

DISSERTATION

THE EXPERIENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT
IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY

Submitted by

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School of Education

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, CO

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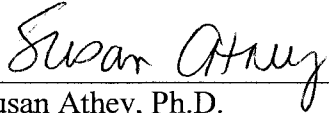
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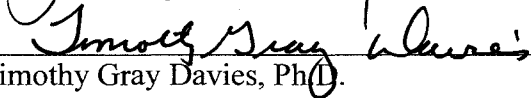
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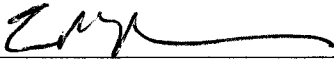
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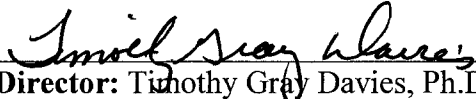
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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

THE EXPERIENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY

Organizational commitment impacts organizations in several ways and is important for organizations to understand how this is experienced by employees. Having committed employees creates a positive organizational climate that is conducive to effective working relationships (Meyer & Allen, 1997). The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand the phenomenon of how community college faculty experience organizational commitment. Committed faculty members can translate the college's goals into the creation of positive learning environments which, in turn, can affect student outcomes and the campus climate. Phenomenology is a methodology that identifies the "essence" of the human experience and gives the researcher an opportunity to explore with participants their multiple experiences (Creswell, 2003).

Nine recently tenured faculty were interviewed to understand their lived experiences as community college faculty about organizational commitment. The interviews were open-ended and in-depth to discover the unique, layered experiences that allowed the participants to discuss relevant and perhaps unanticipated topics related to their commitment. As phenomenological data analysis was applied, five thematic structures were identified: (a) Service Attitude; (b) Types of Commitment; (c) Collegial Responsibilities; (d) Collegial Relationships; and (e) Institutional Support. These thematic structures merged into three Dimensions of Organizational Commitment that described and explained participants' experiences: (a) Individual Expectations;

(b) Positive Experiences; and (c) Negative Experiences. The meaning of participants' experiences is described and explained through the essence of *Courtship*.

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I am thankful to the District and Colleges who opened their doors to this research. My gratitude goes out to the participants who gave their time, stories, and insight into this experience. Their words gave meaning to an experience and research that would have not been possible without them.

This journey would not have even begun without the encouragement and continued support from my former Colorado colleagues: Barb Tansey, Dom Latorraca, and Ted Snow. This adventure would not have continued without my colleagues at Folsom Lake College who encouraged me to keep moving forward, especially Ruth Chavez Nielsen, Sue Lorimer, and Stu Van Horn. I sincerely appreciate the kindness of words, cups of coffee, and glasses of wine from the Farrell Family and the Costa Boys. On the days that I felt like quitting I looked to the memory of Ellen Shide Crannell to encourage me to go on.

I am most grateful for my family. They have been my strength since the beginning. There is my Grandma Larrieu who taught me to enjoy life, appreciate what I have, and never miss an opportunity. There is my Mom and Gary who supported me in ways that cannot be counted nor

repaid. Then there is Tom, kane nohea, ohana ha'awi holo'oko'a a hele ola pu ikaika. Mahalo.

Finally there is my son, Benjamin, who was 5 years old when I began this adventure. At 11 years old he has spent at more than half of his life with Miguel and me. I appreciate his patience with this "writing project" and know that when he is older he will understand the meaning of this experience.

DEDICATION

For Benjamin

This present began as a choice to live,
Moved into an adventure of the soul,
An experience of a lifetime.
Our journey continues as a labor of love.
The future is your present.
From me to you.
With love.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

My Story

I love listening to and telling stories. I love language, words, and the creation of meaning. There is nothing better than sitting around sipping coffee or wine and swapping stories about life, love, comedy, tragedy, real or imagined. In every story there is a purpose, a lesson, a piece of advice. In each exchange there is something that changes who you are.

My love of stories comes from my childhood. I grew up in a very large Mexican and German American family. Our lives revolved around our family. Every Sunday afternoon we would go to my grandparents home to share a meal with other members of my family. Inevitably, we would gather around the back patio and listen to my uncles tell tales. My favorite thing to do was to ask for a story, listen to it, and figure out how it had changed from the last time and, of course, question the changes.

I carried my love of stories with me to college. I was a lost undergraduate student at New Mexico State University until I stumbled onto a course in Reader's Theatre. I not only found myself, but a major: Communication Studies. I thrived on learning about the "theatre of the mind" and I was amazed that storytelling is considered an art form. I loved the study of voice, audience, and space. All that I intuitively knew about storytelling had a name to it. I eventually composed, adapted, interpreted, performed, and directed several texts in the realm of oral interpretation literature. I continue to write and perform at local open mic nights.

My favorite stories are personal. One of my favorite stories to tell is the story of “How Monica became a Dean.” It goes like this: I was born and raised in a community college atmosphere. My home community college is College of the Desert (COD) in Palm Desert, California. I spent most of my childhood at COD. Someone from my family has always worked or studied at the college since the beginning of the college. Whether it was my Grandma Larrieu who worked as a cashier in the dining hall and who tells us stories of serving at parties at the home of the first president of the college, or my father who worked as a gardener for the college there has always been a connection. My mother has a great story of her own. She began her life at COD as a student, a bookstore clerk, teaching assistant, an English as a Second Language teacher, counselor, and Division Chair of Developmental Education in a span of 28 years. To this day, my Uncle Charles is head of facilities and my sister is a student at COD. I, too, was a student at COD and that was where I began my community college teaching career as adjunct faculty in Speech Communication. COD, for me, was the “community’s college.” My family’s life revolved around what was happening at the college and many of my childhood stories are associated with activities at the college. I could go on forever about stories that involved COD: homecomings, street fairs, bingo, registration, amnesty, performing arts series, basketball coaches, soccer tournaments, asbestos, Wassail bowls, dance recitals, and high dives at the swimming pool. Each story in itself would tell you what it was like to be a part of something bigger than yourself and being a part of an extended family. My experiences at COD are an integral part of my life. Therefore, it was natural for me to gravitate to community college teaching as my career. I knew what it was like and wanted to be a part of a community college family.

I earned my bachelor's and master's degrees in Communication Studies with an emphasis in Intercultural Communication from New Mexico State University. In graduate school I began my teaching career as a graduate teaching assistant. After graduation I spent a year as an adjunct faculty member at COD.

In 1991 I accepted a tenure track faculty position in Communication Studies at West Valley College (WVC) in Saratoga, California. At that time there were very few full-time tenure track faculty positions open in California. When I accepted the position, I really felt I had won the community college faculty lottery. I was thrilled beyond belief to get paid to do what I loved and believed in and to be a part of a community college family. I loved teaching. I intended to be at WVC teaching for my entire career. During my time at WVC I became involved in other aspects of the college that spoke to my heart, specifically my dedication to cultural diversity and service learning. I also served on various college-wide committees and became department chair. I found myself in faculty leadership positions that required me to balance my commitments to teaching and leading. Ten years later, when I left WVC, I knew that my next career move needed to be teaching or leading.

Eight months after I left WVC, I became Director of Instructional Outreach at Arapahoe Community College (ACC) in Littleton, Colorado. In this position I had the opportunity to use my experiences as a faculty leader to bridge the gap between instruction and student services, as well as develop programs for an outreach center. During my two and a half years at ACC, I was mentored by a tremendous group of people who taught me what integrity and dedication to students, faculty, and education means. They encouraged me to apply to the doctoral program in Community College

Leadership (CCL) at Colorado State University. The CCL program has been a great opportunity to develop knowledge and leadership skills specifically related to community college administration. This experience has prepared me for the next step in my career.

When I arrived for an interview for the Dean of Instruction position at Folsom Lake College in Folsom, California, I remember saying to myself “this is where I belong.” My experience, education, training, and lifelong commitment to community colleges had prepared me to help lead a small group of faculty to build and grow California’s newest community college. I was meant to be here. I see myself as a faculty advocate. I know what it means to be community college faculty member. I understand the challenges, issues, and excitement that community college teaching brings. I understand the vision and the day-to-day reality. I love what I do. I pinch myself everyday that I get to do this... and they pay me for it.

The Other Side of My Story

I love telling this story. It inspires me to keep moving forward and reminds me why I do what I do. However, there is another part of the story that I do not always tell. Although I loved my students and teaching, there were times when I did not feel valued by the college and the college community. There were times when I felt like my dedication, commitment, effort, and hard work did not really make a difference or matter to anyone. There were times when I did not feel supported by the administration or my colleagues. Towards the end of my time at WVC, I began asking myself questions like “Why bother?” or saying to myself “Just teach. It’s easier.” When I left WVC, I was on the verge of burning out. Some of it was the workload I had brought upon myself. Some of it was the difficulty in balancing teaching and leadership responsibilities. Some of it

was because I was feeling unvalued and unrecognized by the college for my efforts. I often wonder if I had not left WVC, would I have become a disenfranchised, disgruntled faculty? Or would I have taken the time to regroup and jump back into the college community? What would have or could have the college done to help me? I will never know. What I do know is how I experienced commitment to the college and what factors affected my commitment to WVC. My initial positive experiences at COD and my understanding of community college culture developed my early commitment to the college. However, over the course of time the lack of support and recognition slowly diminished my commitment to the college. My commitment to students and education never wavered, but over the years my commitment to the institution waned. I have always been curious and concerned as to how community college faculty experience commitment and what affects their commitment. What, if anything, can a college do to develop commitment? Is commitment something a faculty member brings to the college? Is it something that can be developed by the college? If so, how is commitment developed? Is commitment a personal responsibility? An institutional responsibility? Or a shared responsibility?

My Commitment to Commitment

It is important to me that my values align with the values of the institution. Through experience, I know that is not the case for everyone. Some people accept a job for a variety reasons: money, proximity to home and children, or healthcare benefits. Some do not necessarily consider the alignment of their personal and social values with that of the institution. I was raised in a family where integrity, service, and commitment were essential elements of being a productive person. I come from a very hard working

family, where the values of finishing what you start, helping others, and taking pride in your hard work were mantras when growing up. I have carried these values with me in my personal and professional life into my roles as faculty, leader, and researcher. I have been given the opportunity to have a career that allows me to work hard by serving others. Therefore, the concept of organizational commitment or how an individual relates to, participates in, and bonds to an organization appeals to me both personally and professionally.

Organizational commitment as a subject of empirical research is not new to me. As a graduate student in Communication Studies at New Mexico State University, I was interested in how organizations developed culturally and what factors contributed to the social, cultural, and emotional development of employees. Specifically, I was interested in how organizations that relied upon volunteers developed organizational commitment. I conducted a qualitative study where I interviewed hospice volunteers to explore what organizational commitment factors were communicated during the socialization process. The findings resulted in the identification of three significant factors that affected the development of organizational commitment in hospice volunteers: training, recognition, and identification with the mission and goals of the organization (Flores, 1990). I was fortunate to work with an ethnographer as my thesis advisor. His guidance in the development of qualitative research methods was an invaluable experience that now leads me to pursue qualitative research using phenomenology.

My interest in organizational commitment did not stay in New Mexico. I was able to implement my findings in the development of a service learning program at WVC. I fostered student commitment to the community by implementing service learning in all of

my courses and eventually developed a service learning program for WVC. Today as a leader at Folsom Lake College, I also use my findings in my everyday work.

Dissertation Organization

In this dissertation, I describe a research project that will use phenomenology to explore how community college faculty experience organizational commitment. This dissertation consists of five sections. Chapter One presents my story, dissertation organization, research context, rationale of the inquiry, purpose of the inquiry, research questions, and significance of the inquiry. Chapter Two presents a review of the relevant literature related to this inquiry. Chapter Three describes the qualitative research paradigm, method, and data analysis. Chapter Four presents the results of the research including participants and institutional descriptions, phenomenological analysis, thematic structures, textural structural synthesis, and essence of the study. Chapter Five discusses the results of the research questions including a reflection on the results, how the literature relates to the findings, recommendations for practice and future research, and ends with concluding remarks.

Research Context

This study explores the experiences of community college faculty as they relate to organizational commitment. In order to study organizational commitment in community college faculty, it is important to put the research into context. In this section I provide context and background information about community colleges, specifically California community colleges. I include the role of community college faculty, as well as some of the critical research on organizational commitment.

Community Colleges

Community colleges seek to provide comprehensive educational opportunities to the communities they serve by focusing on teaching, learning, access, and student success (Baker, 1993). Once called junior colleges, they provided the first 2 years of a baccalaureate education and prepared students to transfer to 4-year colleges and universities (Cohen & Brawer, 2002). Today, community colleges fulfill multiple roles within their communities, offering a variety of educational programs and services with a broad and sometimes contradictory set of intended outcomes (Bragg, 2001). The current mission of a comprehensive community college is to prepare students to engage in lifelong learning. This includes curriculum in the following areas; transfer, career/technical, developmental education, community education, and workforce/economic development. Community colleges serve a wide range of non-traditional diverse students with different goals and needs. Community college students tend to be older, employed, prepared, underprepared, first-generation college students, recent immigrants with linguistic challenges, minorities, and women (Bragg, 2001).

In the present educational environment, several factors shape the community college mission. Bragg and Reger (2000) outlined four prominent forces that are shaping postsecondary education. They included an increase in the number of students who have diverse learning needs; an increase in the fragmentation and rigidity of academic disciplines; the inability of students to incorporate coursework into daily life; and the fast paced changes occurring in the workplace that require reform to career and technical education. Along with the challenges of providing a diverse mission to a diverse student population, community colleges are faced with requirements from state and federal

entities, as well as social, cultural, and technological changes. Alfred and Carter (1996) note the challenges included insufficient resources, rapid technological change, increased accountability and performance measures, pedagogical changes such as the emergence of distance education, market competition from universities and for-profit institutions, substantial projected growth in the number of students they serve, and a large number of retirements of faculty in the next decade. Recruiting and replacing faculty is a major concern of community college leaders. In a national study of work-related factors affecting the stress level of community college deans, Wild (2002) found that 41% of the 251 deans who responded to her queries about future challenges identified hiring, finding, replacing, and retiring faculty as another major issue. In another national study focusing on retirement of community college faculty, the researchers found that 51% of the Chief Academic Officers in the study thought there would be “difficulty recruiting fully prepared faculty members” (Berry, Hammons & Denny, 2001, p. 133).

California Community Colleges

California Community Colleges make up the largest system of public higher education in the United States. With more than 2.5 million students at 110 colleges, the system’s mission is complex. According to the California Community College Chancellor’s Office (2006), the mission of California Community Colleges is to (a) offer general education, (b) provide 2-year associate degrees, (c) prepare students who plan to transfer to 4-year colleges or universities, (d) serve students seeking occupational education and certification, (e) provide single courses to upgrade skills, and (f) offer enrichment through credit and non credit courses. These educational programs and services are offered to a diverse student body. Among those 2.5 million students, 1 in 5

students is a recent immigrant and/or English-language learner. Most students are older than those in traditional 4-year institutions of higher education, 73% attend part-time, 80% work and have significant family responsibilities, and over 55% are men or women of color (California Community College Chancellor's Office, 2006). As *A New Look at the California Community Colleges: Keeping the Promise* (2002) pointed out, 75% of the students of color in higher education in California are enrolled in the community college system (Community College League of California, 2002).

The Role of California Community College Faculty

Faculty are the primary deliverers of educational services at community colleges. However, the role of faculty is not limited to teaching and learning. Faculty are also responsible for collegiality and participation in college governance. In 1989, the California State Legislature passed the historic Assembly Bill 1725, which reformed the role of faculty in community college governance by mandating shared college governance structures (California State Assembly Bill 1725, 1989; hereinafter referred to and cited as "AB 1725")

Shared governance structures support participative governance which is a process of exchanging ideas that relies upon interaction among constituent groups (Academic Senate for California Community Colleges, 2006). The previous California community college governance structure was based on the high school model. Under this model, community college faculty played a small role in governing the institutions in which they worked. By enacting AB 1725, the State Legislature made community colleges comparable to universities in the sense that faculty were given the authority to participate in the governance of their institutions in ways university faculty have traditionally

enjoyed. AB 1725 made changes to the California Code of Regulations, Title V, sections 53200 et seq., 51023.5. and 51023.7. (California Code of Regulations, Title V, 2006) which requires community college districts to consult collegially with academic senates on select academic and professional matters. The eleven academic and professional matters include curriculum, degree requirements, grading policies, student progress standards, faculty role in governance structures, accreditation, professional development, program review processes, and processes for planning and budgeting. Therefore, commitment of faculty to a California community college not only includes teaching and learning, but participating in shared governance as well. In California, participative governance is often loosely referred to as shared governance. Shared governance was the term used by participants in this study and therefore will be the term used throughout this study.

Organizational Commitment

The literature discussed above presents a context for understanding the role of California community college faculty. To fully understand this research it is important to acknowledge the literature on organizational commitment.

Organizational commitment is defined as:

The relative strength of an individual's satisfaction with and involvement in a particular organization. A high level of organizational commitment has three main characteristics: (a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and (c) a definite desire to maintain organizational membership. (Porter et al., 1974)

Organizational commitment is a bond to the whole organization, not to the job, work group, or belief in the importance of work itself (Lambert, 2003).

In their three-component model of organizational commitment, Meyer and Allen (1991, 1997) characterized commitment as affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Affective commitment represents the degree to which an employee exhibits a strong belief in, and acceptance of, the organization's goals and values and a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization. Continuance commitment represents the degree to which an employee exhibits a willingness to continue to work for the organization. Normative commitment reflects a perceived obligation to remain with the organization. The majority of the studies conducted on organizational commitment focused on affective commitment.

Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979) suggest that organizational commitment is more than passive loyalty to an organization. They propose that organizational commitment involves an active relationship with the organization such that individuals are willing to give something of themselves to contribute to the health of the organization. Organizational commitment is important to organizations because the development of commitment is essential to the development of a positive organizational culture.

Studies have been conducted on the impact of organizational commitment in a variety of organizations including correctional facilities (Lambert, 2003), in health care facilities (Ellis & Miller, 1994; Brewer & Lok, 1995), in sales organizations (Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1993; Agarwal, DeCarlo, & Vyas, 1999), in unions (Barling, Wade, & Fullagar, 1990), in human service organizations (Glisson & Durick, 1988; Sikorska-Simmons, 2005), in the military (Wong & McNally, 1994), and with public service

employees (Balfour & Wechsler, 1996; Jones, Jones & Prenzler, 200; Young, Worchel, & Woehr, 1998), including community colleges (Hill, 1986; Chieffo, 1991).

There are several antecedents and consequences related to organizational commitment. Antecedents contribute to the development of organizational commitment. Variables positively related to organizational commitment include age, gender, and marital status. The older an employee, the more likely he or she is committed to the organization (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990); women tend to be more committed than men (Grusky, 1996), and married employees are more committed than those who are single (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Angle & Perry, 1983). Perceived organizational support (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986; Tansky & Cohen, 2001), positive organizational climate, and job involvement (Barling et al, 1990) are associated with high organizational commitment. Employees who received training about the role and responsibilities expected of them had a higher commitment to the organization (Schein, 1968). Organizational age and leadership style also have a positive effect on organizational commitment. The older the organization, the more likely employees will feel committed (Glisson & Durick, 1988). The more democratic, inclusive, and communicative the leader, the more likely employees will feel committed to the organization.

Consequences are outcomes related to organizational commitment. Considerable research has identified a significant relationship between an individual's level of organizational commitment and the organization's turnover or attrition rates (Barnes, Agago, & Coombs, 1998; Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch, & Topolnytsky, 2002; Mowday et al., 1979; Steers, 1977; Zhou & Volkwein, 2004). Positive consequences of

organizational commitment also include reduced turnover, reduced absenteeism (Steers, 1977), and reduced tardiness (Koslowsky & Dishon-Berkovits, 2001). Organizational commitment is positively related to increased job involvement (Kacmar, Carlson, & Brymer, 1999), increased job satisfaction (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1982; Young, et al., 1998; Yousef, 2000), increased job performance Meyer et al. (2002), and it also leads to longer organizational tenure (Mowday et al.1982). Organizational commitment has consistently been linked to positive employee prosocial behavior (Organ, 1988) and behaviors such as organizational citizenship behaviors and helping behaviors (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer, Paunonen, Gellatly & Jackson, 1989; Meyer et al., 2002).

Rationale of the Inquiry

Organizational commitment impacts organizations in several ways. It is important for organizational leaders to understand how organizational commitment is experienced by employees. From a human resources perspective, having employees committed to the organization can result in several positive outcomes. Having committed employees creates a positive organizational climate that is conducive to effective working relationships (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Committed employees have a positive impact on organizational culture and create an atmosphere that allows them to work towards the goals and values of the organization. Having employees who understand and subscribe to the goals and values of an organization helps them generate, structure, and evaluate their efforts on behalf of the organization. From an organizational perspective, having an understanding of how organizational commitment is experienced allows the organization to identify and develop processes to support employees in their development of commitment.

If community colleges are to respond to the challenges ahead, they will need to continue to develop organizational commitment in faculty. Given the changing environment of community colleges, having committed faculty who understand and subscribe to the goals and values of the college is paramount to the success of the institution. Committed faculty affect the organizational culture of the college through their involvement in shared governance. Committed faculty members can translate the college's goals into the creation of positive learning environments which, in turn, can affect student outcomes and the campus climate.

The research on organizational commitment is almost entirely quantitative in nature and focuses primarily on the measurement of antecedents and consequences of commitment. Very little qualitative research focuses on how people experience organizational commitment. The majority of the research on organizational commitment has been conducted in business organizations. Few studies have focused on organizational commitment of educators, and these studies have primarily been conducted at the K-12 level. Also, community college faculty have been identified as participants in only a few quantitative research studies on organizational commitment. In this respect, this research breaks new ground.

Purpose of the Inquiry

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the phenomenon of how community college faculty experience organizational commitment. Phenomenology is a qualitative method that identifies and examines the "essence" of the human experience and gives the researcher an opportunity to explore with participants their multiple experiences (Creswell, 2003, Moustakas, 2004). To carry out this study, I interviewed

recently tenured full-time faculty at two selected California community colleges. Nine participants were interviewed to understand their lived experiences as community college faculty in regard to organizational commitment. Private, individual, face-to-face interviews were conducted and transcript data were analyzed to identify emergent themes reflected in the participants' experiences. The interviews were open-ended and in-depth to discover the unique, layered experiences and to allow the participants to discuss relevant and perhaps unanticipated topics related to their commitment. A phenomenological analysis was applied.

Research Questions

In order to explore the meaning of the lived experiences, a researcher must write research questions appropriate to the context (Creswell, 1998). Given my knowledge and experiences with community college faculty and organizational commitment, I focus on the following research questions starting with my primary research question:

How do community college faculty experience organizational commitment?

As I progressed through the research process, I sought answers to the following subquestions:

How do these community college faculty describe and explain their experience with organizational commitment?

What affects organizational commitment in these community college faculty?

Significance of the Inquiry

The study is significant and unique because it explored the concept of organizational commitment using a qualitative method with a new group of participants. This research fills a gap in the research on organizational commitment by using a qualitative method, phenomenology, and by examining how organizational commitment

is experienced, interpreted in the individual and institutional lives of recently tenured community college faculty. Findings from my study may lead to more successful policies and practices that foster commitment among community college faculty, which, in turn may positively affect the overall college culture.

Chapter One Summary

Chapter One of this dissertation provided a context for this inquiry. I reviewed my story, dissertation organization, rationale of the inquiry, purpose of the inquiry, research questions, significance of the inquiry, and potential limitations. Chapter Two provides a preliminary review of literature on organizational commitment to support this inquiry. Chapter Three describes the research design and method used for this inquiry. Chapter Four presents the results of the study. Chapter Five discusses the importance and impact of the research.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This study is a phenomenology inquiry about how community college faculty experience organizational commitment. The intent of Chapter Two is to provide a review of the relevant literature related to organizational commitment. In Chapter Five I return to the literature to provide context for understanding the significance of the findings presented in my study. The literature on organizational commitment is immense. This review of literature will cover definitions, typologies, models, measurement, organizational behavior, and relevant studies related to the inquiry.

Definitions of Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is a multidimensional concept that has been defined and interpreted in a variety of ways (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Kanter (1968) defined organizational commitment as “the willingness of social orders to give their energy and loyalty to social systems” (p. 499). Hrebiniak and Alutto (1972) defined organizational commitment as “a structural phenomenon which occurs as a result of individual organizational transactions and alternative side bets or investments of time” (p. 556). Salancik (1977) defined organizational commitment as “a state of being in which an individual becomes bound by his actions to beliefs that sustain the activities and his own involvement” (p. 62). Steers (1977) viewed organizational commitment as an employee attitude and as a set of behavioral intentions including the willingness to exert

considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization.

However, the Porter, Steers, Mowday, and Boulian (1974) definition of organizational commitment is most commonly used in the literature. They defined organizational commitment as:

The relative strength of an individual's satisfaction with and involvement in a particular organization. A high level of organizational commitment has three main characteristics: (a) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values, (b) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization, and (c) a definite desire to maintain organizational membership. (Porter et al., 1974)

These characteristics imply that the members of the organization wish to be active players in the organization, have an impact on what is happening, feel that they have high status, and are ready to contribute beyond what is expected of them (Bogler & Somech, 2004). Organizational commitment is a bond to the whole organization, not to the job, work group, or belief in the importance of work itself (Lambert, 2003). Organizational commitment differs from the concept of occupational or professional commitment which is defined as an individual's loyalty to a specific occupational field (Gouldner, 1957).

Typologies of Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is influenced by several personal, organizational, job, and non-job factors, and employees can have multiple and differing levels of commitments to the same organization (Gregersen & Black, 1992). One of the issues revolving around the concept of organizational commitment is a lack of consensus of a conceptual framework which makes interpretation of data difficult. There are several typologies that describe the different types of organizational commitment. Although there are similarities in the typologies, each author has a different variation.

Etzioni (1961) proposed that organizational commitment be understood as a three level phenomenon comprised of moral involvement, calculative involvement, and alienative involvement. Moral involvement is a positive, high intensity orientation based on internalization of organizational goals and values, as well as identification with authority. Calculative involvement is a lower-intensity relationship based upon rational exchange of benefits and rewards. Alienative involvement is a negative orientation that is found in exploited relationships or mandatory settings, such as incarceration in correctional institutions.

Similarly, Kanter (1968) divided organizational commitment into three groups: continuance commitment, cohesion commitment, and control commitment. Continuance commitment is the dedication to organizational survival brought on by precious personal investments and sacrifices such that leaving would be costly or impossible. Cohesion commitment is an attachment to social relationships in an organization brought on by renunciation of previous social ties or engaging in ceremonies that enhance group cohesion. Control commitment is the attachment to organizational norms by requiring members to disavow norms publicly and formulate organizational values.

Staw and Salancik (1977) categorized organizational commitment through two approaches: the organizational behavior approach and the social psychology approach. The organizational behavior approach claims that organizational commitment is best viewed as strong identification and involvement in the organization brought on by a variety of attitudinal commitment factors. The social psychology approach asserts that organizational commitment is best viewed in relation to the costs invested in the organization that bind the employee to the organization.

Mowday et al. (1979) argued that commitment is either attitudinal or behavioral in nature. Attitudinal commitment is defined as the process in which people come to think about the relationship with the organization, such as when their values and goals become aligned with the organization. Attitudinal commitment is associated with the antecedents or predictors of organizational commitment. Behavioral commitment is related to the process by which individuals become locked into the organization and how they deal with problems. Behavioral commitment is associated with the consequences or outcomes of commitment (Mowday et al., 1982). Mowday et al. (1979) proposed that there is a cyclical relationship between attitudinal and behavioral commitment. This means that attitudinal commitment affects behavioral commitment and vice versa.

McGee and Ford (1987) used affective commitment and continuance commitment to describe organizational commitment. Their characterization of affective commitment refers to individuals who remain with an organization because they want to do so. Their characterization of continuance commitment refers to individuals who remain with the organization because they have to do so.

The most widely used typology of organization commitment is Meyer and Allen's (1991, 1997) three-component model of commitment. They proposed that commitment is a multidimensional construct composed of three distinct, yet related, types of commitment. The affective component of commitment is "the employee's emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organization. Employees with a strong affective commitment continue employment with the organization because they want to do so" (Meyer & Allen, 1991, p. 67). Continuance commitment is defined as "an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organization. Employees whose

primary link to the organization is based on continuance commitment remain because they need to do so” (p. 67). Normative commitment “reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment. Employees with a high level of normative commitment feel that they ought to remain with the organization” (p. 67).

Stanley, Herscovitch, and Topolnytsky (2002) tested Meyer and Allen’s (1991, 1997) three-component model through a meta-analysis of the literature. Their purpose was to investigate the relationship between the three components along with the antecedents and consequences of all three types of commitment. The meta-analytic results showed that affective and normative constructs are not identical and that normative commitment is rather poorly understood in the literature. Their research left us with many questions regarding what normative commitment is, how it develops, and how it influences behavior. They also found that continuance commitment was different from the other two constructs and related to work outcomes in the opposite direction. The researchers found that two subcomponents, high sacrifice and low alternatives, were related differently to turnover intentions.

Table 1 on the following page provides a visual representation of the similarities and differences in the types of organizational commitment previously discussed.

Table 1. Typologies of Organizational Commitment

	Affective	Investment/ Costs	Obligation	Consequences	Organi- zational Norms
Etzioni (1961)		Calculative	Moral	Alienative	
Kanter (1968)	Cohesion	Continuance			Control
Staw & Salancik (1977)	Organi- zational Behavior	Social Psychology			
Mowday et al (1979)	Attitudinal			Behavioral	
McGee & Ford (1987)	Affective	Continuance			
Meyer & Allen (1991, 1997)	Affective	Continuance	Normative		

Organizational Commitment Development

Given that there are several types of organizational commitment, it is altogether appropriate that there are also several models describing how organizational commitment is developed. The models I present represent various perspectives on the development of organizational commitment. They include process models, early experiences leading to organizational commitment, whether commitment is organization based or member based, and how organizational commitment is an exchange or reflect rewards/costs.

Process Model

Mowday et al. (1982) suggested that organizational commitment is a process that begins before employees formally begin work. The process of organizational commitment is formed in three stages: anticipation, initiation, and entrenchment. The anticipation stage is defined by the expectations and goals a new employee brings to the organization. The initiation stage occurs during the first few months with the organization. Meyer and Allen (1988) argued, "The early months of employment have

been identified as a particularly important period in the development of work attitudes” (p. 197). The entrenchment stage is a continuance of employee duties, behaviors, and attitudes that may extend from one year to a lifetime. Mowday et al. (1982) argued that the development of commitment during the early stages of employment is important to attachment and increases stability and decreases the likelihood of termination. They claimed increased investments of time and energy made it difficult for an employee to voluntarily leave employment.

Early Experiences Model

Like the process model, Pascale (1985) focused on the early experiences of employees, incorporating recruitment and socialization issues, as well as content and process issues in the development of organizational commitment. He observed that companies with effective recruitment and socialization programs used a specific set of techniques. Among these were careful recruitment and selection, experiences designed to promote a willingness to learn and accept the values and practices of the new organization, career path development, use of training, reward and control systems, and the reinforcement of central values through folklore and role models.

Organization Based Model

Angle and Perry (1983) proposed an organization based model of organizational commitment development. This model considered organizational commitment to be a function of the way a member is treated by the organization. Stevens, Beyer, and Trice (1978) endorsed this model claiming job and role characteristics and the nature of work experience influence the level of commitment. With this view, if an individual perceives a positive work environment it will increase the level of commitment.

Member Based Model

Angle and Perry (1984) also suggested a member based model of organizational commitment development in when the locus of commitment resides in the actions and attributes of employees. Similarly, Salancik (1977) proposed that if employees are free to act on the job without constraints, they are more likely to develop consistent attitudes and behaviors congruent with the organization's goals which lead to organizational commitment.

Exchange Model

Blau (1964) and Organ (1988) suggested that organizational commitment is developed where there is an exchange and interdependence between the individual and the organization. Organ (1988) asserted that individuals interact with peers, supervisors, and other members of the organization in ways that evolve into relationships and involve transactions in which both parties give and receive in some way. Blau (1964) characterized the types of exchanges as social and economic. Social exchange is based on implicit obligations and trust. As Settoon, Bennett, and Liden (1996) observed, "exchanges that are social in nature are based on trust that gestures of goodwill will be reciprocated at some point in the future" (p. 220). Economic exchanges are based upon the extrinsic rewards associated with employment.

Rewards/Costs Model

Related to the exchange model is the rewards/costs model. The reward/costs model explains development of organizational commitment as occurring in a four step process (Buchanan, 1974; Meyer & Allen, 1988; Steers, 1977). First, the organization meets employee needs. Second, because those needs are met, employees perceive a

favorable exchange relationship with the organization. Third, the employees become favorably disposed toward the organization. Fourth, the employees, therefore, become more committed to that organization (Buchanan, 1974; Meyer & Allen, 1988; Steers, 1977; Vandenberghe, Bentein, & Stinglhamber 2004). Farrell and Rusbult (1981) identified rewards as job properties such as challenge, autonomy, supervisor support, coworker support, and organizational justice. Costs include job hazards, stress, and routinization (Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). As the rewards increase and costs decrease, commitment increases.

Organizational Commitment Measurement

According to the Porter et al. (1974) definition of commitment, commitment has generally been viewed as an attitudinal measure that is situationally determined. The most popular method of examining the concept in this context is through assessment of an individual's attitudes and feelings towards his or her employing organization. Legge (1995) states that, "virtually all the research conducted on organizational commitment, per se, has used the attitudinal conceptualization"(p. 182). Several quantitative measures have been used to assess attitudinal commitment. These include the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire created by Mowday et al. (1979); the British Organizational Commitment Scale developed by Cook and Wall (1980); the Affective Commitment Scale conceptualized by Meyer and Allen (1984); the Normative Commitment Scale and the Continuance Commitment Scale developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) and the Organizational Commitment Scale created by Balfour and Wechsler (1996).

Organizational Commitment and Organizational Behavior

Research has been conducted on organizational commitment in a variety of organizations including correctional facilities (Lambert, 2003), health care facilities (Ellis & Miller, 1994; Brewer & Lok, 1995), sales organizations (Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1993; Agarwal, DeCarlo, & Vyas, 1999), unions (Barling, Wade, & Fullagar, 1990), human service organizations (Glisson & Durick, 1988; Sikorska-Simmons, 2005), the military (Wong & McNally, 1994), and in public service employees (Balfour & Wechsler, 1996; Jones, Jones & Prenzler, 2005; Young, Worchel, & Woehr, 1998), including community colleges (Hill, 1986; Chieffo, 1991). Mowday et al. (1979) suggested that commitment is more than passive loyalty to an organization. It involves an active relationship with the organization such as those individuals who are willing to contribute to the health of the organization. Organizational commitment is important primarily because the development of commitment and the prediction of other organizational variables are essential to the development of organizational culture. When viewed as a phenomenon which has both contributing factors and outcomes, we see there are antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment.

Antecedents

Antecedents contribute to the development of organizational commitment. Steers (1977) established three types of antecedents that are significantly related to commitment: personal characteristics, job characteristics, and work experiences. Further work by Steers and Porter (1983) resulted in the addition of another antecedent, organizational design.

Personal characteristics associated with organizational commitment include age, gender, marital status, and education. The older an employee, the more likely he or she is

committed to the organization (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990). Women tend to be more committed than men (Grusky, 1996), and married employees are more committed than those who are single (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Angle & Perry, 1983). Glisson and Durick (1988) also found more education to be a significant negative predictor of organizational commitment. The more education an employee has the less committed he or she is likely to be to the organization.

Job characteristics also function as antecedents to organizational commitment. Job challenge, supervisor support, and role stress are job characteristics that have consistently held strong relationships with organizational commitment (Iverson & Buttigieg, 1999; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990; Meyer & Allen, 1988; Meyer et al., 2002). A challenging job, support from a supervisor, and less stress on an employee all lead to higher commitment levels (Meyer et al., 2002). Role clarity is positively associated with organizational commitment (Morris & Koch, 1979). Conversely, role ambiguity is negatively related to organizational commitment (Agarwal, et al., 1999).

There are several work experience variables positively associated with organizational commitment. Perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Tansky & Cohen, 2001), positive organizational climate and job involvement (Barling, et al., 1990) are associated with high organizational commitment. Higher levels of interpersonal trust between employee and supervisor were associated with higher degrees of commitment, while authoritarianism displayed no association with commitment (Hrebiniak & Alutto, 1972).

One of the most documented antecedents of organizational commitment is the effect of early work experiences of employees. Early experiences in an individual's

employment may have a large impact on the subsequent development of commitment (Buchanan, 1974). It is at this time that an individual may be particularly sensitive to organizational influence and the results of that influence most consequential (Bray, Campbell & Grant, 1974). An individual's commitment to an organization may be shaped by recruitment and socialization. Arnold and Freidman (1982) noted that factors such as confirmation of pre-entry expectations were important and have been shown to be positively related to commitment to the organization. Meyer and Allen (1997) found that employees whose pre-entry expectations were confirmed, who had challenging jobs, and who had a sense of independence, felt more affectively committed to their respective organizations, even within the first 6 months of their employment. O'Reilly and Caldwell (1981) reported that the voluntary nature and irrevocability of job choices were related to individual commitment for over a year following job acceptance. They argued that certain aspects of an individual's job choice and particular experiences within the organization served to 'bind' the individual to that organization and influence both commitment and turnover.

Organizational socialization, or how employees are socialized into an organization, is a well documented antecedent to organizational commitment. Employees who received training on the role and responsibilities expected of them had a higher commitment to the organization (Schein, 1968). Specific socialization practices also affected commitment. Through socialization processes managers could attempt to foster better employee understanding of organizational values, norms, and objectives (Kanter, 1968; Pascale, 1985; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Jones (1986) suggested that commitment was related to the extent to which socialization patterns were

institutionalized in an organization. Jones (1986) also found that individuals who reported their socialization experiences were formalized, and followed a fixed timetable and sequence, also reported greater commitment.

Organizational design also functions as an antecedent to organizational commitment. The age of an organization has a positive effect on organizational commitment. The older the organization, the more likely employees will feel committed (Glisson & Durick, 1988). Leadership style (Glisson & Durick, 1988), including leader-member exchange (Settoon et al., 1996), also affected organizational commitment. The more democratic, inclusive, and communicative the leader, the more likely employees will feel committed to the organization. When leaders of an organization were perceived as adopting consultative or participative leadership behavior, where shared decision-making was prevalent, organizational commitment was higher (Yousef, 2000). Similarly, Morris and Sherman (1981) claimed that “high structure/high consideration behavior mixes on the part of leaders tended to be associated with high levels of commitment among subordinates” (p. 519).

Consequences

Consequences are outcomes that follow from organizational commitment. The relationship between organizational commitment and positive work outcomes has been well established in a number of studies. Considerable research has identified a significant relationship between an individual’s level of organizational commitment and the organization’s turnover or attrition rates (Barnes, Agago, & Coombs, 1998; Meyer et al. 2002; Mowday et al., 1979; Steers, 1977; Zhou & Volkwein, 2004). Research indicated that committed individuals were less likely to leave an organization voluntarily (Buck &

Watson, 2002), and were more likely to feel psychologically bound to their organization and their role (Kline & Peters, 1991). Positive consequences of organizational commitment also include reduced absenteeism (Steers, 1977), and tardiness (Koslowsky & Dishon-Berkovits, 2001). Organizational commitment is positively related to increased job involvement (Kacmar et al., 1999), increased job satisfaction (Mowday et al., 1982; Young et al., 1998; Yousef, 2000), increased job performance (Meyer et al., 2002) and lead to longer organizational tenure (Mowday et al., 1982). The more committed an employee, the more likely he or she becomes involved and satisfied with their job, performs at a higher level, and stays with the organization longer than an employee with low organizational commitment. Affective organizational commitment consistently has been linked to positive employee prosocial behavior (Organ, 1988) such as organizational citizenship behaviors (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer et al., 1989; Meyer et al., 2002).

Relevant Studies on Organizational Commitment

A majority of the research on organizational commitment is quantitative in nature and focuses on business organizations. The following section provides a more detailed review of qualitative studies in organizational commitment, as well as studies on organizational commitment in educational settings, specifically K-12, higher education, and community colleges.

Qualitative Studies on Organizational Commitment

Wilson, Keyton, Johnson, Geiger, and Clark (1993) conducted a qualitative study about the organizational commitment of active church members. They used focus group interviews of church members to collect data for their research. They used Beckford's (1973) dimensions of religious organizations as the conceptual framework to guide their

questions, specifically focusing on programming, process, and context of the organization. They identified three significant themes related to organizational commitment: shared congregational identity with the church, strong sense of belonging to the church, and willingness to contribute to the church. They followed up the focus groups with one-on-one interviews of additional church members and validated the three themes identified in the focus groups.

Coffey (1994) focused on how time is used in an organizational context, symbolically and pragmatically, to develop organizational commitment in new members of an organization. Using an ethnographic method, specifically extended participant observation, she collected data on the occupational and organizational socialization on a cohort of 10 accountants during their first year of employment. Data analysis revealed that employee management and utilization of time was central to understanding the socializing function of the accountancy firm, increased organizational commitment, and increased the organizational success of the new accountants.

Sturges and Guest (2001) conducted a qualitative study that explored the antecedents influencing graduates' decisions to remain or leave their first employer in the early years of their career. The research was conducted in 5 large organizations which recruited large numbers of college graduates each year. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews with 50 participants to gain an authentic understanding of the graduates' attitudes and experiences related to organizational commitment. The structure of the interviews was designed to enable them to reflect at length on what might influence their commitment, past, present, and future to the organization. Data analysis revealed that a number of inter-related factors influenced how committed graduates felt

towards their employer. These factors fell into three broad categories. The first category included core issues which affected levels of organizational commitment such as pre-joining expectations, career management help, and training and development. The second category included less tangible factors affecting organizational commitment such as the culture or climate of the organization. The third category included three factors likely to be important in the future of the participants such as the ability to balance work life with home life, recognition and reward for achievement, and career progression.

Gould and Fontenla (2006) explored the organizational commitment of nurses in an interpretive qualitative study. Using in-depth exploratory interviews of 27 nurses they explored the effects of continuing education, family friendly policies, and the type of nursing post on job satisfaction, professional commitment, and organizational commitment. They found that family friendly policies had a positive affect on organizational commitment. They found that nurses employed in more standard positions with more standard hours displayed higher levels of commitment both to the organization and the profession. They also found that opportunities for continuing education, although viewed as a positive organizational influence, had less affect on organizational commitment. The authors noted that this may occur because continuing education may be viewed as an additional source of stress.

Organizational Commitment and Education

Firestone and Pennell (1993) found that teachers' autonomy in making classroom decisions, their participation in school-wide decision-making, and their opportunities to learn were among the organizational conditions that showed a strong association with teacher commitment to the organization. Studies have shown that teachers with a greater

sense of efficacy are more enthusiastic about teaching (Guskey, 1984), reported a higher level of commitment to teaching (Coladarci, 1992; Evans & Tribble, 1986), and are more likely to remain in teaching (Glickman & Tamashiro, 1982).

Bogler and Somech (2004) focused on the relationship between teacher empowerment and teachers' organizational commitment, professional commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. Using a sample of 983 teachers in Israeli middle and high schools, the authors collected data using a questionnaire to measure organizational commitment, professional commitment, and organizational citizenship behavior. Analysis of the data indicated teachers' perceptions of their level of empowerment are significantly related to their feelings of commitment to the organization. The authors found that empowerment, professional growth, status, and self-efficacy were significant predictors of organizational commitment.

Somech (2005) examined the effect of directive leadership compared to participative leadership on school staff teams' effectiveness and motivational mechanisms which include empowerment and organizational commitment. Somech surveyed 140 Israeli elementary school teachers. Using a structural equation model, a positive relationship was identified between directive leadership and organizational commitment. The author argued that when the goal setting is determined and articulated by the leader it assisted teachers in transcending their own self interest for the sake of the vision and mission of the school.

Austin and Gamson (1983) reviewed the work experiences of academic administrators and their link to organizational commitment. Their research led them to conclude that mid-level administrators in higher education were committed largely

because they believed and took pride in what they were doing; they liked the autonomy available in their work; and they liked the people with whom they dealt.

More recently, Dixon, Cunningham, Sagas, Turner, and Kent (2005) investigated factors related to affective commitment in undergraduate interns. The factors included job challenge, supervisor support, and role stress as antecedents to commitment. Based on a sample of 71 participants, they found job challenge to be significant, and had positive and a strong relationship with affective commitment. They also found that supervisor support and role stress did not have a significant relationship with organizational commitment.

Bland, Center, Finstad, Risbey, and Staples (2006) examined the influence of type of appointment on individual faculty productivity and commitment levels at research doctoral institutions. Using data from the National Center for Education Statistics 1999 data of the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty they sampled data from 12,250 participants at 960 institutions. They found that full-time tenured faculty are significantly more productive in research, significantly more committed to staying in academics and their current position, and worked more hours than their non-tenured colleagues.

Hill (1986) conducted a study of New York community college developmental education faculty. Using the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday et al., 1979) he gathered data from 256 participants. He found that faculty members who were more satisfied with their jobs were more committed to their employing institutions. He also found a positive correlation with job satisfaction, immediate social context, promotional opportunities and organizational commitment. However, satisfaction with the work itself was the chief antecedent of organizational commitment.

Chieffo (1991) measured job satisfaction and organizational commitment among a sample of community college leadership team members to determine what factors contributed to their satisfaction and commitment. She administered a survey to participants at 16 colleges and universities in New Mexico. She found that there was a positive relationship between college administrators participating in decision making at meetings and higher levels of job satisfaction and organizational commitment. The structure of the organization was also found to be a significant factor in organizational commitment. Participants at technical-vocational colleges were the most satisfied and committed, followed by participants employed at an independent campus. Those employed by a branch campus reported the lowest levels of satisfaction and commitment.

Chapter Two Summary

Chapter Two provided a review of the relevant literature related to organizational commitment which included definitions, typologies, models, measurement, organizational behavior, and relevant studies related to the inquiry. The literature on organizational commitment is extensive. The preponderance of the literature is focused on the quantitative measurement of affective commitment, specifically the antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment. Relatively few studies have examined organizational commitment from a qualitative paradigm. Research on organizational commitment in relation to education is quantitative and a majority of the research is focused on K-12. In Chapter Three I provide details about the methodology used in the inquiry. In Chapter Four I present the results of the inquiry based upon the methodology. Finally, in Chapter Five I discuss the relevance of the findings, including how the results relate to the literature.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this study I sought to describe and understand the experiences of community college faculty as they relate to organizational commitment through the use of qualitative research. A qualitative research design presents an opportunity to develop a holistic understanding of events, situations, and phenomena in a natural setting without preconceived notions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this chapter, I review the qualitative research paradigm with special attention to phenomenology, method and implementation, including participant selection and criteria, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

Qualitative Research Paradigm

Creswell (1998) defined qualitative research as “an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem” (p. 15). Merriam (2002) characterized qualitative research as “the search for meaning and understanding, the researcher as primary instrument in data collection and analysis, an inductive investigative strategy, and richly descriptive end product” (p. 6). Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that the qualitative paradigm allows the researcher to gather information and through analysis construct a rich understanding of a complex human experience. Finally, Eisner (1991) stated that the aim of qualitative research design is to study real-world situations in a non-manipulative/controlling

manner. In the qualitative process, therefore, the researcher seeks to build a complex holistic picture of the experience by exploring multiple dimensions of a problem or issue and then analyzes the words of informants to provide an intricate narrative with substantive meaning (Creswell, 1998).

Characteristics of Qualitative Research

There are several characteristics of qualitative research that make the paradigm appropriate for my study. They include the search for meaning, natural setting, the active role of the participant, and inductive analysis.

The search for meaning is an important characteristic of qualitative research. Crotty (1998) noted that meaning is constructed by human beings as they engage in and interpret the world they live in. In this study I sought to understand how community college faculty experience organizational commitment. It was through dialogue that we co-constructed the meaning of their lived experiences.

The qualitative method is useful when exploring and observing a phenomenon in a natural setting without a preconceived hypothesis. Qualitative research assumes that humans use what they see, hear, and feel to make meaning of social events. A qualitative researcher studies the subject matter with participants in their natural setting with an attempt to make sense or interpret the phenomena in respect to the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The natural setting allows the researcher, or the researcher and the participants, to interpret and evaluate the meaning of participants' reality and the mutual construction of reality (Moustakas, 1994). This study explored organizational commitment in community college faculty in a natural setting, without preconceived notions, and in a non-manipulative manner.

In qualitative research, participants also play an active role in the development of meaning. In this study participants played an active role in dialogue with me. Through dialogue, participants and I explored and created a shared meaning about their experiences with organizational commitment.

Qualitative analysis is inductive and emergent in nature so that the analysis is a function of interaction between the researcher and the participant, who are both working together to influence the outcome. The researcher investigates issues related to research in detail, in depth and breadth, without being constrained in analysis by categories. The researcher pays close attention to processes and assumes that change is ongoing. In this study through dialogue the participants and I co-constructed the meaning and developed emerging themes. As the researcher I provide a detailed analysis of this dialogue in Chapter Four.

Choosing Qualitative Research as a Paradigm

In searching for a research paradigm that best fits the research questions in my study, I was influenced by Creswell's (1998) description of eight compelling reasons to undertake a qualitative study.

The first reason for conducting qualitative research is to know how or what phenomenon exists rather than why. As a researcher I wanted to know how the phenomenon of organizational commitment is experienced by community college faculty. Therefore, the research questions focus on how community college faculty experience organizational commitment.

The second compelling reason is the topic is one that needs to be explored in a qualitative context. The concept of organizational commitment has been explored

primarily in a quantitative context focusing on antecedents and consequences of organizational commitment. Organizational commitment has not been explored in the context of *how* it is experienced, and what the experience is like. In this study I explored *how* and *what* community college faculty experienced organizational commitment through a qualitative paradigm using phenomenology.

Third, is that qualitative research should be undertaken because of the need to present a detailed view of the topic. The concept of organizational commitment in relation to community college faculty has not been explored in a qualitative paradigm, therefore the need to provide a detailed account of the phenomenon is evident. The overall description of organizational commitment in a quantitative context is not sufficient to understand the experiences of community college faculty. Through this research I explored the concept of organizational commitment in-depth and provided rich thick descriptions of participant's experiences in Chapter Four.

The fourth reason for choosing a qualitative method is that it facilitates exploration of the phenomenon in the natural setting of the participants. I conducted this study in the setting of a community college environment where the interaction was non-manipulative in nature and the participants played an active role in guiding the dialogue.

The fifth reason concerns the advantages of using a literary style in presenting the research. Creswell (1998) noted that the role of the researcher is to engage in storytelling and that being a part of the inquiry process is essential to conducting qualitative research. I had prior experience conducting qualitative research and was interested in writing in a literary or narrative form that describes the experiences of the participants in order to present the shared constructed meaning.

The sixth reason is that the researcher has the sufficient time and resources to conduct qualitative research. I had not only the interest and desire to conduct research in this area, but had the time and resources afforded to me by my family, friends, and employer.

The seventh reason to conduct qualitative study is the willingness of participants to be a part of the research. Based on my preliminary research and conversation with faculty, staff, and administrators at various community colleges, I was confident that community college faculty would be receptive and interested in participating in this study. Indeed this was the case as I received several inquiries about the research from potential participants in a very short period of time.

Finally, the eighth reason focuses on the researcher's desire to be an active learner in the inquiry process. I wished to be an active participant in the inquiry process and was confident I would be able to tell the story of my participants. This desire stemmed from my interest in the subject and prior experience conducting qualitative research.

My interest was understanding how community college faculty experience organizational commitment. Qualitative research provided a method to study the human experience that is not possible through a quantitative approach (Moustakas, 1994). I believe the qualitative research approach was appropriate to address my research questions. It was through qualitative research where community college faculty can be asked to describe their experiences (Creswell 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Merriam, 2002).

Phenomenology

There are several qualitative traditions that could be used to explore the organizational commitment of community college faculty. Although many interpretive research approaches exist, the most common are case study, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative inquiry, phenomenology, and basic interpretive design (Merriam, 2002). The purpose of my study was to describe and understand the essence of the experience of community college faculty as it relates to organizational commitment. Phenomenology was well suited to study this topic.

Phenomenology is both a philosophy and a methodology (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology provided a holistic approach that includes the human experience as it searches for meaning and essence. Creswell (2003) defined phenomenology as research that identifies the “essence” of human experiences of a phenomenon as described by the participants. Through phenomenology the description of the lived experiences of several individuals is through “seeing how they experience, live, and display the phenomenon and looking for meaning the participants experience” (Creswell, 1998, p. 31). Husserl (1931) stated that phenomenologists try to understand rather than to explain the human experience.

As a methodology, Moustakas (1994) described four major processes in phenomenological research: epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis. Epoche or “bracketing” is the process the researcher uses to set aside preconceived ideas and beliefs about the phenomenon to best understand participant experiences. Phenomenological reduction is applied through horizontalization in which individual participant statements are identified and given equal value. Statements are then

clustered into nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping units, or meanings of the individual experience. Textural and structural descriptions are constructed to describe what was experienced by the participants. Imaginative variation creates individual and composite structural qualities to provide a universal description of how the phenomenon was experienced. Finally, the composite textural and structural descriptions are synthesized to create meaning and essence of the experience. I used these four major processes in my study and describe them in more detail in the data analysis section.

Moustakas (1994) stated that the aim of phenomenological study is “to determine what an experience means for the persons who have had the experience and are able to provide a comprehensive description of it. From the individual descriptions, general or universal meanings are derived, in other words the essences or structures of the experience” (p.13). Phenomenology is an especially useful research approach when a concept is immature and lacking previous inquiry . In the case of organizational commitment, the amount of quantitative research is great. However, as I have previously explained, the lack of qualitative research is apparent. Few studies on organizational commitment have attempted to understand the thoughts, feelings, and personal impact of organizational commitment. Few studies exist, qualitative or quantitative, on the experience of organizational commitment on community college faculty. Therefore, the phenomenological method allowed me to explore the lived experiences of community college faculty experiencing organizational commitment.

Method and Implementation

In order to explore how community college faculty experienced organizational commitment, method and implementation need to be clearly communicated. The

following section provides a description of the participant and criteria for selection, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

Participants and Criteria for Selection

I utilized purposeful sampling to identify participants. Purposeful sampling permitted me to best understand the problem and research question because it allowed me to select participants who are information rich for in-depth study (Creswell, 2003).

Purposefully selecting participants for this study allowed me to select participants with multiple voices who could present similarities and dissimilarities in their experiences and provided the rich, thick narratives associated with interpretative work. Purposeful sampling also gave assisted me in identifying individuals who have experienced the phenomenon being explored and who can articulate their conscious experience (Creswell, 2003).

Participants selected for this study were recently tenured California community college faculty. Recently tenured is defined for this study as receiving tenure in the past two academic years. In California, tenure is guided by the California Code of Regulations (California Code of Regulations, Title V, 2006) and is an intense 4-year process in which new full-time faculty are evaluated on several levels by a committee of their peers. The process can include observations, student reviews, self evaluations, and other measurements determined by a union contract. Recently tenured faculty are an appropriate group of participants for this study. They provided me insight into organizational commitment because they represent a population of faculty who have demonstrated a level of commitment to the institution and, likewise, the college has demonstrated a certain level of commitment to the faculty member by granting tenure.

I considered several factors when deciding what population of community college faculty to study. I did not want to study tenure track community college faculty. Tenure track faculty are new full-time faculty who are in the process of being reviewed for tenure. The first reason was the “newness” factor. Many times tenure track faculty are very excited to be a part of the college and/or overwhelmed with being new faculty. This continuum of experience, although interesting to explore, provided too much of a variance. I was interested in studying faculty with some experience at the college and who had demonstrated a certain level of commitment, such as faculty who have recently received tenure. Second, since tenure track faculty are in a peer review process, having their experiences explored by an outside entity may create additional stress and anxiety to their experiences as faculty.

I also did not want to study the experiences of community college faculty near retirement. First, the lens of impending retirement may overshadow their perceptions of commitment to their organization. Second, the passage of AB 1725 in 1989, which legislated shared governance as a model for governing community colleges, imposed a model of governance that was embraced at differing levels among faculty. My professional experience has shown me that faculty who came to understand community college governance prior to 1989 experienced governance in a different way and their perceptions of this substantial change may have had an affect on their commitment to the institution. I was interested in faculty who have experienced shared governance, since 1989. I also chose not to include adjunct faculty as participants. Adjunct faculty regularly teach at multiple institutions and as a result their participation in college activities is limited. They often do not have strong connections to an institution.

I put considerable thought into determining the institutions from which to select participants. I made a conscious decision not to select participants from institutions where I have worked or from institutions with which I have direct connection, such as the colleges in the West Valley-Mission Community College District, the Los Rios Community College District, or the Sierra Community College District. I did not want my personal history or perceptions at these institutions to influence the study or and/or the relationships I have with faculty at those institutions.

I was also interested in studying recently tenured community college faculty at a multi-college district for a variety of reasons. The first reason is that a multi-college district has a greater likelihood of having the number of participants required for this study. This is less likely at a single college or a single college district. Second, interviewing faculty at more than one college increased trust and willingness of faculty to participate in the study. Interviewing faculty at a single institution may have made faculty guarded and unwilling to participate in the study, as well as create unwarranted and unwanted perceptions of anonymity and confidentiality. Finally, convenience came into play. I had gatekeeper contacts at several community college districts in the Northern California region. This provided an added convenience of potential accessibility to participants and time and effort in my ability to conduct this research. When I contacted the gatekeepers I fully disclosed the purpose and extent of the study, requested permission to identify and initiate communications with recently tenured community college faculty on their campuses, and with their assistance identified any institutional approvals that may be required.

In January 2007, I received approval from Colorado State University's Human Subjects Committee (CSUHSC) to conduct research at a two-college district in Northern California.. However, the gatekeeper at the community college district was unable to garner support from the colleges for me to conduct my research. As a result, I contacted three other community college districts in Northern California. Two districts were unable to participate. One district, Bay Area Community College District (BACCD) responded immediately and was willing to participate in the study.

In February 2007 I received permission from the CSUHSC to proceed with my research at BACCD. BACCD is a multi-college district with 3 colleges and 3 satellite centers located in the California San Francisco Bay Area. Established in 1949, BACCD serves a population of approximately 950,000 people in one Bay Area county with approximately 36,000 unduplicated student headcount and approximately 12,800 full-time equivalent students (FTES). One of the centers is scheduled to become its own college in the next 5 years.

Within a few days of CSUHSC approval, the administrative assistant for the BACCD gatekeeper contacted, via email, 52 recently tenured faculty at all 3 colleges and their centers. Twenty persons responded to the request for the interview. I contacted the first 10 potential participants in the order in which they contacted me. Via email exchanges, I attempted to schedule an interview with the potential participants three times before taking them off the list and moving on to an alternative potential participants. I progressed through the list until I scheduled 10 interviews. The remainder of the list was designated as an alternative list in case some participants were unable to participate at any time during the research process.

Data Collection

Data were collected through two in-depth interviews of nine recently tenured community college faculty. Ten interviews were initially scheduled. At the last minute one participant was unable to participate in the first interview. Attempts were made to reschedule the interview, but to no avail. Participants on the alternative contact list were contacted, but were unable to participate for various reasons. I, therefore, went forward with nine interviews. Of the nine participants, 5 were female and 4 were male. Six participants were faculty at Bay Community College (BCC), and three were at Inland Community College (ICC). The participants' assignments and disciplines included academic support services, athletics/physical education, counseling, health professions including dental technology and nursing, art history/graphic design, mathematics, and music. Further detailed information about the participants is reviewed in Chapter Four.

The length of the first interviews ranged from 24 minutes to 1 hour and 40 minutes. The length of the second interviews ranged from 26 minutes to 1 hour and 7 minutes. The purpose of the second interview was to follow up on any questions, issues, or clarity needed from the first interview, as well as share and dialogue with the participant potential themes identified in their first interviews. The first interviews took place at the beginning of March 2007. The second interviews took place at the end of April 2007.

I used a digital voice recorder to record the interviews. The reasons for the selection of this recording method were twofold. The first was the convenience of having a digital copy of the interview to listen to while interviews were being transcribed. The second reason was ease and timeliness of sending the recording to the transcriptionist. As

a result, I was able to send the audiofiles to the transcriptionist immediately after the interviews and able to receive transcribed interviews in a timely manner. Therefore, I was able to conduct the second interviews six weeks after the first interviews.

I scheduled interviews at the campus of the participants and made arrangements with the assistance of college gatekeepers to identify a private place to interview. I was as flexible as possible to accommodate the participants. The interviews took place at a mutually agreed upon time, place, and date at the college of the participant. The space in which the interviews took place was comfortable and free from distractions or interruptions. The interviews took place in a conference room identified by the college leaders or in the office of the participant. It was the choice of the participant where the interview took place. When scheduling the interviews, the participants were given at least five dates and times from which to choose. The interviews took place during the work week between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Four interviews took place in a conference room provided by the college and scheduled by an administrative assistant. Five interviews took place in the office of the participants.

After the first interviews were scheduled I sent a confirmation email to the participants five days prior to each interview. In this email I thanked participants for their willingness to participate; confirmed the date, time, and place of the interview; and sent a copy of the consent form for their review (Appendix A).

I developed an interview guide (Appendix B) to assist me in conducting the interviews. Although I did not follow the interview guide inflexibly, it allowed me to focus on the dialogue with the participants. The interview guide was designed to elicit stories of the lived experiences of the participants. I used these questions to guide the

interview rather than drive the interview. I expected the participants to dialogue with me and act as co-investigator in the direction of the interviews to explore a broad range of ideas and issues related to the study.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) noted that when an interaction takes place the researchers position themselves in a four dimensional space. These dimensions of inquiry focus on the inward, outward, forward and backward of the lived experience. The inward direction focuses on internal conditions of participants such as feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, and moral dispositions. The outward direction focuses on the external conditions of participants such as the environment, social and cultural roles, and context in which the stories live. The backward and forward directions collectively focus on the temporality of experiences of the past, present, and future of each story. These dimensions of inquiry are what guided me in the development of the interview guide.

Interview Guide

I developed the interview guide to gather insight into experiences of community college faculty in regards to organizational commitment. The interview guide is based upon the dimensions of inquiry, my knowledge and experience with community colleges and organizational commitment. I organized the interview guide to ask participants general descriptive questions followed by more probing questions that reflect on the dimensions of inquiry.

In preparation for the interviews I reviewed my dissertation proposal including the review of literature and the methodology. I prepared an outline of concepts I wanted to cover at the beginning of the interview including anonymity and confidentiality, my story, and the interview guide. I used this document to guide me in building rapport with

the participants and to make sure I covered the important aspects outlined in the research protocol. By the time I conducted the third interview I did not need the outline in front of me as I had the content and flow memorized.

Interview Process

At the first interview I introduced myself and explained the dimensions of the study. I reviewed the nature and confidentiality of the interview and explained that each participant would have a pseudonym to help maintain confidentiality. I reminded the participants that their participation was entirely voluntary and they could withdraw consent at any time. I invited the participants to ask any questions in regards to the study at any time. I then presented a copy of the consent form for the participants to sign. I told them I would make a copy of the signed consent form and provide the copy to them at the second interview.

After the consent form was signed, I turned on the digital voice recorder and began the interview. I developed rapport with the participants by sharing with them my story and experience about how I came to conduct this research. I shared with them my experiences in getting a full-time position and how grateful I was to get a full-time position at a time in which there were few positions available in the state. I described how I intended to teach my entire career and how I ended up in faculty leadership positions that prepared me for my current position. I also shared with them my challenges in balancing teaching and leadership and how my commitment to the college changed over time. I spoke with them about the importance of organizational commitment to me as an administrator which has led me to this research. After sharing my story I asked them to tell me their stories about becoming a community college faculty member. From

there any structure to the interview ended. The dialogue between me and the participants was guided, in part, by the participants. At times when the discussion began to wane or get misdirected I used the interview guide to assist me in guiding the participant back to the topic of organizational commitment.

At the end of the first interview I thanked the participants and scheduled the second interview to take place in late April 2007. I told them I would send them a copy of the transcripts from the first interview for them to review a week prior to the second interview. At the second interview we would cover anything that needed to be clarified and/or corrected. We would also have an opportunity to talk more about organizational commitment and discuss the potential themes discovered in the first interview. The week after the first interviews I emailed the participants to remind them of the second interview date and time.

At the end of each interview I reflected on the interview by journaling and developing field notes. At this time I participated in epoche in reviewing my behavior, both verbal and nonverbal, in relation to the interview and made adjustments accordingly for the next interview. At the end of each day of interviewing I emailed a copy of digital audiofiles to a transcriptionist. While I waited for the transcripts to be returned to me, I listened to each interview and began the process of phenomenological reduction, as described in the data analysis section of this chapter.

One week prior to the second interview I emailed participants to remind them of the upcoming interview and sent them an electronic copy of the transcribed interview. I asked them to review the interview for accuracy, clarity, as well as an opportunity to recall our dialogue.

In the second interview I greeted the participants by thanking them for their participation in the study and presented them with a copy of the signed consent form. I, once again, talked about the nature and confidentiality of the interview, reminded them that their participation was entirely voluntary, and that they could withdraw consent at any time. I invited the participants to ask any questions in regards to the study.

I then asked them if they had an opportunity to review the transcribed interview. From there our dialogue began. At the end of the second interview I thanked the participants for their cooperation and willingness to participate in the study. The week after the second interviews I followed up with a thank you note to the participants. Several participants requested follow up information about the results of the research. I will send them an abridged version of the document that removes any specific information about the participants and the institutions involved.

Data Analysis

Moustakas (1994) describes four major processes to organize, analyze, and synthesize data. The four major processes are (a) epoche, (b) phenomenological reduction, (c) imaginative variation, and (d) synthesis. I used these processes in the data analysis.

Epoche

The first major process, epoche or “bracketing”, is a key concept in phenomenological analysis (Creswell, 1998). At this stage, the researcher works to set aside preconceptions in order to best understand the participants’ experiences (Creswell, 1998). Husserl (1931) referred to epoche as the freedom from supposition. At this point, the focus of the research is placed in brackets, and biases and preconceived notions are

set aside so the entire research process is rooted solely on the topic and question (Moustakas, 1994). Throughout the entire data collection and data analysis process, I engaged in epoche to set aside any predilections, prejudices, and predispositions to better understand the experiences through each participant's voice (Moustakas, 1994). I kept a reflexive journal and field notes to describe and reflect on my experiences related to this research.

Also as a part of epoche it was imperative for me to review my perspective on the research. This research was important to me both personally and professionally. My experiences with community colleges as a child, student, faculty member, administrator, and leader have shaped my perspective on the roles and responsibilities of community college faculty. My experiences as a graduate student, faculty member, and dean have formed my views about the nature and development of organizational commitment, specifically how it relates to community college faculty. Therefore, engaging in epoche allowed me to understand my own experiences and how they influenced the entire research process.

Husserl (1931) stated that a phenomenologist must see the inherent logic of human experience and articulate that logic or sense faithfully, without distortion. In order to articulate the experiences of my participants, I was aware that my experiences may not reflect the experiences of newly tenured community college faculty (Merriam, 2002). How I understood the experiences of organizational commitment in community college faculty was shaped by my personal and professional experiences. As a researcher, I was aware of the multiple identities and dimensions that I brought to this study (Lincoln &

Guba, 2000). I continually reflected on my role in the research process including how my own experiences and biases may have shaped the study.

Researcher's Perspective

I felt I related to the experiences of my participants because of my own experiences. Therefore, I was cognizant of my biases and attempted to forgo any preconceived notions I may have had about the experiences of community college faculty due to my personal and professional background as faculty, administrator, and researcher. I shared with the participants my experiences so they could understand my perspective. I established a collaborative relationship with the participants in order to capture their lived experiences and construct meaning from those experiences. The communication of my experiences with the participants also assisted me in establishing rapport and a sense of trust between me and the participants.

My interest in this study resided in my desire to understand how community college faculty experience commitment. As a Dean at a community college, I believe it is my responsibility to help develop commitment in faculty. It is my responsibility to dialogue with faculty to help create shared meaning about their roles and responsibilities as faculty. It is my responsibility to motivate faculty to participate in the college. More importantly, it is my responsibility to create an atmosphere that develops and supports the college community that positively affects campus climate. I do this by attempting to understand individual and collective experiences, how they relate to the college culture, and what motivates faculty to work collaboratively.

As a leader, I believe that the socialization process is significant in the development of commitment and that providing employees with training about the roles

and expectations makes a difference in the commitment. Moreover, training needs to be ongoing in order to support people in their commitment. I believe employees should understand the goals and values of the organization if they are expected to participate fully in the organization. Ideally, organizations should hire people who understand and believe in the goals and values of an organization. Finally, I believe that recognition, in all forms, is extremely important to develop commitment. As a leader, I try to support the development of commitment in faculty by emphasizing all of these beliefs.

As I reviewed and analyzed the data and presented the findings, I considered my experiences, biases, and assumptions. I engaged in epoche by participating in reflexive journaling throughout the entire process and documenting extensive field notes. These two activities not only assisted me in documenting the experiences of my participants, but also documented my experience in this process, my previous experiences, and how that is reflected in data collection and analysis.

Phenomenological Reduction

Phenomenological reduction is the next phase of data analysis. The first step in phenomenological reduction is horizontalization. Horizontalization refers to identifying and listing every significant statement participants make relevant to the topic and giving the statements equal value (Moustakas, 1994). I analyzed the participants' interview transcripts, my field notes, and reflexive journal using inductive data analysis. I listened to and read the interview transcripts of each participant to get an overall sense of the interview including the perspective and the sense of meaning for each participant. I integrated my field notes into the analysis of the transcriptions. This process enhanced the depth and breadth of gathered information from each of the interviews and represented

documentation of my research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Using the coding software NVivo 7, I coded each participant's transcripts. I identified each participant's statement that had significance to the experience. I assigned inductive codes to each statement, careful to apply equal value to each statement. I then organized statements into nonrepetitive, nonoverlapping units of meanings of the individual experience. After coding each transcript, I examined the participants' repetitive or overlapping statements, leaving only the horizons (Moustakas, 1994). Using NVivo 7, I then clustered the individual statements into themes. I inductively assigned thematic names and sorted the themes.

Imaginative Variation

The purpose of imaginative variation is to seek all possible meanings, divergent perspectives, and varying frames of reference about the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Through the process of imaginative variation, individual and composite structural qualities were identified using themes to provide a universal description of how the phenomenon was experienced. For each participant I examined and considered a variety of possible meanings and perspectives from the textural descriptions. From the themes, I developed individual structural and textural descriptions of how the phenomenon was experienced.

I followed each step of these processes after the first and second interviews. The themes identified in the first interviews were used as a part of the interview guide of the second interviews. I reviewed the potential themes with the participants to further describe and clarify the potential themes. After the second interviews I conducted the same steps as described above for each individual participant experience. I incorporated

the themes from the first and second interview when I reached the process of imaginative variation.

Synthesis

Synthesis is the final step in phenomenological data analysis. Synthesis is the process of developing composite textural and structural descriptions of the participants' experiences that develop the meaning and essence of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The composite descriptions are used to develop an understanding of the group essence and are not merely a collection of individual essences (Moustakas, 1994). In this step I collected the invariant meanings and themes of each participant in this study, depicting the experiences of the group as a whole. After I completed the individual analysis of participants' experience, using synthesis, I began to construct the phenomenon by developing a composite of the individual experiences. Using NVivo 7, I inductively coded the textural and structural experiences of all nine participants to form textural structural synthesis of the findings. Using the process of imaginative variation I examined all the possible meanings and reflected on the themes that formed the textural and structural qualities that framed the phenomenon. As the textural and structural qualities of the phenomenon emerged I integrated and synthesized the composite textural structural descriptions into a universal description of the experience. This allowed me to communicate the essence of the phenomenon.

Moustakas (1994) stated "The phenomenological report ends with the reader understanding better the essential, invariant structure or essence of the experience, recognizing that a single unifying meaning of the experience exists" (p. 55). Chapter Four describes the participants lived experiences of organizational commitment, including

collective thematic structures, textural and structural synthesis of the thematic structures, and the essence of the experience.

Ethical Considerations

Several authors have addressed the ethical issues encountered in qualitative research (Josselson & Lieblich, 2003; Miles & Huberman, 1994). These authors emphasized that the researcher must possess a heightened sense of awareness about various ethical dilemmas rather than simply applying the rules prescribed in the literature. I used full disclosure and informed consent to ensure that the study maintained ethical standards. I discussed the issues related to confidentiality with the gatekeepers and participants during my initial contact. I was clear with both the gatekeepers and participants that the results of my inquiry are for research purposes only and will not be used in any other way. I made clear to the participants that their participation was entirely voluntary, at any time they could turn off the recorder, they did not have to answer any questions, or they could withdraw from the study. At the beginning of each interview I reiterated this statement. Prior to the beginning of the first interview I asked each participant to sign a consent form (Appendix A) and provided a copy of the signed form to each participant. I created a pseudonym for each participant and the institutions involved to help maintain confidentiality. I invited the participants to ask any questions in regards to the study at any time. I audiotaped and had transcribed each interview for the sole purpose of this study. During the study all audiofiles and transcriptions were kept in a locked file accessible only by me. I will destroy the audiofiles after the completion of the study.

Trustworthiness

Moustakas (1994) notes there are a number of assurances for trustworthiness or “establishing the truth of things.” Trustworthiness refers to the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of a study (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I achieved trustworthiness in my research by engaging in epoche, creating an audit trail, and informant feedback.

Self reflection is an important preparatory experience to interviewing (Creswell, 1998). Through engagement in the epoche process, I reflected on my experiences to clarify my personal biases, prejudices, and/or preconceived notions related to my research. This was an ongoing process throughout the research that began in Chapter One with me telling my experiences with community colleges and organizational commitment. This included my experiences as a child, graduate student, faculty member, dean, and researcher. I continued this process earlier in Chapter Three by identifying my perspectives, ideas, values about community college faculty and organizational commitment.

As I attempted to analyze, construct, and unfold my participants’ experience I continually reflected on my experiences as they relate to this research by keeping a reflexive journal. The reflexive journal was used throughout the data collection and analysis process to record personal reflections regarding the interviews and my experiences. My reflexive journal allowed me to reflect critically on myself as a researcher and an instrument in the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Moustakas (1994) identified informant feedback as a method of data verification to ensure trustworthiness of the data. I used member checking as a form of informant

feedback. I requested each participant to review the transcripts of the first interview for accuracy and clarity as described in the data collection section. I followed up on accuracy and clarity in the second interview. This member checking technique helped me ensure the accuracy of data (Creswell, 1998, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) recommended careful retention of all study materials in easily retrievable forms. I developed an audit trail of all research documents for this research study to ensure transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study. I maintained a detailed audit notebook of all study materials, interview journals, observation and field notes, audiofiles, verbatim and coded transcripts of the interviews, data displays, coding process, details of thematic development, and a final report. Through good auditing procedures I have a clear record of the critical elements of this study. I provided sufficient information and detail of the methods and findings to allow the reader to determine the applicability to other or new situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The audit trail affords other researchers the opportunity to follow the steps I took to verify the results of this study.

Chapter Three Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the methods to be used to collect and analyze data that provide the descriptions of lived experiences of community college faculty as they relate to organizational commitment. Chapter Three reviewed the qualitative research paradigm including phenomenology, method and implementation, data analysis, and ethical considerations. The findings for my study are presented in Chapter Four. The interpretations of these findings are described in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

In my search to describe and understand how community college faculty experience organizational commitment, I analyzed the data using Moustakas' (1994) qualitative method of inductive data analysis which included epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis. In this section I describe the institutions in the study (BACCD, BCC and ICC), as well as introduce the participants via a within case analysis of participant descriptions. I also describe the institutional issues experienced by participants and explain the phenomenological analysis process. I also present the thematic structures elicited from the data that describe how the phenomenon was experienced. Through the data analysis of the interview transcripts, *Service Attitude*, *Types of Commitment*, *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Relationships*, and *Institutional Support* emerged as the thematic structures that described the phenomenon. I then provide a textural structural synthesis of the thematic structures that described the phenomenon in which the Dimensions of Organizational Commitment: Individual Expectations, Positive Experiences, and Negative Experiences emerge as the ways participants described their commitment. Finally, I conclude with a description of the essence of the phenomenon: *Courtship*.

Institutional Descriptions Introduction

I interviewed 9 recently tenured faculty at 2 of the 3 colleges in BACCD: BCC and ICC. The institutional descriptions represent part of the lived experiences of recently tenured community college faculty in relation to organizational commitment and can be heard through the rich descriptions provided by the voices of the participants. The institutional descriptions include demographic information about the institution, descriptions of the campus, and any institutional issues related to the participants' experiences. Without this information, some of the references to the institutions in the participant descriptions would not make sense.

Bay Community College

BCC was established in 1949 when the BACCD was formed. BCC serves approximately 7900 students with approximately 2600 full-time equivalent students (FTES). BCC serves the western part of the county and delivers both career technical, general education transfer, and academic programs. The ethnic composition of BCC is very diverse: 1% American Indian, 25% African American, 21% Asian/Pacific Islander, 26% Hispanic, 18% White, and 9% Other. Sixty-three percent of the student population is female and 37% is male. The average student age is 29 years. The diverse student population of BCC is very evident on campus. Student diversity is also reflected by the presence of youth culture on campus. Both the ethnic diversity and youth culture is evident by the art and music displayed by students on campus. I spent some time in the student recreation area and was entertained by students singing impromptu, personally crafted, a cappella rap music. The art work in the recreation area and throughout campus was student produced and symbolized youth culture and ethnic themes.

BCC is located in one of the most economically disadvantaged areas in the San Francisco Bay Area. The main entrance to BCC is located near the performing arts center off a main thoroughfare that eventually connects to a major freeway. Across the street from the performing arts center is a dilapidated strip mall that includes a restaurant, a small ethnic grocery store, a gas station, and various service oriented stores.

The bulk of the campus is on a hillside near a suburban area. This part of campus has most of the instructional and student services spaces. Most of the buildings were built between 1950 and 1965 and reflect the architecture of the time. Most buildings are constructed of concrete and have an industrial look to them. The administration building is at the top of the hill. This building houses administrative staff, as well as some student services, instructional classrooms, and a student run café. I was fortunate enough to spend some time in the café and was delighted with the quality and presentation of food. Although this clearly was a teaching environment, the level of student professionalism was impressive.

Near the bottom of the hill was a complex that housed the library, bookstore, and the student recreation area. The library is currently being remodeled via funds from a bond measure and most of the current collection is housed in the bookstore. The student recreation area is a large room with tables and chairs that resembles a cafeteria style dining area. However, this is not a working cafeteria. Food items are available through vending machines and in the bookstore.

At the bottom of the hill is a large parking lot, which is one of three parking lot areas on campus. Like most California community colleges parking availability is an issue. I was challenged to find a parking space when I visited BCC. I did conduct one

interview in the evening and noticed the lack of appropriate lighting in the parking lot and walkways. Speaking of walkways, BCC has a myriad of interconnected walkways leading from one building to another and lacked adequate signage. Some walkways lead to nowhere.

Past the lower parking lot is a cluster of physical education buildings including the gym, gym annex, and sporting fields. Just past the physical education building is a newer performing arts center that is named after an individual. All other buildings on campus are named based on function. For example: humanities building, gym annex, vocational arts building etc... My experience tells me that the construction of the performing arts center was funded by the individual whose name it bears.

One of the unique characteristics of BCC is that the campus is adjacent to a high school that has a special agreement with the college to provide concurrent high school and college instruction. This high school targets at risk students and focuses on active learning. The boundaries between the high school and the college are identified by a chain link fence with breaks in the fence for students to pass between the two institutions. The high school is located at the bottom of the hill across from the lower parking lot and the physical education buildings.

The physical campus is in great disrepair. The landscaping consists of grassy areas with a lot of bare spots, unpruned shrubbery, and several oak and eucalyptus trees. The classrooms appear to have the original furniture, carpet, and paint. The faculty offices have furniture that is at least 30 years old. I also noticed the large computer monitors which indicated dated computer hardware. Participants also told me about slow computer connectivity issues. While waiting for one participant, I witnessed an

interaction between a staff member and a student where they waited at least 5 minutes for information to be retrieved from a computer database.

Inland Community College

ICC was also established in 1949 with the creation of BACCD. ICC is the largest of the 3 colleges in BACCD. ICC serves approximately 20,000 students with approximately 7100 FTES. ICC serves the eastern part of the county and the focus of the educational programs at ICC is general education transfer and workforce/economic development. ICC has an educational center further east of the campus near the border of a neighboring county. The ethnic composition of ICC is as follows: 1% American Indian, 6% African American, 18% Asian/Pacific Islander, 13% Hispanic, 49% White, and 14% Other. Fifty-three percent of the student population is female and 47% is male. The average student age is 27 years.

ICC is located in a suburban/commercial community in the foothills of the California San Francisco Bay Area. ICC is located on very large physical campus located near a residential shopping and suburban area and is very close to a major freeway. Across the freeway are several business parks. Across the street from the main campus entrance is a large strip mall with a chain grocery store, bookstore, and small restaurants.

The center of campus is the quad area which is an open space for students to congregate. The quad area is surrounded by various student service oriented buildings such as counseling, admissions and records, cafeteria, and bookstore. The cafeteria dining area is a large space and seemed to be the central gathering place for students. These student oriented buildings are surrounded by various instructional buildings. ICC is hilly on one side of the campus, and as such, many buildings have two and three levels

interconnected by a system of bridges. The architecture of ICC is a reflection of many styles including cement industrial, Ivy League brick, and western/cabin wood exteriors. The disparate styles indicate to me that the campus was built in phases over periods of time. Like BCC, ICC has a myriad of interconnected walkways on the ground, as well as bridge walkways. It is easy to get lost with the walkways and the inconsistent signage. Building interiors are just as inconsistent as the exterior buildings with regards to design and furniture. ICC also has a student run bakery in the cafeteria area, a coffee/sandwich shop, and a faculty dining area near instructional buildings. The faculty dining room has staffed food services available at the lunch hour.

The perimeter of campus is bordered by parking lots and the physical education buildings, including sporting fields. ICC is in the process of building a new parking structure, therefore a part of campus was sectioned off for construction. The landscaping is primarily low hilly grassy areas, trees, with a pond near the music building. The campus appeared to be maintained at an adequate level. Although some of the furniture was dated, most of it was in decent condition. Some participants mentioned infrastructure issues needed to be addressed, such as outdated heating and air conditioning systems.

Institutional Descriptions Summary

This section described the institutions where I interviewed participants. I included demographic information as well as descriptions of the physical campus and resulting campus culture. Although in the same district, BCC and ICC are different in physical size, the numbers of students they serve, institutional focus, and student populations. The institutional descriptions are important because they provide a context to help describe the participants lived experiences with relation to organizational commitment.

Participant Descriptions Introduction

This section provides an introduction of each of the participants in my study. These introductions provide the reader familiarity with each participant and is as a within case analysis of the data. The participant descriptions provide a context to help better understand the lived experiences of the participants, as well as the data analysis provided later in this chapter. Names of people and cities have been changed to maintain confidentiality.

I interviewed all participants over 3 day periods in March 2007 and then again in April 2007. The first day I interviewed 3 participants at BCC beginning at 7:00am and ending at 4:30pm. The second day I interviewed 3 participants at ICC beginning at 11:00am and ending at 8:00pm. The third day I interviewed 3 participants at ICC beginning at 11:00am and ending at 4:30pm. The same interview schedule was used for the first and second interviews and was convenient for the participants and myself. This schedule allowed me to not only be efficient with my time, but allowed me to disconnect from my work and concentrate on the research. I also had plenty of time between each interview to reflect on the conversations through documenting field notes and writing in my reflexive journal, prepare for the next interviews, and explore the campuses. I stayed at a hotel located between the two colleges.

BACCD was beset with a host of issues that have affected the culture of the district and the colleges. The two most pervasive issues included a budget shortfall with resulting budget cuts and a District decision to move from division chairs to academic deans which resulted in a lawsuit. These issues are important information about the

district and colleges because they are mentioned in the participant descriptions. I will further expand on these issues later in this chapter.

Participant Descriptions

The following are descriptions of the participants I interviewed. I briefly review the discipline in which they teach, how each participant became a community college faculty member, how they describe their commitment, and include any additional information unique to each participant. Of the 9 participants, 5 were female and 4 were male. Six participants were from BCC and 3 participants were from ICC. The disciplines represented by participants included academic support services, athletics/physical education, counseling, health professions including dental technology and nursing, art history/graphic design, mathematics, and music. Participants are introduced in alphabetical order.

Amira

Amira is an African American woman in her mid 30s. She is a counselor focusing on matriculation activities at BCC. Prior to coming to BCC Amira taught elementary, middle, and high school for 7 years. Initially, Amira was hired as an interim counselor in transfer and articulation. Because the transfer and articulation position was temporary, she applied for a counselor position in matriculation which was a tenure-track position. She preferred transfer and articulation activities over matriculation and felt frustrated that by default she is taxed with both transfer and articulation and matriculation responsibilities. I interviewed Amira in her office in the counseling office at BCC. The counseling office is in the humanities building located in the central hilly part of campus. The humanities building houses admissions and records, counseling, various instructional

classrooms, and faculty offices. While I waited for Amira, I sat in the counseling office and noticed that the furniture and carpeting were worn and stained, and the walls needed a fresh coat of paint. The ceiling tiles were discolored and water stained. The windows were cracked and had a thick coat of dust on them. I interviewed Amira both times at 7:00 p.m. She was the last interview of the day on the second day of interviews. When I met Amira, she was warm, friendly, and had a sincere desire to talk with me. She was thoughtful and confident in our discussions. When I met her for the second interview she appeared anxious to talk with me as she had just been approached to become dean of counseling and was conflicted in making a decision about the position:

Amira stated her commitment to her field and her position, but did not necessarily feel committed to BCC:

I definitely feel committed to the field. I feel committed to what I am doing. It has been pretty rough here, as you probably know, the pink slips, and then the pay cuts, and recently some restoration, but still not a whole lot. I feel valued and I don't know if everyone feels that way... Now to Bay College specifically? Uhhmm. I feel somewhat of a commitment. Uhhmm. I am open to, you know, change but I definitely feel like this is where I got my start and, you know, I enjoy it.

She felt conflicted in making a decision to stay a faculty member or move into administration because she felt valued as a counselor and the service she provides to faculty and students:

I am like in this crisis...Where my senior dean is trying to push me towards management and I am really wanting to stay towards the faculty connection...But I feel valued in this position...Like you said, your colleagues, you said they come to you and ask "What about articulation with this?" and "Can you help me with this? And they look to you as a person that can provide a service. And they refer students to you who are interested in transferring and so I feel valued by colleagues and by the management and that is what keeps me committed to the position and what I do.

Amira participated on several committees on and off campus, but also felt overloaded by the workload and responsibilities associated with her position. She described a cartoon that reflected how she felt about her position and displayed a good sense of humor about it:

I think there was this article. It was an article. It was a cartoon. It was like this postcard or something. It had an ape on it, looked like...Dressed up like...I don't know if you have seen it... This female, and it says "I have job security, no one else will put up with this crap" (laughter). That is how I have felt at times. Like no one else would come in here and do all of this and that's like security but at the same time, what is it costing you? So, those are the things. But I feel secure. But I also feel like, no wonder I am secure because nobody else will do it (laughter).

Amira enjoyed working with and felt connected to her colleagues and students at ICC. Amira actively participated in activities related to her position, but also felt overworked and overwhelmed with the amount of responsibility associated with her work in matriculation and the extra work of transfer and articulation. Amira also felt conflicted about the request of administration to become dean of counseling.

Geoffrey

Geoffrey is a Caucasian male in his late 50s and a member of the art history/graphic design faculty at BCC. Geoffrey began his career at BCC over 20 years ago as a classified staff member in the audio visual department and then as the college graphic designer. At one point during his time as a classified staff member he was classified senate president. Geoffrey's appointment to a full-time faculty member in art/history and graphic design was a complicated matter. He was hired without possessing the teaching credentials outlined by the California Community College Chancellor's Office. From what I gathered he was hired by default due to a technicality in the rules governing faculty hiring.

I interviewed Geoffrey in a conference room provided by BCC. This conference room is located on the second floor of the administration building which also housed administration, various student services program, instructional classrooms, and the student café. Student art was displayed throughout the building. The conference room had a large wood oblong table that seated 10 to 12 people and a chalkboard. The large window on the far wall overlooked a common area. Geoffrey is a large, graying, bearded gentleman who walks with a cane, wears glasses, and a beret. Geoffrey's demeanor was cordial and he presented himself as someone who had great things to say. In our discussion he was very forthcoming with his opinions.

Geoffrey was born and educated in the city in which BCC resides. He was a student at BCC. He is also married to another full-time faculty member at BCC. Geoffrey feels very much a part of and committed to BCC and the community. As a result, Geoffrey had a good understanding of the students and the community the college serves. He understood the challenges students face in coming to BCC, including a limited world view and a lack of trust of institutions in their daily lives:

The community changed 5 years after I graduated...There has been more significant change over the years and I can't say that I grew up with the rituals that people are growing up today. But in many ways there is kind of the hard scrabble nature of Rockwell and Seaview. There is the smaller world view. Many people never get out of the county even though there is transportation...There's lots of institutions that they've distrusted and this is the first one that is not like those others. Now there can be aspects of it sometimes, but mostly if you really talked to them they began to say "This can make a difference." So that has always attracted me to them.

Geoffrey had a lot of opinions about the role of a community college faculty member. He made a lot of statements about the importance of service, including his philosophy of service leadership. During both interviews Geoffrey did not reveal that he

participated in collegial activities. He was also philosophical about the definition of commitment and how commitment is development. He felt that commitment is a personal decision and cannot be mandated by an institution and used his hiring experience as an example:

I don't know that you can legislate commitment. I don't know that you can make it as a part of your employment package, since commitment comes from personal view... I'm teaching art and I've never taken an art class, you know, that's not right. I would not hire me. It doesn't fit the standards of how people should be hired. But if the standards were commitment I might hire me. It's not going to be there if you can't count that and you can't look it up and verify it. It's illegal.

Geoffrey has a long history with BCC both as a classified staff member and a faculty member. As a result, he has a good understanding of the student population and the community BCC serves and as a result he felt a commitment to the college. Geoffrey also had a lot of opinions about the role of a faculty and the nature of commitment and its development.

Josh

Josh is a Caucasian male in his early 30s and a faculty member in the academic skills program at BCC. He also teaches writing, coordinates the tutoring center, is staff development coordinator, and directs a Title III grant for the college. Prior to coming to BCC, Josh was an adjunct faculty member in English at a community college in the state of New York. I spoke with Josh in the same a conference room in which I interviewed Geoffrey. Josh was the first person I interviewed at BCC. Josh has a very casual demeanor in both his appearance and his rhetoric. He wore baggy khaki pants and long sleeved knit t-shirts. When we spoke, my impression was that he was never entirely certain of his answers, as if his answers were an undefined thought that needed additional

thought processing. However, in the second interview Josh was more confident in his rhetoric.

Josh felt comfortable in his position as a faculty member. He described his decision to become a community college faculty member as a choice. He stated "I made the choice. I mean, I'm not ever going to be rich, but I'm going to be comfortable, and I'm going to do what I like and that is one of the great things about my position." One of the reasons he appreciated being a faculty member was the freedom and variety associated with the position:

I mean, there's freedom. Nobody's really looking over your shoulder. You teach your classes. You meet with your students. You work with them and then you decide...Like I developed a grammar class because I saw there was a need for it. So I said OK that is something that I'm going to do...But it's like something comes along and if you want to do this, you do it.

Through his many positions Josh is involved in college activities. At the same time he preferred to pick and choose how he participated in the college outside of his required responsibilities. However, he felt conflicted that he did not want to participate in shared governance activities and, for him, this showed a lack of commitment to the college:

It is one of those words and things (shared governance), and in a way I feel like in certain ways I don't meet your definition of committed, because I don't want to do the shared governance thing. That's not it. I am very committed to the place. But at the same time there are things where I just don't... I just want to stay out of.

He felt his commitment to the college was displayed through his dedication to students:

What I'm here to do is teach...And I'm here for the students. I particularly don't like being staff development coordinator. I am looking forward to being able to say I'm sorry but this other thing came up... Not that it is any great picnic either, but I prefer doing that, but because I feel like a lot of things are kind of busy work. But at the same time I also feel like I want to do anything that I can to help the college to be successful. Like it's all right I will do it if it helps. I will do Title III if it helps.

Josh also preferred to not get involved in campus politics. He seemed distressed by the nature of some activist faculty and the confrontation associated with an impending strike:

I mean that (politics) is something I never really been interested in. I never wanted to deal with it. I feel like if I wanted to deal with politics, I would be a politician...We had all of the budget crises a few years back and there was a lot of talk of are we going to go on strike? Are we going to do this? And are we going to do that? And there is a lot of this militancy and my feeling is, of course, you want to fight for your rights. You want to defend. But at the same time, I kind of feel like we all, all faculty members presumably, we are all educated people.

Josh stated that he chose to become a community college faculty member and that he enjoyed the freedom associated with being a community college faculty member. He also appreciated the variety of opportunities available to him at the college. Josh participated in many activities associated with his position. Yet, Josh felt that since he did not want to participate in shared governance activities that, perhaps, he did not have as high of level of commitment as did other faculty. One of the aspects of being a faculty member that appealed to Josh was the option to not participate in college politics.

Karen

Karen is a Caucasian female in her late 20s and a mathematics faculty member at ICC. She came to ICC and community college teaching directly from a doctoral program in mathematics from a local university where she taught mathematics as a graduate student. As a child Karen lived in a commune and currently lives a hippie lifestyle. Karen has a youthful appearance. She is a petite woman with long reddish blonde hair that she wore in braided pigtails. She wore long flowing skirts and Birkenstock shoes. On both occasions she had just come from class and carried with her a wicker basket with tea bags in it. She explained that she liked tea and shared her tea bags with others on campus.

I talked with Karen in a conference room provided by ICC. This conference room was located in an administrative building that housed several dean administrative assistants. The conference room was small with a laminated table with seating for up to 6 people. It appeared that the conference room was used more for storage than for meeting. The far wall was lined with metal filing cabinets which had an assortment of boxes piled on top of them. There was a small table up against the wall opposite the filing cabinets that had piles of papers. The conference room did not have anything on the walls.

Prior to coming to ICC, Karen was not aware of the community college mission or student population. However, since becoming a community college faculty member her awareness of community colleges has evolved where she has an understanding of the role and mission of community colleges:

I think I'm committed to the idea of community colleges and that happened pretty quickly. I really didn't know very much about community colleges before I started. As I have learned about those...God, this is the most fabulous thing ever and I'm sure that happened in my first semester.

Karen's commitment to the college focused on her colleagues. She stated "I'm trying to think of what the situation where I would feel not committed and it would either be if I was surrounded by people who didn't care or if I were more restricted." She also appreciated the freedom and flexibility of being a faculty member including the ability to choose how she gets involved in college activities:

It is a big freedom that we are given. To do what we see is appropriate...Both in the classroom and in certain parts of campus life, which I know different people at ICC have had different experiences along these lines. But I think that I've tended to get involved with things where I have been given a lot of leeway. If I do get involved in something beyond the math department, they happen to be topics that I like.

Karen felt commitment toward her department, but has made a conscious decision to not be included in larger college issues due to what she termed “faculty bitterness.”

Karen shared with me a story about being happy to not be on the all faculty e-mail distribution list because of the negative content and tone of the email exchanges among faculty:

In the spring of my fifth year I finally figured out I was not on the faculty e-mail list and my first thought was that’s why I have been so mellow this whole time, because I had never been reading any of these back and forth and, you know, all the people like just kind of dumping...Because somebody would make a reference did you see what so and so wrote... I never saw that and it sounded like just these horrible...Like only faculty, they’re allowed to vent...And as soon as I realized that I decided then and there that I am never getting on this e-mail. HAHAHAHA! I am so happy. HAHAHA!

Although relatively new to community colleges, Karen has embraced the goals and mission of community colleges. Karen, like Josh, appreciated the freedom associated with being a community college faculty member, as well as the flexibility to choose how she participated in the college community. However, Karen was bothered by the bitterness of some faculty.

Liz

Liz is a Caucasian woman in her early 40s and a mathematics faculty member at BCC. Prior to coming to BCC she was an adjunct faculty member at a community college in the state of Michigan. Liz described herself as a “radical lesbian” and a “philosophical anarchist.” I spoke with Liz in an empty classroom near her office. We originally were going to meet in her office. However, her office is a cluster of faculty offices with little privacy. I recommended that we move to the empty classroom across from her office and she agreed. The empty classroom we met in appeared to have the original furniture, linoleum flooring, and chalkboard. The desks are aged hardwood tops marred by carved

writings and symbols. The chalkboard has a white dust film on it and seemed to be worn through in places. The doorway entrance has very large chips and cracks. The windows, like those in the counseling office, are cracked and have a thick coat of dust on them.

Liz is a tall woman, with short graying hair. She wore thick glasses, jeans, and long-sleeved button down shirts. She had a strong physical presence because of her stature and her assertive mannerisms. When we shook hands, she quickly approached me with long strides on her walk and stood closer to me than is customary on a first meeting. Liz had very strong opinions displayed by the volume and tone of her voice. However, by the time I completed my interviews I came to the conclusion that this was the manner in which she spoke on a daily basis.

Liz is a single parent of an adopted mixed race child. The primary focus of her attention is on the care of her son. She stated she chose to work at BCC so she and her son could be a part of the community:

My son is Black and Latino and I am White. I don't have a partner. I want him to have a Black presence in his life. There's more mixing of races here than anywhere else that I know of in this country and he has many Black people, not enough Latino people, in his life here and I don't think that could have happened in Ann Arbor.

Liz was very aware of District and College issues related to the budget and shared governance, specifically the pay cuts. She was clearly upset about the pay cuts. When asked if she was committed to the college she stated "Yeah. But I'm pissed as hell that we got a 7% pay cut". However, she claimed the issues did not affect her commitment to the college. She stated that she showed her commitment by not applying for positions at other colleges and by participating in activities she does not have to participate in:

Liz: The fact that I'm not applying for the jobs that pays more. We are the lowest paid right now and we weren't when I started. A 7% pay cut. We are by far

the lowest paid college in this area. It sucks. It's really rude. I'm not making ends meet.

Researcher: By the fact that you're not looking anywhere else, that's how you show your commitment?

Liz: That's a way one would show one's commitment. But I'm also on the faculty senate, as painful as it is, and I do a math contest. I do all sorts of things that I don't have to do.

Liz had a lot of opinions about the college, management, shared governance, the union, and individual people on campus. Most of her opinions were negative and revolved around faculty being "screwed" and how others do not know how to do things the "right" way. When she referred to faculty she frequently commented on what "amazing teachers" BCC has.

At one point in the interview she shared with me an interaction between her and the president of the college, Ruth, who is now the district chancellor. She commented how the interpersonal interaction positively affected her commitment to the college:

Researcher: Did the college do anything to help create your commitment?

Liz: No, I don't think so. I think it's about... Well, I will tell you what Ruth did. Ruth came to my office within the first 2 weeks of me working here and asked how it was going. Totally down-to-earth and she reminds me of an aunt of mine... Have you met Ruth?

Researcher: Oh yes. She is the one that gave me permission to come here.

Liz: I like Ruth. I'm not sure she is always doing the right thing by my standards, but I'm pretty sure she's trying. When I wrote her an e-mail complaining that I can't pursue education, you know, I have to be looking for kindergarten for my son for next year and I can't pursue this with a clear mind because I don't know if I have enough money for it and her first reply to me was rather short and I wrote back and just said "Thanks for replying. I just want you to know how hard it is." Because I didn't want to give her any grief. She has too much to do for me to give her grief. I want her to see my situation.

Researcher: The reality of it?

Liz: Yep. And so her reply was short and I thanked her anyway and she called me... She called me on the telephone. She put me in tears. I almost feel like crying about it now. She called on the telephone within, you know, I pushed the button and the phone rang. I was a little concerned that she was reading her e-mails that diligently because she's got so much to do, but I'm so impressed by her intent to try to keep connections with every person in a whole District. That's just pretty amazing. I don't know if she can do it.

Liz was focused on the care of her son and how her job affected his care. Liz was aware of the issues related to the budget cuts and had a lot of opinions about the governance of the college and individual people at the college. The personal touch offered by the college president appeared to have a positive affect on her commitment to the college.

Patty

Patty is a Caucasian woman in her early 40s and is a member of the dental technology faculty at ICC. Patty was a student at ICC, taught as an adjunct faculty member at another Bay Area community college, and was in private practice prior to coming to ICC. I interviewed Patty in the same conference room as Karen. I met with Patty in the afternoon after her lab and before her evening class. Patty is a petite woman with short graying hair. She wore glasses, jeans, and button down shirts. In our discussion Patty was very matter of fact in her dialogue with me and had quick responses to questions. I got the impression she would have been happier to complete a survey than converse. Patty was proud of ICC's reputation and stated it had an affect on her commitment in a positive way:

Researcher: What makes you feel committed to the college?

Patty: The reputation and just from what I remember as a student.

Researcher: What is the reputation?

Patty: Excellent. Everywhere I go. Oh, ICC! Oh, it's always in the top.

Patty viewed her role as a faculty member in the dental technology program as representative of ICC to the community and felt that the promotion of the dental technology program to the community was the scope of her participation in the college

community. She felt that her teaching workload and community outreach did not allow her to participate in college activities:

Researcher: How much do you participate? Other than teaching? How much do you participate in the rest of the college governance?

Patty: Not much. Again, we stay within our own. I serve more of the community by serving things such as having community events within our program. But as to college events? It's just another thing that I would have to add to my plate.

I asked Patty if there would ever be a point in which she would participate in college activities. She stated that since her classes have a great deal of lab time and the labs overlapped college meeting times she would "Either have to come in on weekends or I've got to come in... but I don't have any dates that I'm off."

As result of her workload and not participating in college activities Patty does not have very many relationships outside of her department. Patty's office is on the lower level of a 2-story building. The division office is on the second level of the building which is inhabited primarily by science faculty. Patty stated she did not have an interest in communicating with the science faculty because she perceived them as having negative attitudes toward the college. It appeared that she was isolated physically and collegially from the rest of campus. She claimed that she only saw her other colleagues at the beginning of a semester and that she kept to herself:

Patty: You will never find me upstairs. I do stay at my own little world.

Researcher: What about other colleagues? Like your English colleagues? Or your math colleagues? You know, those folks.

Patty: I don't know. I see them once a year when we all meet in the fall, but not all of the time.

Researcher: So you really are isolated.

Patty: Yeah. I don't have any contact with any of the other faculty.

Researcher: Are you the only full-time faculty member?

Patty: No, there are three of us. With that group if they are on the main level there, we pretty much see each other or I will see people passing. I don't even walk down to the cafeteria to get food. I mean, it is just like this. I'm all up at this end of the campus.

Patty felt commitment to the college based upon her experience as a student and her positive impression of the college reputation. She demonstrated her commitment through her promotion of the dental technology program to the community. She stated that her teaching workload and efforts with community outreach did not allow her to participate in college activities. Patty is both physically and socially isolated from her colleagues.

Sarah

Sarah is a 62 year old Caucasian woman and a faculty member in the nursing department at BCC. This position is Sarah's first teaching position. Prior to coming to BCC Sarah was a nursing administrator at a local assisted living facility. Sarah viewed this position as her last position prior to retirement. She stated "I've had a long career in nursing and I'm coming to the end of my career in nursing. I'm 62 years old, so I probably will be retiring within the next 5 to 6 years. Something like that." When I met Sarah for the first time she was finishing a meeting with her nursing colleagues. Sarah was very casual in her appearance and demeanor. Her casual demeanor was emphasized by her patient persona. She was very thoughtful and reflective in our discussion. At the end of our first interview she thanked me for talking with her and noted that our conversation gave her something to think about. At our second interview she was very prepared and eager to continue the dialogue.

I spoke with Sarah in her office at BCC. Sarah's office is a former classroom with partitions that did not reach the ceiling that separated her office from other faculty offices. Because voices carried, at times Sarah spoke softly. I offered to move the interview to a more private space, but Sarah declined. I was struck by the dated furniture

and technology present in Sarah's office. The filing and storage cabinets were bright green metal, typical of early 1970s color scheme. Her desk was a sagging pressboard modular which held a very large computer monitor that took up most of the desk top. During our time together Sarah mentioned that she did not regularly check her email because the computer was very slow and had inconsistent connectivity.

Sarah considered one of her roles as a faculty was to be a representative or ambassador for the college through the nursing program:

I think I'm probably a pretty good ambassador for the college. I have students, a clinical group of students that I take to the county hospital and I think that I am a good representative for the college... And that the students are appreciated and that I get a lot of comments from people there about it. We know that you have a good nursing program. We are really anxious to hire your graduates. They have a good working relationship with that agency and I think that I'm a representative of the college in that way.

Sarah described her commitment to the college via her participation in the campus community, including faculty senate. She stated that participation in faculty senate was frustrating, but informed her of bigger college issues and kept her in touch with college trends:

Sarah: How else do I show my commitment? I try to participate in the college, in the college activities to the level that I am given the amount of work that I need to do for the department. Because it is a lot... I'm on the faculty senate.

Researcher: That is a big commitment.

Sarah: It is relatively. It's a frustrating commitment. It's a very frustrating committee for me to be on, but it gives me kind of a bigger picture of what is going on in the college, what is going on with other faculty members in other departments... What are the trends? So, it's informative and it kind of keeps me in touch with the college at large.

Sarah believed that she did not have sufficient knowledge about community college culture that other new faculty may have had because her prior experience was in nursing not community college teaching. She felt that community college culture was

something she learned on her own and took a few years to learn. She stated “There's so much that is going on at any one time that it really takes 2 or 3 years for someone who doesn't know about community college environment to get a sense of what all of the issues are.” She noted that the first year she focused on learning about the nursing department and she had to learn about the department and the college on her own.

Sarah: I think for the first year that I was here I was so caught up on what was going on in the department, which is also very complex that I didn't really look too far outside of the department and how does this fit in the larger college picture.

Researcher: You had to learn on your own.

Sarah: Pretty much. Pretty much.

Sarah is a former nursing administrator turned nursing faculty member.

According to Sarah this is her last job prior to retirement. Sarah felt she demonstrated her commitment to BCC by being an ambassador to community and by participating in college activities such as the faculty senate. Sarah felt that since she is new to community college teaching that she had to learn on her own about community college culture.

Tony

Tony is a male in his late 40s who was born and raised in Ecuador, South America. He is a physical education faculty member and the men's head soccer coach at BCC. Prior to becoming a full-time faculty member, Tony taught as an adjunct faculty member in physical education and was the men's assistant soccer coach at BCC. I interviewed Tony in his office in the gym annex at BCC. The gym annex housed faculty offices, a weight room, and dance instructional space. Like other buildings at BCC, the facility is in great disrepair. Tony's office is a typical coach's office filled with sporting equipment, awards, gym shoes, team pictures, sports articles taped to the wall, and a lingering odor of sport. Tony, a soccer player himself, has graying curly hair and wore

sweat suits and running shoes. Tony is a very jovial, talkative person by nature. He was also very thoughtful and assured in our conversation.

Tony recently became the communications director for the District faculty union and is a member of the executive board of the union. Tony viewed himself as an activist:

Things have changed a lot, and I felt that I could contribute to that. I have always been an activist. A socialist. Against the war in Vietnam. I was an activist and I was then involved in environmental and social issues and I felt that I could bring that expertise to this campus. So, yeah, so I do those kinds of things. So I think I contribute a lot.

He felt committed to the college and fellow faculty and demonstrated his commitment through his participation in the faculty union. He felt that the faculty union needed leadership in connecting with faculty and his role as communications director would help facilitate the communication:

One of the problems...I felt that there was a lack of understanding between the leadership, and the union, and the rank and file. And I felt that the program would be successful in pushing interests of faculty, and through that, improving the dialogue with administration and creating a better educational environment. That required that the union leadership to be for all with the rank and file. So I wanted to be on the executive board. But I am committed trying to make sure that we represent the rank and file.

Tony had a good understanding of the student population, his role in the college community, and connecting with the larger community. He felt that is was part of his responsibility to serve the students in the community:

I like what I am doing. I think I am servicing our college. In particular the Latin community and the Black community and low income people. And I like working because I think suburban kids get anything they want, and I could have maybe have gone to another school where I had better facilities, not maybe as many headaches, but I enjoy it. I was born in Latin America and I speak Spanish fluently, so I might as well use that ability in a community where it can be beneficial to people that get the short end of the stick most of the time. So it is a good place to be. I feel comfortable with it and I like it.

Tony felt commitment to the college and demonstrated his commitment through his participation in the faculty union leadership. Tony also had a very good understanding of the student population at BCC and felt a strong commitment to serve the students at BCC.

Wendell

Wendell is a Caucasian male in his late 30s and a faculty member in the music department at ICC. He directs the college band program. Wendell stated that he wanted to be a college band director since childhood. He intentionally earned a master's degree in music so he could be a college band director. Wendell was also a community college student. He applied to teach at other community colleges prior to coming to ICC. I interviewed Wendell in his office at the music building at BCC. The music building is located on a small bluff overlooking the pond. The music building houses the entire music program and has practice rooms, performance spaces, as well as faculty offices. Wendell shares an office with another colleague, the music department chair. The office is shaped like a triangle with the one side of the triangle the door and window to the hallway and the two other sides connect at a point at the back wall. The shape of the office made for an odd arrangement. The office has several piles of paper and an assortment of musical items. The shape of the small room made little room for a guest, but we managed.

Wendell is a large man who wears glasses, sweat pants, long sleeved t-shirts and tennis shoes. Wendell is a morning person, as he requested that we talk at 7:00 a.m. Wendell was the first person I interviewed. He is very talkative and had distinct confident opinions about the college and commitment. I came away from the first interview

thinking that if all participants were so forthcoming, vocal, and talkative that I was definitely going to have interesting results. Although I believe my results are interesting, I did find that not everyone was as lively or talkative as Wendell.

Wendell felt commitment to his discipline and his students and does not feel commitment to the college. He viewed his role as a faculty member as a benefit to the college and utilizes college resources to benefit his program. He does not feel supported by his colleagues and the larger college community:

That if you keep your nose clean you could pretty much do what ever you want. So, it's not so much a commitment to the college as it is a commitment to what I want to do and utilizing the college resources to facilitate that, because I don't feel a real support has been developed for the program as a whole from the administration...I commit to it because it serves me. So I can't see myself doing something like that (other college participation), but I see my role as benefiting the college. I see my role as getting FTES because my classes are huge.

Wendell's commitment is to himself. He viewed the college as a conduit to his goals and expressed regret that his success serves the college:

I added the guitar class. I wanted to make a little more money. Plus I was worried that some of these other classes weren't going to fly...So I accepted that challenge because I'm here at 8 o'clock anyway...Why not make some money doing it? I can teach 2 or 3 sections of that and start coming to work at 10:00 instead of 6:00...And make my life a little bit better. So, again the commitment part it's more self-serving. Then it serves the college. Unfortunately.

Wendell claimed his commitment is to education and he believed that the college gets in the way of his mission:

Look at my office situation. He's (referring to his office mate) the department chair, and he has a wedge to work out of...So, it doesn't matter where I am, it's that commitment to education that matters, and to me the institution mostly gets in the way.

Wendell expressed reluctance and pessimism about committing to and participating in any activity that did not meet his needs. Wendell described his

participation on a student services committee and when the committee started addressing issues that were not beneficial to him and his program, he changed his mind about serving on the committee:

I spent 3 years on the student services committee. Part of the tenure process is in your third year you have to be on the committee. So they forced you to be on that for a couple of years. It was cool. We did do some nice things...We started talking about weird things like how are we going to get people to stop smoking. All right. Enough of that. I have to commit to this program. When I am sure that I can get 20 people in all of my classes every semester for, you know, let's establish a 4-year pattern. Then maybe I can start going and doing some stuff on another committee somewhere...Right now I have to take care of what is going on at home.

At the time of the interviews Wendell was not serving on any college committees.

When asked if he saw himself participating in the future said only if the service on the committee would help the department and himself:

It could happen...But it would have to be something that would serve me somehow. There is one of our faculty who is on a very powerful committee. The budget oversight committee. That is something that I would like to do because you are watching the hole in the funnel. You are sitting right there and watching the money leave...And that is something that would really benefit the department and me specifically.

Wendell shared with me stories about inter-departmental faculty conflicts and how they affected his commitment to the college in a negative way. He viewed his relationships with music colleagues as a competition:

But you can never come home because you'll never be able to afford a place to live or you can start destroying your competition...Last year I decided to fight and I decided to do it in a real vicious way. But not actively vicious to my colleagues. I decided that I was going to recruit for the instrumental music program and I was going to make the instrumental music program so good that it just squashed everything else and it is starting to happen.

Wendell clearly stated that he did not feel any commitment to the college. He did, however, feel commitment to himself and the band program at ICC. When participating

in college activities he chose activities that served him and his program. Wendell has also experienced hostility from his colleagues and as a result perceived his relationships with his music colleagues as a competition.

Participant Descriptions Summary

Participant descriptions provided a within case analysis and description of each of the participants in the study. The participant descriptions reviewed the disciplines of each participant, how each participant became a community college faculty member, and information unique to each participant. These descriptions provide a context to help better understand the lived experiences of the participants.

Institutional Issues Introduction

The institutional and participant descriptions are important to the understanding of the participants' lived experiences. However, in order to have a holistic view of the participants' experiences, a review of the institutional issues that occurred during their tenure experience is essential. Many of the institutional issues occurred at the District level and involved reorganization from division chairs to academic deans and a budget shortfall. However, the District level issues affected participants' experiences at the college level. This section provides a description of the District and College level issues. The information gathered about the institutional issues came from the dialogue with participants and primary research conducted on my part. I accessed local newspaper articles, board meeting minutes, and legal documents to ascertain the following information. To reveal the sources would violate the anonymity and confidentiality important to this study and therefore will not be specifically cited.

District Level Issues

The institutional issues at the District level experienced by participants revolve around a District reorganization from division chairs to academic deans and a budget shortfall. The following is a description of the District level issues.

Reorganization

Since the establishment of BACCD in 1969, division chairs managed the various academic divisions at the colleges. Division chairs were full-time faculty within the division who were nominated by a majority vote of the division's full-time faculty members. They were then appointed to the position by the college president. Division chairs served up to two consecutive 3-year terms and continued to teach part-time during this period. At the end of their service a division chair generally resumed full-time teaching responsibilities. Division chairs acted as first-line managers for their divisions which facilitated communication between faculty and administrators and managed most aspects of the faculty's involvement in college administration.

In spring 2001, the District chancellor determined it would be advantageous to switch from the division chair system to professional managers with academic deans. Because of the District's high enrollment and almost year-round instructional calendar, it had become increasingly difficult for the college to manage its affairs effectively using part-time faculty division chairs that worked for only 9 months of the year and served brief terms. In September 2001, the president of ICC announced that, as part of a district-wide reorganization, professional deans would be hired for managerial positions previously filled by division chairs. The ICC faculty senate complained this change could not be undertaken without its consent based on AB 1725 regulations, which required

collegial consultation for policies relating to academic and professional matters. The District governing board formally approved the replacement of division chairs with full-time deans in December 2001. In January 2003, the ICC faculty senate filed in court a petition for writ of mandate against BACCD and the governing board to overturn the decision. In October 2004, the Court agreed that the regulations did not require collegial consultation and denied relief to the faculty senate. The Court interpreted the regulations as requiring collegial consultation only when a change in a college's governing structure diminishes the faculty's ability to perform their unique faculty roles, as opposed to roles they might serve in management. In March 2007, the ICC faculty senate filed an appeal with the Appellate Court. The Appellate Court affirmed the judgment. In April 2007, the ICC faculty senate filed an appeal to the California Supreme Court. The California Supreme Court refused to hear the case.

For most of the participants, the reorganization took place just prior to or right after they began working for the colleges. Participants at ICC were more aware of the issues than participants at BCC. It was my impression, based upon the interviews, that participants did not view the actual reorganization as a very important part of their experience. My assessment was that because the reorganization took place at a time prior to or right after they were hired, they did not have the institutional knowledge that other faculty members may have had to be invested in the issue. They also may not have had enough time to become acculturated to the college and therefore may not have known the difference between having a division chair or academic dean as a manager. However, the feelings of other faculty about this issue affected participants. They communicated that

they were continually made aware of the issue by other faculty and felt the anxiety and resentment, more so at ICC than at BCC.

Many participants thought the decision to move from division chairs to academic deans was ICC's decision rather than a District decision. My research indicated that the decision was a District decision and affected all BACCD colleges. The announcement that an appeal had been filed with the California Supreme Court happened on the day of my second interview with Tony. At that time he confirmed for me that the reorganization was a District decision and the perception of faculty was that the decision was forced upon them without their consent:

Tony: It used to be we didn't have deans. It was kind of forced upon us without a real consent.

Researcher: Was that the whole District or was it just...

Tony: The whole District and in fact, Inland Community College, they are in court right now and in fact, they sued the District on the issue and it looks like, I just got an e-mail and they are going to court. So, we'll see what happens.

Wendell described his perception of the reorganization and how it affected ICC's culture:

I got the job in 2001 and it was as messed up as I thought it was. I don't know how much you know, Inland Community College, but it's a mess administratively. The last college president installed dean's without consent of the faculty, just installed them. We used to have faculty leadership at the divisional level. Division chairs. And he just said nope next semester were going to be spending millions of dollars on new deans and if you don't like it too bad. We're screwed. This is a bad deal. So, all along with some, there is some kind of old tiny things going on here with battles.

Karen stated that she was personally not affected by the decision. However, she communicated how she could relate to faculty who were with ICC for a longer period of time:

But I am mocking the history of ICC. There was a bit of controversy a few years ago when we changed what was the division chair structure, which was elected faculty members to the dean structure which was administratively hired. So that happened my first semester that I was here. So, I started out with pretty large

political waves happening. I don't know the 10 or 20 year history, but there are certainly some faculty who are very upset and I had a feeling that had I been here for the 5 years prior to that and felt the change I would have been more upset myself.

Budget Shortfall

The BACCD board meeting minutes of March 8, 2004 provided a brief account of how the District came into the position for budget shortfall for the 2004-2005 academic year. The following is my paraphrasing of the information in the board minutes.

In 2002-2003, in response to a budget shortfall, the District cut \$4.6 million from both District and College operating budgets. A freeze on faculty and staff hiring was imposed to alleviate further cuts.

In 2003-2004 a \$6 million budget shortfall was caused by an increase in salary and benefit costs, as well as inflationary expenses on services and supplies. The 2003-2004 budget shortfall was resolved through the elimination of vacant positions, continued cuts in college and District operations budgets, postponement of faculty hiring, a continued freeze on staff hiring, reduction in part-time faculty allocations, and a negotiated change for health benefit plans. Revenues were increased through higher fees for college parking, facilities, and nonresident enrollment.

In 2004-2005 the District faced a \$8.9 million budget shortfall. The shortfall, according to District board minutes, stated that the fiscal crisis was caused by multiple factors. These factors included employee compensation and retiree benefit program costs, inflationary costs, a decrease in expected revenue from a change in high school concurrent enrollment laws, planned salary savings not achieved as originally planned due to the application of layoff rules, and a state general apportionment deficit. Prior to the March 8, 2004 board meeting further reductions had been targeted in cell phones,

travel, equipment purchases, overtime, and hiring and reclassification actions. The board meeting of March 8, 2004 was a special meeting to address precautionary layoff notices (pink slips) for March 15, 2004. The board approved the pink slips. As a result, all employees of the District were notified of potential layoffs to be determined by June 2004. The precautionary layoff notices were rescinded in June 2004. However, at the September 27, 2004 board meeting, with continued budget troubles, the board also enacted a 7% pay cut for all District employees.

Although pay has been reestablished back to 2003-2004 levels, the precautionary layoff notices and the pay cut left a lasting impression on faculty. Low morale and mistrust of District administration resulted. Participants attributed the budget issues to fiscal mismanagement at the District level. The District chancellor was fired in August 2004 due to lack of leadership during the budget crisis. As a result, the pink slips and pay cut had an impact on the lived experiences of participants. Amira expressed her concern about the impact of the pink slips given across the District on her ability to stay at the college as an interim faculty member:

Unfortunately they had pink slips for across the District at a time when I was here and I was not tenured at the time. So, I was really, really nervous about not being able to keep my position. Last hired, first fired...

Wendell described the mistrust of administration, specifically District administration, and how the pay cuts affected his commitment:

First of all, there has been too much turnover, and there has been too much corruption at the administration level, especially the District administration level. It has just been a mess here. We took pay cuts a couple of years ago and that is just unheard of. We are at the bottom of the barrel in salary in the Bay Area. It is horrible here. So, committing to the college... It is a complicated answer...

Another consequence of the budget shortfall was the low morale across the District. Tony explained how the pay cut affected employee morale even though pay has been reestablished to 2003-2004 levels. He stated “Morale has been low after the take backs of 3 years ago. Even though they grinded back our pay we are at the bottom of the list. It was a horrible situation here.”

After interviewing participants, I sensed an overall acknowledgement that the District issues with regards to the reorganization and the budget shortfall were concerns of the past. I also got the impression that the District administration had changed in a positive way and that participants recognized the change as well. Tony also expressed this sentiment as he described the previous administration as a “serious problem” and the current administration moving in a “positive direction”:

So, I think that the previous administration that was here before us, they’ve all left. That was a serious problem. I think that has changed around with the new chancellor and with the people on board. I think there’s a new wind blowing in a positive direction.

District Level Issues Summary

The BACCD issues of the 2001-2002 District reorganization from division chairs to academic deans and the 2002-2005 budget shortfalls that led to the issues and of pink slips and a pay cut were expressed as issues of importance to participants in one way, shape, or form. At the time of the interviews I got the impression from participants that positive changes had taken place at the District and College level. The issues are important because they are part of the participants’ collective experience.

College Level Issues

The District level issues had an affect on participants' experiences at the college level. The following are descriptions of how the participants at each college described each college and how the District level issues affected their experience.

Bay Community College Issues

Participants from BCC were acutely aware of the demographics of their student population including socio-economic and cultural differences among their students. Liz described her impressions of the student population and how she felt "lucky" to work with the students:

Our student body is one quarter White, one quarter Black, one quarter Latino, and one quarter other. It's the most amazing mix. In most of my classes there is hardly anybody who does not have black hair...And our faculty at the college is very mixed racially... We don't reflect the student body, we are way more white than the student body...But I feel very lucky to work among the students I do. To be able to teach successfully with students, who have had really bad schooling in the past...I mean they think I'm the bomb. It's great. I am so lucky.

Amira described BCC as a family which echoed the sentiments of other faculty at BCC. She noted that although there were disputes there was a sense of helping one another:

You have your bickering. You make it right and you're fine. You're still family. You're still going to help each other for the most part. I mean, there are some people that won't go to the extent that they would before, but they still feel connected to a certain community within the college.

The District issues, specifically the budget shortfall and the associated pay cut were still in the forefront of the minds of faculty at BCC. At one point every BCC participant mentioned the pay cut. The lack of respect between faculty and administration during the financial crisis was also mentioned by several participants. Tony described

how this lack of respect affected the college culture at BCC through a lack of collegiality between faculty and administration:

In talking to my colleagues a year or two ago there were a lot of people wanting to leave and go on to other things and obviously if things had not turned about here...You want to live in and work in a collegial kind of atmosphere where you are respected by administration and that was an issue.

Part of the lack of collegiality, as communicated by participants, was the impression that shared governance was not practiced at BCC during the budget crisis. Tony stated “I think administration, for example, they easily bandy around the word shared governance, all the time. But the reality of the fact is that is not the case.”

On the other hand, changes in administration were perceived as being positive in nature. Sarah noted that the administration had been helpful in communicating the “big picture” and the “terrible mess” the college was in and how she appreciated the approachability of the chancellor:

The administrators here are very good about coming to the division meetings at least once a semester and talking about the big picture and the issues that are going on...Like the budget and where is the money going, where it comes from and why are we in such a terrible mess and how are we going to get out of it...Our president at the time, who is the chancellor now, was and is, I believe, very open and approachable about those kinds of things and I appreciate that.

Bay Community College Issues Summary

Participants at BCC were very aware of the diverse student population they serve. Some participants described the culture of the college as a family. However, the District issues, specifically the pay cut, were part of the collective awareness of BCC participants. Other issues such as the practice of shared governance were concerns expressed by participants. However, there appeared to be an awareness by BCC participants that

positive changes in terms of the relationship and communication with administration had taken place at BCC.

Inland Community College Issues

The negative feelings associated with the District issues were more apparent at ICC than BCC. Both the reorganization and the budget shortfall were still very much in the forefront of the minds of ICC participants. The negative feelings with regards to the District issues, appeared to have exacerbated existing adversarial issues between faculty and administration. The adversarial relationship was not necessarily a result of the District issue, but appeared to run simultaneously with the District issues. This had resulted in faculty bitterness toward administration at different levels. Wendell provided a view of the adversarial relationship between faculty and administration. He stated that the adversarial relationship was a long standing tradition that was a part of ICC culture and affected his commitment:

It's hard to commit to this school because of the adversarial relationship that the faculty has with the administration and there is a long tradition at ICC of having an adversarial relationship. It has always been this way here. There is a lot of paranoia, and it is well founded. Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they're really not after you. Here it is like that. You really have to watch it.

Although Wendell felt the adversarial relationship still existed, Karen felt that the related hostility is held on to by a group of faculty. She stated she did not feel the bitterness herself because she did not have the years of experience that other faculty had. In the following Karen described how the problems at the District made some faculty bitter:

There were a lot of like negative feelings on the campus and many things have gotten fixed. Thank goodness. There was clearly some problems in the District situation...Budget issues...People who did not care about the college, but they are gone now. But I know that I would occasionally bump into these faculty members who were very bitter about the current situation and that was hard for me because I didn't have their background of years to see that.

The faculty bitterness was mentioned by each BCC at some point in the interviews. Patty gave a very good example of the extent college politics, faculty bitterness, and the divisiveness between faculty and administration at ICC had on her experience. In her first year at ICC she said she was asked to “choose a camp”, meaning choose whether she was supportive of faculty or administration. When she did not choose a side with any particular group she was told by a faculty member that she could not talk with administration. The result of this experience contributed to her lack of interaction with other faculty:

Patty: It was that divided and I kept thinking why can't I? I mean the gentleman hired me. He is really a nice guy. I mean, I don't know if he was always, but to me he has been nice. You know I say “Hi” or “How are you doing” or “Welcome.” They saw me talking and said you can't do that.

Researcher: So it was very direct. It was very directive.

Patty: Very direct. It was just like, OK, I can't. All right. So I just kind of stayed within my little world.

Researcher: So you insulated yourself.

Patty: Yeah. I insulated and stuck around and occasionally I would see the other faculty that was hired at the same time as I did. We would say “Hi” and “How are you doing?” They would kind of roll their eyes too.

Along with the District issues and faculty bitterness the turnover of deans at ICC since the reorganization was an issue at ICC. Patty provided an example of how the administrative turnover frustrated her:

You know, because we had 3 or 4 deans since I have been here and it's just been OK and who does what? And OK, you are the new one now? Just trying to figure it out and just how it works....Once a dean gets to understand what your needs are, they're gone. You know, and then there is somebody else and the poor dean is being divided between us and Phys Ed. You know, the other end of the campus. I don't think that the dean can really hear both departments well on what their needs are.

Wendell also described his experience with administrative turnover and how it affected the composition and his perceived quality of his tenure evaluation team:

So, it (the evaluation team) is 2 faculty and a division chair. And the division chair stays on that for the whole time and then they changed the deans in the middle. So then all of a sudden the dean was involved and that made it a little bit more weird because then you didn't have faculty supervising faculty anymore. Especially in a music department where you need that specific kind of input. You know, she (the dean) was a literature person. She didn't know anything about music departments. She was pretty much useless.

The impression that ICC was a divisive institution was also expressed by Amira, who is a faculty member at BCC. Amira applied for a full-time faculty position at ICC while she served as an interim faculty member at BCC. The following is her description of her experience at ICC:

And when I walked on the campus, I literally felt different... They had posters in the windows on faculty windows saying things about management and you could feel the tension in the air. And I said we are in the same District but I don't feel that at BCC. So being offered a position there, I didn't accept it. I was like, that is not what I am looking for. I am really looking for a culture that tries to help. You know, everyone and not a division between management and faculty and classified. I want to see the unity, shared governance, and all that.

Inland Community College Issues Summary

The reorganization and the budget shortfall were divisive issues for faculty at ICC. These issues seemed to have exacerbated existing adversarial issues between faculty and administration at ICC. These issues along with the administrative turnover have resulted in faculty bitterness toward administration at various levels.

Institutional Issues Summary

This section provided a review of the institutional issues that occurred during participants' tenure. The institutional issues at both the District level include reorganization from division chairs to academics deans and a budget shortfall. These District level issues had an effect on the college level issues experienced by participants.

The institutional issues were a backdrop essential to the understanding the participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon.

Phenomenological Analysis

As mentioned on Chapter Three, I used Moustakas (1994) four major processes to organize, analyze, and synthesize data: (a) epoche, (b) phenomenological reduction, (c) imaginative variation, and (d) synthesis. The following is a review of the data analysis process as it relates to the results.

Epoche

Creswell (1998) noted that epoche or "bracketing" is a first step in phenomenological analysis. During epoche the researcher works to set aside preconceptions in order to best understand the participant's experiences (Creswell, 1998). Throughout the entire data collection and data analysis process I engaged in epoche to set aside any preconceived notion, prejudices, and predispositions in order to better understand the experiences through each participant's voice (Moustakas, 1994). I kept detailed field notes and a reflexive journal to describe and reflect on my experiences related to this research. Engaging in epoche allowed me to understand my own experiences and how they influenced the entire research process.

In order to logically and faithfully articulate the experiences of my participants, I monitored my awareness so my experiences would not reflect the experiences of newly tenured community college faculty (Merriam, 2002). How I understood the experiences of organizational commitment in community college faculty was shaped by my personal and professional experiences. As a researcher, I was aware of the multiple identities and dimensions that I brought to this study including my experiences as a child, student,

faculty member, and dean (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). I continually reflected on my role in the research process to examine how my own experiences and biases may have shaped the study. I shared with the participants my personal and professional experiences so they could understand my perspective. I established a collaborative relationship with the participants in order to capture their lived experiences and construct meaning from those experiences. The communication of my experiences with the participants also assisted me in establishing rapport and a sense of trust.

As I reviewed and analyzed the data and presented the findings, I considered my experiences, biases, and assumptions. Throughout the entire phenomenological analysis process I engaged in epoche by participating in reflexive journaling and documenting extensive field notes. These activities not only assisted me in documenting the experiences of my participants, but also documented my experience in this process, my previous experiences, and how that is reflected in data collection and analysis.

Phenomenological Reduction

Phenomenological reduction is the next phase of data analysis. The first step in phenomenological reduction is horizontalization. Horizontalization refers to identifying and listing every significant statement participants make relevant to the topic and giving the statements equal value (Moustakas, 1994). I analyzed the participant interview transcripts, my field notes, and reflexive journal notes using inductive data analysis. I listened to and read the interview transcripts of each participant to get an overall sense of the interviews including the perspective and the sense of meaning for each participant. I integrated my field notes into the analysis of the transcriptions. This process enhanced the

depth and breadth of gathered information from each of the interviews and represented documentation of my research (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

After each set of interviews, using the coding software NVivo 7, I coded each participant transcript. I coded each participant statement that had significance to the experience. I assigned inductive codes to each statement, careful to apply equal value to each statement. After coding each transcript, I examined the participants' repetitive or overlapping statements, leaving only the horizons (Moustakas, 1994). Using NVivo 7, I then clustered the individual statements into themes. I inductively assigned thematic names and sorted the themes.

Imaginative Variation

The purpose of imaginative variation is to seek all possible meanings, divergent perspectives, and varying frames of reference about the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Through the process of imaginative variation, individual and composite structural qualities were identified using themes to provide a universal description of how the phenomenon was experienced. For each participant, I examined and considered a variety of possible meanings and perspectives from the textural descriptions. From the themes, I developed structural and textural descriptions of how the phenomenon was experienced.

I followed each step of these processes after the first and second interviews. The themes identified in the first interviews were used as a part of the interview guide of the second interviews. I reviewed the potential themes with the participants to further describe and clarify the potential themes. After the second interviews, I conducted the same steps as described above for each individual participant experience. I incorporated the themes from the first and second interview when I reached the process of imaginative

variation. Descriptions of how specific themes were developed are included later in this chapter.

Synthesis

Synthesis is the final step in phenomenological data analysis. Synthesis is the process of developing composite textural and structural descriptions of the participants' experiences that develop the meaning and essence of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). The composite descriptions are used to develop an understanding of the group essence and are not merely a collection of individual essences (Moustakas, 1994). After I completed the individual analysis of participant experience using synthesis, I began to construct the phenomenon by developing a composite of the individual experiences. Using the process of imaginative variation, I examined all the possible meanings and reflected on the composite themes that formed the structural qualities that framed the phenomenon. As the textural structural qualities of the phenomenon emerged, I integrated and synthesized the composite textural structural descriptions into a universal description of the experience. This allowed me to communicate the essence of the phenomenon. Synthesis of the data is presented later in this chapter in the textural structural synthesis section.

Thematic Structures

Using inductive analysis and Moustakas' (1994) four major processes to organize, analyze, and synthesize data: epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis, four themes emerged from my data analysis. The themes that framed the phenomenon included *Service Attitude*, *Types of Commitment*, *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Relationships*, and *Institutional Support*. As participants shared their experiences several

sub thematic structures emerged as well. The presentation of the thematic structures is a cross-case analysis of the lived experiences of the participants who represent the shared meaning of the participants and includes a description of the phenomenological analysis process and

Service Attitude

In describing commitment participants placed value and displayed a *Service Attitude* in their work, meaning that participants intended to be of service to others in the course of their work. This *Service Attitude* was reflected by participants in the language they used to describe their overall commitment. Participants told me that the reason for their commitment was to “make a difference” or “have an impact” or “to do my best.” Sometimes this description was in reference to the lives of the students they served. At other times it was in reference to making a difference in the community or society as a whole. Participants also used phrases such as “doing my best”, “above and beyond”, or “one hundred percent effort” to communicate their commitment and willingness to put forth effort, primarily on behalf of students.

Intrinsic Rewards

Participants expressed that the *Service Attitude* was fostered by the intrinsic rewards received through their work. Student success was one of the intrinsic rewards expressed by participants. Sarah gave an example of how student success and being a part of a team were intrinsic rewards that were important to her:

I love the students. I love watching them learn and grow and master the content that they have to and graduate. That’s very rewarding. I enjoy working with my colleagues for the most part. Not all of them, but I have very good friends on the faculty. I enjoy the idea that we are a team of people. We are a group of people who make a difference.

Geoffrey elaborated the value of intrinsic rewards by giving an example of how student learning was an intrinsic reward that affected his commitment:

So here's this one thing...This time I asked them (students) what was the one thing you've learned from this entire month? Because we are having a major test on it next month.

(Reading from a student paper)

'The one thing... The many things I learned this past month, was how to appreciate art. Now, I understand that this whole course was geared toward. I was able to go to an art museum and really see a piece for more than face value. I was able to appreciate what the artist was trying to convey. I was able to see form and texture and light, as well as the message. I see more clearly now how ideas and techniques all intermingle and work together.'

I'm done. Test is over. That's the end results of what...This isn't two more stereotypes assembled or completed. I don't know that we could quite compare the product of education to the military product, or the business product.

Tony also gave an example of how motivating students was an intrinsic reward to him and fostered his service attitude:

I'm always looking for ways to facilitate my ability to make things better for students. I'll give you an example. Like today, I had my tennis class. I have this one kid that shows up every once in a while. He's a severely autistic kid. He can barely do it. He's always like this. But we've got him on the tennis court now and he's actually swinging at the ball and he hit it over the net, and he was very happy. So, today, at the end of the class, we had a little conga line where I had high fives and I had all the other students in my class come by and slapped him and gave him a high five and he was just...He was just beaming. It was like...probably no one had ever done that for him. He was just really happy. It's just small things like that just to make him feel like he's wanted and that he's cared for. That he's not just a side show, which I think, happens a lot.

For many participants, the opportunity to motivate students and see the rewards from their efforts encouraged them to continue serving.

Phenomenological Analysis and Service Attitude

The idea of service quickly and clearly emerged in the data analysis process. In my reflexive journal and field notes this concept emerged several times. During the process of horizontalization at the end of the first interview, textural clues emerged

through the language used by participants. During the process of imaginative variation, I was able to clearly interpret the various meanings of “doing my best” and “100% effort” reflected not only a strong work ethic, but a value of service to others. The concept of service was originally embedded in the thematic structure *Types of Commitment*. However, long-term imaginative variation established that, indeed, *Service Attitude*, although related to the *Types of Commitment* was its own thematic structure. The subtheme of intrinsic rewards was originally embedded “as rewards and recognition” in the thematic structure of *Institutional Support*. However, after careful review of the data and long-term imaginative variation it became clear that the only rewards participants spoke about were intrinsic in nature. They were not a function of any *Institutional Support* but rather a function of *Service Attitude*.

Service Attitude Summary

Participants displayed a *Service Attitude* towards their work, meaning that they had intentions of serving others as a part of their work. Participants expressed their intentions through the language they used to describe and explain their commitment. Participants also communicated that the service provided them intrinsic rewards that fostered their desire to serve.

Types of Commitment

Types of Commitment refers to the ways in which participants described, categorized, and prioritized their commitments. This theme emerged in the first set of interviews. The participants’ descriptions of commitment did not necessarily focus directly on commitment to the college. Participants prioritized their commitments as follows: (a) commitment to students; (b) commitment to their department; (c)

commitment to education; and (d) commitment to the college. Sarah directly communicated her priority of commitments, with students as the most important commitment:

Researcher: Do you feel committed to the college?

Sarah: I feel committed to my students. I feel committed to the nursing department and I would say third I would feel committed to the college. They are way down on my list of where my allegiances are.

Although Sarah was direct in communicating her commitment priorities, others were indirect about their prioritization of commitments. Amira described the community college culture and how a faculty member might prioritize their commitments, with commitment to the college being last on the list. This description is reflective of the experiences provided by many of the participants:

I think that a faculty member has to find their place within a community college. Because there is a culture that a community college has. So, when you're looking for a job, you're committed to education, you're committed to students, you're committed to the mission of the community colleges. But at the same time, you are looking for a perfect fit for you. And so, within that, if you find Bay Community College is that culture that's a perfect fit. Then you do find yourself more committed to the college too. But I think that is one of the last things that the individual faculty member looks at is the actual college. They look at education, community college, and then the college.

In the preceding statements Sarah did not mention commitment to education and did not throughout her interviews. Amira did not mention commitment to the department, but did later in the interviews. The priority of commitments typically stated student's first, department second, education third, and the college last. This is how the subthemes are presented.

Commitment to Students

The most frequently cited description of commitment was to students. Every participant, more than once, cited commitment to students as a priority. Patty described

her commitment to and efforts on behalf of students by stating “Extra hours. Time putting in. Whatever it takes to get the process done. My students are my main priority.” Sarah also described her commitment to students through service. She also alluded to the differences in students at BCC and ICC:

The bottom line is always what is good for the students and how are we serving our students, and who are our students. What is the student population? We serve students from West county, which is different from the people in the Eastern part of the county...And why is that different? And how are there needs different? And how can we better serve them?

Amira also described the importance of being committed to students and how she felt about helping others commit to students:

I think the management on the academic side is still helping. More about the students because without them we wouldn't even have our jobs. So, it's definitely about the students. But that's the heart for me too, is how can I help students by helping employees help students? You're still helping students and to see that connection.

Tony and I discussed the college community and its affect on his commitment and he clearly explained his commitment to students as his first priority:

Ultimately my commitment is to my students and I feel if I can see my soccer students getting out of here and going on to 4-year schools...Ten years down the road I'll bump into a kid like from 10 years ago. “Hey, coach, how you doing?” He'll come up and say “Thank you very much you were really supportive and very helpful.”

Tony continued to reflect on his commitment to students as part of his desire to contribute to society. However, he did not necessarily find importance in being committed to the college:

I don't see myself as a representative of the college in terms of being a faithful employee. I see this as an opportunity to service students for the betterment of our society and that way satisfying my own inner needs in terms of how I see myself as a successful person. So, to do that I am required to be in an educational system of one sort or another.

Amira described faculty commitment to students. In her description she commented on the commitment of faculty despite changes at the college:

But there are faculty here that are so committed to...Like the math department...That even though they were affected by the change of a division chair being now a dean, and lost that position, they're still here. There is a particular instructor, who was rewarded for how many years he's been here. And he is here and he is still committed to the students and to that department. But for the college as a whole? What happens is I don't see the individuals as involved as maybe they were before. So we do lose something as a campus but we don't lose that commitment to the students.

Josh expressed his commitment to students by connecting the goals of the college mission to serving students. He stated "If I could see how it (staff development) was meaningful to the overall mission of the school, which again I think is primarily about students..." If he could connect what he was doing as achieving the goals of the college mission, then he felt he was serving students.

To reiterate the importance of participant commitment to students, the following statement sums up participant sentiment. When asked about what she liked best about working at the college Sarah stated "I love the students. I love watching them learn and grow and master the content that they have to and graduate."

Commitment to Department

Commitment to the department was the second most commonly described type of commitment. Participants used several different terms for this description, including: department, discipline, and program. In many cases participants interchanged these words. However, department was the most common term used and therefore will be the term used in this section. Some participants described their commitment to the department as necessary for the health of the department. Wendell described the need to commit to the department by stating "I think my commitment is more... It's more toward

my discipline. Because the college has been blown about by the wind, especially in the last 10 years... I have to commit to this program.” Sarah also placed her commitment to the department along with commitment to her profession of nursing and teaching before her commitment to the college:

I think it goes along with what I feel, and I think what I would communicate to you is my first commitment is to the students, and to my colleagues and to my profession, and advancing my profession. And so talking with you today, I can say that I have a great commitment to that. My profession, and being certain that what I am teaching is in line with the professional standards rather than to this particular college where that all takes places. That’s third on my list.

Tony described his commitment to his soccer program:

I am so committed to what I am doing with my soccer program here and with the local community and providing for...I mean the Rockwell School District is just a horrible way for the students...The only way that these kids are going to go for it is by getting a better education and I am using soccer as a reason for them to want to continue with education...Ultimately, I say “None of you guys are going to be professional soccer players.” One in ten thousand chance, you know, but if I can keep them in school and say, “Look are you going to be a taxi driver for the rest of your life? Or a bus boy in a restaurant? Or common labor? Nothing is wrong with those things but you have potential to get to the next stage.”

However, others noted that the collegiality within the department was a source of their commitment to the department. Karen stated “I can tell you that if I had a different set of colleagues in the math department it would completely change my feeling about working at the college.” Sarah stated “The idea that everyone in this department, our department is really committed to what we are doing and share that kind of, you know, we need to do whatever it takes within reason.”

Two participants, Patty and Sarah, had required departmental responsibilities that were different than other participants. Their departments were in career and technical programs: dental hygiene and nursing. These programs have external accrediting and/or

licensing requirements. Therefore, their commitment to the department was described in a different way than other participants. Sarah stated:

Ninety-nine percent of my work is in the department and we in nursing always want to think that we are different from everyone else. But I think in some senses we are. We not only report to the college, but we report to the state board. We have to be licensed. We have to meet their requirements and so we have outside agencies that we are also always thinking about. We want to keep our accreditation from them, of course.

Other participants described the commitment to the department as a function of proximity and physical space. Liz described how the pod of math faculty offices facilitated her commitment to the department and also impeded her knowledge and participation in the college culture:

I am in my little department. We are a pod, you know, our offices are together and it's a ways to the next set of offices...So I don't know anybody outside my department very well. So the culture of this college, I don't know even after 5 and half years here I don't have a sense of how it is different.

Tony, on the other hand, described his commitment to his department as a connection to the college as a whole. He viewed department success as a means to institutional success:

So, from my perspective, I would say that I am definitely very much interested in the betterment of our department and of our way forward. But I feel that...I see it as only one link in a larger chain, which is the entire educational institution, and I think we all sink or swim together.

Tony also offered an explanation why commitment to a department is a choice for faculty:

I think ultimately we feel the most comfortable and closest with the areas of our expertise, which would be in our department. But yet if we are ultimately going to be successful, I think, we have to avoid that insularism or...what is it? Isolationism? Or whatever.

Commitment to Education

Following commitment to students and the department, commitment to education was the next most commonly described type of commitment. Commitment to education can be best described as believing in or valuing the concept that education changes lives in a positive way. Participants stated that they were not necessarily committed to the specific college in which they worked, but they were committed to education. Josh clearly stated his commitment to education and how his commitment affected students:

I believe in education. I mean, I like that. I like feeling like I'm doing something useful... I prefer working with these students (remedial) because there's a need for it and I think that is very true of pretty much everyone in our department.

Commitment to education was frequently expressed as a commitment to the mission of community colleges. They frequently noted that their personal values aligned with that mission. Tony explained how his commitment to education reflected his personal values of giving people a second chance:

I would think that in general most people who would apply for a community college situation, and not all community colleges are alike... You know, but there are a lot of community college like ours. Although, you might be dealing with upper middle class kids, you still are not dealing with the cream of the crop. You are still dealing with kids that have issues, broken families, got involved in drugs, and never got it right and now they are getting a second opportunity, and so it is not always commitment but I think also empathy... We all make mistakes and we deserve... People deserve a second opportunity and that is the culture at community college.

Participants expressed commitment to education, but they were not specifically committed to the college. For example, Amira said that she was committed to education and community colleges because of the student interaction:

I really like having the one-on-one or small group interactions with students. Because I feel like you really get to know the student and you really can help the student on what their individual needs are... But I like helping the range of ages as well. So I think I am committed to community colleges.

She also went on to state that she saw her future in community colleges, but not necessarily at ICC. Karen also provided an example of commitment to education, but not the college. In our dialogue she expressed her commitment to community colleges and questioned her commitment to the college:

Yeah, I think I'm very enthusiastic about what a community college does in general. How ICC generally does it in particular? I don't know if I'm that attached to ICC as an institution. I had some life direction fantasies at one point which did involve moving to another part of California and I thought well that would be fun to try out a different college and see what they are like. So I think I'm more committed to the idea of community college. I think I would not switch to any other level of college or university or K-12.

Participants described their commitment to the beliefs and values that education can change peoples' lives. The commitment to education was expressed as a commitment to the mission of community colleges and reflected the personal values of many participants. However, commitment to education did not directly mean a commitment to their college.

Commitment to the College

Based upon the data collected, commitment to students, department, and education were the most recurring descriptions of commitment. However, there were also direct displays of commitment to the college. Karen described the importance of commitment to the college by stating "I think even in the college as a whole, it is really important that there are a number of people who are passionate about it, and that makes all the difference."

Descriptions of the depth and breadth of participation in the college community varied among the participants. Some saw themselves as representatives of the college through participation within their own department. Patty viewed her participation in her

program as a commitment to the college. She stated “The program is representative of the college and the reputation of the program reflects upon the college as a whole. So the program is going well and is good with the community that reflects upon the college.”

Others viewed their commitment to the college from a larger perspective. For example, some participants defined their commitment to the college by participating in shared governance and the faculty union. Tony described his commitment to the college by involving himself in the faculty union:

Is it possible to continue down that road (referring to continued decline of the college and the District)? Is it possible that could happen? Yes. But that is one of the reasons I have decided to get involved, because I think I can bring something to that dialogue. To help turn around and create a better atmosphere. Ultimately, if we really do have shared governance, we would make life for administration so much easier.

Connection to the community was also brought up several times by participants as an important part of the commitment to community colleges. Geoffrey made the point that the commitment to the college is a commitment to the community:

Is the college necessarily a reflection of the community? And so, therefore, it does make the connection...But I think in general, certainly here, the college culture is very closely connected to the community. And I think that's largely due to Stu, that's the president, went to Rockwell High. I went to Rockwell High. Many faculty know the community.

Researcher: So the commitment to the college is because of the commitment to the community.

Geoffrey: Right.

Although participants described commitment to students, department, and education as a priority over commitment to the college, commitment to the college was expressed by some participants. Descriptions of the depth and breadth of participation in the college community varied among the participants. Some viewed themselves as a representative of the college through participation within their own department. Others viewed their

commitment to the college through participation in college activities, while others expressed their commitment to the college through a commitment to the community.

Phenomenological Analysis and Types of Commitment

Types of Commitment quickly emerged as the first thematic structure in the data analysis. Clues to the development of this theme can be found in my field notes and my reflexive journal at the end of each day of the first set of interviews. I noted in my journal that it became apparent to me that participants expressed different types of commitment, and may not express a direct commitment to the institution. This theme was furthered by my impressions of the second and third days of interviewing.

During the time between the first and second interviews, I began to concretely identify the different types of commitment expressed by participants. While the audiotapes were being transcribed, I listened to the interviews. They continued to substantiate that participants felt a strong commitment to students. This was also confirmed during the process of horizontalization where data coding took place. From the first interviews I began to see textural and structural clues of the different types of commitment prioritized by participants and that commitment to the college was low on the list of prioritized commitments.

For the second interviews I structured my interview guide to provide participants opportunities to confirm and/or deny and/or further clarify this potential theme. In the second interviews participants clearly expressed, both directly and indirectly, a commitment to students. However, in the second interviews, commitment to the department, education, and the college were not displayed with the same clarity as commitment to students.

After coding the data from the second interviews, I engaged in the process of imaginative variation. I examined each individual statement to explore the possible meanings that could emerge from the data. With regards to commitment to department and commitment to education, this process was extremely helpful and important in developing themes. In the case of commitment to department, participants often interchanged the terms “department”, and/or “program”, and/or “discipline” within the context of the interview and sometimes within one section of an exchange. For example, one participant used “program” to refer to the area she taught in, while another participant used “department.” Some participants referred to their “discipline” as the area they taught in while others referred to their “discipline” as their professional discipline. While engaging in imaginative variation, I examined each coded statement that used these terms and imagined all the potential meanings of the term. I did this by reviewing the audiotapes for verbal and nonverbal clues. I reviewed the transcripts, the assigned codes, and how codes were organized during horizontalization. I also reviewed the notations in my field notes and reflexive journal. All of these activities helped me identify all the potential participants’ meaning of “department “ and eventually led to the determination that it depended on the context if they referred to commitment to the department or not. For example, in the analysis of my dialogue with Sarah, she sometimes referred to commitment to her discipline when explaining her commitment to her department. At other times she referred to her commitment to her discipline, which meant a commitment to the nursing profession. I went through a similar process with regards to determining commitment to education in trying to determine the meaning of the references to “education”, “higher education”, “community colleges”, and “mission.”

Throughout the process of identifying types of commitment, I engaged in epoche. I struggled to restrict my personal biases, opinions, and preconceived ideas about commitment. For example, for a time I thought that participants were being indirect in communicating their commitment to the institution. However, through reflexive journaling, personal reflections, and conversations with colleagues I eventually separated my personal notions of commitment with that of participants. Although one could come to the conclusion that the descriptions of types of commitment are indirect commitment to the college, it is through the careful phenomenological analysis of the data, including engaging in epoche, that I discovered that participant displays of types of commitment were not necessarily indirect communication of commitment to the college.

Types of Commitment Summary

The thematic structure of *Types of Commitment* was a cross case analysis of the participants' lived experiences and represented one of the pervasive thematic structures that occurred in the data analysis. In the thematic structure of *Types of Commitment*, participants identified, categorized, and prioritized their commitment with students as the top priority followed by commitment to their department, education, and then college. A few participants felt that their commitment to the college was displayed through their participation in departmental activities. One could argue that commitment to students, the department, and education is an indirect commitment to the college. However, most participants did not necessarily view their other commitments as a direct commitment to the college. Sometimes they viewed all of their commitments as different and distinct, and at other times their commitments intermingled. Nevertheless, participant commitment to the college was not a high priority.

Collegial Responsibilities

Participants also experienced organizational commitment through *Collegial Responsibilities*. *Collegial Responsibilities* is defined as the roles and responsibilities of community college faculty. This includes teaching and participating in various collegial activities that benefit the institution. In this context, shared governance played a role in participants' commitment to the institution, as well as the workload associated with *Collegial Responsibilities*.

Shared Governance

With the emergence of AB 1725 in 1989, the role of California community college faculty changed to include responsibilities for governance of the college ("AB 1725"). Faculty and administration are now required to consult collegially on the following academic and professional matters which include curriculum, degree requirements, grading policies, student progress standards, faculty role in governance structures, accreditation, professional development, program review processes, and processes for planning and budgeting (California Code of Regulations, Title V, 2006).

When I asked participants if they valued and believed in shared governance, the overwhelming answer was "yes." Sarah echoed the sentiments of other participants by stating "I do believe the concept of shared governance in that I think that faculty and students need to have some say and some influence about how the college is run. About the priorities of the college." All participants stated that they valued shared governance. However, as Karen, like most participants, felt that they did not have enough information about how shared governance process and their role in it:

I would say that the principle of it is absolutely a value of mine and I'm not familiar enough with the processes to recommend how the process should work. I think it is really important that faculty and administration together make the

decisions on things that they both have professional expertise in, but I know that sometimes those processes can take a long time. So, I don't know how to fit the philosophy into the reality. I don't have enough experience.

Most of the responses about valuing shared governance revolved around having an opportunity to have a voice in the workplace. Karen stated "I would presume that if I didn't feel like I could have that voice it could make a really big difference." Sarah emulated the sentiment by stating:

If I was working in a place where I felt that I had no say... That no one was listening to me about my concerns, my commitment to that organization would be much less than if I'm in an environment where at least someone is asking me what I think. Perhaps not always doing what I think should be done, just asking me.

Amira mentioned that further education on shared governance would be helpful to her level of understanding:

I definitely believe in it. At all levels? I'm not sure. There's sometimes when I feel like the management needs to make a decision, and then there times when I think everyone needs to be involved in the decision making...So, I do value it, but I definitely need more education on it, and we utilize it a lot here.

The need for further education and understanding about the concept and practice of shared governance was also summarized by Sarah:

I have to say that I hear a lot about shared governance... Everybody gets to talk about it and give their ideas about it...But in terms of what decision gets made? It's not a group decision. There are still administrators who make the decisions about how the college will function. And so, shared governance always seems to me to be probably not the right term. You know, it's like someone said the other day...They have to come into the room and sit and listen to your ideas, but they don't have to do it.

One of the prevailing issues with regards to shared governance is that participants believed that shared governance was more of a concept than a practice. Tony described his view of shared governance:

One of the problems that I see in our college, and I'm sure it's everywhere, is that we use the word shared governance and therefore believe it exists and I am saying it doesn't exist because you use the words. You actually have to produce a relationship and a way of communicating and dealing that reflects what those words really mean.

Although shared governance is valued by the participants, all the participants expressed frustration with the practice at their college and at the District. Tony described his frustration in reference to a decision about hiring a full-time faculty member:

Well, they never took the time to consult the department, and concern of the department issues. And most likely, if they had a discussion, we would have agreed to the decision. But the fact we were not included in the decision says that in fact shared governance is a little team word that is used. You know, kind of like propaganda. To make themselves feel good and it has to be more than that.

Wendell had a more jaded view of the purpose of shared governance. However, his opinion that shared governance was a futile exercise was consistently expressed by many participants:

Shared governance is a way of saying we're going to give you some say in how the place is run, but we're really still in charge anyway. So to me it's fake, and I'm on constant watch for this....How many different squirrel wheels can they give the faculty to run around in to make it appear to them that they are actually doing something. When it really doesn't amount to anything? Because everyone is real smart at a college. The administration has to be super super smart to fake out enough faculty to stick them in these squirrel wheels so they don't really effect how the college is run, and that's what I see here. There are a lot of squirrel wheels. Nothing getting done and everyone is expending a lot of energy. When it's bottom line time, the administration does what it wants and the faculty salutes and marches. So professionally, I believe in it because it's a good thing for the college, but deep inside, I think it is bogus as hell.

Shared governance is a state mandated collegial responsibility that is valued by participants. However, participants who communicated they did not have a good understanding of shared governance and their role in it. They also expressed frustration with the practice of shared governance at their respective institutions.

Workload

The roles and responsibilities associated with full-time employment, including participation in shared governance, created work outside of the classroom. The workload associated with collegial responsibilities had an affect on their commitment. Sarah explained that she felt overloaded with the amount of information she received:

I feel like I have too much information. When I look at my email, I have information about sports games coming up. I have information from the faculty union about negotiations. I have information from management about SLO (student learning outcomes) training, and yes, now all the courses are going to have to go through curriculum review...It's like I go through and I delete all of it. It's like I don't want to know about this. I don't care. Probably there's some stuff in there that I do want to know about, and should want to know about, but it's way down on my list of things that are important to me right now today. Meetings, union negotiations are very important. Very important. That's when it is determined salary, benefits, and the meetings are held over there on a day that I can't go because I'm teaching and it's in Thompson (another building). And it's like I don't wanna know. I'll pay my dues. I think you're all doing great job. That's all I can do. So, for me it's almost like it's too much information.

Josh explained his priority of teaching over other collegial responsibilities. This was a sentiment expressed by several participants:

I feel like you spend as you need to get the job done, but staff development is never going to be anywhere as important as the classes I teach. So, what if staff development gets screwed up a little.

Patty expressed her challenges with managing her teaching responsibilities, with the expectations outside the classroom:

I had only taught one lecture class ever. All of my time would have been in labs. So all of a sudden I've got 4 lecture classes, 2 labs and that was just... Oh, this is new. Look at all of the behind the scenes extra work that I didn't realize how much time that would take.

Although Patty's experience may be a reflection of her newness to teaching, Geoffrey articulated how the overwhelming workload and unappreciation affected his commitment:

What is the killer of commitment? The opposite. Unappreciation. Being overwhelmed. Being undervalued. You know, all of those things that are the opposites. They nibble. You can swat at them. Sometimes it's just little flies and you can sort of beat them back out of your own will. But commitment isn't something that can be purchased. It's something that will disappear under attack.

Amira discussed the amount of responsibility placed upon her, at times, was difficult to manage, yet she wanted to do her best:

Going back to adding to your responsibilities is one thing that really makes a difference. Because, like you were saying earlier, you want to do your best. I am really about, I want to do my best and if you give me more than I can handle, I am not going to be able to do my best and so that has happened.

Another opinion expressed by participants is that collegial responsibilities are noticeably perceived as being inequitable among the faculty. Amira explained "I see that there are the same people at the meetings, there is the same people going above and beyond." Sarah expanded on this opinion and expressed how this inequity created resentment among faculty and affected her commitment. This reaction was expressed by several participants:

I think that one of the things that undermine commitment is when faculty members began to feel like they are doing a whole lot more than other people are doing... You got a job. You go do the job and you do your work. There is stuff there to be done. I begin to feel really resentful... And then I have to say wait a minute. Nobody is asking to do this. You're doing this because you think it is a good way to do things and other people have different priorities and it's all OK. I mean, in terms of the college, in terms of their load, in terms of how they are getting paid. But I do think that in our department there are some of us who do more than others and that causes me to be somewhat resentful.

Although participants valued the intrinsic rewards afforded by their work, participants also felt that the disparity in the amount of workload at times overshadowed the recognition by the institution. Amira provided an example:

Well, you do want recognition. You don't have to have your name called in front of a group but you do want them to know you did a good job. So, those are the things that I don't appreciate. It's like it is constantly being poured... That is a lot.

Tony gave an example of faculty who complained about the union, but did not bother to participate bothered him:

One of the reasons I got involved with the executive board and the union is because I would constantly hear the harping that the union doesn't do this. The union doesn't do that. Blah, blah, blah. But, yet, most of it came about when there were meetings. People never went.

Several participants remarked on how the workload associated with collegial responsibilities needed to be prioritized by the institution. Geoffrey communicated the need to prioritize institutional activities and removing what is no longer essential to the institution:

I don't know that that's helpful in terms of the long range. Certainly as we grow and as we determine, we prioritize what we do. We say this is...We didn't know this, but this is now clearly a priority. It helps us so much. It is so essential that we are having it...But in adding this we need to remove some of the stuff that now we realize is not as essential.

Josh expressed his frustration with District and state mandates that in his view created additional work:

Well, we have to do it. Why? Because the District tells us that we have to. OK. Why does the District tell you that you have to? Well, because the state tells them they have to. OK. Well, why does the state tells them they have to? Well, because somewhere at some point somebody wrote a report that says staff needs... It's just a good idea that makes people feel maybe more professional. But it's not the real thing. It's not the real deal.

The workload associated with collegial responsibilities is perceived by participants to be overwhelming. Some participants felt unappreciated in their efforts which negatively affected their commitment. The perceived inequity of workload among participants also caused feelings of resentment among faculty which negatively affected their commitment. Tony summed up the frustrations of participants about the impact of

collegial responsibilities on the workload of faculty by stating “You can’t squeeze anymore into the balloon without popping it.”

Phenomenological Analysis and Collegial Responsibilities

Clues to the thematic structure *Collegial Responsibilities* are found in my field notes and reflexive journal after the first set of interviews. It was not until after horizontalization, when I coded the first set of interviews, that this theme began to appear in textural and structural form. It was at this point that shared governance, including the values and the lack of understanding emerged as a possible theme. As a result, for the second set of interviews I included questions in the interview guide that would elicit clarity on this point. It was during the second set of interviews that I began to see the difference between shared governance and workload issues.

The process of imaginative variation took place over several months with regards to *Collegial Responsibilities*. Initially imaginative variation began after I coded the data. However, through epoche I spent a great deal of time processing what I knew about *Collegial Responsibilities* versus what was said by participants. I wrote in my reflexive journal, consulted with colleagues, reviewed transcripts and field notes, listened to the interviews, and poured through the assigned codes to make sense of these themes. For a long time I named this theme ‘shared governance’, but it was not until months later after reading my writing out loud did it appear to me that this theme included more than just shared governance. *Collegial Responsibilities* seemed more appropriate in that it encompassed the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of faculty, which included, but were not limited to shared governance. It was clear that shared governance played a large role in the *Collegial Responsibilities* and the resulting workload. However, shared

governance did not cover the activities that were not shared governance related. In these themes both imaginative variation and epoche together were essential in analyzing the data.

Collegial Responsibilities Summary

Collegial Responsibilities was a pervasive thematic structure that was threaded throughout the data analysis. *Collegial Responsibilities* reflected participant participation in collegial activities outside the classroom, the value and knowledge of shared governance, and an expression of the impact of the workload associated with *Collegial Responsibilities*. Participants clearly stated that they valued shared governance. However, several participants communicated that they did not completely understand the principles, practices, and processes related to shared governance. Some participants who were aware and had an understanding of *Collegial Responsibilities* felt that the practice of shared governance at the institutions was conceptual in nature and a futile activity for faculty. Despite the dissatisfaction with shared governance, participants recognized the importance of having shared governance as a principle and practice and stated that the absence of shared governance would negatively affect their commitment. Participants also communicated to me that the impact of the workload generated by *Collegial Responsibilities* was overwhelming and, at times, participants felt unappreciated in their efforts. This perceived lack of appreciation negatively affected their commitment. In addition, the perceived inequity of workload among faculty also caused feelings of resentment among faculty negatively affecting their commitment.

Collegial Relationships

The thematic structures of *Types of Commitment* and *Shared Governance* provided a snapshot into the lived experiences of community college faculty with relation to organizational commitment. Another thematic structure that emerged from the data were *Collegial Relationships*. *Collegial Relationships* refers to the personal and social connections employees have with one another in the workplace. Participants described how both positive and negative relationships affected their commitment. Every participant in one way, shape, or form provided an example of how a person and/or person/s had an affect, positive and/or negative on their lived experiences with relation to organizational commitment. All of the participants recognized that the type and quality of relationships was an important aspect of their commitment. Liz shared earlier how her interaction with the president made a positive difference for her. Josh articulated how the personality of the institution was a reflection of people within the institution:

I guess just the overall thing that I would say about commitment is that places have personalities. Just like people do, and if your personality clashes with that of your institution you're not going to want to be there and if it is a fit you will be very happy there. And places where a lot of people are unhappy probably suggest that.

Tony expanded on a similar vein noting that commitment is a personal decision and the people you work with affect commitment:

Any institution is only as good as the people that are in it and what they bring to it. Because that is the living core of it. You would hope that you attract people that are there because, as an educator, you should have a mission and a real commitment to the betterment of those around us and in our society. So I think commitment ultimately is a personal decision.

Karen was very explicit about the value of her work relationships and stated "If I were working with a bunch of people in the math department that were difficult to work with

that would be the most significant thing that would make me feel happy about what I'm doing.”

This next section displays the ways which participants experienced *Collegial Responsibilities* through a sense of community, respect, politics, and communication.

Sense of Community

Participants expressed that the relationships in the form of a college community affected their commitment in a positive way. This sense of community can be described as interactions among and between work groups. This sense of community could be developed by working together on projects and/or a common goal. Sarah gave an example of the effect of a health movement at ICC and how that has created a sense of community and positive working relationships:

There's a health movement on campus to help people be more healthy. So, there's a walking program. The three divisions of the college have set up a little competition. Which division is going to rack up more walking miles. This is a movement to help all of us do better, and have a good time. Those relationships are important. There are many places that you wouldn't see that. You wouldn't see that kind of interaction with the management, faculty, and classified staff. It may be a social thing. It is a social thing, and yet it has a higher purpose, a promotion of health for everyone.

Other participants illustrated how commitment was affected by the connectedness and the caring of others. Karen stated, “That helps out with the commitment to the college that someone actually cares about my instruction or about me personally. About what I do being a teacher and that support and that just might be a key.” When Amira spoke about the relationship of faculty to administration she expressed the importance of feeling connected:

I feel like I am connected in a sense. I feel the connection. So I think that is what I like. It is more like a community, like we are all working together. It is not like management...Here they ask you and they make the decisions but you still have

input. So I guess I feel connected and not just on this level but the higher level and even up to the chancellor's office. And so, I think, that is what I like the most about BACCD.

Participants communicated that a sense of community played a role in the development of positive working relationships that fostered their commitment. This sense of community is developed at both the work group and personal level.

Respect

Respect by one's peers was frequently and consistently expressed as an important factor in commitment. Geoffrey explained that respect along with trust affected his commitment:

So, probably the first level would be respect and would be trust. Basically saying, you are someone that is an expert in this field and I trust what you say is true. And I trust that the needs that you frame to me are things that I need to act upon without suspecting that there is some ulterior means. Without feeling as if you're getting overwhelmed by these requests. That it comes from a good heart and a good spirit.

Wendell also gave an example of how mutual respect with another colleague fostered his relationship:

But there's always a high mutual respect. There are other members of the faculty who disagree with me politically. One in particular, he is a far, far lefty, and I'm a far, far right. Yet, we have a very high respect for one another. We like getting together and talking about politics and talking about why things work the way they do, or the way they don't, and how some things meet at the end, and how I agree with some of the outcomes of my friends on the other side of the aisle, but not the methods. That works fine.

On the other hand, the lack of respect of one's peers also had an affect on commitment. Wendell gave an example of when a last minute meeting was called which was perceived by him as unprofessional and negatively affected the relationship:

So, not only is it unprofessional of them to give us hours to take care of something that really takes weeks to prepare for, but they really haven't recognized that this is an unwieldy system. It's just worked in the past, and it's

just something we will all have to deal with. Come on folks. Can we think of another way to deal with this?...It doesn't make any sense, and it really hurts the college because it makes the people who are ultimately responsible for it...The department chairs and the individual members of the faculty...It makes them resent the people they work for.

Participants also communicated that unsupportive relationships affected their commitment in a negative way, specifically, negative faculty to faculty relationships. Geoffrey used the term "sniping" to describe the negative interaction among faculty. Earlier in this chapter Patty described her inability to participate in campus activities outside of teaching. When I asked her if her colleagues gave her a hard time about it she stated:

Patty: Not the ones in the program, but the ones outside of the program. Yes.
Researcher: How does that affect you?
Patty: It turns me off.

Wendell gave an example of how a colleague attempted to interfere with his tenure evaluation:

He made a stink and tried to get my tenure revoked or just not getting it. Just because he's a jerk. He would make it his hobby to do it. One of the reasons that I pulled back from my position (ideological) is because I thought my job was more important than making a point. Somebody that I know said you know why academic battles are so bloody? Because there is so little at stake.

Respect by one's peers affected helped establish and maintain relationship and had a positive affect in participant commitment. However, lack of respect by one's peers was described by participants as having a negative affect on their working relationships and commitment.

Politics

Politics were perceived as having a negative affect on participants' relationships and commitment. Politics can be described as the activities and maneuvering associated

with achieving personal, professional, or college related goals. I asked each participant “What would make you feel more committed to the college?” Patty responded “If there was a way to get past the politics. Yes! I don’t like the politics.” Josh stated earlier that he was not interested in getting involved in campus politics. In response to the question posed above he stated “Well, I suppose the morale, of course, gets pretty low when the budget is cut and I mean when things become too political I tend to zone out.” Geoffrey was more philosophical and practical about the affect of negative relationships on commitment:

But it is a challenge. I mean, not everybody plays fair. But I have a commitment to my students to be fair. I have a commitment to management to be fair. I have a commitment to my peers. It’s a personal choice to maintain that but it sure would be lovely to be. . . (sentence not completed by participant).

Politics, specifically faculty to faculty politics was perceived to have a negative affect on relationships and commitment. As a result, some participants chose to not communicate and/or establish relationships with their peers.

Communication

One aspect of *Collegial Relationships* is the quality and consistency of communication. Communication refers not only to the imparting of knowledge and information, but the manner in which the information is communicated. All participants conveyed that communication, as a part of their relationships, was an important factor that affected commitment. Wendell expressed his expectations of communication, including communication from the institution to faculty:

Communication is the best thing. It solves all problems. The only thing that puts you in the dog house forever is for you to fall off the map and never communicate with me. And even that’s revocable if you communicate with me. I expect the institution to be responsible to its faculty by communicating the issues that they have with their own school.

Tony articulated the importance of communicating issues to faculty with the goal of providing information and knowledge:

Among this faculty, there has to be some people that see the bigger picture and then find ways by which they can communicate that information to the rank and file. That's the only way we are ultimately going to be successful is with information. With knowledge. If we don't have information and knowledge, we are going to react out of in a vacuum or in darkness, and we are going to make rash and wrong decisions that are, in the long run, going to hurt us and the college as a whole.

Patty described the need for consistent communication was a widespread sentiment among the participants:

I would say having consistency and then having them (administration) back up what their decision was. I made this decision due to A,B,C,D. A little bit of sharing on where or why so you can understand where the decision came from and then I can respect that more in a person.

Finally, Tony spoke about the connection between good communication, shared governance, and the success of the organization:

And if we are going to be successful as an organization, then you in the administration need to empower the faculty and empower the people that work for us... And the only way to do that is to slow down a little bit and really live and really mean what you mean about shared governance. And that means communicating. Letting them know what's going on. Asking for input. Ultimately you have to make a decision, but you can't say you have shared governance and then you just ram things down people's... (sentence not completed by participant).

Communication also played a role in the relationships established and maintained by participants. Participants expressed that the quality and consistency of communication, particularly from administration had an affect on their relationships and commitment.

Phenomenological Analysis and Relationships

During the course of the first set of interviews it was apparent that people played a role in participant's experiences with commitment. Evidence of these themes can be

found in my field notes and reflexive journal. During horizontalization of the first set of interviews the subthemes of respect, lack of respect, and politics began to appear. Therefore, during the second set of interviews, I intentionally included questions in the interview guide that spoke to these subthemes. Further clarity on these subthemes was clearly evident in transcripts, field notes, and my reflexive journal notes related to the second set of interviews.

During the process of imaginative variation I spent a great deal of time imagining all the possible meanings related to *Relationships*. It was during this time that the subthemes of politics turned into faculty politics, and communication emerged as a sub theme. Participants were very clear in their discourse about what they meant about respect and lack of respect. However, when referring to politics, it was at first unclear to me what kind of politics participants meant. During imaginative variation I listened to the audiotapes and reviewed the transcripts to look for clues as to their meanings. The turning point came when I listened to Patty's first interview where she clearly described her dislike of the politics among faculty. I then reviewed and listened to other participant's transcripts and audiotapes and identified that their references to politics were consistently about faculty to faculty politics. Epoche also played a role in developing the theme of faculty politics. When participants referred to politics they meant faculty versus administration politics. I had to set aside my preconceived notions that about the nature of community college politics. In my personal and professional experience when faculty refer to politics, they tend to refer to faculty versus administration politics. However, in this case politics meant faculty politics. Occasionally participants mentioned faculty versus administration politics, but not to the extent they

communicated faculty politics and it appeared to be an important part of their experience with commitment.

During imaginative variation the subtheme of communication emerged. Participants clearly communicated how respect, lack of respect, and politics affected their commitment. However, there was an underlying message in their experiences that can be characterized as communication, specifically, the quality and consistency of communication. A few participants were explicit in stating the need for communication. However most participants were not explicit and imaginative variation became an important part of the phenomenological analysis of this subtheme.

Collegial Relationships Summary

All participants recognized and expressed the importance that *Collegial Relationships* had on their commitment. Participants described how the personality of the institution was a direct reflection of the people that worked there. The institutional personality had an impact on the quality of their experience and affirmed their commitment. Participants shared that the sense of community at the college was an expression of the quality of their *Collegial Relationships* and affected commitment in a positive way. They also provided descriptions of how connectedness with other employees and caring of others was expressed as having a positive influence on commitment. The mutual respect of one's peer was an aspect of *Collegial Relationships* that had a positive impact on commitment. The lack of respect by one's peer had a negative impact on participant commitment. Participants also communicated that faculty to faculty politics affected their commitment in a negative way. They felt that the politics created damaging relationships, yet others understood the reality of politics at a large

institution. One aspect of *Collegial Relationships* was the quality and consistency of communication. The expectation that communication be useful, effective, and consistent was an expressed interest of participants. When practiced, communication had a positive affect on commitment. When not practiced, communication had a negative affect.

Institutional Support

Institutional Support was also a thematic structure that emerged from the data analysis. *Institutional Support* can mean a variety of things from monetary support to personal support. However, for participants *Institutional Support* referred to the lived experiences with regards to recognition, an orientation program, and perceived lack of support.

Recognition

Recognition was a type of *Institutional Support* that affected participant commitment. Recognition refers to the acknowledgement of a deed or service. Josh acknowledged that the recognition via appreciation and support communicated by the college affected his commitment in a positive way:

There is appreciation. There is support. There is this sense of whenever I report something, you get praised. You get appreciation and I could see it. I could see results. I could see things progressing from one stage to the next. I can see, so it makes me feel like what I'm doing is worth doing.

Sarah also gave an example of how recognition affected her commitment. She stated "You know, at big faculty meetings and so that sounds good. It's like. Yes, you guys are doing a really good job. Pat on the back. That's really good." Amira communicated the importance of recognition and how the recognition made her feel a part of the college, and therefore affected her commitment:

It (recognition) does. It would. If I did a lot, and I felt like it was just overlooked, it would affect my commitment. You need to feel valued somehow and usually that's by being recognized. Even if it's not recognized as doing a good job all the time, but it's recognized as your part, and we need you to participate. We need your part in order to make the whole. So I think that's what makes me feel connected. And because I feel a part I'm more committed. I know that people are relying on me, and they recognize that not necessarily I needed to be rewarded in any other way. But that's good too. But I don't need that all the time. I just need it to be known that I'm a part and what I'm doing makes a difference.

Orientation Program

BACCD provided an orientation for new full-time faculty: The Nexus Program.

This orientation program took place the week prior to the beginning of classes during the first year of employment. Participants expressed different views about the effectiveness of the content and structure of the orientation. However, the overall sense was that the orientation program was useful in providing the participants with information about the District and college culture. The orientation program was communicated to me as

Institutional Support. Amira provided an overview of the orientation:

They had the new faculty orientation and took all of the new people on, like a little van and drove us throughout the community and showed us the diversity of the community. He (division chair responsible for the program) said this is who we serve. All the way down to Rockview where you wouldn't know that these are the people that end up at Bay College. So just seeing that. Hearing the stories. Seeing some historical points. He even took us to a restaurant that I would have never went to before. It is just like all of that history. Plus, here is a packet. This is how the curriculum works. It is like you really had a whole day to get acquainted with the college and become acclimated to what was going on.

She also commented on the importance of bonding with other faculty:

And I thought that was great. But it was almost like a sorority or fraternity... We have that bond to this day. Like you came the year I came and you're still here. You know, we could talk to each other and help each other and most of them are moving up to more of leadership roles within the departments as well.

In Josh's description of the orientation he discussed how he was made to feel welcome by the administration:

Well, I think the college did do things to make me feel... Well, I think it does things to make all new faculty feel welcome. I mean, when we come in there is sort of formal orientation and we are taking on a tour so it's formal, but it's also informal. The president at the time, Ruth Tansey, invited all new faculty to her house before the semester began.

Josh also described how the vice president discussed the evaluation process and communicated the importance of new faculty succeeding:

It's (the evaluation process) meant to be supportive and the point is we have invested a lot of time and energy into getting you here, into getting you folks here... To hire a full-time faculty, it's an unbelievable investment in time and energy. And he's like we don't want to do this again. So, we want you to succeed.

The orientation program, sponsored by BACCD, was perceived as *Institutional Support* by participants. It gave participants an opportunity to learn about the college and to bond with each other.

Lack of Support

Participants frequently commented on how the lack of support negatively affected their commitment. Geoffrey, in reference to issues of respect and trust, believed that in order to be supportive of each other that "Suspicious and defensiveness is what probably needs to disappear." Although philosophical in nature, most of the examples of lack of support reflected physical or institutional needs. Amira explained that she would consider staying with the college if there was more support in a variety of ways:

I could probably stay here if there was more support. Like even clerical support. Be it support. Simple support. Or like replacing positions that are vital. Like the transfer center. They had someone who could say I am taking the leadership in that and that is something I don't have to worry about, then that would be fine.

Wendell felt that the college needed to address basic issues such as adequate parking spaces and reliable computer systems. These actions would show support from the institution:

Like all colleges, they need to address basic issues like parking. I have never been at a college that has satisfactory parking. There is a big hole out there (in reference to the building of the new parking structure). They tore down those buildings and they're not going to replace them. Why did they do that? They have an out dated computer system. It is a horrible system. When it crashes at the beginning of the semesters because it can't take the load...Yet, all we do is keep putting caulk and bandages and stuff on the same system. Why not spend the money there to make it easier for people to do their thing? But the school itself is suffering from a fiscal crisis, yet they make it difficult for students to sign up for classes. That would help me commit more to the college. That goes again back to the consistency issue.

Tony provided an example in which he felt support was lacking because funding was taken away from the soccer program. As a result, it had created an additional workload of fundraising:

I used to have a \$3500 budget for my soccer team that was taken away. Now I have to fundraise everything. So, I could say, well, I'm not getting the institutional support I want, but I have chosen not to do that. That's just another thing that has to be taken care of.

Sarah gave an example of the need for a light bulb to be replaced and how the lack of communication was viewed as lack of support:

I would like to have somebody come and fix the broken lights in our classroom that I have been trying to get somebody to just put in new bulbs for 2 years and they don't do anything about that. I don't know why that is? I mean, if they would send me a letter that said "I'm sorry we don't have money for bulbs." I would say OK, that's too bad... But it's like it falls into a black hole... And the classroom is dark. It's hard for the students to see and we're all in there plugging away and they can't get the damn bulbs for us. Little things like that really bother me.

Lack of support was communicated in many ways, specifically as a lack of physical or institutional needs. Lack of support from the institution was expressed as negatively affecting participant commitment.

Phenomenological Analysis and Institutional Support

The concept of support emerged during the course of the first set of interviews. It was clear to me that support was an important theme. However, there were many

examples of support that were identified during horizontalization. It was not until imaginative variation that I was able to determine that support referred to *Institutional Support* and that recognition and the orientation program were examples of positive institutional support. It was also during imaginative variation that I was able to clearly articulate that lack of support was a subtheme of institutional support.

Institutional Support Summary

Institutional Support was a thematic structure elicited from the data analysis. Although there are many different meanings of institutional support, participants described *Institutional Support* through recognition, an orientation program, and lack of support. Recognition from the institution had a positive influence on participant commitment. The orientation program sponsored by the District and Colleges was also described as institutional support. Although praised as an effort by the institution, there was lack of consensus about the effectiveness of the content and structure of the orientation. The orientation program was perceived as a bonding experience for faculty. This was supported by institution and had a positive affect on commitment. Although there were positive aspects to *Institutional Support*, there was a perceived lack of support with regards to under funded budgets for supplies and equipment, lack of response for maintenance, and reduction in staff, which resulted in negative commitment. Participants noted that lack of support diminished the positive aspect of recognition and negatively affected their commitment.

Thematic Structures Summary

Participant's voices emerged to describe five thematic structures that defined their lived experiences as community college faculty in relation to organizational commitment.

Service Attitude, Types of Commitment, Collegial Responsibilities, Collegial Relationships, and Institutional Support emerged as the thematic structures that described participants' experiences. Each thematic structure has subthemes to support the structure. Table 2 below is a visual representation of the different thematic structures and associated subthemes found in the data analysis:

Table 2. Thematic Structures

Service Attitude	Types of Commitment	Collegial Responsibilities	Relationships	Institutional Support
Intrinsic Rewards	Students	Shared Governance	Sense of Community	Recognition
	Department	Workload Issues	Respect/Lack of Respect	Orientation Program
	Education		Communication	Lack of Support
	College		Faculty Politics	

A textural structural synthesis of these themes follows to describe how these thematic structures framed the meaning and essence of the phenomenon.

Textural Structural Synthesis

The thematic structures of *Service Attitude, Types of Commitment, Collegial Responsibilities, Collegial Relationships, and Institutional Support* interacted in discrete ways to frame the phenomenon of my study: *The Experience of Organizational Commitment in Community College Faculty*. This section briefly reviews the thematic structures and presents the textural structural analysis of the phenomenon.

Thematic Structure Review

The following is a brief review of the thematic structures. Participants clearly displayed a *Service Attitude* towards their experience which was supported by intrinsic rewards associated with service. Participants also described, categorized, and prioritized

the *Types of Commitment* including commitment to students, department, education, and college. Participants had various levels of awareness and understanding of *Collegial Responsibilities* and felt that there was a heavy workload associated with shared governance. Participants also developed, fostered, and experienced *Relationships* that contributed to their commitment and/or had relationships that negatively affected their commitment. They also experienced *Institutional Support* positively and/or negatively.

Participants expressed a *Service Attitude* towards their work. This attitude was a reflection of their desire to serve others and was displayed through the language they used to describe and explain their experience. Further, participants communicated that their *Service Attitude* was fostered by the intrinsic rewards they received as a result of the service.

Types of Commitment depicts the manner in which participants described, categorized, and prioritized their commitments. Commitment to students was participants' first priority, followed by department, education, and then college. All participants expressed a commitment to students, department, and education. However, few participants articulated a direct commitment to the college. Although an argument could be made that commitment to students, department, and education is an indirect commitment to the college, the participants did not see that relationship. As a result, the commitment of community college faculty to the organization was not a high priority for participants.

Collegial Responsibilities describes the roles and expectations of community college faculty outside the classroom. Participants experienced *Collegial Responsibilities* through participating in college activities, including shared governance. Some

participants were aware of and/or understood their responsibilities to the college, others did not. These participants demonstrated their awareness and understanding by participating in college activities including shared governance. Participants who had an awareness and understanding of *Collegial Responsibilities* were aware of the workload associated with their responsibilities. Other participants did not have an awareness and understanding and /or had a limited awareness and understanding of their *Collegial Responsibilities*. These participants spent their time primarily teaching. *Collegial Responsibilities* tells of the participants' descriptions of the awareness and understanding of the roles and expectations of community college faculty.

Collegial Relationships communicates the level of importance and value of relationships to participant commitment. Participants experienced *Collegial Relationships* through a sense of community, respect, politics, and communication. Some participants developed and maintained positive working relationships within the college community and found value in these relationships with regards to commitment. Most participants recognized how negative relationships adversely affected their commitment. However, some participants lacked relationships of any type and/or had hostile or competitive relationships with their colleagues.

Institutional Support explains the types of support provided by the institution that affected participant commitment. Participants experienced *Institutional Support* through recognition, an orientation program, and lack of support by the college. Descriptions of recognition indicated that recognition, in all forms, positively affected participant commitment. Participants also described the impact of the orientation program on their commitment. They noted that although the orientation program lacked some components,

the bonding experience with faculty had a positive affect on commitment. Finally, many participants experienced a lack of support from the institution. Lack of support includes not meeting basic needs such as under funded budgets for supplies and equipment, lack of response from maintenance, and reduction in staff. All of which resulted in negative commitment.

The thematic structures of *Service Attitude*, *Types of Commitment*, *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Collegial Relationships*, and *Institutional Support* interacted in discrete ways to describe the textural structural synthesis: Dimensions of Organizational Commitment.

Dimensions of Organizational Commitment

The following section describes the synthesis of the thematic structures *Service Attitude*, *Types of Commitment*, *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Collegial Relationships*, and *Institutional Support* and how they intermingled to display the phenomenon through Dimensions of Organizational Commitment. As the thematic structures interfaced three dimensions emerged to describe how participants experienced commitment: (a) Individual Expectations, (b) Positive Experiences, and (c) Negative Experiences.

Although there were common themes experienced, each participant had a different set of Individual Expectations, Positive Experiences, and Negative Experiences that attributed to their commitment. It is at the intersection of these dimensions that the experience of organizational commitment frames the phenomenon of this study.

Individual Expectations

Individual Expectations is a dimension that shows how *Service Attitude*, *Types of Commitment*, and *Collegial Responsibilities* intermingled to express how the prior expectations participants had about their experience affected their commitment.

An Individual Expectation that was prevalent throughout the data analysis was displayed in *Service Attitude*. Participants brought an expectation to their experience that they would be able to serve students, community, humanity, or some combination of these entities. All participants placed value on service and expressed their intention to serve as a faculty member and expected to reap intrinsic rewards from the experience. However, each participant had individual ways in which they intended to exhibit their service.

Types of Commitment played a role in the development of Individual Expectations. Each participant individually categorized, prioritized, and combined the *Types of Commitment* in various ways that met their notion of commitment. However, the common thread of *Types of Commitment*, was that participants expected to display a commitment to students and education during their experience. It was unclear if commitment to department and/or college was part of Individual Expectations or formed after their experience began.

Further, participants' expectations of *Collegial Responsibilities* played a role in the development of Individual Expectations. Some participants were aware and had an understanding of their *Collegial Responsibilities* which included teaching and contributing to the college. Other participants did not have this same awareness and understanding prior to the experience. As such, participants' expectations about the roles,

responsibilities, and expectations related to their experience differed depending on their awareness and understanding of *Collegial Responsibilities*.

Participants had a set of Individual Expectations they brought to their experience. These expectations were borne out of their awareness and understanding of *Service Attitude*, *Types of Commitment*, and *Collegial Responsibilities*. These thematic structures intermingled to form the Individual Expectations each participant had of their experience. Table 3 below represents how Individual Expectations was developed by the thematic structures.

Table 3. Individual Expectations

Individual Expectations		
<i>Collegial Responsibilities</i>	<i>Service Attitude</i>	<i>Types of Commitment</i>
College Activities	Intrinsic Rewards	Students
Shared Governance		Department
		Education
		College

Positive Experiences

Positive Experiences is another dimension of organizational commitment that demonstrates how *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Collegial Relationships*, and *Institutional Support* intermingled to create experiences that attributed positively to the development of participant commitment. With respect to *Collegial Responsibilities*, participants described positive experiences they had participating in college activities, including shared governance. Some participants had a good understanding of their role and responsibilities which enhanced their experiences.

Other Positive Experiences that described how participants experienced commitment can be found in *Collegial Relationships*. A sense of community at their respective colleges facilitated the positive working relationships that affected

commitment. Respect among their peers and positive communication interactions also enhanced the relationships and created Positive Experiences.

Another common theme that represented Positive Experiences was displayed in *Institutional Support*. Participants had Positive Experiences bonding with other faculty during the orientation. The opportunity for bonding was viewed as positive *Institutional Support*. Furthermore, recognition, in all forms, was viewed as a positive experience supported by the institution.

The combination of positive experiences related to *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Collegial Relationships* and *Institutional Support* created the Positive Experience dimension of organizational commitment. As a result, each Positive Experience was different for each participant. Table 4 below illustrates how the thematic structures integrated to form Positive Experiences.

Table 4. Positive Experiences

Positive Experiences		
<i>Collegial Responsibilities</i>	<i>Collegial Relationships</i>	<i>Institutional Support</i>
Roles and Expectations	Sense of Community	Orientation Program
College Activities	Respect	Recognition
Shared Governance	Positive Communication	

Negative Experiences

Negative Experiences is a dimension of organizational commitment that describes how *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Collegial Relationships* and *Institutional Support* interacted to negatively affect commitment.

Some participants did not have positive experiences related to *Collegial Responsibilities*. Many participants expressed that the workload associated with shared governance negatively affected their commitment. Participants also experienced how

some *Collegial Relationships* resulted in negative consequences on their experience. These negative relationships were manifested by a lack of respect among peers, faculty to faculty politics, and negative communication interactions. Other aspects of negative experiences revolved around *Institutional Support*. Participants expressed negative experiences through lack of support at various institutional levels.

The intermingling of the negative aspects of *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Collegial Relationships*, and *Institutional Support* created the dimension of Negative Experiences that affected participant commitment. The amalgamation of Negative Experiences affected participants on an individual level. Table 5 below shows how the thematic structures developed into Negative Experiences.

Table 5. Negative Experiences

Negative Experiences		
<i>Collegial Responsibilities</i>	<i>Collegial Relationships</i>	<i>Institutional Support</i>
Roles and Expectations	Lack of Respect	Lack of Support
Shared Governance	Faculty Politics	
Workload Issues	Negative Communication	

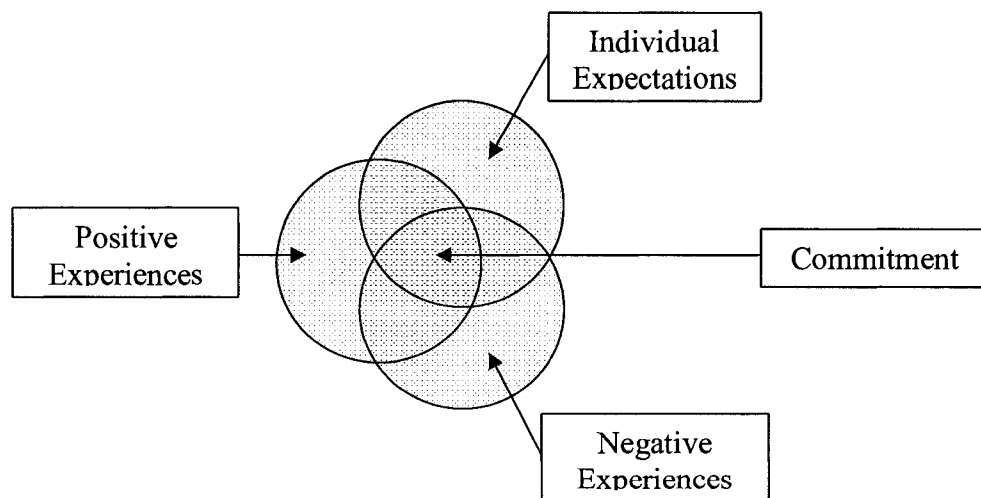
Framing Dimensions of Organizational Commitment

The interaction of Individual Expectations, Positive Experiences, and Negative Experiences created the textural structural synthesis: Dimensions of Organizational Commitment. Individual Expectations were developed through each participants' experience related to *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Service Attitude*, and *Types of Commitment* each participant brought to their experience. Positive Experiences were formed through *Collegial Responsibilities* such as participating in college activities. Positive Experiences were also fostered through the development and maintenance of positive *Collegial Relationships*. The positive relationships were exhibited by a sense of

community, respect of peers, and positive communication interactions. Positive Experiences were also displayed in *Institutional Support* as a result of the orientation program, and recognition by the institution. Negative Experiences were exemplified by a lack of awareness or understanding of *Collegial Responsibilities* and the increased workload as a result of shared governance. Negative Experience was also described in *Collegial Relationships* which included lack of respect by peers, faculty politics, and negative communication interactions.

The intersection of these three dimensions is how participants experienced organizational commitment. Each participant had a different set of expectations and experiences that contributed to their experience of organizational commitment. Figure 1 visually demonstrates how the Dimensions of Organizational Commitment intersect to explain how participants experienced organizational commitment.

Figure 1. Dimensions of Organizational Commitment.



Phenomenological Analysis and Textural Structural Synthesis

The processing of textural structural synthesis occurred over a period of time. I used trial and error as my method of synthesizing the thematic structures. Prior to identifying Dimensions of Organizational Commitment, I developed three different ways to present textural structural synthesis. After each construction I would reread the thematic structures, have discussions with peers, and engage in epoche. The first two versions of textural structural synthesis focused on “what” participants experienced rather than “how” participants experienced commitment. I also spent a great deal of time and effort trying to fit participants into categories defined by the thematic structures. This did not work either. It was not until I had a conversation with a tenure track faculty member at my college about her expectations prior to her experience that it dawned on me that Individual Expectations played a role in faculty experiences with commitment and that institutions do not have control over the expectations prior to hiring. It also became clear to me that the interaction of Individual Expectations, Positive Experiences, and Negative Experiences was “how” participants experienced commitment and that each experience was unique to the individual.

Engaging in epoche was imperative during my journey with textural structural synthesis. Epoche forced me to examine my preconceived notions about organizational commitment. Engaging in epoche was a personal challenge when synthesizing the data. However, epoche kept me honest in keeping track of my biases and assumptions about this topic and resulted in great deal of intrapersonal communication. The use of the reflexive journal and dialogue with colleagues, friends, and family is how I engaged in epoche.

Textural Structural Synthesis Summary

The experiences of participants were framed in distinct ways in which the thematic structures of *Service Attitude*, *Types of Commitment*, *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Relationships*, and *Institutional Support* intermingled to define the phenomenon through the Dimensions of Organizational Commitment. As the thematic structures interfaced, three Dimensions of Organizational Commitment characterized the participants' experience through Individual Expectations, Positive Experiences, and Negative Experiences, which led to the essence of my study: *Courtship*

Essence

As I considered the lived experiences of my participants *Courtship* emerged as the essence of my study. As I reflected on the five thematic structures and the textural structural synthesis, it occurred to me that how participants' experienced organizational commitment was much like the development of romantic relationships in Western cultures. This analogy weaves together the collective experiences described in the five thematic structures of *Service Attitude*, *Types of Commitment*, *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Collegial Relationships*, and *Institutional Support*. *Courtship* also describes the different ways participants experienced commitment through the textural structural synthesis of Dimensions of Organizational Commitment.

As Dean of Instruction I spend a great deal of time hiring new full-time faculty and evaluating tenure track faculty. While serving on a hiring committee, several committee members and I observed that interviewing was much like going on a first date. It was then that I began to explore the analogy of *Courtship*. It also occurred to me that the tenure track evaluation process is similar to *Courtship*, where the interaction between

expectations and experiences influence the outcome of the relationship. It then came to mind that the granting of tenure is comparable to a marriage. Marriage, like commitment, is a result of an intermingling of expectations and experiences. Like relationships, experiencing organizational commitment is different and unique for every person. Resembling relationships, the essence of organizational commitment is a function of how Individual Expectations, Positive Experiences, and Negative Experiences interact.

Consider Individual Expectations. Expectations in *Courtship* are equivalent to *Collegial Responsibilities*. These expectations are based upon prior experiences and knowledge about what constitutes a relationship. This is similar to participant expectations and knowledge about what is involved in teaching at a California community college. Further, the values a person has about *Courtship* correlates to the value of *Service Attitude* expressed by participants. The values brought to a relationship affect the expectations of the *Courtship* much like the value of *Service Attitude* affects the Individual Expectations of participants. Also, the different *Types of Commitment* displayed by participants are analogous to the expectations of the types of commitment a person brings to *Courtship*. For example, when developing a relationship a person may want to establish a friendship, desire a short term commitment, want a long-term commitment, or a combination of the above. A person may begin the relationship intending to develop one type of commitment, but may change over the course of the relationship. This is true for participants as they expressed that they were committed to students and education prior to hire. Yet, some participants developed additional commitments to the department and/or the college based upon their positive and negative experiences.

Along with Individual Expectations, the Positive Experiences and Negative Experiences in *Courtship* have an affect on commitment. The combination of positive and negative experiences in the relationship affects the outcome of the *Courtship*. This is also true about how participants experience commitment. The activities associated with *Collegial Responsibilities* correlates to the amount and level of participation in a relationship or how the relationship is managed by the parties involved. The development of commitment is related to *Courtship* with regards to *Collegial Relationships*. How a relationship develops through creation of a sense of community with each other and with family or friends influences the outcome. The same is true for developing and maintaining relationships at the college. The existence of respect, or lack thereof, influences the *Courtship* and the experience of commitment. The quality and consistency of communication interactions, both positive and negative, influence the *Courtship*, like participant commitment. The influence of politics in *Courtship* and at the college also shape the positive and negative experiences. Relational support effects *Courtship* like *Institutional Support* effects commitment. The orientation to the relationship during *Courtship*, including an orientation to family and friends, affects overall relationships. This is much like how the orientation to the college affected participant commitment. Relational recognition like institutional recognition, in all forms, positively affects *Courtship* and commitment. Lack of support, in any way, shape, or form, at the relational level can negatively affect the *Courtship*. This is similar to the lack of support expressed by participants and how it negatively affected participant commitment.

Ultimately, experiences with *Courtship* or commitment hinge upon the Individual Expectations brought to the experience. Expectations play a role in determining if an

experience is perceived as positive or negative. If a person has had healthy positive experiences with relationships and has developed expectations consistent with the other person, the likelihood is that the positive experiences would outweigh the negative experiences. The converse is also true. This is analogous to the interplay between Individual Expectations, Positive Experiences, and Negative Experiences. If participants have accurate and consistent expectations of the institution, then the likelihood is the experiences would be more positive than negative. Once again, the converse is true if participants have inaccurate expectations that are inconsistent with that of the institution.

How participants experience commitment is a reflection of how the Dimensions of Organizational Commitment through Individual Expectations, Positive Experiences, and Negative Experiences intersect to reflect commitment. This interplay is analogous to the *Courtship* in romantic relationships in Western culture. Although participants have collective experiences as described in the thematic structures, how these expectations and experiences intermingle is different for each person. This is also true in *Courtship*. The expectations a person brings to a relationship and the interplay of the Positive Experiences and Negative Experiences during *Courtship* are different for each person resulting in different experiences of commitment.

Phenomenological Analysis and Essence

The essence of *Courtship* emerged through extensive imaginative variation and engaging in epoche. Over the course of a year I imagined various ways I could express the meaning of the experience for participants. I explored analogies with regard to gardening, cooking, traveling, and storytelling... to no avail. The development of this

essence came to me during an interaction on a hiring committee. Until then I struggled to honor the meaning of the participants' experience.

By engaging in epoche I was very careful to pay attention to my preconceived notions, assumptions, and biases about the development of relationships. However, I would be remiss if I did not reveal that I recently remarried. I was challenged when developing the analogy of *Courtship* to be as objective as I could about what constituted development of romantic relationships in Western culture. I was very aware of my personal experiences and how they might shape the interpretation of the data and the development of the essence. However, after scrutinizing my data, my analysis, and my own perspective I am convinced that the essence of *Courtship* accurately represents the participants' experience.

Essence Summary

Courtship represents the essence of my study. The interplay between *Service Attitude, Types of Commitment, Collegial Responsibilities, Collegial Relationships, and Institutional Support* created the textural structural synthesis, Dimensions of Organizational Commitment, which describes how participants experience organizational commitment. *Courtship* and organizational commitment are an amalgamation of the Individual Expectations, Positive Experiences, and Negative Experiences. Like romantic relationships, how participants experienced commitment is different for each person.

Chapter Four Summary

Phenomenological research allowed me to dialogue with nine recently tenured community college faculty and listen to their lived experiences with regards to organizational commitment. The purpose of this chapter was to synthesize the data

collected in order to describe the lived experiences of community college faculty as they relate to organizational commitment. I described the institutions in the study, introduced the participants, described the institutional issues experienced by participants, explained the phenomenological analysis process, and presented the thematic structures elicited from the data. Through the data analysis of the interview transcripts that *Service Attitude*, *Types of Commitment*, *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Collegial Relationships*, and *Institutional Support* emerged as the thematic structures that described the phenomenon. I then provided a textural synthesis of the thematic structures that described how Individual Expectations, Positive Experiences, and Negative Experiences interacted to create Dimensions of Organizational Commitment. Finally, I concluded with a description of the meaning and essence of the phenomenon: *Courtship*. In Chapter Five I address these findings with regards to my research, how the results relate to the literature, as well as a discussion about how my results apply to practice and future research.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

Chapter Five is a summary of the *Experience of Organizational Commitment in Community College Faculty*. In my study I examined the lived experiences of community college faculty as it related to organizational commitment. As I holistically examined the lived experiences of community college faculty, I was able to identify how they described and experienced organizational commitment including what affected their commitment.

The following are the research questions that guided my study:

How do community college faculty experience organizational commitment?

As I progressed through the research process, I also sought to answer the following subquestions:

How do these community college faculty describe and explain their experience with organizational commitment?

and

What affects organizational commitment in these community college faculty?

To address my research questions I collected data during two in-depth interviews with 9 recently tenured California community college faculty. Through dialogue, participants shared their lived experiences with regards to organizational commitment. According to the phenomenological methods outlined by Moustakas (1994), I analyzed 17 interview transcripts and discovered elements of their unique

experience. I identified and organized five thematic structures that were common elements that framed their experiences: *Service Attitude*, *Types of Commitment*, *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Collegial Relationships*, and *Institutional Support*. The five thematic structures discretely intermingled in unique ways to frame the textural structural synthesis of Dimensions of Organizational Commitment, which include Individual Expectations, Positive Experiences, and Negative Experiences. The interplay of these Dimensions of Organizational Commitment merged to form the essence of my study: *Courtship*.

In this chapter I share my assumptions and bias as related to the study, address the findings to the research questions, provide an examination of the review of literature, offer recommendations for practical usage and further research, and conclude with closing remarks.

Researcher Assumptions and Biases

The universal question that guided this study was “How do recently tenured community college faculty experience organizational commitment?” I designed the study with the goal of learning how community college faculty describe and experience organizational commitment. I also wanted to know what affected their commitment. In qualitative inquiry the researcher is the primary instrument in data collection (Merriam, 2002). As the primary research instrument, a reflection on assumptions and biases is an essential part of qualitative inquiry, specifically phenomenological research. To begin a discussion of the findings, a reflection about my assumptions and biases as a researcher is necessary.

I came to this study with personal experience as a child of a community college faculty member and a positive experience being part of a community college family. I worked 10 years as an active full-time faculty member at a California community college. I also have 6 years experience as a community college administrator, 4 of the 6 years as a Dean of Instruction. I entered this study understanding that not everyone had the same experience with regards to commitment and as a result expressed their commitment in different ways. My experience told me that faculty that understood the goals of the institution were more committed than those who did not. My experience also told me that community college faculty were committed to educating students at this level. My personal experience as a faculty member and administrator, combined with my research knowledge about organizational commitment told me that socialization, training, and rewards and recognition would create positive commitment in faculty. My practical experience along with my knowledge and study of the literature guided my research protocol. This furthered my inquiry to understand community college faculty as they experience organizational commitment. I am aware that my personal and professional experiences, as well as my study of the literature, brought assumptions and biases to my study. However, my understanding of the theoretical and practical aspects of the study allowed me to explore the multiple dimensions of the participants lived experiences. As I interacted and listened to participants lived stories, my assumptions were exposed, while other assumptions were validated or rejected. My collective experiences allowed me to delve into the heart of the study at several levels.

Throughout the inquiry, the assumptions and biases are reflected upon inductively through epoche (Moustakas, 1994). As a human research instrument, my assumptions and

biases naturally come into play when interacting with participants. I was constantly aware of the need to keep my assumptions and biases at the forefront of my mind. As I prepared to meet with each participant I reflected and clarified my assumptions and biases. This allowed me to separate myself from my role as a professional and dialogue with participants to listen to their lived stories I kept a clear and open mind in order to understand their perspectives. During data analysis my awareness of my preconceived notions about the role of faculty and my personal interpretations of commitment were frequently challenged through epoche. Discussions with peers ensued about the concept of epoche itself and how it played a role in my research was a frequent activity. Reflexive journaling and self dialogue kept my biases and assumptions in check in order to listen, reflect, and understand the lived experiences of participants.

Introduction to Findings

The next section focuses on how the findings of the inquiry answer the posed research questions. First I will discuss how participants experienced organizational commitment, followed by what affected organizational commitment in participants.

Experiencing Organizational Commitment

How recently tenured community college faculty experience organizational commitment is the phenomena I sought to understand. Specifically, I wanted to know how community college faculty describe and explain their experience with organizational commitment. I addressed this question in detail in Chapter Four by describing the intricate ways in which the five thematic structures, *Service Attitude*, *Types of Commitment*, *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Collegial Relationships*, and *Institutional Support* intermingled to frame the phenomenon through the interaction of Individual

Expectations, Positive Experiences, and Negative Experiences to create Dimensions of Organizational Commitment. The following is a review of the findings that seek to answer how recently tenured community college faculty experience organizational commitment.

Participants had common themes that described their experiences. These common experiences are described in the thematic structures, *Service Attitude*, *Types of Commitment*, *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Collegial Relationships*, and *Institutional Support*. These thematic structures discretely intermingled to form the Dimensions of Organizational Commitment that described how participants' expectations and experiences explained their unique commitment. Although participants had collective experiences related to organizational commitment through the thematic structures, the expectations brought to the experience and the interaction of the Dimensions of Organizational Commitment resulted in commitment.

How recently tenured community college faculty experienced organizational commitment is best described by the essence of *Courtship*. *Courtship* describes the meaning of the participants' experience. The significance of participants' expectations and experiences correlates to *Courtship* practices in Western cultures. These expectations are a reflection of the values brought to a relationship, similar to that of the *Service Attitude* brought by participants. The expectation of the type or relationship a person seeks through *Courtship* is comparable to the *Types of Commitment* participants look for in their experiences. The expectation about the role each person plays in relationships is related to the roles and expectations participants have about their experiences as described in *Collegial Responsibilities*.

Further, *Courtship*, like commitment, is affected by the positive and negative experiences during the relationship. These experiences are influenced by the type and level of participation in the relationship. The experiences are also impacted by communication interactions, including the types and level of politics, as well as the type and level of support offered in the relationship. All of these experiences collectively affect the outcome of the experiences. In *Courtship*, the outcome could lead to dissolution of the relationship, living together, or marriage. With regard to recently tenured community college faculty, the outcome could lead to resignation, termination of contract, or the granting of tenure. Much like *Courtship*, experiencing organizational commitment for recently tenured faculty is a process where the interaction of the expectations and experiences leads to different outcomes with commitment.

Experiencing Organizational Commitment Summary

How recently tenured community college faculty experienced organizational commitment was a function of the collective experiences expressed through the thematic structures: *Service Attitude*, *Types of Commitment*, *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Collegial Relationships*, and *Institutional Support*. Although participants had similar experiences, through the thematic structures they expressed these themes individually as displayed through the textural structural synthesis of Dimensions of Organizational Commitment. These dimensions included how participants brought their Individual Expectations to the experiences combined with their Positive Experiences and Negative Experiences. Each participant experienced commitment differently based upon the interaction of the Dimensions of Organizational Commitment. The essence of the experience is much like that of a *Courtship* in romantic relationships in Western cultures.

What Affected Organizational Commitment

What affected organizational commitment in recently tenured community college faculty is the second research subquestion I sought to address. Through dialogue with participants I was able to identify three major thematic structures that affected organizational commitment: *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Collegial Relationships*, and *Institutional Support*. I described each of these themes in detail in Chapter Four and review as follows.

Collegial Responsibilities

Collegial Responsibilities, specifically shared governance, affected participant commitment. Participants explained that they valued the concept of shared governance as a part of their *Collegial Responsibilities*. The fact that shared governance existed at their institution, in whatever form, affected their commitment to the college in a positive way. They claimed that if they did not have a voice in the governance of the institution, it would negatively affect their commitment to the college. Although participants valued the concept, many felt they did not have enough information or knowledge about shared governance at their particular institution to know whether it was effective or not. Therefore, it was unclear as to whether the lack of information and knowledge about shared governance had an affect on commitment. The impact of an increased workload as a result of shared governance had a negative affect on participant commitment. Participants frequently expressed discontent about the challenges and workload associated with the roles and expectations of a community college faculty member. The lack of information and knowledge about *Collegial Responsibilities*, including shared

governance, played a role in the discontent about the workload and negatively affected commitment.

Collegial Relationships

The findings indicated that *Collegial Relationships* through a sense of community, respect, politics, and communication had an affect on participant commitment. Participants communicated lived experiences in which the quality of relationships with their colleagues positively or negatively affected their commitment to the college. Participants who developed and maintained positive working relationships, specifically faculty to faculty relationships, expressed more direct commitment to the college. Participants who shared negative lived experiences and relationships with their colleagues negatively affected their commitment. Relationships with other faculty affected participant commitment more than other types of relationships. Faculty relationships displayed positive commitment. Negative faculty to faculty relationships led to negative commitment.

Institutional Support

Finally, *Institutional Support* had an affect on commitment. The findings suggested that *Institutional Support* through recognition, an orientation program, and lack of support had an affect on participant commitment. Recognition, in all forms, positively affected participant commitment. The orientation program also had an affect on participant commitment. Although there was disagreement about the quality and presentation of the orientation program, it was interpreted by participants as positive *Institutional Support*. This was because the orientation program represented an opportunity to learn about the institutional and bond with colleagues. Lack of support had

an affect on participant commitment. Lack of support was interpreted by participants as the institution not meeting the basic needs of faculty and the college. This included under funded budgets for supplies and equipment, lack of response from maintenance, and reduction in staff. Regardless of the kind of lack of support, it had a negative effect on participant commitment.

What Affected Organizational Commitment Summary

Collegial Responsibilities, Collegial Relationships, and Institutional Support all affected participant commitment. As a part of their *Collegial Responsibilities* participants valued shared governance as a concept which affected commitment positively. However, the workload associated with *Collegial Responsibilities* had a negative affect on commitment. Participants that developed and maintained positive working *Collegial Relationships* expressed commitment to the college. The most significant relationships that affected commitment both positively and negatively were faculty to faculty relationships. *Institutional Support* in the form of recognition and the orientation program had a positive affect on commitment. However, lack of support, in all forms, affected commitment negatively.

Findings Summary

How recently tenured community college faculty experienced organizational commitment is described and explained through the interplay of the thematic structures *Service Attitude, Types of Commitment, Collegial Responsibilities, Collegial Relationships, and Institutional Support*. These themes merged to frame participant commitment through the interplay of the textural structural synthesis of Individual Expectations, Positive Experiences, and Negative Experiences: Dimensions of

Organizational Commitment. It is through the interaction of these Dimensions of Organizational Commitment that described and explained how participants experienced commitment. Each participant brought a different set of expectations to the experience and encountered Positive Experiences and Negative Experiences differently. The collective meaning of the experiences is displayed through the essence of *Courtship*.

Regarding the affects of organizational commitment in recently tenured community college faculty, the three thematic structures *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Collegial Relationships*, and *Institutional Support* best describe and explain the experience. Factors that positively affected participant commitment included the value of shared governance as a part of *Collegial Responsibilities*, positive *Collegial Relationships*, and *Institutional Support* in the form of recognition and an orientation program. Factors that negatively affected commitment included the workload associated with *Collegial Responsibilities*, negative *Collegial Relationships*, and the perceived lack of *Institutional Support*.

Reflection on Findings

The findings elicited answers to questions that both validated and changed my original expectations of the study. I addressed these questions through the analysis of the data that emerged the thematic structures of *Service Attitude*, *Types of Commitment*, *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Collegial Relationships* and *Institutional Support* and through the textural structural Dimensions of Organizational Commitment, and the essence of *Courtship*.

Thematic Structures

The *Service Attitude* displayed by participants and the intrinsic rewards expressed as a consequence of the attitude was an expected outcome of the research. Through by my personal and professional experiences I have witnesses countless displays of service from community college faculty. It has also been my experience that the intrinsic rewards related to service is the primary reason why faculty continue to serve students.

As I interacted with participants it did not surprise me that they expressed different *Types of Commitment*. However, I was somewhat surprised that participants prioritized their commitments. Given that participants prioritized their commitments, in retrospect, it does not surprise me that participants prioritized commitment to the college last. The displays of commitment to the college on the continuum from direct commitment to indirect commitment to no commitment was an expected outcome of the study

With respect to *Collegial Responsibilities*, the fact that there was a lack of information and knowledge about *Collegial Responsibilities*, including shared governance, was an anticipated result. The negative affect of the workload associated with *Collegial Responsibilities* was also an expected outcome of the research. My professional experiences as a faculty member and as a dean made me aware of the outcomes related to *Collegial Responsibilities*. As a faculty member I remember it taking me a good deal of time to understand the policies and practices of shared governance. As a dean, I spend a great deal of time communicating to new faculty what shared governance is, how it works, and why it is important to them and the college. Also as a

dean, I frequently encounter dissatisfaction from faculty about the workload associated with shared governance.

The value and importance of *Collegial Relationships*, including the subthemes of sense of community, respect, politics, and communication were an expected outcome of the findings. However, what was unexpected was faculty views about college politics. Many participants commented that they did not expect politics to be a part of their experience. I was surprised at the naivety of some that politics, specifically faculty to faculty politics, would not exist at an educational institution. I was also struck by the lack of skills participants had to navigate the politics. I think this speaks to the lack of awareness about *Collegial Responsibilities*. I also think that it might be a generational issue. With the number of retirements and the influx of new faculty with little workplace experience the expectations about the experience may be different than they were 30 to 40 years ago. I just recently had this experience with younger new faculty at my college. I did expect to hear more negative lived experiences between faculty and administration and expected a negative affect on commitment.

As far as *Institutional Support*, the outcomes of the research were expected. I anticipated that recognition would have a positive impact on commitment. I also expected that the orientation program would positively affect commitment, as would a lack of support, at any level, would negatively affect commitment. My findings as a result of my work as a graduate student studying organizational commitment in hospice volunteers identified three significant factors that affected the development of organizational commitment: training, recognition, and identification with the mission and goals of the

organization. In this case the finding that recognition and training, via the orientation program were expected.

Textural Structural Synthesis

The Dimensions of Organizational Commitment that emerged from the synthesis of the thematic structures was enlightening. Yet, after reflection, this was not a surprising outcome of my research. After personal reflection and discussion with colleagues, it is clear to me that the Individual Expectations a faculty member brings to the experience is the foundation of the experience, and the Positive Experiences and Negative Experiences are based upon the expectations set.

Courtship

In retrospect, I am surprised that it took me so long to identify the essence of *Courtship*. As a dean, one of my primary responsibilities is to acculturate new faculty to the college. I frequently use metaphors and analogies to describe this process. I refer to the college as “our family,” or I refer to the relationship building process as “dancing with one another.” I help faculty understand that building positive working relationships is important and necessary because we “have to live with each other” for a very long time. And I should have taken earlier notice of my recent personal experiences with dating, courtship, and remarriage. Regardless, it was not until an experience on a hiring committee that it became clear to me that *Courtship* is how community college faculty experience organizational commitment. However, much like commitment and courtship, phenomenological analysis is a process that takes time to experience, reflect, and develop.

Reflection of Findings Summary

The findings of my study reflected the thematic structures, textural structural synthesis and essence that framed the phenomenon of how community college faculty described and explained organizational commitment. This section focused on my personal and professional reflection on the finding, specifically how the finding validated an/or changed my notion about organizational commitment and community college faculty. Now I turn to the literature to discuss the relationship of the literature to my study findings.

Relevance to Literature

The five thematic structures *Service Attitude*, *Types of Commitment*, *Collegial Responsibilities*, *Collegial Relationships*, and *Institutional Support* illustrated how participants experienced organizational commitment through the Dimensions of Organizational Commitment: Individual Expectations, Positive Experiences, and Negative Experiences. The essence as expressed through *Courtship* which portrays the complex and intricate nature of how community college faculty experienced commitment to their college. The complexity of organizational commitment is apparent in the literature as there is no single factor that affects organizational commitment. Meyer and Allen (1994) attempted to provide some clarity in their meta-analysis, in which they attempted to comprehensively document the typologies, antecedents, and consequences of organizational commitment. They described the multitude of ways the typologies of affective, normative, and continuance commitment can intermingle. They also described the myriad of ways antecedents or predictors of commitment merge, as well and the numerous consequences of commitment. Clearly there are several unanswered questions about the nature of organizational commitment.

All of the studies reviewed in Meyer and Allen's (1994) meta-analysis were quantitative in nature and focused on the measurement of organizational commitment. Very little qualitative research has been conducted on organizational commitment. I chose phenomenology as my qualitative method in order to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of community college faculty with regards to organizational commitment.

As I compared my findings to the literature, five areas surfaced as relevant to the literature. They are (a) role ambiguity and role clarity; (b) shared decision making; (c) social exchange; (d) perceived organizational support; and (e) socialization. A discussion that relates my findings to the literature follows.

Role Ambiguity and Role Clarity

Role ambiguity and its converse, role clarity, are antecedents associated with organizational commitment. Role clarity is the level of role information that leads to the understanding of their organizational role (Major, Kozlowski, Chao, & Gardner, 1995). Role clarity is positively associated with organizational commitment (Morris & Koch, 1979; Major et al. 1995). The converse of role clarity, role ambiguity is being unclear about job duties and responsibilities (House & Rizzo, 1972). Jackson and Schuler (1985) noted that the preponderance of prior studies labels this phenomenon as role ambiguity, emphasizing the negative consequences when employees possess lower levels of role information. Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964) stated that role ambiguity attributed to either role information being nonexistent, not provided by role senders or not perceived by employees. Schein (1968) noted that employees who received training on their role and responsibilities had a higher commitment to the organization.

In my findings, participants communicated different levels of role ambiguity. When discussing *Collegial Responsibilities*, participants expressed a range of knowledge about their role in the organization. Some participants had an awareness and/or knowledge of their roles prior to their hire, while others learned of their roles during the course of their work beginning. Information about faculty roles was communicated at the orientation program provided by the institution. However, due to the participants' range of knowledge about their roles, it is unclear if the participants perceived that the information was communicated consistently and effectively by the institution. The different level and type of participation in college activities indicated that role ambiguity existed for participants. The workload issues related to shared governance could also indicate the existence of role ambiguity and affected participants' commitment. Therefore, this study supports other research that role ambiguity affects commitment.

Shared Decision Making

Shared decision making also functions as an antecedent to organizational commitment. Yousef (2000) noted that when leaders of an organization are perceived as adopting consultative or participative leadership behavior, where shared decision making is prevalent, organizational commitment is higher. Similarly, Morris and Sherman (1981) claimed that "high structure/high consideration behavior mixes on the part of leaders tended to be associated with high levels of commitment among subordinates" (p. 519).

The governance structure of California community colleges is intended to be consultative and participative by all entities at the college. Participants communicated that the existence of shared governance at their institution was important to them. They also expressed that the lack of voice in how their workplace was governed would

negatively affect their commitment. However, participants also shared that due to their limited knowledge about shared governance they could not effectively assess whether the process and practice was working or not. Therefore, this research supports other research that shared decision making, in the form shared governance, and positively affected participant commitment. However, due to some participant's lack of knowledge and experience with shared governance, it is difficult to determine if shared governance is effective.

Social Exchange

The thematic structure *Collegial Relationships* correlates to the literature on organizational commitment and social exchange. Blau (1964) and Organ (1998) suggested that organizational commitment is developed where there is an exchange and interdependence between the individual and the organization. When employees interact with peers, supervisors, and other members of the organization in ways that evolve into relationships that involve transactions, in which both parties give and receive, commitment is created (Organ, 1988). As Settoon et al. (1996) observed that trust and implicit obligations of reciprocation are an important part of the social exchange.

The social exchange between participants in the form of *Collegial Relationships* affected participant commitment. This was apparent via dialogue with participants about the importance of relationships to their commitment. My findings indicated that the quality of relationships and the nature of communication affected participant commitment. Specifically, how the subthemes sense of community, respect, politics, and communication intermingled resulted in various levels of commitment. Therefore, this

research supports the claim that social exchange in the form of *Collegial Relationships* affects commitment.

Perceived Organizational Support

Eisenberger et al. (1986) defined perceived organizational support as employees overall beliefs about the extent to which the organization cares about their well-being and to which it values their contributions. O'Driscoll and Randall (1999) found that perceived organizational support and satisfaction with intrinsic rewards made significant positive contributions to both job involvement and affective commitment.

Eisenberger, Fasolo, and Davis-LaMastro (1990) observed a positive relationship between affective commitment and the extent to which employees believe the organization provides them with needed support, values their contribution, and cares about their well-being. Other research (Shore & Tetrick, 1991; Shore & Wayne, 1993) suggested that perceptions of "caring" on the part of the organization may lead employees to experience affective attachment.

The literature on perceived organizational support is related to the findings in the thematic structure *Institutional Support*. The lack of support as displayed by under funded budgets for supplies and equipment, lack of response from maintenance, and limited staffing could be construed as the organization not providing participants with needed support. However, the orientation program could also be considered needed support. The orientation program could be interpreted as the institution caring about participants' well being. Support, in the form of recognition, communicated that the organization valued their contributions and cared about their well being. Therefore, there

is a relationship between *Institutional Support* and the literature on perceived organizational support. However, further research would be needed to affirm the findings.

Socialization

Organizational socialization, or how employees are acculturated into an organization is a well documented antecedent to organizational commitment. It is during socialization that an individual may be particularly sensitive to organizational influences (Bray, Campbell & Grant, 1974). O'Reilly and Caldwell (1981) stated that certain aspects of an individual's job choice and particular experiences within the organization can serve to bind the individual to that organization and affect both commitment and turnover. Early experiences in an individual's employment may have a large impact on the subsequent development of commitment (Buchanan, 1974). Factors such as confirmation of pre-entry expectations have been shown to be positively related to commitment to the organization (Arnold & Freidman, 1982). Meyer and Allen (1997) found that employees whose pre-entry expectations were confirmed felt more affectively committed to their respective organizations. Pascale (1985) also focused on the early experiences of employees. He observed that companies with effective socialization programs that included experiences designed to promote a willingness to learn and accept the values and practices of the new organization, had higher commitment.

The orientation programs provided by the colleges were an attempt at socializing employees about the roles expected of them at the college. Participants communicated various levels of effectiveness of the content and structure of the orientation programs. However, collectively participants communicated that the most valuable part of the experience was the opportunity to bond with other faculty. Therefore, it is unclear if the

orientation program independently had an impact on participants' commitment. Also the literature on pre-entry expectations is similar to the Dimension of Organizational Commitment. Participants' prior expectations about what the experiences of being a community college faculty member is either confirmed or not through the amalgamation of the Positive Experiences and Negative Experiences and therefore affirm that pre-entry expectations have an impact in organizational commitment. However, in this inquiry it is unclear if pre-entry expectations were confirmed, or not, during the orientation program.

Relevance to Literature Summary

Five areas in the literature were relevant to the findings in my study. Role ambiguity and role clarity were similar to the thematic structure *Collegial Responsibilities* in that participants expressed a wide range of knowledge about their role in the institution. Shared decision making correlated to the concept of shared governance experiences by participants. Social exchange is associated to the thematic structure *Collegial Relationships*, in that the quality of the exchange affected commitment. Perceived organizational support is akin to the thematic structure, Institutional Support, in that the support or lack of support affected commitment. Finally, the literature on socialization is connected to the orientation programs provided by the institution. It is important to remember that organizational commitment is a complex concept particularly since there is no single factor that affects organizational commitment. To compare qualitative research on organizational commitment to research that is primarily quantitative makes comparisons challenging.

Recommendations for Practice and Research

The integration of my findings with the literature provides an opportunity to offer recommendations for practitioners and possibilities for future research. In this section, I present recommendations from my findings followed by suggestions for further research.

Recommendations for Practice

In my study, I examined how recently tenured community college faculty experienced organizational commitment. I was able to holistically understand the meaning of their experiences. Given the findings presented in this research I recommend that socialization practices for new community college faculty be institutionalized. These socialization practices should be deliberate thought out, directly communicated, and focused on the needs of faculty and the institution, and we reviewed and adjusted on a regular basis. The socialization practices should begin at the time of hire and be reinforced throughout the employment experience.

As the literature suggests, the early experiences of socialization play an important role in the development of commitment. As such, the tenure process is an important time and opportunity begin developing commitment and through socializing faculty to the culture of the college. The development of a comprehensive orientation program, augmented with additional training throughout employment reinforces *Institutional Support* and *Collegial Relationships*. Therefore, I recommend institutionalization of socialization programs that specifically focus on orientation programs for new faculty and augmented training through employment.

The orientation and augmented training should focus specifically on roles, responsibilities, and expectations of being a community college faculty member including the history, theory, process, and practice of shared governance. This would

decrease role ambiguity, increase role clarity, and increase commitment to the organization. This would also foster relationships development in that it affords faculty an opportunity to communicate and connect with their peers to build a sense of community and respect among each other. The institutionalization of socialization practices also provides opportunities for recognition.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of my study also demonstrated a need for additional research. The following focuses on recommendations for future research that address organizational commitment and community college faculty.

There is a need for additional qualitative studies about how community college faculty experience organizational commitment. More specifically, longitudinal studies that map the experiences related to organizational commitment over time. Further, studies could also include research on faculty that have had longer tenure with the college to see if time has an affect on commitment. Such studies could add to existing qualitative studies and further our knowledge about how community college faculty experience organizational commitment.

My findings indicted that participants expected to be of service to a multitude of entities, primarily students. Although there are several studies on organizational commitment in service industries, but none discuss how the *Service Attitude* affects organizational commitment. Such a study could isolate how a *Service Attitude* plays a role in organizational commitment.

The literature on organizational commitment focuses on types of organizational commitment with respect to *how* one feels committed to the institution. However, my

findings indicated that participants categorized the different entities they felt committed to, as well as prioritized those commitments. The idea that employees identify and feel commitment to different entities and prioritized their commitments is new to the literature. Therefore, studies are needed to investigate the categorization and prioritization of the different types of commitment is needed. These studies could use narrative inquiry or ethnography as methods to investigate the phenomenon. Such studies further our knowledge regarding organizational commitment, specifically if employees commit differently and prioritize to distinct entities within the organization.

Closing Reflections

The Experience of Organizational Commitment in Community College Faculty provided an opportunity for participants to share their lived experiences about their commitment. Participants' willingness to share their experiences provided a valuable contribution to the body of literature related to organizational commitment and community college faculty, as well as provided opportunity for practical application and future research. Their experiences with commitment were heard through their voices and shared through the thematic structures *Service Attitude, Types of Commitment, Collegial Responsibilities, Collegial Relationships, and Institutional Support*. Although participants had collective experiences to share through the thematic structures, how they experienced the interaction of the Dimensions of Organizational Commitment through Individual Expectation, Positive Experiences, and Negative Experiences differed and resulted in various levels of commitment. Finally the overall meaning of the participants' experiences is displayed in the essence of *Courtship*. As I reflected on the experience of participants, my thoughts returned to my story in Chapter One. I began my study hoping

to better understand how community college faculty experience organizational commitment. The findings that emerged through the voices of the participants offered me the opportunity to identify ways to describe, explain and understand the experience for community college faculty.

Seventeen years ago I began my *Courtship* as a community college faculty member. The expectations I brought to my experience were a reflection of my experiences as a child growing up with a family that worked at a community college and was prone to service as a life philosophy. I expected to be part of a community college family. I was very aware of the obligations of faculty to participate in the college community. However, since shared governance was relatively new to California I was not sure, as were others, how it would affect my experience. I expected to serve the community through teaching. I expected to be appreciated for my efforts. Over the course of 10 years, through positive and negative experiences, some of my expectations were met. I was able to serve the community through teaching. I was able to affect many lives in positive ways. I was able to participate in the college in ways that served the needs of the college, but also served my own personal needs. I established and maintained many positive working relationships and friendships. However, at times I feel supported and recognized, at other times I felt like my efforts were in vain. I also experienced a lack of respect, negative communication interactions, and lack of support that left me wondering if this experience was worth it. Ultimately, I left the college due to family responsibilities. However, making the decision to leave came at a time that I did not feel appreciated and supported. This made leaving easier than if my expectations were being met through positive experiences. Over the course of time, my *Courtship* with WVC

waxed and waned depending on the amalgamation of positive and negative experiences and how they affected my expectations. In the end I chose to leave WVC, but I did not choose to leave education or students. My *Service Attitude* has stayed with me and my commitment to students and education have stayed with me throughout my career. Although my *Courtship* with WVC ended, my *Courtship* with community colleges continues. It is my hope that the findings of my study will impact how community college faculty experience commitment, further the body of knowledge about organizational commitment and community college faculty, as well as provide insight on how to better serve faculty and community colleges.

Dissertation Conclusions

In this dissertation, I described a research that used phenomenology to explore how community college faculty experience organizational commitment. This dissertation consisted of five chapters. Chapter One provided an introduction and context to the research. Chapter Two presented a preliminary review of the relevant literature related to this inquiry. Chapter Three described the methodology and analysis used in the study. Chapter Four presented the results of the research including thematic structures, textural structural analysis and essence of the study. Chapter Five discussed how the findings related to the literature, recommendations for practice and future research, and ends with concluding remarks. It is my hope that this research has added to our understanding about how community college faculty experience organizational commitment and perhaps offers an opportunity for new dialogue about how to create commitment in faculty.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Participant Consent Form

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Colorado State University

TITLE OF STUDY: The Experience of Organizational Commitment in Community College Faculty

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Clifford P. Harbour, J.D., Ed.D., Associate Professor, School of Education, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO, 80523 Tel: 970.491.5425 E-Mail: cliff.harbour@colostate.edu

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Monica L. Flores, Dean of Instruction, Folsom Lake College, 10 College Parkway, Folsom, CA 95630 Tel: 916-608-6620 E-Mail: floesm@flc.losrios.edu

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH? We are asking you to participate in this study because you have been identified as a recently tenured community college faculty member. If you agree to participate in the study, we will ask you about your perspective in two private confidential interviews. The first interview may last up to one and a half hours. The second interview may last up to one hour. You will be asked a series of open-ended and focused questions about your experiences as a community college faculty member with organizational commitment.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY? This study is being conducted by Monica Flores, Dean of Instruction at Folsom Lake College in Folsom, CA. Monica is a doctoral student at Colorado State University and is conducting this research as a part of her doctoral dissertation. Monica is the Co-Principal Investigator in this study. Cliff Harbour is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at Colorado State University. Cliff is Monica's dissertation advisor and is the Principal Investigator in this study.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY? The purpose of this qualitative study is to understand the phenomenon of how community college faculty experience organizational commitment. To carry out this study, I will interview recently tenured full-time faculty at selected California community colleges. Participants will be interviewed to understand their lived experiences as community college faculty in regards to organizational commitment. Private, individual, face-to-face interviews will be conducted, and transcript

data will be analyzed to identify emergent themes reflected in the participant's experiences. The interviews will be open-ended and in-depth to discover the unique, layered experiences and allow the participants to discuss relevant and perhaps unanticipated topics related to their commitment. A phenomenological analysis of the data will be applied.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST? The study will take place at selected California community colleges.. The study is scheduled to run from February 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO? This study will collect data through an analysis of interviews. If you agree to participate in the study we will interview you in private at a date, time, and location that we both agree upon. You will be asked to participate in a follow-up interview. Your identity and the identity of your institution will remain confidential.

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

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

WILL I BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY? There are no known benefits to you if you decide to participate in this study.

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

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

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE? The information that you give will be seen by the Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigator, and a professional transcript transcriber.

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

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

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

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS? Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the principal investigator, Clifford P. Harbour, at 970-491-5425. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Janell Meldrum, Human Subjects Administrator at 970-491-1553. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take *with you*.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing three pages.

Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

Date

Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

Name of person providing information to participant

Date

Signature of Research Staff

Appendix B

Interview Guide

1. Tell me the story of how you became a community college faculty member.
2. Describe your commitment to the college?
3. What kind of effort are you willing to exert on behalf of the college?
4. What makes you feel committed or not to the college?
5. What developed your level of commitment?
6. What would make you more committed to the college?
7. What would make you less committed to the college?