were successful in obtaining the community college presidency when competing against many traditional current and former community college presidents with many years of community college experience who had also applied for the position.

During the interviews, it became obvious to the researcher that the majority of the presidents were very good listeners, and this was further reinforced in conversations with trustees, colleagues, and employees. “He listens; he really listens; he listens to what we have to say,” these were common phrases made by faculty, staff, and administrators relative to the presidents. In addition, all of the presidents specifically mentioned how they really made an effort to listen to their faculty and staff. Likewise, in spite of their non-traditional pathway, it was the perception of four of the six that they were initially well received by their presidential colleagues and developed a positive working relationship with traditional presidential colleagues. It is the researcher’s opinion that this occurred in large part because of their strong interpersonal skills.

Of the vast number of essential leadership skills developed by many leadership researchers, one skill is included in virtually all literature, that of strong interpersonal skills. Chieffo (1992) noted that a *people* orientation to an administrative post has the highest correlation to job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The relaxed, yet respectful manner in which the researcher observed the presidents interacting with their faculty and staff again demonstrated their effective interpersonal skills.

It is the researcher’s opinion that the strong political backgrounds of the participants also aided in the development of their keen interpersonal skills. Along their

journey to the community college presidency they each had occasions to learn and appreciate the power of this skill.

Political Relationships

Strong political relationships represent an attribute that is generally not found in the literature regarding effective leadership. However, political relationships were indeed influential in the selection of the six non-traditional community college presidents included in this study. Although political relationships and influences are often thought of in negative terms, that is not the case with these participants. That is not to say that political influences did not perhaps help in their attaining a community college presidency; however, the political influences also proved beneficial for the college.

Cohen and Brawer (1994) indicated that state legislators have become central to the discussion of fiscal issues since community colleges must compete for funding with other state agencies. The strong, positive political ties that many of the participants had clearly helped directly, or indirectly to bring additional resources to the colleges. Steve, Michael, and Mark, gave particular examples of how this had occurred since their appointment. In addition, colleagues of Mark and Michael also spoke of their ability to work thorough former colleagues and political leaders in order to benefit their colleges.

Although David, Larry, and George's political relationships were not tied as closely to legislative and executive branches of government as a result of their journey to the community college presidency, they still appeared to have established positive local and state political relationships that proved beneficial to the presidents, as well as their colleges. George's strong interaction with the community and its leaders, as well as his demonstrated public relation abilities reflected his awareness of the need to maintain

positive political relationships. Similarly, David's success in obtaining much needed funding for capital construction projects to build additional campuses in his service area indicated to the researcher his effective political connections.

Passion and appreciation for the mission of the community college

A common attribute among all of the six presidents was a genuine passion and appreciation for the mission of the community college. This attribute was essential in the researcher's opinion to their successful appointment to the presidency. They were able to convey this passion during their interviews. Although Mark did not have any academic leadership experience he had developed an appreciation for the mission of the community college from the successes of his mother and the rewards experienced by his wife in the education field long before he even considered applying for a presidency. Similarly, Steve had carried a love and appreciation for what a community college can do for an individual because of his personal experience as a young veteran attending the college where he now serves as president. David and Michael first gained their sincere appreciation for the mission of community colleges through their prior relationships with economic and workforce development within the community college environment. Through those relationships they were able to see the impact a community college can have on a student's life. George and Larry's appreciation and passion were quickly developed when they started to research and explore the community college system in consideration for applying for a community college presidency. In spite of the various avenues in which each president came to appreciate the mission of the community college, it was clear to the researcher that every president had a strong belief in what community colleges could offer students. In short, during their interviews, each

participant demonstrated an excitement, an enthusiasm, indeed a passion for what community colleges were able to accomplish and how they personally could make a difference in the lives of community college students.

Challenges and Disappointments

The challenges and disappointments encountered by these non-traditional leaders included:

- Lack of adequate resources
- Productivity and priorities
- Decision-making
- Bureaucracy and politics, and
- Change

Surveys of community college presidents consistently report that one of their major concerns is the lack of sufficient resources to achieve the mission of their institution (Weisman & Vaughan, 2002; Vaughan & Weisman, 1998). Sigmar's (1997) study of twelve community college presidents in Washington revealed that "their biggest problem was lack of funds, that communication with the entire campus was an important first step, and that the most important thing a new president could do was to set goals and start immediately on organizational planning and action" (p. 12). Sigmar (1997) stated that several of the presidents in his study noted that they had failed to understand the depth of feeling that some of the campus had about particular issues, and that they were surprised at how slowly actual change was accepted.

The process of decision-making and change in the educational environment proved challenging to some of the presidents both within their respective community colleges and also at the statewide level. Steve was frustrated with the length of time it takes to make a system-wide decision among his presidential colleagues. Likewise,

David was disturbed by the lengthy process related to the recognition of a problem and the ability to make a change. He simply said, "I have been very disappointed in the rate of change." Mark said, "people (here) want to be included in the (decision-making) process." "I wasn't really expecting the idealism of the academic community...the process of the whole engaging event" shared Steve. Yet, the challenges these presidents faced with decision-making are not unique and have been referenced by presidents in past years. Schuster, Smith, Corak and Yamada (1994) asserted that as the environment of higher education is changing rapidly, institutions are perceived as having poorly designed administrative structures for timely responses and the preference of faculty for consensual decision making processes contributes to the existence of lengthy decision making processes in academic organizations.

Roueché (1996) emphasized the need for trustees, administrators, and faculty to recognize and understand that colleges will never again be like they were in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Societal and economic changes that are affecting the world are also affecting the direction of higher education. Future leadership will need to be visionary and adaptive to change. According to Bennis (1991) higher education leadership must "create an environment that actually embraces change, not as a threat but as an opportunity. I think that's the only way to run an organization in a turbulent world" (p. 152).

Reyes and Twombly (1987) reached a similar conclusion in their discussion of decision-making and governance in the community college. Their contention held that although bureaucratic lines of authority are typically well defined, a political bureaucracy

seemed the appropriate classification for effective governance, just as consensus building and faculty and administrator loyalties were paramount to decision implementation.

As Johnson (1998) stated, "I believe the best opportunity for change comes from inside the college-not by state mandates" (p. 38). Sarantos (1994) also referenced the need for focusing on the internal institutional environment in the assertion that "...an environment can be created that recognizes the constancy of change, values the importance of individual contribution and perspectives and proactively adapts to changing educational forces" (p. 2). According to Roueche, Baker and Rose (1989) "we live in a time of rapid social change. The ability to change appropriately, in fact to determine the nature of the change, is one mark of a successful organization and a successful leader" (p. 34).

It is the researcher's opinion that once again primarily the strong leadership skills of these presidents have aided them as they face daily challenges. Their challenges are indeed not unique. None of the challenges or disappointments expressed by the presidents linked to their non-traditional background or their lack of academic leadership experience.

They each continue to face daily challenges and disappointments, but their challenges and disappointments do not differ greatly from those documented by their traditional presidential colleagues. According to Weisman and Vaughan (2002) the challenges and disappointments of limited resources, resistance to change, and prioritization are encountered by the majority of community college presidents.

Rewards

The overwhelming reward for the presidents was the ability to contribute and share in the successes of students. They expressed joy when they related stories about the success of their students, and in spite of the challenges and disappointments discussed earlier; the presidents shared a genuine sense of contentment. Five of the six presidents appeared to be genuinely happy to be there and be a part of community college education. Steve related his feelings to “a calling.”

Hesburgh (1988) wrote:

Why do people volunteer or allow themselves to be chosen as leaders? I do not know. I suspect that there is an inner calling, a vision that, if accomplished, will leave this a better world (p. 8).

As Daughdrill (1988) wrote, many people refer to serving as a president as a “calling.”

Passion, stewardship and vision shape their character. His description of passion echoes with the definition of spirituality for this research. He wrote:

To me, a college presidency is a calling much like that of a minister. It requires a love for the institution, its history, traditions, people, ideals, and values. It is a passion that consumes one’s thoughts, fills one’s dreams, invades every moment, and shapes every conversation. It is an emotion that cannot be faked. The president is simply too visible to mask true feelings for long.

This love for the institution comes before self. True leaders do not define their work in career terms, for career implies self-orientation that is antithetical to great leadership. They must be willing to subordinate their own desires to the needs of the institution. They must be willing to lose themselves in the institution, fight its battles, foster its values, and advance its goals (p. 82).

Autry (2001) also wrote, “Leadership, or management if you prefer, approached properly, is a calling. Not just a job but a calling” (p. xv).

Contentment is a term rarely used within a leadership context (Crume, 2000). However, many leadership theorists describe various traits, qualities and characteristics of visionary leaders that are similar to the descriptions and definition of contentment. The term contentment is one that is somewhat difficult to define and the term is often used interchangeably with happiness. Warren (1997) defined contentment as a “deep, inner condition of knowing that you have found yourself—and that you are courageously trying to be the person you were meant to be” (p. 7).

As Crume (2000) related, optimism and a sense of contentment, especially expressed through the sheer pleasure of guiding an institution that positively impacts the transformation of people’s lives is widely found in the literature on presidential leadership. Again, the rewards of student success or the contentment of being the leader of an educational institution related to their individual non-traditional pathway. Yet, their joys and pleasures have been echoed by their traditional and non-traditional colleagues alike.

Additional Observations of Selected Non-Traditional Community College Presidents **Succession of presidents**

An interesting and common parallel among five of the six presidents was that at their respective institutions, a long-term successful president was followed by a short-term fairly unsuccessful president or interim president, who was then succeeded by the non-traditional participant. This fact was repeated to the researcher by sources in addition to the participants. One trustee shared his personal opinion as to the reason for this progression of presidents at the college in which he was associated. He said, “We had a very, very, very outstanding president at that school and it seemed to me when we

went out for the search that there was going to have to be a 'fall guy' come in afterwards. Quite frankly, our interim handled that very well.”

As reflected by various individuals, many of the unsuccessful former presidents who had well thought out visions may have failed because of an inability to understand and cultivate the shared values of their various constituencies. As related by administrators and trustees, it appeared that they had hardened themselves against the advice of their own faculty and staff, and consequently lost those followers. The non-traditional incumbents appeared to realize the importance and the need for this following. Similarly, philosophical disagreements with state political leadership demonstrated a lack of shared values, which limited their ability to be an effective leader in an organizational context. This illustrates the importance of shared values; something each of the participants appeared to embrace.

It is important that a president affirms, articulate, implement, and represent the shared values of a college (Shaw, 1999). A great number of leaders have the capacity to formulate an envisioned future for the organization but are challenged by creating the shared values necessary for pursuing the vision (Charan & Colvin, 1999).

Gardner (1990) asserted that the failure of leaders is related to a lack of decisiveness, abuse of power, lack of confidence, pessimism and the inability to win the trust of their constituents. Conversely, unsuccessful leadership is often reflective of constituents' passiveness, apathy and tendency to view themselves as being denied respect.

Although trustees of participants were hesitant to admit that they were indeed seeking a non-traditional candidate, they often indicated that they were not opposed to the

consideration of a non-traditional candidate for the community college presidency.

Nevertheless, the researcher feels that in some cases the trustees and selection committees were indeed looking for “something different” when they selected the non-traditional candidate for the position.

Summary – non traditional presidents are not unique

The presidents did indeed draw from their past experiences. The most noted experiences were: 1) public relations and interpersonal skills; 2) political relationships; and, 3) business orientations. Yet their skills were not unique. Sigmar’s (1997) conclusion was that “those in administrative posts at colleges need to encourage people with vision, energy, commitment, and imagination to take on the challenges of leadership associated with becoming a community college president” (p. 12).

In the researcher’s experience in the community college system, exemplary presidents, as well as average and even poor presidents exist. This is not unique. They come to the positions with strengths and weaknesses, areas of expertise, as well as areas of deficiency. They meet challenges, have disappointments and experience rewards. Similarly, this is what this study has revealed about six presidents who followed a non-traditional pathway to the presidency. They are not unique from other community college presidents. They have strengths and weaknesses, expertise in specific fields and deficiencies in others. Their challenges, disappointments and rewards are not unique. In fact, their most recognizable difference is only that they have not previously working in the community college system.

Implications to the Community College Presidency revealed from the Study

This section explores the implications revealed from this study related to: 1) the future hiring processes of community college presidents; and, 2) the reasons individuals with non-traditional pathways should be embraced and encouraged to apply for community college presidencies. In conclusion, three recommendations are made for further studies related to the community college presidency.

Theories of the traditional presidential pathway

Ironically, Vaughan (1986) stated that the best way to the community college presidency is through the academic pipeline; yet, as soon as a person is in the presidency Vaughan said he must abandon academics in lieu of more pressing presidential demands. He encourages the presidents to permit the academic deans or vice presidents to serve the needs of instruction. As reflected by the sample population in this study, because of the lack of an academic pathway, presidents who followed a non-traditional pathway are not challenged with a desire to hold onto former academic roles. As represented in this study, they are ready to assume the presidential leadership demands immediately and permit the academic deans or vice presidents to meet the needs of instruction.

Empowerment is essential for the president who followed a non-traditional pathway. The participants, as well as members of their staff and trustees, confirmed that the president who followed a non-traditional pathway did not want to serve in the academic dean role, they felt their role was to lead the institution and support the needs of instruction by empowering their instructional academic administrators and the faculty to meet the needs of academics. Rocklin (1999) supported this theory when she suggested that successful presidents must have a horizontal and global view of their institution and the tasks of the

president. She said vice presidents and deans tend to have a vertical view, focusing on their own responsibilities and those of their subordinates. Barwick (2002) said, "The position of president is so different from any other position in a community college that no other position, in itself, provides adequate preparation for it" (p.8).

Hiring Processes

The study revealed that the mindset of those serving on selection committees must change in order for the percentage of presidents following non-traditional pathways to increase. Through this study, the researcher discovered that the leadership challenges of the 1960s when the community college boom occurred would likely be repeated within the next decade. During the formation of many of the community colleges, founding presidents did not have academic or even community college experience (Vaughan, 1989). Many had never before been in the community college system.

Although organizations such as the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), the American Council on Education (ACE), and AACC-affiliated organizations are strategically planning for the impending leadership turnover; they do not appear to be strongly considering candidates from outside of the community college environment. Most programs seem to target people already in the community college system. With approximately 800 out of 1150 current presidents being replaced in the next ten years, and with similar large numbers of faculty and current administrators nearing retirement, community colleges may well consider looking outside of education to fill many of these presidential vacancies. It is the researcher's opinion that more than ever before search committees will need to look at experience much more broadly.

With the changing role of the community college presidents, the skills necessary for success will likely change. Search committees must realize this changing role. With resources declining more efficiencies are needed; skills in fund raising are helpful; and strong political relationships are an asset. With these changing roles, it is possible that even those community college veterans that have been aspiring for a community college presidency may need to evaluate the future roles and tasks of the community college presidency. Chances are that many of the tasks they currently enjoy in their job in the community college system will not be the tasks demanded of the community college president in the 21st century.

“Most community college watchers seem to agree that the next generation of leaders will need a much wider range of skills and attributes than generations before” (Kelly, 2002, p. 7). Yet, Roueche said, “The people who follow the departing leaders are going to have to work hard to develop the skills beyond the skills of traditional community college leaders,” (Kelly, p. 8).

Non-traditional candidates are not being encouraged or embraced by leading community college organizations. This is troubling to the researcher. Through this study the research has revealed that at least five of the six non-traditional community college presidents interviewed were exemplary leaders as defined in the literature and have a strong dedication to the philosophy of the community college mission. Yet, Dr. George Boggs, president of the American Association of Community Colleges said, “We need a leader who can understand and defend the community college mission and core values” (Kelly, 2002, p. 9). Boggs said he fears that business and university leaders may not

necessarily share community college commitment to open access and opportunity for all students.

Faculty representatives also express misgivings about recruiting from the private sector. One concern is that business people would not respect the shared-governance model that gives faculty and other constituencies a strong voice in decision-making (Kelly, 2002, p. 9). Counter to the literature, this sample of non-traditional community college presidents had an overwhelmingly strong commitment to shared governance. Still, there appears to be a negative mind-set regarding the consideration of presidents from outside of higher education. “In the business world, the models of leadership are not really built on shared governance,” said Jonathan Lightman, executive director of the Faculty Association of Community Colleges of California. “Our system is a unique system unto itself. So it’s a pretty heavy position to come into without any experience,” said Lightman. This area of research demands further attention.

Recommendations for Further Research

Recommendations for further research emerged from this study of the non-traditional journey of a selected group of community college presidents and the review of literature. Three studies are proposed, with varying samples, populations and research approaches.

First, the researcher recommends a follow-up phenomenology research design that would model this study. To maximize the study, it should include 100 percent of the non-traditional population. In addition, more in-depth follow-up interviews could be conducted with the trustees, colleagues, and employees, as well as selection committee members. Findings from a companion study would support the original findings or

provide contrasting data. The same question protocol and all aspects of the first study should be repeated to ensure consistency.

Another study would explore the history of the succession of community college presidents. A combined quantitative and qualitative method is recommended for this study. Quantitative research would quantify such things as the length of time in the position of the immediate predecessor to the current president; strength of previous president's leadership; length of tenure of his/her predecessor; strength of that president's leadership; length of time in position of the current president; and, traditional or non-traditional background of each president. For the qualitative research, questions could be asked such as: Are presidents appointed immediately following a long-term successful president often short-lived in that presidential position? If so, what are the reasons? Does a "fall-guy" need to serve immediately following a long-term successful president in order for healthy transition to eventually occur? Do search committees when replacing an unsuccessful president often seek non-traditional candidates? All community college presidents throughout the United States should be included in the quantitative study. Then based on the findings, a select group of 8-10 presidents should be selected for the qualitative study.

A third recommendation would be a study involving an in-depth analysis of the entire presidential selection and hiring processes within the community college systems. This would include a study of the identification of criteria for the vacancy announcement, job description, selection and interview processes, and ultimate hiring and orientation processes. A major focus would be related to the search for a traditional versus non-traditional candidate, and the preconceived ideas of the selection committees related to

attributes for a successful community college president. Important research questions to answer would be: What does the vacancy announcement portray about the candidate they are seeking? Are faculty and administrators open to non-traditional candidates? If not what are the reasons? How often are community college presidential vacancies filled without conducting a nationwide search? What are the justifications?

Conclusion

A final conclusion from this study, reinforced by related literature, is the theory that most community college leaders ascend to the presidency from the traditional academic route (Weisman & Vaughan, 2002; Rocklin, 1999; Kubula, 1999; Vaughan, 1986; Cohen & March, 1974). Only approximately four percent of the entire identified community college presidential population comes to the office from a route other than education. Although this fact was never disputed, the research from this study only adds further to the theory that non-traditional pathways do not typically lead to the community college presidency.

“Although there is no specific blueprint for college leadership, certain skills have been identified as important for effective presidents, including the ability to bring a college together in the governing process; the ability to mediate; having a good command of technology; maintaining a high level of tolerance for ambiguity; understanding and appreciating multiculturalism; and the ability to build coalitions” (Vaughan & Weisman, 1998). As a group, the non-traditional leaders in this study possess these skills. Likewise, the participants in this study brought to the position a more than adequate exposure to the top five priorities cited by a 1998 AACC study, for the use of a

community college president's time: 1) planning; 2) fund raising; 3) personnel issues; 4) budget; and, 5) community relations (Ross & Green, 2000).

“Like politicians, today's higher education candidates usually fare best if they are articulate, photogenic, and skilled in the art of self-promotion” (Lovett, 2002, p.2).

“A number of successful community college leaders have been selected from among four-year college and university administrators, K-12 public school superintendents, business and industry, and the non-profit sector” (Rocklin, 1999, p. 2). The researcher disputes this claim. To define less than six percent of the community college presidential population; and, four percent if educational experience is excluded, as “a number” sends a false impression to the reader. Today candidates who have followed a non-traditional pathway face difficult challenges in seeking a community college presidency. Mindset changes will need to occur within faculty, selection committee members, as well as administrative ranks in community colleges and community college support agencies before significant increases will be seen in this area.

This study does not dispute that the traditional academic pathway is the most successful pathway to the community college presidency. However, the study does reveal that regarding the sample used in this study, non-traditional pathways can indeed lead to exemplary leaders and ultimately successful community college presidencies. As the leadership crisis approaches during the next ten years, it is the researcher's opinion that trustees, administrators, faculty, and others involved in the selection of presidential candidates should also consider those candidates who have not followed the traditional academic pathway as viable future community college presidents. The current literature has focused on what it takes to get a job as a community college president. By focusing

on the non-traditional pathway to the community college presidency, this study has revealed not what it takes to get the job, but what it takes to do the job.

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Appendix A

Initial E-mail Correspondence with Participants

Dear Dr. (name),

I am a Ph.D. student at Colorado State University. I am writing my dissertation on "Tracing the Non-Traditional Journey of Selected Community College Presidents." During the next ten (10) weeks, I will be interviewing eight (8) non-traditional pathway presidents to explore their unique pathway and what brought them to the community college presidency. **I understand that you followed a non-traditional pathway to the presidency at ----- and would like to ask if you would consider being a part of my study.**

Your participation would include:

- A. a (1) to two (2) hour interview in person, preferably on your campus;
- B. a follow-up interview by phone that would last no more than one (1) hour; and
- C. your review of the transcripts from our conversations (estimated time of no more than one hour).

All of the interviews will remain confidential, and the only identifiers in the dissertation will be demographic and classification descriptions of you and your institution.

I appreciate your consideration of this request. If you would be gracious enough to participate, please reply to this e-mail and I will place a follow-up phone call to your office to arrange for a brief phone meeting to answer any questions you might have and to schedule a time for my visit to your campus. I have enclosed some biographical information about me below. Thank you again, and I look forward to receiving your return mail.

Sincerely,

Joyce A. Cross

Biographical Information

Work History

2001-currently, Dean of Financial and Administrative Services, Dabney Lancaster Community College, Clifton Forge, VA

1999-2001, Dean of Financial and Administrative Services, Lord Fairfax Community College, Middletown, Virginia

1996-1999, Director of Business and Facilities, Blue Ridge Community College, Weyers Cave, VA

1988-1996, Senior Accountant, Dabney Lancaster Community College, Clifton Forge, VA

1987-1988, Personal Account Representative, Virginia Power Company, Lowmoor, VA
1974-1987, Bank Teller, Mountain National Bank, Clifton Forge, VA

Education

2001, A.B.D., Ph.D. Education and Human Resource Studies, Community College
Leadership, School of Education, Colorado State University, Ft. Collins, CO
1996, MBA, School Of Business, Colorado State University, Ft. Collins, CO
1990, BA, Business Administration, Mary Baldwin College, Staunton, VA
1987, AA&S, Business Management, Dabney Lancaster Community College, Clifton
Forge, VA

Appendix B

Letter Confirming Interview President

<Date>

<President's Name>

<Campus Address>

<Institution>

<Street Address>

<City>, <State> <Zip>

Dear <Dr. or Mr./Ms.> <Last Name>,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my dissertation research on community college presidents who followed a non-traditional pathway to their presidency. I look forward to our Thursday, <Month><Day>, 2001 meeting. This will be my first trip to your campus, and I thank you for your kind invitation to come visit.

Ms. <Secretary/Adm. Asst. Name> has scheduled an hour and a half for the interview. I have a question protocol that focuses on exploring your unique pathway to the community college presidency. This is only a guide for initiating our conversations and I indeed encourage you to share stories and personal antidotal experiences that trace your journey to the presidency, yet may fall outside this original question protocol. I do ask permission to record our conversation on audiocassette tape for transcription purposes. However, all conversations will clearly remain confidential, and descriptions of the presidents interviewed in the dissertation will feature only generic demographic information.

I have enclosed a copy of the Informed Consent Agreement for your signature. I can collect this form before we start the interview. This is a standard informational release form approved by the Human Subject Review Committee at Colorado State University. I will be more than happy to answer any questions about this document before we begin the interview.

Again, thank you for participating in this study. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or comments about our visit. I look forward to meeting you during our meeting in <Month>.

Sincerely,

Joyce A. Cross

Appendix C

Letter Confirming Interview Trustee

<Date>

<Trustee's Name>

<Street Address>

<City>, <State> <Zip>

Dear <Dr. or Mr./Ms.> <Last Name>,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my dissertation research on the selection of community college presidents who followed a non-traditional pathway to the presidency. I look forward to our Thursday, <Month><Day>, 2001 telephone interview.

Ms. <Secretary/Adm. Asst. Name> has scheduled a half hour for the interview. I do ask permission to record our conversation on audiocassette tape for transcription purposes. However, all conversations will clearly remain confidential.

I have enclosed a copy of the Informed Consent Agreement for your signature. I ask that you return this form to me by mail to—175 Rolla Mill Road, Verona, VA 24482. I will need to have this form in my possession prior to the beginning of the telephone interview. This is a standard informational and release form approved by the Human Subject Review Committee at Colorado State University. If you have any questions about the form or the interview, please contact me at (540) 863-2801.

Again, thank you for participating in this study. I look forward to talking with you on <Date>.

Sincerely,

Joyce A. Cross

Appendix D

Question Protocol - President

<President's Name>

<Institution>

<Date>

1. What was the journey like in following a non-traditional pathway to the community college presidency? Please describe what motivated you to want to step away from your former career pathway to apply for and ultimately assume a community college presidency.
2. Why do you think you were appointed to this position? Please describe experiences and accomplishments from your background that assisted you in meeting the elements of the presidential profile and ultimately landing the community college presidency.
3. What has the experience been like as a community college president? Please describe challenges, disappointments, and rewards that have occurred during your presidency and how you drew upon your background and experiences along the non-traditional pathway to aid you in dealing with these issues.
4. Please give examples of how you continue to draw upon your individual and unique background, experiences, and accomplishments during the non-traditional journey in addressing the various challenges of your job today.

Appendix E

Question Protocol - Trustees

1. I have a consent form I need you to read and sign. The form explains that you will not be identified by name in my dissertation and that all comments are confidential. Do you have a fax number or mailing address so I can forward the form to you? Would you prefer to read over the consent form before I continue?
2. What were the qualities you were looking for in a president when you selected _____?
3. Were you specifically looking for someone with a non-traditional background? Someone who was not already in the community college system.
4. Why did you select _____? How did he meet the presidential profile you were looking for?
5. Do you think his non-traditional background has been an influence on his leadership? Do you view that as an asset? Do you see him drawing upon his background and experiences in dealing with community college issues and challenges? Could you give me any examples?
6. Was he well received with the board and associates even though he had a non-traditional background and did not have a doctorate?

Appendix F

Colorado State University Informed Consent To Participate in a Research Project - President

Title of Project: Tracing the Non-Traditional Journey of Selected Community College Presidents

Name of Principal Investigator: Timothy Davies, Ph.D.

Name of Co-Investigator: Joyce A. Cross

Contact Name and Phone Number for Questions/Problems:

Researcher: Joyce A. Cross, 175 Rolla Mill Road, Verona, VA 24482, H: (540) 248-2637; W: (540) 863-2801

Advisor: Timothy Davies, Ph.D., School of Education, Colorado State University, Ft. Collins, CO 80525; W: (970) 491-5199

Purpose of the research study: The purpose of the study is to explore the non-traditional pathway and experiences that brought you to the community college presidency during the past decade, and what skills and experiences you draw upon from your past to lead a community college in today's challenging educational environment. For the purpose of this study, the researchers have simplistically defined a non-traditional pathway to the community college presidency as one that never included a formal community college leadership position.

As a participant, you will agree to participate in two interviews. During these interviews you will be asked to share your thoughts, perspectives, experiences as you followed the non-traditional pathway to the community college presidency. The first interview will be conducted in person on your campus or another suitable location. The second interview will be conducted by telephone or in person, and this interview will be an opportunity for both the researcher and you to address any questions or confirm details mentioned in the first interview. These interviews will be recorded on audiotape. Finally, you will have an opportunity to review the final transcripts of these interviews for accuracy. You will spend no less than one (1) hour and no more than two (2) hours in the first interview, and approximately one (1) hour in the second interview. The total study will require approximately three (3) hours.

Page 1 of 2 Subject initials _____ Date _____

Risks Inherent in the Procedures: There are no known risks. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, but the researchers have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown risks.

Benefits: The participant will benefit from participation by the knowledge that he/she contributed to information regarding the non-traditional journey to the presidency. This information could help others seeking a community college presidency either by traditional or non-traditional pathways.

Confidentiality: The information that you provide in the study will be handled confidentially. Your information will be identified in the dissertation only by general descriptive information about you and your institution (e.g.: 53 year-old female president of a community college in the southeast). Your name and the name of your institution will not be used in any report. Your audiotapes will be destroyed after the transcription. Because your name will not appear on tapes or transcriptions, your participation will remain confidential.

Liability: 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.

Questions about subjects' rights may be directed to Celia S. Walker at (970) 491-1563.

Participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty.

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 2 pages.

Participant name (printed)

Participant signature

Date

Co-investigator signature

Date

Page 2 of 2 Subject initials _____ Date _____

Appendix G

Colorado State University Informed Consent To Participate in a Research Project - Trustee

Title of Project: Tracing the Non-Traditional Journey of Selected Community College Presidents

Name of Principal Investigator: Timothy Davies, Ph.D.

Name of Co-Investigator: Joyce A. Cross

Contact Name and Phone Number for Questions/Problems:

Researcher: Joyce A. Cross, 175 Rolla Mill Road, Verona, VA 24482, H: (540) 248-2637; W: (540) 863-2801

Advisor: Timothy Davies, Ph.D., School of Education, Colorado State University, Ft. Collins, CO 80525; W: (970) 491-5199

Purpose of the research study: For the purpose of this study, the researchers have simplistically defined a non-traditional pathway to the community college presidency as one that never formally included a community college leadership position.

As a participant, you will agree to participate in one telephone interview approximately thirty minutes in length. During this interview you will be asked to share your thoughts, perspectives, experiences in selecting a community college president from a non-traditional pathway. This interview will be recorded on audiotape. Once the interview is transcribed you will have an opportunity to review the final transcripts for accuracy. The total study including transcript review will require approximately one (1) hour. A final telephone call will be made to verify transcript accuracy prior to any data from the telephone interview being included in the study.

Risks Inherent in the Procedures: There are no known risks. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, but the researchers have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown risks.

Benefits: The participant will benefit from participation by the knowledge that he/she contributed to information regarding the selection of presidents following a non-traditional journey to the presidency. This information could help others seeking a community college presidency either by traditional or non-traditional pathways.

Page 1 of 2 Subject initials _____ Date _____

Page 2

Confidentiality: The information that you provide in the study will be handled confidentially. Your name and the name of your institution will not be used in any report. Your audiotapes will be destroyed after the transcription. Because your name will not appear on tapes or transcriptions, your participation will remain confidential.

Liability: 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.

Questions about subjects' rights may be directed to Celia S. Walker at (970) 491-1563.

Participation: Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty.

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 2 pages.

Participant name (printed)

Participant signature

Date

Co-investigator signature

Date

Page 2 of 2 Subject initials _____ Date _____

Appendix H

Thank You After Initial Interview President

<Date>

<President's Name>

<Office of the President>

<College>

<Street Address>

<City>, <State> <Zip>

Dear President <Last Name>,

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to participate in my dissertation research. I sincerely enjoyed my visit and our conversation about your pathway to the community college presidency. Your experiences, insight and perspective provided very valuable data for my research.

I am in the process of transcribing our interview, and I will forward that to you for review within the upcoming weeks. After mailing it to you, I will contact your office to schedule a follow-up phone conversation. This interview will last no more than one hour. I have a few additional questions, and I would appreciate it if you would review the transcript to make certain these comments appropriately reflect your thoughts. Please remember transcripts do not make good literature! The purpose is to convey ideas, and the form or flow is secondary to the richness of the responses.

Again, thank you for participating in this study. I look forward to our next conversation about the experiences on your journey to the community college presidency.

Sincerely,

Joyce A. Cross

Appendix I

Thank You After Initial Interview Trustee

<Date>

<Trustee's Name>

<Street Address>

<City>, <State> <Zip>

Dear Trustee <Last Name>,

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to participate in my dissertation research. I sincerely enjoyed our telephone conversation about the selection process of non-traditional community college presidents. Your experiences, insight and perspective provided very valuable data for my research.

I am in the process of transcribing our interview, and I will forward that to you for review within the upcoming weeks. After mailing it to you, I will contact your office to schedule a follow-up phone conversation. This interview will last approximately twenty minutes. I have a few additional questions, and I would appreciate it if you would review the transcript to make certain these comments appropriately reflect your thoughts. Please remember transcripts do not make good literature! The purpose is to convey ideas, and the form or flow is secondary to the richness of the responses.

Again, thank you for participating in this study. I look forward to our next conversation about your experiences as a trustee in the selection of a non-traditional community college president.

Sincerely,

Joyce A. Cross

Appendix J

Analysis Code

TRACING THE NON-TRADITIONAL JOURNEY OF SELECTED COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS

Open Coding

- I. The Journey to the Presidency**
 - INF: Influences**
 - MOT: Motivation**
 - PPR: Presidential Profile**
 - PSP: Presidential Search Process**

- II. The Experiences as a Community College President**
 - CHA: Challenges**
 - DIS: Disappointments**
 - REW: Rewards**
 - DRW: Drawing from the journey**

- III. Emerging Profile of Selected Non-Traditional Community College Presidents**
 - LDS: Leadership**
 - PSK: People skills**
 - SUS: Followed long-term successful, short-term unsuccessful predecessors**
 - XUN: Not unique**
 - PAS: Passionate**

AXIAL CODING

I. The Journey to the Presidency

- INF: Influences
ED: Education
CR: Career
SP: Spouse
FA: Family
PO: Political
MT: Military
CO: Colleagues/Friends
- MOT: Motivation
CG: Change
DI: Making a difference
AR: Approached by others
CO: Colleagues/Friends
PO: Political
PE: Personal (coming home)
- PPR: Presidential Profile
AP: Why appointed
LD: Ability to lead
PS: People skills
PO: Political
PR: Public relations with business/industry; community; institution
RD: Research Documents (vacancy ad, job description)
- PSP: Presidential Search Process
SP: Search and Interview Process
TR: Traditional
NT: Non-Traditional
ED: Education
CR: Career
PO: Political
CO: Colleagues/Friends
RD: Research Documents

II. The Experiences as a Community College President

- CHA: Challenges
FI: Fiscal
ED: Education
CG: Change
BR: Bureaucracy
RE: How received
- DIS: Disappointments
FI: Fiscal
BR: Bureaucracy
CG: Change
- REW: Rewards
DI: Making a difference
CG: Change
- DRW: Drawing from the journey
PR: Public Relations
PO: Political

LD: Leadership
 PS: People skills
 FC: Facing challenges

III. Emerging Reflection (Image) of Selected Non-Traditional Community College Presidents

LDS: Leadership
 TU: Trustee view
 RJ: Researcher's Journal
 RD: Research Documents (inaugural address, speeches, vacancy ad, etc)
 OT: Others (Interview and Literature Review)
 DE: Decision-making
 PSK: People skills
 TU: Trustee view
 RJ: Researcher's Journal
 RD: Research Documents
 OT: Others
 AP: Appreciate others
 SUS: Followed long-term successful, short-term unsuccessful predecessors
 TU: Trustee view
 RJ: Researcher's Journal
 OT: Others
 ENV: Environment
 RJ: Researcher's Journal
 CH: Change
 XUN: Not unique
 TU: Trustee view
 RJ: Researcher's Journal
 RD: Research Documents
 OT: Others
 PAS: Passionate
 TU: Trustee view
 RJ: Researcher's Journal
 RD: Research Documents
 OT: Others

SELECTIVE CODING

I. The Journey to the Presidency

- INF:** Influences
ED: Education
CR: Career
SP: Spouse
FA: Family
PO: Political
MT: Military
CO: Colleagues/Friends
- MOT:** Motivation
CG: Change
DI: Making a difference
CO: Colleagues/Friends
PO: Political
PE: Personal (coming home)
- PPR:** Presidential Profile
LD: Ability to lead
PS: People skills
PO: Political
PR: Public relations with business/industry; community; institution
RD: Research Documents (vacancy ad, job description)
- PSP:** Presidential Search Process
TR: Traditional
NT: Non-Traditional
ED: Education
CR: Career
PO: Political
CO: Colleagues/Friends
RD: Research Documents

II. The Experiences as a Community College President

- CHA:** Challenges
FI: Fiscal
ED: Education
CG: Change
BR: Bureaucracy
- DIS:** Disappointments
FI: Fiscal
BR: Bureaucracy
CG: Change
- REW:** Rewards
DI: Making a difference
CG: Change
- DRW:** Drawing from the journey
PR: Public Relations
PO: Political
LD: Leadership
PS: People skills

III. Emerging Profile of Selected Non-Traditional Community College Presidents

LDS:	Leadership
	TU: Trustee view
	RJ: Researcher's Journal
	RD: Research Documents (inaugural address, speeches, vacancy ad, etc)
	OT: Others
PSK:	People skills
	TU: Trustee view
	RJ: Researcher's Journal
	RD: Research Documents
	OT: Others
SUS:	Followed long-term successful, short-term unsuccessful predecessors
	TU: Trustee view
	RJ: Researcher's Journal
	OT: Others
ENV:	Environment
	RJ: Researcher's Journal
	CH: Change
XUN:	Not unique
	TU: Trustee view
	RJ: Researcher's Journal
	RD: Research Documents
	OT: Others
PAS:	Passionate
	TU: Trustee view
	RJ: Researcher's Journal
	RD: Research Documents
	OT: Others