

DISSERTATION

THE MERGER BETWEEN THE SAN LUIS VALLEY AREA VOCATIONAL
SCHOOL AND TRINIDAD STATE JUNIOR COLLEGE:
IT S IMPACT ON THE LATINO COMMUNITY

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

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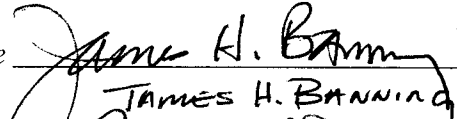
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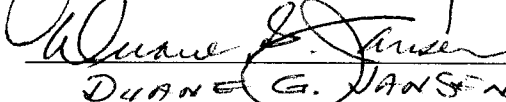
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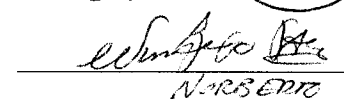
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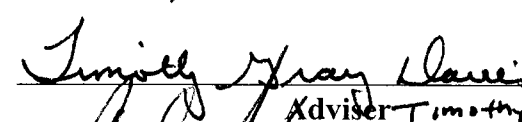
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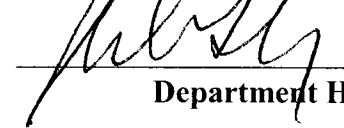
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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

THE MERGER BETWEEN THE SAN LUIS VALLEY AREA VOCATIONAL SCHOOL AND TRINIDAD STATE JUNIOR COLLEGE: IT'S IMPACT ON THE LATINO COMMUNITY

The purpose of this study was to examine the merger between the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School and Trinidad State Junior College, and the merger's impact on the Latino community. Five major questions were asked related to how the merger affected the Latino population, the San Luis Valley community and businesses, as well as were the students better prepared before or after the merger.

The study utilized a qualitative, case study research design. Thirty in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 Anglo and 15 Latino participants. Selection criteria were based on participants' involvement in San Luis Valley community issues, being of Latino decent, longevity in the community, and involvement with the institution.

There were seven themes and four sub-themes that emerged from the study:

1. Community involvement and awareness was limited to the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School employees, board members of Trinidad State Junior College, the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School Advisory Committee, the Alamosa School District Board of Education, and top administrators from the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School and Trinidad State Junior College.

2. Adams State College had limited knowledge of the merger until its completion.
3. San Luis Valley Area Vocational School staff felt they should have been more involved and informed regarding the merger.
4. The merger was an educational benefit to the San Luis Valley and the Latino community.
 - a. The merger provided two-year educational opportunities to Latinos and the San Luis Valley.
 - b. The merger provided an educational bridge, post-secondary certificate to an associate degree, then a four-year degree.
 - c. Opened doors and expanded the health and childcare programs
 - d. English as a Second Language and Adult Basic Education opportunities to limited English-speaking students.
5. The Associate of Applied Science degree is terminal.
6. Lack of Latino faculty at the merger site.
7. The perception of not being able to gauge student success and loss of one-on-one instruction.

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To the Lord, I now understand that you have a mission for me to accomplish. Thank you for giving me the strength to continue, for the journey has been trying, exhausting, and a relentless test of faith to my family, my character, and my inner strength, but the path has been lit by my wife, children, parents, brothers, and many true friends.

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journey, but with the help of the following individuals along the way I was able to succeed.

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Dr. Jim Banning
Dr. Tim Davies

To Tim (Dr. Davies) - As the last section of the path became impassable, I prepared to return back home, I knocked on a faculty door, the door that opened was Tim's, I asked him for help and direction. Tim not only gave me help and direction but became my mentor, spiritual and educational advisor, but most importantly, family.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Background

Mergers in the United States higher education systems have been occurring during the past two decades for a variety of reasons, but the major reasons have been reducing higher education operating costs, lowering higher education facility costs, declining student enrollments, providing legislative accountability, and improving effectiveness of student transfer. This study will investigate the merger between the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School (SLVAVS) and Trinidad State Junior College (TSJC) and the impact the merger had on the San Luis Valley, especially on the Latino community.

Some immediate cost savings of educational mergers are sharing of library resources, combining one staff in accounting and payroll and other service functions for multiple institutions, and reducing several governing boards to one board. Some merger benefits to students, staff, and community are the acceptance of student transfer and credit, availability of financial aid, a common curriculum, and a lowering of the tax base to support education.

In July 1995 Minnesota merged its community colleges, technical colleges, and state colleges in an attempt to reduce administrative and support costs for its higher education system. Minnesota's *January 2001 Annual Report* showed the progress that has been made in merging the previously separate state university system, community

colleges, and technical college systems. The merger has reduced the number of individual institutions by creating 11 consolidated community and technical colleges (Office of the Legislative Auditor, State of Minnesota, *Annual Report 2001*).

In Maryland's Baltimore County, the Catonsville, Dundalk, and Essex Community Colleges had low enrollments and lacked communication and cooperation among the colleges. Each college was specialized in courses and subject area; however, students did not have access to all courses and programs. With the 1998 merger, specialized courses were offered at all sites when the three colleges became the Community College of Baltimore County (Booth, 2002).

After Alaska's 1986 economic collapse, a radical restructuring of Alaska's public higher educational system included the merger of 11 community colleges and three universities into multi-campus. The plan included the merger of union and non-union faculties, the possible reduction of 100 administrators, and a 5 percent operational cut (Gaylord & Rodgers, 2000). Two years after the merger, restructuring and decision making policies were almost completed with Alaska saving its educational delivery system from the state's most drastic reduction in educational funding since World War II.

Tennessee considered developing Nashville Tech into a full-fledged community college including the general education and liberal arts curriculum. Such a merger was viewed to be an advantage for the local community in attracting business and industry, and it could have saved the taxpayers the expense of building a new community college from the ground up. In addition, the merger would have allowed students to be prepared to transfer to Tennessee State University to complete their baccalaureate degree (Cass, 2000).

Likewise, in 1999 Kansas considered merging its 19 community colleges with its 11 vocational schools under a single governing board reporting to the Kansas State Board of Regents. In addition, this proposed merger would transfer the control of the vocational schools from the Kansas State Board of Education to a newly created governing body (Hanna, 1999).

The educational mergers within the state of Colorado have been less dramatic. Several specific community colleges and area vocational schools have been merged, as opposed to a total state system merger as addressed in other states. However, the Colorado mergers were the direct result of costs associated with secondary vocational programs funded under the Colorado Vocational Act. The legislative area vocational schools full time equivalent student (FTE) funding was based on a different formula than that of the state and local district community colleges. In addition, there was a need for increased state funding to reduce the burden of local taxation and the financial operating cost on local school districts and community colleges.

Most of the Area Vocational Schools (AVS) provided both secondary and postsecondary vocational programming. The AVS infrastructure was the responsibility of either the local school boards or Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES). The only capital funds for AVS buildings and equipment came from the federal Vocational Education Act and the State Board for Community College and Occupational Education (SBCCOE). The State Board for Community College and Occupational Education System and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) held that the AVS did not need funding equal to the community colleges' FTE funding because the AVS infrastructure support came from the local board of education or BOCES.

AVS funding sources were not the same as for the K-12 programs. Operational funds for the secondary vocational programs were provided by the school district based on the K-12 Per Pupil Operating Revenue (PPOR). In addition, these programs were also eligible for monies through the Colorado Vocational Act, which had been enacted in 1970 by the state legislature to support the excess costs of vocational programs. However, the actual reimbursement rates rarely were over 30 percent of these excess costs which, although providing some level of support, did not keep pace with accelerating instructional costs and declining enrollments. The AVS post secondary programs received funding under a special formula through the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System (CCCOES); the level of funding was not as high, however, as was the funding for postsecondary programs located in the community colleges. Tuition and fees were the only other revenue sources for postsecondary programs.

The significant funding difference between the area vocational schools and the community colleges was that the area vocational school funding was based on student clock hours, not student credit hour as was the case for community colleges. The area vocational schools because of enrollments, facility size, and lack of academic programs did not receive the capital construction money or the Carl Perkins federal grant allotments as did the community colleges.

In the mid- to late 1980s, the state changed the funding formula to one level and did away with differential funding, which funded vocational programs at a higher rate than arts and science program courses. As Colorado's funding for K-12 education was diminishing in the 1980s, local school districts and their respective governing boards

which supported or governed area vocational schools reevaluated their educational mission. They decided that one way to reduce costs was to shift the post secondary vocational education programs from their local control to the state community college system. This transfer would provide the post secondary vocational programs with more funding than local area vocational schools were receiving.

Beginning in the late 1980s, the existing seven area vocational schools in Colorado began to merge with the nearest community college as a satellite campus. San Juan Basin Area Vocational School was the only AVS which was supported by a local mill levy along with contracts from the local school districts and postsecondary FTE funding from the state. San Juan Basin Area Vocational School entered into a partnership with Pueblo Community College (PCC), which allowed PCC to expand its services to Colorado's southwest region thus providing the associate of science, associate of arts, and associate of applied science degrees. In 1988 Larimer County Area Vocational School in Fort Collins merged with Front Range Community College. Then in 1995, the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School, (SLVAVS) merged with Trinidad State Junior College (TSJC). This study focuses on the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School and Trinidad State Junior College 1995 merger.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the effects the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School (SLVAVS) and Trinidad State Junior College (TSJC) merger had on the San Luis Valley and its Latino community. Included in this study will be the perceptions of those people who played a role in planning and implementing this merger, as well as those citizens who were affected by the merger.

Through the merger, Trinidad State Junior College- Valley Campus (TSJC-VC) proposed to offer additional degree and certificate programs and increase the availability of vocational training to all San Luis Valley citizens. Specifically, the merger was to provide Latinos with a greater opportunity for advancing their training skills through the Valley Campus than they had previously available to them through the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School. Therefore, another area of interest is to understand whether the San Luis Valley community perceived that Latinos were gaining access to and using the increased opportunities which are available as a result of the merger. A final area to be investigated was whether the merger increased the Latino community's opportunities in postsecondary education, advanced higher education, and workforce preparation.

Research Questions

This qualitative study used a case study approach. The global question asked was: "How has the merger between the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School (SLVAVS) and Trinidad State Junior College (TSJC) been perceived by community members in the San Luis Valley?" The following specific questions will be addressed:

1. How has the merger between SLVAVS and TSJC affected the San Luis Valley Latino community?
2. How has the merger provided postsecondary, advanced higher education, and workforce preparation opportunities for the San Luis Valley Latino population?
3. How has the San Luis Valley community perceived the effects of the merger?
4. How has the San Luis Valley's business community been affected by the merger?

5. How well prepared for the work world and for postsecondary transfer were the graduates from the SLVAVS compared to the TSJC-VC graduates?

San Luis Valley

The San Luis Valley (SLV) consists of Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande, and Saguache counties in south-central Colorado. The Valley is a combination of small towns surrounded by rural farmland. Within the six counties are located the following towns: Alamosa, Antonito, Blanca-Fort Garland, Center, Creede, Del Norte, La Jara, Manassa, Monte Vista, Mosca, Romeo, Saguache, Sanford, San Acacio, San Francisco, San Luis, San Pablo, and South Fork. All six counties are economically depressed, with Rio Grande the highest-ranking per capita county in the Valley yet ranking only 43rd in the state's 63 counties. The Valley has a population of 46,190 individuals, with approximately 46.5 percent or 21,473 Latinos. The San Luis Valley is approximately 122 miles long and about 74 miles wide (San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, 2001). It extends from the Continental Divide on the northwest to the New Mexico state line on the south. The valley is 8,194 square miles, which is larger than the state of Massachusetts but is populated by only 4.9 persons per square mile, compared to 767.6 persons in Massachusetts. Saguache County alone has more square miles than Rhode Island and Delaware combined. The major Valley employers are Colorado Department of Transportation, Adams State College, local area school districts, potato warehouses, and farming (San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, 2001).

San Luis Valley Area Vocational School

The San Luis Valley Area Vocational School (SLVAVS) housed and delivered the postsecondary vocational programs until 1994. These programs were governed by

the Alamosa Public Schools in Alamosa, Colorado. The Alamosa school district also supported its own secondary vocational activities in the district. San Luis Valley Area Vocational School was a comprehensive area vocational school created by a 1967 legislative mandate as part of House Bill 1448.

The San Luis Valley Area Vocational School served the entire SLV and was first located in Monte Vista. The governing body was a special Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) with every San Luis Valley county represented. As high school superintendents changed in the Valley, so did their perceptions of the area vocational school's importance to their respective districts. There were many administrative and funding problems surrounding the SLVAVS the most pressing being the Monte Vista School District wanted and needed SLVAVS space for its own district's needs. Therefore, it became expedient to dissolve the special BOCES and close the SLVAVS in late spring 1978 P.R. Rouse (personal communication, September 14, 2002).

In August 1978 the school was reopened in Alamosa on a three-acre site. The complex contained two buildings and approximately 47,000 square feet. It was placed under the Alamosa Public School Board of Education. From August 1978 until June 30, 1994, the San Luis Valley citizens were served by SLVAVS. The San Luis Valley Area Vocational School was accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. Its secondary and postsecondary vocational certificate programs were approved by the Colorado State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education. Its Licensed Practical Nurse program was approved by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education and the State Board for Nursing. SLVAVS

followed the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education and the Colorado Commission on Higher Education regulations.

The San Luis Valley Area Vocational School provided vocational training to approximately 40 high school students in seven different programs, approximately 96 adults in full-time programs, and an additional 443 adults in part-time programs. The secondary vocational classes were delivered in daily two-hour sessions on a semester basis at each high school. The postsecondary classes were run on a semester-hour basis and held at the SLVAVS. The postsecondary FTE was 330 during the 1994-95 school year. With the next academic year 1995-96, it began its new role as the Trinidad State Junior College-Valley Campus.

Local Merger

In 1994 the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School and Trinidad State Junior College merged to form Trinidad State Junior College-Valley Campus (TSJC-VC). TSJC-VC provided increased educational opportunities including aquaculture, registered nurse, cosmetology, child care, and well water programs. It also added the Associate of Applied Science Degree.

The academic year 1994-95 was a transition year for the two institutions. During that year the president of Trinidad State Junior College, the System's president for the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education (CCCOE), the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education, and the Alamosa School Board agreed to transfer the San Luis Valley property and governance from the Alamosa Board of Education to the Colorado Community College System (CCCS), the new name for the CCCOE. This transfer necessitated a service delivery area designation change allowing

Trinidad State Junior College and its Valley Campus to offer the Associate of Applied Science Degree in the Valley.

In the academic year 1995-96 the full merger took effect. Once the merger was complete, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) and Trinidad State Junior College conducted a site evaluation at the Valley Campus on April 8-9, 1996. The site evaluation resulted in a 10-year accreditation. The site evaluation cited areas of strength that included meeting the five criteria listed under the NCA accreditation:

1. The institution has a clear and publicly stated purpose consistent with its mission and appropriate to an institution of higher learning;
2. The institution has effectively organized the human, financial, and physical resources necessary to accomplish its purposes;
3. The institution has educational programs appropriate to an institution of higher education;
4. The institution can continue to accomplish its purpose and strengthen its educational effectiveness;
5. The institution demonstrates integrity in its practices and relationships.

Purpose of the Merger

The San Luis Valley Area Vocational School had served the San Luis Valley since 1967; however, significant financial problems began to surface. Beginning in 1992, the Alamosa School District Board of Education became concerned. Diminishing K-12

dollars were being used to support overhead and administrative costs of the largely adult education center. In addition, the San Luis Area Vocational School had little money for capital improvements. The center did not have adequate resources to expand facilities and shops, add new technologies such as computer labs, update nursing equipment, nor did SLVAVS have a library or comprehensive learning development center.

In the merger, the Colorado Community College System agreed to provide revenue for capital improvements, revenue and staff for support services, staff development activities, new technical equipment for the vocational programs, authority to deliver the associate degree in applied sciences, financial support for community development activities, approval and funding to add additional vocational and technical training and programs.

Goals of the Merger

In 1993-94, Trinidad State Junior College conducted a long-range plan to develop its Academic Master Plan pursuant to system policy requirements and to evaluate the merger. The resulting Academic Master Plan described institutional goals that were to lead Trinidad State Junior College into 1998. The following goals affected the Trinidad State Junior College-Valley Campus as the merger was completed:

1. To establish a college vision for the future and to serve as a two-year regional center of educational excellence;
2. To devise programs and activities to break down and remove barriers to educational programs, services, and activities at Trinidad State Junior College;
3. To enhance and expand the instructional programs of the college; and

4. To strengthen and emphasize the importance of reducing student attrition and of increasing student retention at Trinidad State Junior College. (Commission on Institutions of Higher Learning, North Central Association of Schools and Colleges. Focused Visit Report, April 8-9, 1996)

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study was to determine how the merger between the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School and Trinidad State Junior College affected the general valley community, the Latino community, and the local employers. By providing additional degree and certification programs, TSJC - VC increased the availability of training to all students of the San Luis Valley, and more specifically, the Latino population. While there have been other mergers on the national level bringing various segments of postsecondary/higher education communities under one governance structure, this merger stands alone in affecting a community consisting of approximately 46.5 percent Latino citizens.

As long as mergers are continuing to be used as cost-saving measures to relieve state budgets of some higher education costs, there needs to be accountability to the public being impacted especially when that public is an ethnic minority without the political power to refuse such a merger. The importance of this study is to determine if in fact the Latino citizens within the San Luis Valley have been well-served by the merger and the new facilities and programs provided by Trinidad State Junior College- Valley Campus.

Lest Coloradoans think they are out of the merger business, the Northwest Educational Research Center (NORED) study should provide a timely reminder. The

NORED study was commissioned by Colorado Commission of Higher Education in response to HB 99-1289 which was enacted during the 1999 legislative session. The Colorado Commission of Higher Education directed the Northwest Educational Research Center to study higher education in Colorado and to determine the need for changes or improvements in educational services to the citizens and to the State of Colorado.

The first of two annual reports addressed higher education enrollments, student retention, graduation and transfer rates, distance learning, facilities, costs, and tuition. The second report examined Colorado's higher educational governance structure and the educational governance of other states and other types of higher educational structures. The study focused on Colorado's existing higher education governance structure and identified areas of weaknesses and strengths; it also studied other states' governance structures that had the potential for improving the higher education delivery in Colorado.

The guidelines for this NORED study included the possibility of merging existing institutions together. The study's final recommendations did in fact recommend such mergers. As the 2001 legislature began its meetings in Spring 2001, there were many bills both in support of and in opposition to these recommended mergers. Clearly, the merging of postsecondary institutions is still considered to be a viable cost-saving measure. What remains to be seen, and what this study hopes to evaluate, is how the people in the merger jurisdiction were affected.

Delimitations and Limitations

This study focuses on the results of a merger of an area vocational school with a community college in a remote, rural setting ranging in populations from less than 300 citizens to 14,966 citizens. In addition 46.5 percent of the population is Latino. The

conclusions drawn from this study are limited to small, rural institutions (San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, 2001).

Also, the study investigated the merger of two institutions into the one community college. This study did not focus on numerous mergers, but rather, focused on one specific merger and the effects of this merger on its communities with special attention to its Latino community.

Researcher's Perspective

I was born in Las Vegas, New Mexico. As a youth, my family moved west to California, then to Pueblo, Colorado, and finally to Colorado Springs, Colorado, where I finished high school. Within my family there are seven siblings (all boys), as well as my mother and father. My father completed a bachelor's degree from Colorado State University, and all my brothers have completed at least a bachelor's degree as well. What makes my family's college completion rate even more remarkable is that only 65 percent of all Latinos finish high school, and only 12 percent of that 65 percent go on to finish a bachelor's degree. This equates to a 5.4 percent Latino college graduation rate at the bachelor's level and is significantly reduced at the graduate level.

After high school, I enlisted in the United States Air Force and was trained as a one and two engine jet mechanic. During my United States Air Force tenure, I attended the Community College of the Air Force and completed my Associate of Science Degree at Pikes Peak Community College, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

As the researcher of this study I had a vested interest in the merger's success, the facility's growth, and the Latino students' success. I was committed to the San Luis Valley and its churches, community, and civic organizations. I worked at the San Luis

Valley Area Vocational School, Educational Center, and Trinidad State Junior College-Valley Campus (TSJC-VC) for 20 years as a welding instructor, evening division director, and finally, associate dean. While I was employed by the SLVAVS, I was instrumental in and involved with the merger as the institution progressed from an Area Vocational School, an educational center, and finally the TSJC Valley Campus. I began working for the institution when it was the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School under the governance of Alamosa Public Schools in 1980 as the welding instructor. During my first year I saw a post-secondary enrollment of 54 students in four programs: Building Trades, Business, Licensed Practical Nursing, and Welding.

In 1986 my position was split between half-time welding instructor and half-time evening division director. After two years in this split position, the enrollment of the school had grown to a point where I was appointed full-time evening division director. During this time I completed my bachelor's degree.

In 1994 I was promoted to the position of Associate Dean of Instructional Service. By this time I had earned a Master's Degree in Education. I was very involved and had a vested interest in the merger. I wanted to see SLVAVS become part of TSJC and bring the Associate of Applied Science degree to the Valley population. I believed the merger would have the greatest impact on the Latino population, as this segment of the population had been severely underserved in post-secondary educational opportunities.

I was employed with TSJC-VC in the Associate Dean position until 2000. In 2000 I accepted a position as Vocational Director for the Colorado Department of Corrections. However, my long-term tenure with the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School/Trinidad State Junior College has had an influence on my point of view. I was

personally involved in the \$5.6 million renovation of the TSJC-VC and a \$676,000 child care center operated under the Valley Campus.

I'm also of Latino descent and had been involved in the local community for all 20 years as faculty member and administrator at the facility. I am also vested in providing clear information on the process of the merger as it grew from a concept to reality. I continue to have a strong commitment to the San Luis Valley youth, especially the Latino youth. I strive to be a role model and inspiration to the Valley Latino youth by setting the example of "breaking the barriers" of ethnicity and entering into the white-collar higher educational leadership.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to determine the effects the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School (SLVAVS) and Trinidad State Junior College (TSJC) merger had on the San Luis Valley community, and specifically on the Latino community. A review of literature indicated there were numerous studies on business mergers; however, there are few studies related to educational mergers in rural settings with high Latino populations.

The review of literature focuses on two major sections: the first section includes mergers in general, business mergers, and educational mergers. The second section will review literature relevant to the status and trends that impact Latino education at the national, state, and local levels including Latino population growth, literacy, economics, educational levels, labor market issues, and income.

Mergers in General

The majority of literature on mergers focused on business mergers during the 1970s and 1980s (Lamont & Anderson, 1985; Porter, 1987). Literature shows that by the 1990s business mergers were occurring in record numbers (Lovallo & Kahneman, 2003). Correspondingly, literature shows recent worldwide merger collapses have been unprecedented (Pye & Camm, 2003). One in three employees will be affected by a merger in their lifetime according to Hubbard (1999). A merger is defined as one firm taking over or joining another firm to form a new company. The driving force behind a

merger was to provide improved shareholder value, profit, and market share (Agrawal, Jaffe & Mandelsen 1992); (Froud, Haslam, Johal & Williams 2000); Hubbard, (1999); Scherer, (1998) pg. 69-82.

Literature review shows two types of mergers: horizontal and vertical (Salant, Switzer & Reynolds, 1983). The horizontal merger works especially well in the corporate sector where the concentration chiefly deals with governing boards, strategic planning for growth, and shareholder profit (Martin, 1994). The vertical merger model works well for educational mergers with the merger focus on program continuation and value added curriculum, academic governing structures, accreditation agencies, affiliated institutions, library, and alumni. Profit is not the educational merger's driving force (Martin, 1994; Matsusaka, 1993).

Literature reviews suggest that the shareholders measure and control mergers based on economic significance rather than on a per share monetary process. Shareholders viewed a merger as a disappointment if the rate of return does not exceed their expectations, and it is the shareholders who make the decisions that a merger should move forward (Matsusaka, 1993).

Another reason for mergers is that the strategy and rationale streamlines an organization making it more efficient and cost-effective by eliminating unnecessary and duplicative functions and people (Flanagan, 1996). This is supported by a previous study by Chatterjee and Meeks (1995) finding that mergers also may have the objective of eliminating noncompetitive or obsolete products, services, and processes, or a merger may meet the demands of customers and clients for new products and services. This

supports merger strategy to improve shareholder value, profits, and market share (Froud, et al. 2000).

Literature review shows there are four primary practices to implement mergers: strategy, execution, culture, and structure. Strategy is the blueprint for the merger's progress and who is involved. Execution is the time frame and who the players are and their duties and responsibilities. Culture is understanding the inner workings, relationships, and basics of the firm that is being taken over, and structure is understanding the reporting and job duties or assignments (Lovallo & Kahneman, 2003).

There are four secondary practices: talent, innovation, leadership, and involving partnerships (Lovallo & Kahneman, 2003). Talent is finding and utilizing the resources and expertise that comes from within the merge; innovation is finding or working towards solutions to improve that merger of merger process. Leadership is understanding and working towards involvement of all parties; partnership is involvement of community agencies or related companies. Research also shows that mergers, besides working towards implementing the four primary practices strategy, execution, culture, and structure towards becoming a successful merger, must also strive to have an anti competitive effect on the cost or price, must reduce costs. Marks and Mirvis (2003) indicate this may be accomplished through the reorganization of production. Also efficiency, combining sales, distribution and elimination of duplication must be achieved (Marks & Mirvis, 2003). To support reasons for mergers, one must focus on the strategic fit, processes required, and reorganization and attempt to create something greater.

Literature shows that mergers of related firms are likely to be more successful than unrelated firms. Research shows the advantages of related mergers are similarity of

marketing, production, experience, and scheduling processes (Lubatkin, 1983; Porter, 1985). Supporting literature shows that mergers can save resources, manpower, cut production costs and overhead, as well as administration cost (Froud et al. 2000). However, Collins (2003) points out that mergers have high failure rates and the risk of failure often outweighs the rewards of success. This high failure rate is supported in that seven out of every ten mergers fail. Further, mergers bring forth an identity crisis with the merger of two companies, since both companies are collectively proud of their respective traditions and identities (Pye & Camm, 2003).

Business mergers. A major business development during this century has been mergers and diversification of American firms. A survey of research literature shows an increase in business mergers during the past several decades with a rally of mergers in the 1990s (Goldbatt, 1999). Furthermore, Goldbatt's research supports this increase by showing the number of mergers skyrocketing in the 1990s. An example comes from the dot-com frenzy at the turn of the century (Cullinan, Rovit, & Tymms, 2003). From January 1990 to June 1997 there were 96,020 companies throughout the world that came under new ownership through mergers worth \$3.9 trillion (LaJoux, 1997). Correspondingly, literature shows the number of recent worldwide merger collapses have also been unprecedented with seven out of ten business mergers failing (Cullinan, Rovit, & Tymms, 2003).

According to Sirower (1997), many mergers fail because they fail to understand or underestimate the potential synergies that could come from the merger. Sirower, (1997) also states that failure of merger planning to gauge the value of future benefits and synergies threatens the success of the merger. Supporting literature shows a failure to

understand, value and define merger synergies often results in the destruction of the shareholder value and the merger (Sirower, 1997).

Culture and synergies. Marks and Mirvis (2003), and Campbell and Goold (1998) support considering synergies in respect to collective value creation. This collaborative effort transfers capabilities between firms to improve a competitive position and consequently positively affects the merger's performance.

Research shows individuals must be involved with the merger from the very beginning where a cultural fit is essential to merger success (Goldbatt, 1999). Goldbatt (1999) further suggests cultural awareness is essential for a merger's success and that merger leaders set the tone for the culture and determine the climate for relationships. These leaders need to be sensitive to cultural issues and should initiate dialogue with the target organization (Goldbatt, 1999). A study by Marks and Mirvis (2003) formulates that a merger that is rushed inhibits success and leads to condescending attitudes and opposition from either side. This leads to poor relationships and lack of trust. They found that older established firms almost always have negative feelings towards the merger. Their study, in which 90 percent of the executives surveyed were not prepared for the change in structure and status that followed the merger, borne this out. Pye and Camm (2003) found that it may take seven to ten years to change a culture; however, they point out that with involved management and proper preparation, change can occur in a shorter timeframe. However, they further state that mergers should be rejected if there is a lack of cultural compatibility between companies.

Marks and Mirvis (2003) show that a steering committee should be put in place to discuss transition structure. The committee should be comprised of members from the

community with the ability to interface with the mergers' partners. Chaudhuri and Tasrizi (1999) reinforce the notion that those in top leadership need to set guidelines and make recommendations. Leadership should bring all players together at once and should attempt to understand, discuss, and identify areas of concerns. Team building begins at the concept of the merger and gets everyone on the same page. This shows, according to Marks and Mirvis (2003), that the merger will be handled on a professional basis without favoritism. Goldbatt's (1999) research also demonstrated that for the merger to progress effectively, the leaders must address the following barriers: shortage of decision making time; lack of good and consistent information; a tendency to hide the truth because the fear of losing power; loss of money and jobs.

Host community. Related merger research literature by Currie, Trute, Tefft and Segall (1989) showed some host communities strongly oppose the merger solely due to resource consolidation. Further, their research showed community opposition to the mergers is well documented as "not in my back yard" and "anywhere but here" (p. 305). In their study Segal, Baumohl, and Moyles (1980) point out that very negative reactions to mergers were associated with middle to upper-class neighborhoods, while there was less resistance from lower class neighborhoods. Baron's (1981) research showed that the lower-class neighborhoods did not have the ability to fund legal challenges or political advocacy. Additionally, related merger literature suggests that mergers are most likely to take place in communities that have the least resistance (Graham & Hogan, 1990). Baron's research also characterizes these communities as lacking social cohesion and poor socioeconomics (Baron, 1981).

Also mergers may meet resistance because the host community may have had negative exposure, negative impressions, or been stigmatized by past behavior (Currie, Trute, Tefft, & Segall, 1989). Armstrong (1976) also showed opposition may reside in the community feeling to not understanding the economic and social aspects of the merger.

Business goals. According to Scherer (1988), the long-term economic goal of a business merger is to maximize the average annual rate of gain in intrinsic business value on a per-share basis. Mergers are not measured by the economic significance, rather these mergers are measured on a per share progress. Scherer also stated that mergers are viewed as a disappointment if the rate of return does not exceed that of a large comparable American corporation. Although the merger is corporate in form with shareholders as part owners and controlling partners, the shareholders make the decisions (Collins, 2003). This same research shows shareholders are entitled to the same type of reporting; obviously the degree of detail must be assessed differently, particularly where information would be useful to a business competitor.

Merger rules and regulations. Pye and Camm's (2003) study shows that in the corporate world, boards are a legal requirement for Public Limited Companies. The board's legal status is covered by the Companies Act of 1985. This Act states that the board is required to act in the interest of the shareholders.

Within the United States mergers are regulated by many agencies and laws; however, two acts or laws stand out. The first is the Clayton Act. Section 7 of the Clayton Act, 15, U.S.C. states it is the duty of competition authorities to make sure that effective competition in the market is preserved, i.e. as translated in legal terminology,

that competition is not substantially lessened. Second is the Antitrust Law which states mergers can not reduce industry. The Anti-Trust Law prohibiting monopolies is the industry standard for merger policy and procedure.

Research by Pye and Camm (2003) supports the rationale for these regulatory agencies and Acts as mergers and acquisitions are a public policy concern. Their research also shows that with the increase in the volume of mergers in the United States, antitrust regulators reviewed a total of 3,702 mergers in 1997 compared to 1,451 in 1991.

Advantages of business mergers. Deneckere and Davidson's (1985) research literature suggests that some advantages of mergers are the ability to raise capacity, efficiency, profitability, and cost savings. The literature supports the tendency that the advantages of merging are motivated by costs savings viewed as efficiency gains, increased output, and reorganization of product. The same study reinforces that business mergers are evaluated by costs, gains, and increased output. Agrawal, Jaffe, and Mandelsen (1992) state that a successful merger increases the joint value of each firm, which stabilizes the value and costs. They also show that mergers provide a top performing culture that provides a strong commitment and innovations to the employees and customers. Chatterjee and Meeks (1995) further state the advantages include bottom-up feedback from employees who share the risks and profits.

Disadvantages of business mergers. In Farrel and Shapiro's (1990) research they claim one disadvantage of a business merger is that if sufficient profitability is not met, dissolution of the merger will occur. Pesendorfer (2000) offers other disadvantages that the merger could bring such as anticompetitive effect on the pricing on the investment. This also supports the reality that some mergers may never show or may never have the

ability to show profit and will dissolve (Salant, Switzer, & Reynolds, 1983). Another disadvantage of mergers is rooted in the misunderstanding of the corporate culture and the idea that the merger is invisible to the marketplace, customers, and investors. Pesendorfer, (2000) also proves that customers want quality, reliable service, ethical conduct and fair pricing. This customer service aspect has greater impact to the consumer than being loyal to a specific name-brand product.

Educational Mergers

Mergers in education have attracted a large scholarly interest in the past twenty years, which coincides with the business merger boom of the 1980s and 1990s according to Harman (2002). Research by Marks and Mirvis (2003) show some immediate cost savings of educational mergers include sharing of library resources, using one department to do accounting and payroll and other paperwork tracking for multiple institutions, and reducing several governing boards to one board. According to Harman (2002) some benefits of a merger to students, staff, and community are the acceptance of student transfer and credit, availability of financial aid, a common curriculum, and a lowering of the tax base to support education.

Implications of educational mergers for community college leaders could result in the reduction of faculty and support staff to avoid duplication. A recent publication by Levin (1998) discusses organizational change in the community college system in the next century. "In order to adapt and survive, the community college, both institution and movement, must constantly reinvent itself" (p. 85). A side effect of educational mergers is that the colleges expand their program offerings to accommodate their expanded roles and missions as they assume the new roles from area vocational schools to community

colleges. Also, the merger eliminates the community college/area vocational school competition within the service delivery area. Without competition, the students within the merged service delivery areas will not have an educational choice and the college will be accountable for all student needs. This is supported by Rappaport and Sirower (1999) where they point out that merger leaders underestimate or fail to understand the potential synergy produced by the merger. Bettis (1981) supports the elimination of competition, which produces greater economies of scale and scope, and creates synergy and improved performance.

Merger literature research asks: will the community college have the expertise for the operation and transfer of an area vocational school to a community college? Will the network, telecommunications and information systems be accessible and compatible? If not, what will be the adaptation costs? Finally, did this communicate the philosophy and mission that truly represents the essence and meaning of the merger to the individuals and community (Sirower, 1997). Educational research by Wyatt (1998) shows that structural issues such as procedures, linkage arrangements, management of mergers, and merger processes have received a fair amount of attention in higher education literature.

Socio cultural. Educational merger literature shows socio cultural issues receive little attention during the merger process. Buono and Bowditch (1989) show that very few studies have taken place regarding the cultural side of educational mergers. Their research shows that cultural and social effects must be addressed before the start of a merger. Their study also focuses on the post-merger human and cultural elements of mergers that take into account the socio cultural aspects. Pritchard (1993), who completed one of the few socio cultural studies, shows the style of leadership that is

needed to build and sustain morale while developing new loyalties. Martin (1994) also shows the importance of the post-merger phase of consolidation and community building in situations where the educational institutions are unequal. Buono and Bowditch (1989) show there is a potential for different cultures to collide during the merger process. The culture clash in literature shows organizational culture can be seen when cultures are forced to become one. Buono and Bowditch (1989) also show that institutions may seem on the outside to be compatible, but underlying cultural differences may threaten the merger. Research shows organizational members are entrenched in their culture before the merger, and organizational members do not realize the merger's influence on their behavior. Marks and Mirvis (2003) state that attempting to merge different campus cultures into a workable system presents a sizeable challenge for higher education. They also point out that when deeply entrenched academic programs are forced together, they can slow or severely hinder the change. This research proves the "thicker" the culture, shared beliefs, and values are the less easily change is accomplished.

Latinos in education and educational roles. Review of the literature shows other socio cultural concerns for Latinos surrounding educational mergers are two-fold: the first is the rise in the numbers of Latino's beginning their higher education at community colleges; the second concern is the lack of Latino CEO's at the community college level. Latino community college enrollment is 56 percent while Latino community college CEO's is below 4% (Gutierrez, Castaneda, & Katsinas, 2002). Their research shows that Latinos are attending community colleges at a far greater rate than any other ethnic or racial group. Santiago (1996) states that community colleges have become the educational choice for Latinos pursuing higher education.

Gutierrez, Castaneda, and Katsinas (2002) show there is a crisis as Latino student enrollments grow, and the expectation is that the Latino leadership in positions at colleges and universities will also increase. Latino leadership positions have not come close to student population growth. The crisis that they cite is an alarming differential between the shortage of Latino faculty and the growing Latino student population.

Related literature shows that in the 1970s Latinos did not take part in the planning or policy decision-making process at any institution, agency or body concerned with higher education. The reason for the lack of Latino decision-making at the higher education level is related to Latinos not positioned as CEOs or faculty (Brown, Santiago, & Lopez, 2003). Additional research reveals that even though few in numbers, Latino allegiance was high to both the community and college, and many Latino's feel being a liaison to the community is of great importance (Lopez & Schultz, 1980).

Sedlacek and Fuentes (1993) show that surveyed Latino college administrators felt the need to serve as role models and further that Latino students are more likely to succeed if they have role models or mentors in their colleges. Additionally, Sedlacek and Fuentes (1993) found that due to the low number of Latino faculty, Latino students have a difficult time finding educational role models to help aspire to become leaders in the college system. This becomes more understandable when one considers the lack of research on the career paths of Latino college leaders and the even smaller body of literature that now exists tracking the personal experiences of Latinos in higher education (Santiago, 1996).

Phelps and Taber (1996) show that educational boards tend not to hire minority presidents as they fear backlash from a predominantly Anglo faculty. However, it is not

uncommon to have a minority college campus, usually one with a high minority student population, located within a high minority population where the president is a member of the minority population (Phelps & Taber, 1996).

Recent literature shows that Latinos in community colleges are expanding their roles in part due to an increase in the leadership pipeline. Santiago's (1996) research shows that between 1982 and 1993 the number of Latinos attending two-year and four-year colleges rose by approximately 90 percent. However, research by Brown, Santiago, and Lopez, (2003) shows that Latinos have the lowest retention rate in college at 42 percent and that Latinos' received 12 percent of bachelor's degrees, only 4.3 percent of all master's degrees and 3.7 percent of the doctorates in 1997-1998.

Martin and Samel's (1994) show staff and student concerns are centered on the following bench marks: restructuring academic programs, cultural, territorial, seniority, anxiety and confusion among support staff, students, faculty, and administration. This research is followed by Marks and Mirvis (2003) who state that because of the rapid progress of some mergers, staff affected by the merger tend to feel disoriented, frustrated, unsettled, not ready for change, and are unable to fulfill the demands of the merger. What their research shows is student and faculty concern and anxiety is centered around the fear of the unknown and uncertainty of what the future holds. These concerns are supported by research from Hodgson (1996), which shows the autonomy of the old campus and allegiances to the structure and culture being attacked by the merger. This research also supports that most institutional mergers, besides being wasteful of material and human resources, inflict pain, add anxiety, and are disruptive and can take years to finally take hold (Meek, 1995).

Community and faculty involvement. Campbell and Goold's (1998) research found that mergers are driven by trustees and committee members. Mergers appear to pick up steam in private discussions where students, alumni, and faculty members have no idea that merger dialogue is even occurring. Announced mergers have the tendency to pick off weaker institutions. Unlike a corporation merger, where all decisions can be explained by doing what is best for the shareholder, an educational merger would have many more constituencies to satisfy. Martin's (1994) study shows if one school feels it is being exploited or hollowed out in a way by the merger there could be upheaval. Martin's study also shows that disaffected faculty members express their disaffection in the classroom, community, and with other staff members.

Research shows that faculty concerns can be reduced if the following steps are introduced to help with the anxiety and challenges that the merger presents. According to Martin (1994), policy and procedure must be addressed and spelled out to include teaching loads, educational qualifications for teaching positions, and governance. Also of concern to staff was the direction toward which mergers tend to lean (Hatton, 1997). Hatton explained that educational mergers move towards self-directed learning with enhanced distance learning and program delivery on the web.

Literature shows one way to help with faculty concerns where a name change takes place is to select a name that symbolizes a new unity with a strong association to the geographical region (Marks & Mirvis, 2003). By developing this new name, most of the old power structures and loyalties are broken. This name change also helped with the

period of consolidation after the merger and helped develop a sense of community that fostered a loyalty to the new institution (Martin & Samels, 1994a).

Community awareness. Wilson and Melendez (1996) merger research indicates that numerous institutions stated communications were unclear. Further, many said they never anticipated some of the questions and were hesitant to give a definitive answer. Martin and Samels (1996) study also showed students felt that programs were being closed and they were not informed of the decision. One way to help with communications and community relations is to follow the Kansas model. Approximately 21,000 survey forms were distributed throughout south central Kansas asking for input on the merger between Fort Hays State, Pratt Community College, and the Area Vocational School. The survey presented to the community the rationale for the merger and included transferability of course credits and cost savings. The survey also outlined the principles and procedures which would be used to guide the merger. The results were used to assist all three institutions in gathering information to use as a guide. This information was then forwarded to the Board of Regents and then on to the Kansas Legislature (Hollingsworth, 2000).

Advantages and disadvantages of educational mergers. A merger helps retain some infrastructure identity for the institution being taken over and allows it to keep some specialized courses. Mergers accommodate the tendency of students who want to attend a larger better-known institution to get a brand name degree (Martin, 1994). Martin (1994) also states mergers consolidate everyday operational activities such as cooperative buying, accounting, payroll, and paperwork for the merged institutions and sharing library resources.

Mergers bring forth an identity crisis with the merger of two institutions with both campuses being proud of their own traditions and identities. John Jeffery Louis, chairman of Parsons Capital Corporation, said, "Consolidations are more tricky when there are two institutions down the street from each other serving similar, but not the same, communities" (Martin, 1994, p. 96).

Summary of Mergers

Research literature shows an increase in mergers during the past several decades with the number of mergers skyrocketing in the 1990s fueled by the dot-com frenzy at the turn of the century (Cullinan, Rovit, & Tymms, 2003). This same literature also shows the number of recent worldwide merger collapses have been unprecedented with seven out of ten business mergers failing.

Rappaport and Sirower (1999) demonstrate the reason mergers fail is because leaders do not understand or underestimate the potential synergies and fail to evaluate the future benefits and synergies the merger will provide. Research shows that by not understanding and valuing the resulting synergies associated with a merger, the failure of the merger will likely result.

Marks and Mirvis (2003) research explains that cultural awareness is essential for a successful merger. The merger leader must set the expectations for the culture and relationships. Merger leaders must address and be sensitive to cultural issues starting with the initial dialogue. Rappaport and Sirower (1999) also show that leaders must learn, even in mergers that are rushed, to understand the importance of culture, attitude, and opposition from the other side. Without building good relationships or trust, the older established firm will almost always have negative feelings towards the merger.

Building trust and understanding the culture should take place with individuals from the community who have the ability to interface with the merger's partners. This team-building concept brings all players together to promote understanding and to discuss and identify areas of concerns (Goldbatt, 1999).

Marks and Mirvis (2003) illustrate that leaders of successful mergers put into place transitional teams comprised of community members who help set-up guidelines and timeframes. Successful merger components have leadership who listen and discuss areas of concerns. By doing this, the leadership shows the merger is professional and without favoritism.

Research also documents those communities that are middle class and above tend to show opposition to the merger while there is less resistance to the merger from lower class neighborhoods (Segal, Baumohl, & Moyles, 1980). Literature supports these lower class communities as lacking political influence and poor socioeconomics (Baron, 1980).

In their research Buono and Bowditch (1989) show that synergies which are related to or will result from the merger need to be addressed or understood. Research proves that mergers fail because leaders do not understand, value, and plan for the future. Further, literature shows potential for different cultures to collide during the merger process. The culture clash in literature show organizational culture can be seen when cultures are forced to become one. On the outside the institutions may seem to be compatible; however, underlying cultural differences may threaten the merger. Research shows organizational members are entrenched in their culture before the merger, and they do not realize the merger's influence on their behavior.

Finally, as discussed in the beginning of this chapter, national educational mergers have occurred during the past several decades for numerous reasons. These include cost saving measures, finding and retaining students, reduction of governing boards, partnerships, transferability, and sharing of resources. However, in light of the recent national downturn in state spending operations, the need to streamline the nation's educational system has come to the forefront. Published rationale for educational mergers include: state legislatures requiring mergers of institutions of higher learning at the request of taxpayers seeking greater accountability, decreasing federal and state support, four year colleges and universities gaining approval to offer the associate's degree, and performance standards.

Follow-up on the Educational Mergers Discussed in Chapter One

In July 1995 the State of Minnesota merged its community, technical, and state colleges. The reorganization meant Northland Community and Technical College (NTC) in Thief River Falls merged with the NTC campus in East Grand Forks forming one college set in two locations. Fergus Falls Community College combined forces with three nearby NTC campuses in Moorhead, Detroit Lakes, and Wadena becoming one. Though not a merger, NTC in Bemidji aligned itself more closely with Bemidji State University, and the two campuses share teaching and learning space. "All campuses involved in the reorganization, along with Minnesota State University-Moorhead, will make up a major alliance of two- and four-year colleges in northwest Minnesota. The aim of the alliance is to benefit students through a strong regional approach to education," (p. 2) said Linda Baer, Mn SCU senior vice chancellor for academic and student affairs. Architects of the reorganization, who called it their "Two, Two, Four

Plan" because of the way it grouped geographically close institutions, say it saves \$700,000 annually by minimizing duplications and maximizing shared resources. (Dodds, 2003).

In Maryland's Baltimore County, the Catonsville, Dundalk and Essex Community Colleges became the Community College of Baltimore County. The Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC) was formed in 1998 as a result of a merger between three colleges in Baltimore County. The challenge that CCBC faced was that it was an emerging college serving a community in transition from suburban to urban and from a privileged population to one that will require greater support. This is a prime moment for CCBC to shape its own future, its students' futures, and the future of Baltimore County (McPhail & Heacock, 1999).

Alaska's 1986 restructuring of its public higher educational system has grouped 11 community colleges and three universities into multi-campus. Also the merger included the joining of union and non-union faculties (Gaylord & Rodgers, 2000).

Nashville Tech's merger developed the college into a full-fledged community college including the general education and liberal arts curriculum. The merger provided the community college an effort to attract industry and offerings to non-traditional students. The merger also helped meet the enrollment goals set by a federal court order in 1984. In addition, the merger allowed students to be prepared to transfer to Tennessee State University to complete their baccalaureate degree (Cass, 2000).

The Kansas merger of its 19 community colleges with its 11 vocational schools with a single governing board reporting to the Kansas State Board of Regents was not

approved by the board of regents. No further plans to continue with merger dialogue have been announced. (Community College Week, 12/11/2000, Vol. 13 Issue 9, p12, 1/2p).

Colorado's Educational Mergers

In Colorado, at the state level, educational mergers have been completed between local area vocational schools and the Colorado Community College System. However, as stated in chapter one, these mergers were the direct result of a need to increase state funding in order to reduce the burden of local taxation, reduce the financial burden on local school districts, and elected community college boards. With funds for K-12 education diminishing in the 1980s, several local school districts which supported or governed area vocational schools looked for local community colleges to pick up the governance of area vocational schools.

San Juan Basin Area Vocational School

San Juan Basin Area Vocational School entered into a partnership in 1991 which allowed Pueblo Community College to expand its services to the southwest region of Colorado and provide the associate's degrees.

San Luis Valley Area Vocational School

In 1994 The San Luis Valley Area Vocational School and Trinidad State Junior College merged to form Trinidad State Junior College-Valley Campus (TSJC-VC). The academic year 1994-95 was a transition year for the two institutions. During that year the president of Trinidad State Junior College, the System's president for the Colorado College and Occupational Educational System (CCCOES), the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education, and the Alamosa School Board agreed to transfer the San Luis Valley property and governance from the Alamosa Board of

Education to CCCOES, now known as the Colorado Community College System (CCCS). This transfer carried with it a change of service delivery area designation, allowing Trinidad State Junior College and its Valley Campus to offer the Associate of Applied Science Degree in the Valley.

The academic year 1995-96 was the first year the full merger took effect. As a result of the merger, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA) and Trinidad State Junior College conducted a site evaluation at the Valley Campus on April 8-9, 1996. The result of the site evaluation was a ten-year accreditation of Trinidad State Junior College and acceptance of the merger.

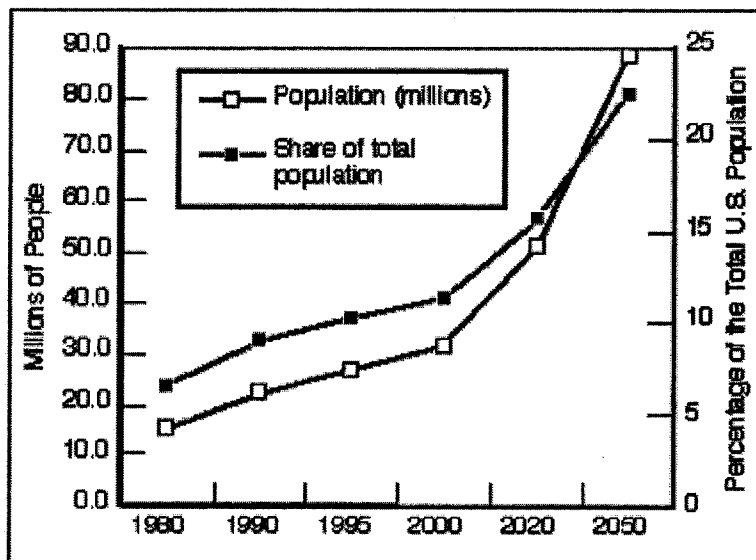
Front Range Community College Larimer County Center

An agreement was entered into in 1988 with Poudre School District R-1, Thompson School District R2-J, and Park School District R-3 leasing the 100 acre site with improvements to the State Board for Community College and Occupational Education System for a five year term. At the same time, the State Board agreed with the Larimer County BOCES that it would offer employment to all of the area school employees and offer postsecondary programs up to and including an associate degree at the center. The agreement was between the K-12 districts and FRCC college, and was called the secondary program agreement. It specified which secondary programs would be offered to district students and what rate the school districts would pay for those programs. The secondary agreement also specified a process for annually renewing these arrangements between and among the districts and the College.

Latino Literature Review

This section will review literature impacting Latino education and focuses on Latino population growth, literacy, economics, educational levels, labor market issues, and income.

Census 2000 data show the U. S. Latino population is 35.3 million (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000). This is a 57.5 percent growth rate, up from 22.4 million since 1990. Latinos now account for 17.4 percent of the population, which appears to be fueled by immigration and a younger population in its prime childbearing years (Figure 1) (U.S. Bureau of the Census 2000). In addition, Fan and Zuiker (1998) show the age structure among Latinos to be pyramid-like, with nearly 40 percent below the age of 19, compared with 29 percent for the total population. Given this information, the Latino educational needs and share of the labor force will increase (Sorensen, Brewer, Carroll, & Bryton, 1998).



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Figure 1. Hispanic population growth and projections.

National Latino Education Population Growth

High school graduation rates for most of the U. S. population have increased during the past decades. The White dropout rate has decreased from 12.3 percent to 7.7 percent between 1972 and 1994. Black dropout rates have decreased from 21.3 percent to 12.6 percent during this same time period, while the national Latino dropout rate has diminished only slightly from 35 percent in 1990 to 34.3 percent in 2000 (NCES, 1993b, 1996, 2001).

Latino dropout rates remain high due to low academic achievement and dissatisfaction with school, a desire to be employed to help bring up the family income, and teen pregnancy (Brown, Santiago & Lopez, 2003). The July 27, 1998, issue of Community College Week confirmed these low Latino graduation rate, and pointed out that Latino women were graduating at a slightly higher rate than their male counterparts. Poverty, language, and immigration status fueled by the variables of poorly funded, insensitive and overburdened schools in Latino barrios and poor rural areas are negatives too numerous for many Latinos to overcome (U.S. Department of Education, 1999).

National Latino Education

The Latinos' educational achievement has not kept pace with their increasing share of the population and the labor force. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Latino high school completion was only 65 percent. Although this figure partly reflects young adult immigrants with low levels of education entry into the United States, the high school completion rate of native-born Latino's still remains significantly lower than other groups (U.S Department of Education, 1999). Since high school diplomas or diploma

equivalents are necessary to attain admission into community colleges, many Latinos do not have an avenue to higher education and workforce preparation.

Sorensen, Brewer, Carroll, and Bryton (1998) show that low high school graduation rates have obvious repercussions for Latinos trying to obtain higher education. Since there is a much smaller pool of college-eligible students, one would expect Latino college participation to be lower than other groups' participation. In fact, Latinos are among the most severely underrepresented groups in four-year higher education (The Council on Economic Advisors, 2000).

The National Center for Education Statistics High School and Beyond database reported that 58 percent of White students attend some postsecondary education within four years of high school graduation, compared with 45 percent of Latinos. Moreover, Latino post-secondary degree attainment is much lower than that of Whites, with only 12 percent of Latino's earning bachelor's degrees (Sorensen, Brewer, Carroll & Bryton, 1998).

Past U.S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley discussed the need for more efforts to improve Latino success in education at all levels.

Hispanic students are twice as likely as blacks, and three times as likely as whites, to drop out of high school. The Education Department referenced a study they conducted suggesting that the nation's education system is ill equipped to deal with the fastest-growing group of schoolchildren.

Hoping to paint a different picture for these children, Education Secretary Richard Riley called for public school districts to create in the next five years 1,000 new dual-language schools which instruct children in English and in a native language such as Spanish.

'If we see to it that immigrants and their children can speak only English and nothing more, then we will have missed one of the greatest opportunities of this new century, Riley said. It is high time we begin to treat language skills as the asset they are (p 2).

The study also said that 11 percent of Hispanics age 25 to 29 possessed at least a bachelor's degree, compared with 14.2 percent of blacks and 32.6 percent of whites. (Hispanic Dropout Numbers Alarming *WASHINGTON* (AP), March 16, 2000 p. 3).

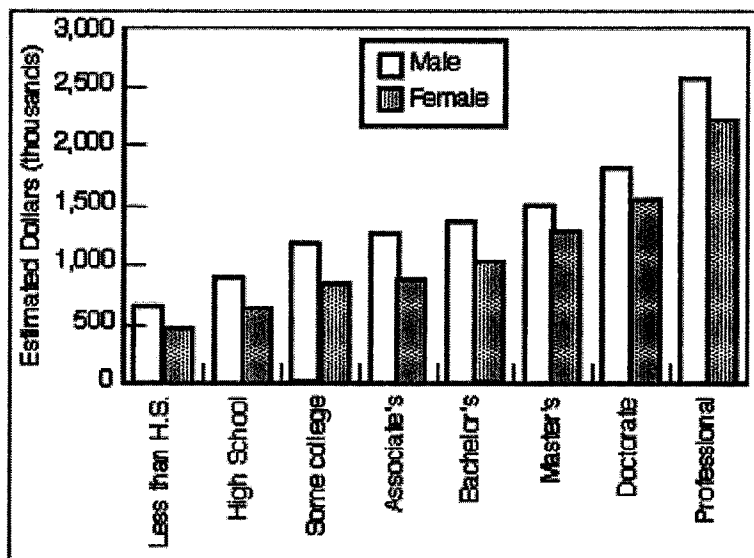
Sorensen, Brewer, Carroll, and Bryton (1998), asked the question: What will it mean for the nation to have a growing, significant proportion of the population not completing college or high school? This underscores the reality that without a high school education and beyond Latinos only will be able to compete for low-skill jobs and will be locked in the lowest socioeconomic brackets. Given this information, the Latino share of the low-skilled jobs and social programs will increase. The effect of low academic attainment shows repercussions throughout all higher education levels and shows that the Latinos share of the educated population dwindles as education levels increase (Justiz, & Bjork, 1994).

Latino Lifetime Earnings Rise with Education

Cohen and Brawer (2003) reiterate that education within the United States historically has been the path for upward occupational economic and social mobility, but Latinos complete high school and college at much lower rates than other ethnic groups as they are much more likely to drop out of middle school, high school, and college. A disproportionately small percentage of Latinos with associate's or bachelor's degrees means under representation in professional and graduate schools as well.

The benefits to society of closing the educational gap between Latinos and other ethnic groups will also close the socioeconomic gap in terms of equity and social stability. It is now possible to predict what increasing Latino participation in higher education would mean for Latinos' incomes (Figure 2) and thus, for the U.S. tax base

(United States Department of Commerce News, 1998). Raising Latino higher education participation level is likely to have positive effects at other educational levels. For example, Latinos completing college would increase motivation for Latino high school students to take academic subjects and complete high school. Completing high school successfully would mean more Latinos would move on to postsecondary education and become better prepared for the workforce earning an associate's or bachelor's degree or even a one year vocational/technical certificate. Thus, an increase of income tax revenue from Latinos could reach as high as \$6 billion (Justiz, Wilson & Bjork, 1994). Estimates show that lifetime income tax payments based on the current tax schedule for Latinos rises with increased educational levels. Latinos with a bachelor's degree will pay more than twice as much in taxes as those with only a high school diploma, and Latinos with a professional degree will pay an estimated three times as much as those with a bachelor's degree (United States Department of Commerce News, Washington, DC 20230, September 1998).



SOURCE: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Figure 2. Latinos Lifetime Earnings Rise with Education.

National Latino Economics

Latinos now account for more than one quarter of all new entrants into the labor force (U.S. Department of Labor, 1994). Along with the increase in population and workforce has come growth in purchasing power. Hispanic buying is projected to rise to \$350 billion this year from \$207.5 billion in 1990, (Lanfranco, Ames, & Huang, 2000). Fan and Zuiker (1998) demonstrate that income growth rates combined with high birthrates are the primary reasons why the Latino labor market is considered to be a leading growth potential in the United States.

In 1997 the poverty threshold for a family of four was \$16,400 in annual income and \$12,802 for a family of three. In 1997, 8.3 million Latinos representing 27.1 percent of the population were in poverty. In 1997 the medium income of Latino households was \$26,268 as compared to \$38,972 for White households (U.S. Census Bureau Public Information Office, 2000). Lanfranco, Ames, and Huang (2000) illustrate how Latino buying power grew at a compound annual 7.5% between 1990-97. Calculations indicate that the effect is considerable enough that the continued under education of Latinos will exact a high economic toll not only for these individuals but for society as a whole. These estimates may serve as a lower bound of the benefits of increasing the bachelor degree attainment of Latino's (Peravin & Kane, 1990).

Cohen and Brawer (2003) demonstrate that Latinos have the least success in obtaining educational degrees at every collegiate level; it follows that this problem continues to keep Latinos at lower family income levels. The less education equals lower

income reality becomes a cycle that is difficult to break. As indicated by college enrollment, many Latinos do not even consider higher education a possibility (Outcomes of Education, Outcomes of Education, 1999 Conditions of Education, US Dept. of Education, 1999, page 434). The economic consequences related to the Latino dropout rate draws a definitive conclusion about the magnitude of educational increases for Latinos (U.S. Bureau of the Census Statistical Brief, S/94-25, Washington, D.C., 1994). The estimated earned income over a lifetime for a bachelor's degree over a high school diploma is \$400,000 for Latino women and \$500,000 for Latino men; the earnings for a professional degree is \$1,700,00 (Sorensen, Brewer, Carroll, & Bryton, 1998) (A report by The Council of Economic Advisors, 2000).

Economic Return to Higher Education

It continues to be demonstrated that the higher the level of education attained, the higher the annual income. The exception is the reduced return for a doctorate. There is a slight decline in average earnings in real dollar terms for those individuals with the doctorate (U.S. Department. of Education, 1999).

Table 1

Outcomes of Education

Degree Obtained for Workers 25 years and Older	1991	1997
Less than 9 th grade	\$ 20,767	\$ 19,291
9 th to 12 th grade, no diploma	25,220	24,726
High School Graduation	31,557	31,215
Some college, no degree	37,312	35,945
Associate Degree	39,850	38,022
Bachelor Degree	48,204	48,616
Master's Degree	58,607	61,690
Professional Degree	87,198	85,011
Doctoral Degree	67,390	76,234
Average	37,253	36,678

Note. Constant 1997 dollars, men.

National Latino Literacy

The National Adult Literacy Survey collected data that show Latinos score low on all three literacy categories tested including prose, document, and quantitative literacy (Table 2). These low scores on literacy reinforce the problems and negative literacy attainment cycle, school success, and economic gain (U. S. Department of Education, 1999).

Table 2

Literacy Skills of Adults, 16 Years and Older

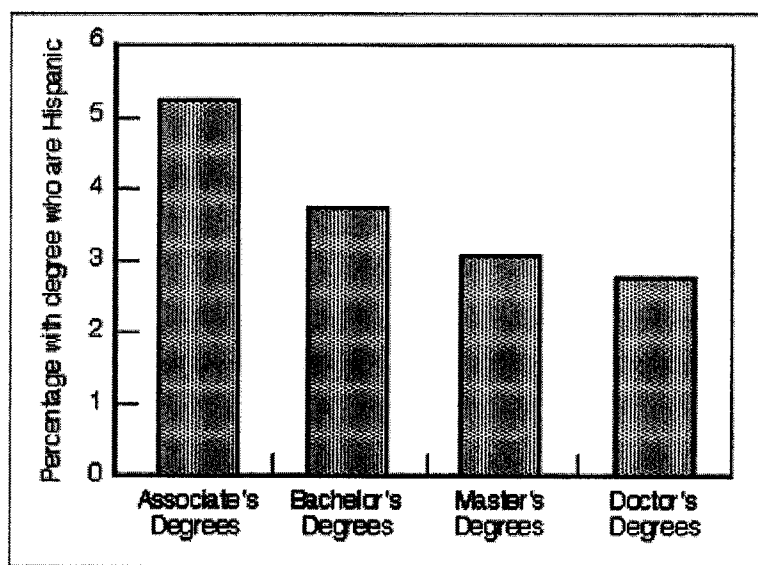
Race/Ethnicity	Prose Literacy	Document Literacy	Quantitative Literacy
White	286	280	287
Black	237	230	224
Asian	242	245	256
Latino-Mexican	206	205	205
Latino-Cuban	211	212	223
Latino-Puerto Rican	218	215	212
Latino-Central American	207	206	203
Average Score	272	267	271

Although many reasons are given to explain this low literacy performance, not all the reasons are understood. The consensus of the literature is that most high schools and community colleges are not fulfilling their promises to Latino students (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Specific causes and solutions need to be found to modify the learning system and increase Latino student success in high school and college. During United States History Latinos have been significant parts of the southwestern population for over 500 years, with national economic success becoming increasingly dependent upon the improved skills and productivity of the Latino community. The educational system must adapt to insure Latino and American success necessary to make the United States more globally competitive in the 21st Century (Santos, 1980).

National Latinos' Success in College

Many community colleges have high minority enrollment, compared to universities and four-year colleges. One reason for this difference is the more stringent universities and four-year college admission requirements. Community colleges provide open door admission access and thus are enrolling more minority students including Latino students (Santos, 1980).

Low high school graduation rates have obvious repercussions for Latino higher education. Since there is a much smaller pool of college-eligible Latino students, Latino college participation is lower than for other groups (Figure 3).



SOURCE: National Center for Education Statistics.

Figure 3. Latino college degrees.

Brint and Karabel (1989) suggest that increasing Latino participation in higher education would be a sound public investment, but they also say it may not be predictive. The U.S. educational system, including postsecondary education and specifically community colleges, faces two contradictory tasks: the democratic one of bringing new

populations into higher education and the exclusionary one of channeling them away from the four-year institutions they hope to attend (Brint & Karabel, 1989). “The question is not whether minority students tend to be concentrated in two year colleges, they do. The question is whether they tend to go through to the level of the associate degree and then transfer to the university; as a group they do not” (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p.25).

Higher Education Degrees by Ethnicity

The differences in obtaining master's degrees and bachelor's degrees among various populations are similar. Percentages of degrees issued are listed in Table 3.

In 1995-96 only 2.2 percent of the doctoral degrees in the nation were awarded to Latinos. This compares to 5.9 percent Asian, 3.7 percent Black, 62.2 percent White and 25.6 percent non-resident aliens (Table 270, 1999 Education Statistics, US Dept of Education). The Chronicle of Higher Education (Dec. 3, 1999 volume XLVI, number 15) data show little improvement over time. In 1996-97, only 1.5 percent of doctoral degrees were awarded to Latinos. During the same period, the population of Latino students enrolled in the college system went from 11.3 percent non-resident alien to 25.6 percent non-resident alien. The same national data show that the pride colleges take in having more students of color on their campuses is a result of increased attendance of foreign nationals, while domestic minority participation has remained low and unchanged for decades (Table 270, 1999 Education Statistics, US Dept of Education). The Chronicle of Higher Education (Dec. 3, 1999 volume XLVI, number 15).

Table 3

Percentage of Degrees Issued

Year	Latino	Black	Asian	White	Non Resident- Alien
1976-77 – AA	4.1 %	8.2 %	1.7 %	84.5%	0.8 %
1976-77 – BA	2.0	6.4	1.5	88.0	1.7
1976-77 – MA	1.9	6.6	1.6	84.0	5.5
1976-77 – PhD	1.6	3.8	2.0	81.1	11.3
1995-96 – AA	6.9	9.3	4.2	76.8	1.8
1995-96 – BA	5.0	7.8	5.5	77.8	3.2
1995-96 – MA	3.6	6.4	4.5	73.4	11.8
1995-96 – PhD	2.2	3.7	5.9	62.2	25.6

Note. Table 270, 1999 Education Statistics, U.S. Dept of Education. The Chronicle of Higher Education (Dec. 3, 1999 volume XLVI, number 15).

Table 3 demonstrates that if there is a perception of more ethnic diversity on our college campuses at all degree levels it is likely due to the dramatic increase of foreign students. This growth is not from the very marginal increase in domestic minority participation. Even with increasing population numbers throughout the southwestern states, the proportion of Latinos successfully completing a postsecondary education is not keeping pace with the population growth (Valladares, 2003).

Latino Educational Pipeline

Over the past ten years programs designed to affect Latino dropout rates have been implemented at Latino serving middle and high schools levels. The following are selected educational programs that are a pipeline for Latino Education:

1. Upward Bound. A program designed to increase student college entrance by placing students on college campuses during the summer to give them a sense

of what college life is like. An important component is in providing college program scholarships to students who meet certain high school performance criteria (Burkheimer, Levensohn, Koo, & French, 1976).

2. Coca Cola Valued Youth Program. A cross-age tutoring program designed to increase the self-esteem of at risk middle and high school students by placing students in positions of responsibility as tutors of younger school-aged students (Cardenas, Montecel, Supik, & Harris, 1992).
3. ALAS. Achievement for Latinos through Academic Success is a dropout prevention program for high-risk middle school students, targeted at high poverty Mexican American students (Larson & Rumberger, 1996).
4. AVID. Project Advancement Via Individual Determination is a program that offers low-achieving students who feel that they are in good academic standing placement in college preparatory courses (Swanson, Mehan, & Hubbard, 1995).
5. Project GRAD. Graduation Really Achieves Dreams a comprehensive dropout prevention program developed at Jefferson Davis High School. This high school is 83 percent Latino with a very low student socioeconomic base. The program was started by the CEO of Tenneco, who awarded students who maintained a 2.5 grade point average over the four-year high school period a \$1,000 a year scholarship; graduation rates and students' assessment scores have risen significantly for Latino students as a result (Ketelsen, 1994).
6. MESA. Mathematics Enrichment and Science Achievement is a program created by the University of California in 1970 because of concerns of low

college minority graduation rates in math and science (Fashola & Slavin, 1997).

Colorado Latino Population

The 2000 Colorado census shows a population was 4,301,261. Of that total, 17.1 percent are Latino (Table 4). The Colorado Latino population is slightly higher than the national population average but seems to mirror the national population and economic trends (Colorado Census, 2000). Colorado's Latino population is estimated to increase by 30 percent within the next ten years. Colorado's White population will increase by about 7 percent over the same period (Colorado Census, 2000).

Table 4

Colorado's Population, 2000

	Total	18 and Over	Under 18
White, Non-Hispanic	3,202,880	2,473,860	729,020
Hispanic	735,601	476,879	258,722
Black, Non-Hispanic	158,443	111,334	47,109
Asian	93,277	70,384	22,893
Native American	28,982	21,053	7,929
All Other	82,078	46,956	35,122
Total	4,301,261	3,200,466	1,100,795

Colorado Economics

The family income percentage breakout for Colorado's Latinos is as follows: less than \$10,000, 23 percent, \$10,000-\$24,000 range, 34.3 percent and more than \$25,000, 42.2 percent. Latino households earning less than \$25,000 fell from 81 percent to 58 percent. In 1997 the national medium income was \$38,972 for Anglo households, as compared to Latino national medium income of \$26,268, which is slightly higher than the Colorado medium Latino income of \$25,000. The national, state, and local Latino income data statistics show a significant difference in Latino earnings as compared to Anglo earnings. The conclusions that could be drawn are related to the lack of Latino educational completion and lack of workforce preparedness (San Luis Valley Development Resource Group, 2001).

Colorado Latinos' Education K-12

Latinos are the second largest ethnic group enrolled in Colorado schools. These statistics are detailed in the Colorado Department of Education report and were taken from a one-day head count in October 2000 (<http://denverpost.com/news/news/0105a.htm>). According to the Colorado Department of Education's report, the number of Latino students enrolled was 159,600. This represents 18.1 percent of the Colorado total K-12 student population.

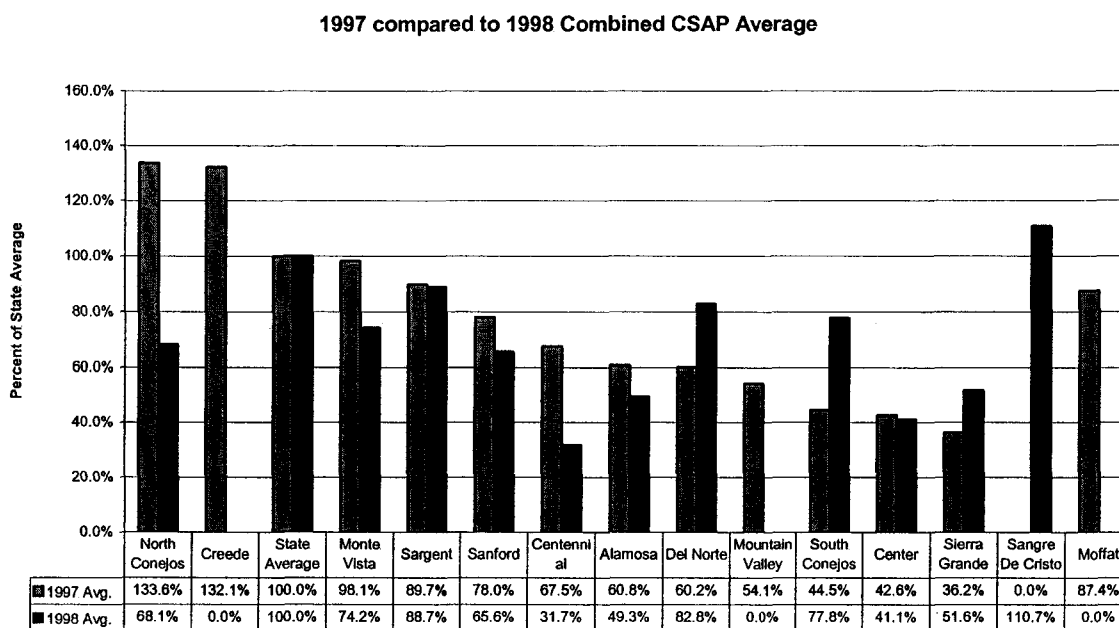
According to Colorado Department of Education Class of 1999 Graduation Rates, 4,978 Latino students graduated from high school; this was a 65 percent graduation rate, which also mirrors the national graduation rates. Fall 2000 Colorado High School Enrollment by Ethnicity Compared statewide was listed as:

White, Non-Hispanic	72.2%
Hispanic	18.1%
Black, Non-Hispanic	5.6%
Asian	3.1%
American Indian	1.1%

Colorado 2000 High School Graduation rates showed that 38,924 students or 80.9 percent of all students graduated from Colorado high schools in 2000, with White non-Latino students having the highest graduation rate at 85.3 percent of the population. Latino students had the lowest graduation rate at 65 percent (Colorado Department of Education 2000).

Table 5

San Luis Valley Student Achievement Data



Note. (San Luis Valley Resource Group, 2001).

San Luis Valley Demographics/Population

The total San Luis Valley (SLV) population is 46,190 with Latinos 46.5 percent of the Valley population (Colorado Census, 2000). Descendants of the early settlers

make up the largest portion of the Latino population, but the group also includes farm workers and laborers from Mexico and Guatemala (The San Luis Valley Development Resource Group, 2001).

Colorado's per capita personal income was \$29,994 in 1998, as compared to the national average of \$26,412. However, most of the SLV counties were at 60 percent of that amount or less (The San Luis Valley Development Resource Group, 2001). Data from the six SLV counties show that out of the 63 counties in Colorado, Alamosa ranked 44 with \$19,853, Conejos ranked 63rd with \$13,880, Costilla ranked 61st with \$15,662, Mineral ranked 39th with \$21,595, Rio Grande ranked 43rd with \$20,450, and Saguache ranked 62nd with \$14,257 (San Luis Valley Resource Group, 2001).

The Valley's labor force averaged 20,734 in 2001 with 19,461 employed, and 1,273 unemployed. Unemployment averaged 6.4 percent, which is more than double Colorado's rate of 2.7 percent. Unemployment ranged as high as 9.2 percent in Costilla County due to a mine closure in 1997. Employment opportunities increased by 13.8 percent from 1990-2000, slightly less than the population growth. The state of Colorado's employment increase was 32.1 percent for the same period (San Luis Valley Resource Group, 2001).

Summary of Latino's Statistics

This section will summarize the literature reviewed relevant to the impact on Latino education. This summary is focused on national, state, and local Latino population growth, literacy, economics, educational levels, labor market issues and income.

First, Fan and Zuiker (1998), supported by Census 2000 data, show the U. S. Latino population at 35.3 million with Latinos now accounting for 17.4 percent of the population. This supports research by Sorensen, Brewer, Carroll, and Bryton (1998) that the Latino educational share of the labor force is likely to continue to increase.

Second, the labor force and Latino population increase supports research by Lanfranco, Ames, and Huang (2000) which shows Latino buying is projected to rise to \$350 billion this year from \$207.5 billion in 1990, (Lanfranco, Ames & Huang, 2000).

Third, the research shows United States high school graduation rates have increased during the past decades. However, the national Latino dropout rate has stayed at 35 percent from 1990 to 2000 NOES, (1993b, 1996, 2001). Causes for the high Latino dropout rates are low achievement and dissatisfaction with school; a desire to be employed to help increase family income; and teen pregnancy. Poverty, language barriers, and immigration are the variables of poorly funded, insensitive and overburdened schools in poor rural areas. Together these stated negatives appear to be too substantial to overcome (Outcomes of Education, 1999).

Fourth, low high school graduation rates have obvious repercussions for Latinos trying to obtain higher education (Sorensen, Brewer, Carroll, & Bryton, 1998). Latinos are among the most severely underrepresented groups in four-year higher education, (Council of Economic Advisors, 2000). With a smaller pool of college-eligible students, Latino college participation is lower. In fact, Latinos are among the most severely underrepresented group in four-year higher education (The Council of Economic Advisors, 2000). Moreover, Latino post-secondary degree attainment is much lower than that of Whites, with only 12 percent of Latino's earning bachelor's degrees (Sorensen,

Brewer, Carroll & Bryton, 1998). Since Latinos have the least success in obtaining educational degrees at every level, it follows that this problem continues to keep Latinos at lower levels of family income (Cohen & Brawer, 1989).

Finally, literature shows through low Latino literacy rates, Santiago (1996) that most high schools and community colleges are not fulfilling their promises to Latino students. Specific causes and solutions need to be found to modify the learning system and increase Latino student success in high school.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter includes the research design and rationale, site description, participant description, data collection methods, data analysis techniques, and trustworthiness.

Research Design

A qualitative single case study was the design selected because the study was about one educational merger beginning in 1994-1995 and concluding in 1995-1996 between Trinidad State Junior College and the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School governed by the Alamosa Public School District Board of Education located in Alamosa, Colorado. Therefore, the case was bounded by time and place. The study asked the five basic questions of “How?” “What?” “When?” “Where?” and “Why?” (Yin, 1989) through the research questions. The global question asked was “How has the merger between the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School (SLVAVS) and Trinidad State Junior College (TSJC) been perceived by community members in the San Luis Valley?” The following specific questions were addressed:

1. How has the merger between SLVAVS and TSJC affected the San Luis Valley Latino community?
2. How has the merger provided postsecondary, advanced higher education, and workforce preparation opportunities for the Latino population in the Valley?

3. How has the San Luis Valley community perceived the effects of the merger?
4. How has the San Luis Valley's business community been affected by the merger?
5. How well prepared for the work world and for postsecondary transfer were the graduates from the SLVAVS compared to the TSJC-VC graduates?

Answering these questions helped me better understand and relate the events and circumstances behind the merger.

The participants were people selected from the Valley who had insights, experience, and interest in the merger being completed. I purposefully selected fifteen Anglos and fifteen Latinos to better understand their perceptions of the merger's effects on the Valley. In addition to the thirty participants I also used official and unofficial documents from the principals' board meetings, staff meeting minutes from the principals' organizations, the 1996 NCA Self-Study, and newspaper articles. I also kept a researcher's journal for my observations, thoughts, feelings, recollections, and field notes.

In analyzing the data I used constant comparative analysis to determine the themes emerging from the interview transcripts and also for determining themes within some of the longer documents. The minutes and newspaper articles I analyzed looking for confirming information to support or refute the themes that emerged from the transcripts and longer documents. I used my researcher's journal to help me put ideas and timelines in perspective and to bracket thoughts, feelings, and perceptions which were clearly my biases. This allowed me to concentrate on what my participants' were saying and perceiving.

According to Merriam (2002) a case study needs discipline and protocols that do not depend solely on intuition and good intentions; in qualitative research those protocols are called triangulation. By using triangulation, I used multiple data sources so that I could provide corroborating evidence from interviews and documents to highlight the emergent themes and perspectives (Merriam, 2002). Triangulation allowed me to compare and contrast various perspectives on the merger from the community members, students, college staff, SLVAVS staff, Alamosa K-12 staff, and state level individuals.

I used member checking to determine the accuracy of the interviews, and peer review to help me stay true to the study's process and the congruency of the emerging findings. The last strategy I applied for trustworthiness was the adequate engagement in data collection. Not only did I spend time with people who maintained the documents, I called back to people after the interview to ask further questions and recheck data. As my researcher's perspective notes, I used my experience within the Valley as well as my experience within SLVAVS to help identify people and documents to use in the study.

Description of the Site

The San Luis Valley Area Vocational School was located in the San Luis Valley, a mixture of small towns surrounded by rural farmland. Spanish Conquistadores arrived in the San Luis Valley in the 16th century to explore the area and ended their journey when they settled in the fertile farmland where the Rio Grande and Conejos Rivers meet. With this history in mind, the oldest church in the state is located in Conejos County; San Luis is the oldest occupied town in Colorado; and the Valley has a rich history of Spanish and Mexican Land Grants. In addition, the oldest water rights in Colorado are located in the San Luis Valley.

Post secondary and secondary educational services for the Valley were provided by Adams State College, San Luis Valley Area Vocational School, and fourteen local school districts. The San Luis Valley Area Vocational School was centrally located in the city of Alamosa on a three-acre site and had a complex of two buildings containing approximately 47,000 square feet. While the SLVAVS served students in all fourteen school districts, its governing board was the Alamosa Board of Education. SLVAVS also had an advisory board that recommended program changes and community needs and interests to SLVAVS administrators but had no legal authority in its own right.

Participants

Participants in this study included fifteen Anglo and fifteen Latino San Luis Valley citizens who were involved in the merger or had a vested interest in the merger's outcome. The participants selected had a longstanding record of involvement in San Luis Valley community issues. Participants were chosen based on their experience with the San Luis Valley, their experience with and knowledge of the SLVAVS/TSJC-VC merger, and their length of residency in the Valley. This enabled them to share their perspectives both before and after the merger. It also allowed the interviewees the opportunity to reflect on the merger and to provide their insight as to the effect the merger had on the San Luis Valley communities.

In some cases, these participants were identified through the documents collected such as official meeting minutes, while in other cases other citizens being interviewed

Table 6

Background Information on Interviewees

Ethnicity		Male/Female		Affiliation	Affiliated with Education
Anglo	Latino				
1	X	X		TSJC	X
2			X	TSJC	X
3			X	SLVAVS	X
4	X	X		ASC	X
5	X	X		ASC	X
6		X	X	SLVAVS	X
7		X	X	State Agency	X
8		X	X	State Agency	
9	X		X	SLVAVS	X
10		X	X	State Agency	X
11		X	X	State Agency	X
12		X	X	SLVAVS	X
13	X		X	SLVAVS	X
14		X	X	SLV School District	X
15		X	X	SLVAVS	X
16		X	X	SLV School District	X
17	X		X	SLV School District	X
18	X		X	SLVAVS	X
19		X	X	SLVAVS Advisory	X
20	X		X	SLVAVS Advisory	X
21	X		X	County	X
22	X		X	TSJC	X
23		X	X	ASC	X
24	X		X	SLVAVS	X
25	X		X	SLV School District	X
26	X		X	SLVAVS Advisory	X
27	X		X	State Agency	X
28	X		X	TSJC	X
29		X	X	Public Sector	
30		X	X	Public Sector	

Note. Affiliation Key:

ASC = Adams State College

County = Alamosa County

SLVAVS Advisory = San Luis Valley Area Vocational School Advisory Committee

SLVAVS = San Luis Valley Area Vocational School

SLV School District = San Luis Valley School District

State Agency = Rocky Mountain Job Service/Rehabilitation/SER

TSJC = Trinidad State Junior College

were reference participants (Commission on Higher Institutions of Higher Education, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Focused Visit Report, April 8-9, 1996). Others were contacted based on a networking strategy because their names were provided during interviews with Valley citizens.

Data Collection

San Luis Valley citizens who were selected as participants were interviewed for thirty to forty-five minutes. These interviews were conducted in a semi-structured interview format. I conducted the question and answer session portion of the interview and recorded the discussion on audiotape. The interviews were then transcribed word-for-word from the audiotape (Stake, 1995). In addition to the participants' interviews, I obtained documents relating to the merger and the respective institutions. Some documents identified were the respective budgets from the two institutions prior to the merger and the TSJC-VC budget post merger, meeting minutes, community meeting minutes relating to the merger, the TSJC's North Central Association self study, and state governing board minutes. SLVAVS/TSJC Advisory Board minutes were also collected. Other documents and newspaper articles were included as I identified them during the course of the study. In addition, I collected pictures of the SLVAVS/TSJC-VC before and after the merger to present any visual or physical changes that the campus underwent.

I collected and analyzed program enrollment trends in general, and program specific before and after the merger. These enrollment figures followed up data reports of the students placed in Valley employment or transferring to a four-year institution before and after the merger.

Data Analysis

The sessions that were recorded consisted of the five open-ended questions stated earlier in this manuscript. In order to provide continuity and uniformity, each interview had a descriptive header to record the information that was relative to the purpose of the project and to serve as a reminder to the interviewee as to the exact nature and purpose of the interview (Stake, 1995). In addition, closing comments were provided for each interview, as was an expression of my appreciation to the interviewee for his or her time, effort, and insights into the questions posed. All interview data were collated from the recorded interviews. From this written format, each concept was documented and charted. Common categories and comments were extrapolated. In this manner, common issues were found among those interviews. All similar comments were examined. I then determined common themes and tracked them among all interviewees. These common themes were utilized to find case study assertions.

As categorical aggregation became evident issue-relevant meanings were established. These issue-relevant meanings came directly from the recorded interviews as documented in a written format and were then placed into a spreadsheet chart. The central themes then became the study's assertions. The assertions step was the last step in the analysis, in which I put into text the interpretations and personal views of the interviewees.

I used a similar analysis technique with the documents I collected relevant to the study. For the longer documents I used the same constant comparison analysis to identify the emergent themes and then compared and contrasted those themes to the interview analysis results. For other documents that were not as complex I read them carefully

several times and extracted information that corroborated or refuted the established themes.

The last data analysis I undertook was with the researcher's journal. I carefully reviewed the material that I had bracketed which indicated that my own values or experiences were being triggered during the study. I checked to see they were not included in the participants' or documents' analyses. I also used my field notes in the journal to assist me in corroborating or refuting the emergent data.

Trustworthiness

This study ensured validity and reliability because I conducted the research and investigation in an ethical and open manner (Merriam, 2002). Also, this study, through data collection and the interview process, provided various sources of information and documentation to provide enough detail to stand by my conclusions (Stake, 1995).

Merriam's five basic strategies were used during the study to ensure validity, which included: triangulation, member checks, long term observation, peer examination, and researcher's biases. The five basic strategies also addressed the concerns regarding internal validity about the reality of the study and asked the question of whether the study captured and measured the community's perceptions of the merger?

All recorded interviews were written word-for-word in a written transcript. All transcripts were preserved verbatim. These written transcripts were also included within this study for review as were the charts utilized to discover common themes and develop the central phenomenon.

The method of evaluation – the case study approach – was previously established and became an accepted method of investigation and approach for this type of study.

This method has been utilized numerous times and has, therefore, withstood the test of time.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the study results of the merger between the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School (SLVAVS) and Trinidad State Junior College (TSJC). It begins with a geographical description of the San Luis Valley research site, including a listing of the counties and towns within the Valley, the cultural history of the area, and the present Valley demographics. Also included is information on the economic conditions, the characteristics of the labor force, Valley resident income levels, and educational profiles.

The chapter will also summarize the roles and the interconnectedness that the Valley educational institutions had before the merger including Adams State College, the SLVAVS, and the 14 school districts within the six-county area and the roles that these institutions have assumed following the merger. Finally, the chapter will present the documentation and timeline leading up to the merger. The five research questions will be presented as well as the data collected from the interviews, documents, field notes, and researcher's journal.

Description of the San Luis Valley

The San Luis Valley geographically forms one of the world's largest alpine valleys and is surrounded by the San Juan Mountains on the west and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains on the east. The Valley stretches from south central Colorado to northern New Mexico. The Valley floor lies over 7,500 feet above sea level and is

approximately 74 miles wide and over 122 miles long. Although the Valley is Colorado's only true desert, it sits above an aquifer containing billions of acre-feet of ground water (San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, 2001).

For thousands of years, semi-nomadic Native Americans called the Valley their home; however, as early as 1540 Spanish explorers entered the Valley, and in 1708 Juan de Ulaterra claimed the San Luis Valley for the King of Spain and established the area as a northern outpost of the Spanish colonial empire. The Spanish influence is still evident with 46.5 percent of the Valley population of Latino origin. The Valley includes some of the earliest signs of settlement in Colorado by having both the oldest church, located near Antonito, and the oldest town, in San Luis. Valley residents continue to have strong ties to Spanish Catholicism, its old world culture, and its traditions. Spanish as a second language is spoken by 32.3 percent of the Valley population.

The San Luis Valley population for 2000 was 46,190 within six counties: Alamosa (14,839), Conejos (8,423), Costilla (3,756), Mineral (867), Rio Grande (12,093), and Saguache (6,212). The larger towns in the counties are Alamosa, Antonito, San Luis, Blanca-Fort Garland, Creede, Monte Vista, Del Norte, Center, and Saguache. The area includes 8,194 square miles with an average of 5.6 persons per square mile compared to the state's average of 31.8. The Valley makes up 8 percent of the state's total land area (San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, 2001).

The median age of the Valley residents is 31.3 years, which is slightly younger than the state median age of 32.5. The population is 31 percent under the age of 18 while 13 percent were 65 or older. Compared to Colorado's age distribution, however, the

Valley has a lower concentration in the 20-44 age group (San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, 2001).

The ethnic breakdown is 52 percent white, 46.5 percent Hispanic, 1 percent Asian, with Native American and African Americans comprising .5 per cent of the Valley's population. The Latino population percentage is the highest minority population concentration in Colorado. Many Latino families have been in the Valley since the early 1700s and are known as Hispanos.

There are approximately 14,300 households in the Valley; 73 percent are family households; 23 percent, one-person households; and 4 percent non family households. The family households average 3.25 persons. Eighty percent of family households are married couples with slightly more than half having children. The remaining 20 percent are single parents. Of the 2,128 single parent households, 76 percent were headed by a female only and averaged 2.83 people; the national average was 2.63 (San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, 2001).

All six counties are economically depressed with Rio Grande County ranking the highest per capita county in the Valley; however, of Colorado's 63 counties, Rio Grande County ranked number 43 in per capita wealth. The Valley median household income is \$17,533, which is lower than both the Colorado income of \$29,994 and the Denver median of \$25,106. The median family income for the area is \$20,397, which is lower than the state's \$35,930 and Denver's \$32,038. Self-reported median income is \$8,652 per person compared to the state's \$14,821 (Demography Section, Colorado Division of Local Government, July 2000; U. S. Per Capita Income from Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1999). Of all persons living in this area, 27 percent live below the poverty

level compared to 12 percent for the state. For families the rate is somewhat lower at 22 percent. The population segment with the highest percentage living below the poverty level is female only households at 54 percent. The number of Valley residents in the labor force is 17,686 or 63 percent of the population, with 58 percent males and 42 percent females (San Luis Valley Development Resources Group, 2001).

In 1993 the Valley had 14 K-12 school districts, one four-year postsecondary institution, and one area vocational school. A more in depth description of each level of education follows.

San Luis Valley K-12 Schools

Alamosa County served the most students followed by Rio Grande and Conejos Counties. All 14 school districts were incorporated and most were considered comprehensive in that they offered some level of vocational programs including business, industrially related programs, power mechanics, and consumer family studies. Most high schools had articulation agreements with both Adams State College (ASC) and the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School (SLVAVS). Approximately 54 percent of the total student population in the 14 school districts were Latino, ranging from 75 percent in Costilla County to 3 percent in Mineral County.

Adams State College

Adams State College, located in Alamosa, was founded in 1931 by the Colorado General Assembly and was named for William “Billy” Adams, a long time San Luis Valley resident, senator, and governor. The mission of the college was to be the regional provider of postsecondary college track or professional programs in the San Luis Valley. It is a comprehensive liberal arts college including 2 associate degrees, 18 bachelor

degrees, and 6 master's degree programs. The five most popular majors are business, the AA/AS degrees selected studies in elementary education, biology, and psychology. ASC employs approximately 90 full-time and 30 part-time faculty, 70 exempt and 90 classified staff. Over 50 percent of the faculty are tenured with 90 percent having a terminal degree. Only 7 percent of the faculty and 19 percent of the exempt staff are classified as minorities (Adams State College, Office of the Register, 2002).

ASC has an on campus enrollment of approximately 2,500 and more than 9,000 students are enrolled in its extended studies program. Twenty-seven percent of the undergraduate students were Latino. Recent data released by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education state that the ASC Latino baccalaureate graduation rate of 25 percent and the graduate school graduation rate of 13 percent are the highest graduation rates among the four-year colleges in Colorado (Adams State College, Basic Institution Data Form, Self Study Report 1996).

Trinidad State Junior College - Trinidad Campus

Trinidad State Junior College (TSJC) is a comprehensive community college located in Trinidad, Colorado. At the time of the merger, the college had only one satellite site that was located in Walsenburg, Colorado, just 37 miles north of the Trinidad campus. TSJC also serves Colfax and Union Counties in New Mexico through a reciprocal agreement with the state of New Mexico. TSJC's total service area encompasses over 22,000 square miles of mostly rural area. The TSJC student population is 44 percent Latino reflecting the service delivery area which is over 45 percent Latino (Rocha & Romero, 1996).

San Luis Valley Area Vocational School

The San Luis Valley Area Vocational School (SLVAVS) was a comprehensive area vocational school created by legislative mandate in 1967 after the passage of House Bill 1448 to serve the six counties in the Valley as the provider and administrator for vocational programs. The school first delivered postsecondary vocational programs and services from 1969 until 1979 in the town of Monte Vista under a valley-wide governing board. In 1979 governance was transferred to the Alamosa School District.

The Alamosa School Board governed these programs until the merger with TSJC was completed in 1994. The SLVAVS continued offering postsecondary and secondary vocational programs and administration for most of the 14 Valley school districts. Vocational training was provided for approximately 40 high school students in seven district programs. The high school classes were held daily in two-hour sessions at either the SLVAVS or in the high school facility. Approximately 96 adults in full-time programs and an additional 443 part-time were enrolled at the SLVAVS site. The postsecondary operation was run on a semester-hour basis. Before the merger, the SLVAVS offered only terminal vocational certificates which could not be transferred or used to continue in a higher level program.

The Merger

Pre-1993

Economic hard times slowly began to take their toll on the Alamosa School District in the late 1980s and early 1990s and by 1992 the school board chose a new superintendent with a reputation for understanding school finance. The new superintendent began his work in FY 1991-1992. Meanwhile conversations and

discussions about how to cut costs began to center on the area vocational school, which was the one element of the school district's programs that was not part of its secondary mission. The SLVAVS was not only to serve the Alamosa community but all six counties of the Valley which extended the Alamosa School District's responsibility as the SLVAVS administrator beyond its own boundaries. In addition the area vocational school offered postsecondary and secondary programs. The Alamosa School Board and the new superintendent decided that the sole mission of the District was for K-12 secondary programs; thus, this decision had SLVAVS operating outside the district's mission.

Specific reasons for targeting SLVAVS were that the vocational programs, especially the building trades program, were losing students. The downturn in local construction meant the program became less and less of a draw for students pursuing construction as a potential career. In addition the program had always built a house for resale as part of the students' application of building skills; however, the lack of a housing market forced the program to abandon this part of the curriculum and lost the house sale funds that the project used to help finance the program.

Funding sources for the SLVAVS were not the same sources as for the K-12 programs. Operational funds for the secondary vocational programs were provided by the school district based on the K-12 Per Pupil Operating Revenue (PPOR). In addition, these programs were also eligible for monies through the Colorado Vocational Act (CRS 23-8- 1010), which had been enacted in 1970 by the state legislature to support the additional costs incurred by vocational programs. However, the actual reimbursement rates rarely were over 30 percent of these additional costs, which although providing

some level of support, did not keep pace with accelerating instructional costs and declining enrollments. The post secondary programs received funding under a special formula through the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System (CCCOES); the level of funding was not as high, however, as for postsecondary programs located in the community colleges. Tuition and fees was the other revenue source for postsecondary programs.

The significant difference in the funding calculations between the area vocational schools and the community colleges was that the area vocational school funding was based on clock hours students attended, not credit hour as was the case for community colleges. The area vocational schools, because of funding formulas, enrollments, facility size, and lack of academic programs did not receive the capital construction money or the Carl Perkins federal grant allotments as did the community colleges.

In FY1991-92 the SLVAVS had to borrow money from the Alamosa School District to finish the year and meet payroll. It was understood that the building which housed the SLVAVS, although owned by the School District, was to be maintained by the SLVAVS. This was an additional expense that was going unmet due to a lack of funds.

September 1993

By FY1992-1993, the School Board became deeply concerned. Diminishing K-12 dollars were being used to support overhead and administrative costs of the SLVAVS largely adult education center. Alamosa School Board members were expected to deal with ever increasing postsecondary issues coming before them. The SLVAVS had inadequate resources to expand facilities and shops and to add new technologies. The

institution did not have any operational money for equipment, supplies, employee raises, or even facility repair. The Alamosa School Board again reiterated that its mission was K-12 programs and services within the Alamosa School District, and the mission of the SLVAVS was postsecondary vocational programs serving the entire San Luis Valley. The School Board also felt it had no expertise in providing postsecondary education, and governance of the SLVAVS should come from a postsecondary institution. After several meetings of the SLVAVS director with the new Alamosa School District superintendent, it became apparent that governance changes would have to occur. The SLVAVS director was requested to begin talks with the TSJC president in late Fall 1993. After several meetings with the TSJC president, informal merger dialogue was started between the SLVAVS director and the TSJC president.

There were several reasons that TSJC became the obvious institution of higher education to govern the area vocational school and assume the new role as regional provider of post secondary occupational education. TSJC had been conducting programs in cooperation with the SLVAVS for a number of years since the area vocational school was in the TSJC's service-delivery area. The satellite programs in operation included Associate Degree Nursing, criminal justice, and most recently had expanded with the Associate Degree farm/ranch management program.

January - May, 1994

Documents evidencing that the merger was in process began with the TSJC Advisory Council minutes January 20, 1994. In the presentation given by the TSJC Dean of Occupational Education concerning the vocational program update, the following statement appears: "The Ranch Management program is a cooperative venture between

Trinidad State Junior College and San Luis Valley Area Vocational School.” Also noted, “The Associate of Applied Science degree in Office Supervision and Management from TSJC will be offered in Alamosa. This cooperative effort with the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School will provide an educational opportunity to residents of the valley. The TSJC program will be fully articulated with the SLVAVS business certificate program.” These quotes support that cooperative programming was fully established as part of the working relationship between the two institutions.

The TSJC report to the regular CCCOES State Board meeting on March 10, 1994, included the following statement: “Met with Alamosa Advisory Council and Alamosa Board of Education to discuss educational issues within the cooperative agreement with TSJC.” This is the first documented evidence found indicating meetings between the main participants of the impending merger were being held.

The Alamosa School District Board minutes of March 22, 1994, with all board members present, reported that the SLVAVS director asked the Board if he could set up a work session with personnel from CCCOES. Under Action Items, “Item C -Resolution from SLVAVS,” the Board moved, seconded, and unanimously agreed “to accept the Resolution that the SLV Area Vocational School has presented so they can move forward with their ideas.” The Resolution outlined the new emerging mission of the former area vocational school. It indicated as the SLVAVS is the primary institution for delivery of postsecondary vocational education programs in the San Luis Valley and the future labor predictions indicate a strong need for postsecondary occupational programs and the SLVAVS has limited resources and authority to award higher level degrees, a merger with TSJC would address these problems and provide greater benefits to Valley residents.

The merger was now officially announced at the board meeting and documented that a merger was taking place to provide the six counties in the San Luis Valley with a satellite campus of TSJC.

The Vocational Director Services Contract between the SLVAVS and the Alamosa School District was continued with the usual stipulations and conditions for what was to become the transition year of the merger, FY1994-1995. This contract was accepted by the full Alamosa School Board at its April 19, 1994, meeting. The merger provided for a new advisory committee member to be added from the SLV to TSJC advisory committee. The announcement of a new appointment to the TSJC Advisory Council of a person from Alamosa was made in a May 12, 1994, report to the CCCOES State Board Personnel and Policy Committee. This was also announced in the TSJC July/August 1994 report to the CCCOES State Board. An article was also included in the *Valley Courier*, June 29, 1994, just before assuming his appointment. With this appointment the San Luis Valley communities were now represented on the TSJC regional governing committee.

On May 11, 1994, a memo was sent to the Alamosa School District superintendent from the SLVAVS director entitled "Reduction-In-Force (RIF) of the Area Vocational School's Administration, Faculty, and Support Staff." The memo outlined the process for the removal of specific occupational classifications from the Alamosa School District and the transfer of positions to TSJC and the state of Colorado. Through follow-up interview with the SLVAVS director he stated that in a general meeting all SLVAVS employees agreed to the transition. By removing the classifications, the Alamosa School District would be saved from having to RIF the vocational

employees. The director asked that the proposal be presented at the May 17, 1994, Board meeting as a discussion item and as an action item for the June 21, 1994, meeting. The transition memo was presented at the May 17, 1994, Board meeting.

A report of the CCCOES Board Personnel and Policy Committee to the June 9, 1994, State Board CCCOES meeting outlined the impending merger of the SLVAVS and TSJC. It was reported that the relationship of the new and emerging two-year institution with the local four-year college, Adams State College, was addressed. The SLVAVS was authorized to deliver only vocational certificate programs in the Valley. Whereas, Adams State College was authorized to offer "two year transfer programs with a community college role and mission but shall not offer vocational education programs." Therefore, "No college is authorized to offer the associate of applied science degree in the Valley. TSJC is willing to meet this need."

The report also outlined the timeline for the actual merger effective July 1, 1994, with the Alamosa School Board transferring title to the State Board of CCCOES. It was also indicated that the Alamosa School Board would contract for services with TSJC for the term July 1, 1994, through June, 1995. TSJC would offer employment to all staff at the former SLVAVS. Also included in this meeting was a motion that the Board approve a plan to renovate the existing SLVAVS facility. The Board approved the plan unanimously.

The final documents indicating that the merger was now complete included the Alamosa School Board minutes of June 21, 1994. As Item E under Action Items, the change in governance and the memo outlining the Reduction in Force (RIF) procedure were presented. With all board members present, the contract to change the governance

and the RIF memo was accepted unanimously. The transfer of governance would begin on July 1, 1994. A General Contract gave the recitals of the agreement spelling out the procedure for handling the programs, personnel, tuition and fees, and other special provisions. The contract also included the warranty deed which transferred the property and financial resources from the Alamosa School District to the state of Colorado. The TSJC report to the State Board of CCCOES for July/August 1994, also stated that the “Merger between TSJC and SLVAVS became official July 1, 1994. The school will be known as the San Luis Valley Educational Center in Alamosa, Colorado, for a one year transitional period. After the one year transitional period the campus would become known at Trinidad State Junior College-Valley Campus (TSJC-VC).

During the merger process, Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) and CCCOES reinforced the associate degree (AA/AS) role and mission that had been traditionally designated to Adams State College. Adams State College would continue to offer “two-year transfer programs within a community college role and mission but shall not offer vocational education programs.” The agreement also states that “no college is authorized to offer the Associate of Applied Science degree in the Valley, TSJC will meet this need.” The agreement allowed Adams State College to continue with its two-year transfer program; this prohibited the delivery of the first two years of undergraduate education as is normally included in the community college mission. However, San Luis Valley Educational Center (SLVEC) is authorized to deliver vocational certificate programs.

Locally, the first announcement pertaining to the merger through the local newspaper *Valley Courier* was June 23, 1994. The headline read, “Voc School TSJC

merger now official.” The article appeared on the front page and was a column in length. Basically the same information was included in a June 29, 1994, article which stated “TSJC, Voc School merger becomes official Friday.” A second article also appeared in this issue telling of the appointment of an Alamosan to the TSJC Advisory Council. The general tone of the articles was that the merger would benefit all parties included and especially the Valley residents with broadened occupational programs, financial aid for students, and course offering’s beyond the certificate level.

Interview Data Analysis

This section addresses the participants’ responses to the five interview questions. Additional data from document analysis, the researcher's journal, corroborating discussions, and follow-up phone calls to the interviewees are integrated with the interview data analysis and triangulates the data in the findings.

The participants in this study included 15 Anglos and 15 Latinos from the San Luis Valley (SLV). The criteria used for participant selection included each individual’s record of involvement in the SLV, longevity in the SLV, and his or her interest in and/or knowledge of the merger.

Discussion of Interview Question Number One: "Was there community involvement or awareness of the merger between the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School and Trinidad State Junior College?"

Question one was asked to determine the extent of the participants’ awareness concerning when, how, and why the merger between the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School (SLVAVS) and Trinidad State Junior College (TSJC) occurred.

Follow-up questions during the participants' interviews probed how information was received and the perceived level and type of community involvement in the merger.

Themes

There were three themes that emerged from the interview data from Question One:

(a) Community involvement and awareness was limited; (b) ASC had limited knowledge of the merger until its completion; and (c) SLVAVS staff felt they should have been more involved and should have received more information concerning the merger as it was progressing.

Community involvement or awareness was limited. Through the interview process eight individuals felt there was very limited knowledge or community awareness of the merger. For example, an Anglo San Luis Valley School District administrator answered:

To my knowledge there was not any type of merger involvement from our school district with our vocational programs. I guess that I heard about the merger through the grapevine.

A Latino governmental agency interviewee indicated:

There was not any kind of merger information that our agency was involved in that I am aware of. I don't know if there would have been community involvement.

Other comments from a Latino respondent stated that:

To the best of my knowledge, I do not remember being involved with any type of merger discussion whether it was negative or positive. Also there was no vocational rehabilitation involvement.

A third Latino governmental agency employee said:

To my knowledge there was not much if any participation from our agency. Our agency involvement would have been helpful with the building layout and traffic flow.

Seven individuals felt the only involvement was through Alamosa School District Board of Education meetings or work sessions between the SLVAVS, TSJC, and the SLVAVS Advisory Committee. It appears that membership on this Advisory Committee was assumed to be representative of the San Luis Valley as shown below.

An Anglo TSJC administrator commented:

As far as community meetings, they just did not happen. But there was community awareness through the local board of education.

This same respondent also stated:

I can't tell you how many, at least four meetings, possibly more with the Alamosa Board of Education prior to the merger to discuss it. The original involvement was probably more with the SLVAVS advisory council and the school board. The community in itself other than the advisory committee really wasn't much involved in it.

A Latino governmental agency respondent stated:

I'm not sure--very little--I have my doubts that there was merger discussion, unless it was with the SLVAVS Advisory Committee.

However, an Anglo SLVAVS advisory committee member indicated:

We (the SVLAVS Advisory Committee) met with the Alamosa School Board, TSJC main campus, and SLVAVS regarding the merger.

Six of the respondents stated they represented the San Luis Valley through the SLVAVS advisory committee, and two individuals felt the TSJC Advisory Committee in Trinidad was involved in the merger.

An Anglo SLVAVS advisory committee member indicated:

There were several meetings regarding the merger with the Alamosa School Board and the SLVAVS.

Six individuals understood that the Alamosa School Board was involved in the sale and transfer of the SLVAVS property. Four community member respondents had

heard the Alamosa School Board was losing money and the school board members had stated their mission was only grades K-12 and should not include postsecondary.

As stated by a Latino SLVAVS advisory committee member:

The Alamosa School Board at that time did not want to have any more to do with the vocational school, and CCCOES system was very interested for the vocational school to become a junior college.

In the first theme the interviewees suggest community awareness and involvement were very limited and then only to the entities and membership involved in the merger. Responses from both Anglo and Latino participants presented a picture of limited knowledge of the merger. Other than the SLVAVS administration, SLVAVS advisory committee, Alamosa Board of Education and TSJC administration, the community at-large was perceived to be uninformed concerning the merger.

Adams State College's limited involvement in the merger process. The second theme illustrates that Adams State College's involvement in the merger process was not evident to interviewees from Adams State College. ASC interviewees felt the College had little discussion or input regarding the new community college campus' mission in the Valley. An Adams State College administrator said the college was not part of the dialogue, planning or implementation of the merger with the Alamosa Board of Education, TSJC, or SLVAVS. The interviewee also stated he read about the merger between the SLVAVS and TSJC after it was finalized and announced in the local newspaper. However, one of the ASC interviewees was quick to point out that ASC is designated as the AA/AS degree granting institution in the San Luis Valley and the mission of the new community college (TSJC- VC) would be to deliver only career and technical programs.

I would have been the logical person to be involved since there was a variety of different relationships. I think had there been any awareness of that (merger) at the college, it would have been at the top of discussion and so forth.

Stated one ASC administrator,

I knew nothing about it (merger) until it was announced in the paper. To the best of my knowledge, there was never any discussion at ASC about the merger occurring as far as I was aware," he indicated.

The ASC administrator also concluded:

That the merger was primarily a deal between the community colleges and the local school board. Merger discussions with ASC would have been helpful. The merger had very little impact on student transition from TSJC-VC to ASC as far as student enrollments indicate.

An Anglo SLVAVS faculty staff member also indicated:

Adams State was not involved with the merger and did not understand the community college role and mission.

In the second theme Adams State College administration felt they had very limited knowledge of the merger. Since they perceived themselves to be the institution of higher learning in the SLV, they felt Adams State College should have been involved in the merger process. Additionally, the interviewees felt merger dialogue with Adams State College would have opened the door to the different educational departments and would have enlightened the ASC college staff to the merger and been helpful in student educational transfer as well as having enhanced Adams State College's understanding of the role and mission of the community college system that was about to be introduced into the SLV.

SLVAVS staff awareness or involvement. The third theme showed that the SLVAVS staff and students who were interviewed said they had knowledge of the merger and that they were concerned about it. They needed more information regarding a

merger which could affect their livelihood. Two of the interviewees said some of the SLVAVS staff had fears that they could lose the option to continue their Public Employee Retired Account (PERA) benefit package, as well as the benefits accrued as part of the SLVAVS and Alamosa School District such as: retirement, service time, sick and vacation leave balances. Further, they were wondering for whom they would be working. For example, one Anglo SLVAVS staff member stated:

Why did it take so long to get out the information regarding the merger and would the SLVAVS have representation about and concerning the merger? As a teacher, do I need additional education or will the vocational credential keep my employment; does a BA work or do I need a MA?"

A Latino staff member asked:

What was the community college system? And how was it different from the area vocational school system?

Classified SLVAVS staff had concerns for themselves and their livelihoods questioned the different classifications for support positions and continuation of benefits within the community colleges. The School District support staff were classified under the rules and regulations of the School Board and the Alamosa Teachers Education Association (AEA), SLVAVS staff were not clear on what the new classifications within the college system included and how the transfer and status process would play out. SLVAVS Staff concerns related to students, and they wanted to know how clock hours used by the SLVAVS to measure credit were to be transferred to credit hours in the TSJC-VC system. Another question was how financial aid calculated from the vocational school model would transfer to the community college financial aid model. Staff were concerned over where the money would come from to support student financial aid? Faculty, support staff, and students asked how a certificate program, which

they were teaching or involved in articulated to a two-year degree program or did it? Faculty, support staff and students indicated that the SLVAVS staff had many personal and student related concerns regarding the merger and wanted more information and dialogue regarding the process.

However, the director of the SLVAVS at the time of the merger indicated both in an interview and through correspondence that the SLVAVS staff had been involved. Either the SLVAV director or the TSJC president reported back to staff periodically while the merger progressed.

In a follow-up phone interview the SLVAVS Director stated:

“Had several meetings in which SVLAVS director and TSJC president updated SLVAVS staff and SLVAVS advisory committee on the status of the merger. Before and during the merger the Director gave a status report on the need for fiscal change of governance and took a straw vote from SLVAVS staff which was in favor of the merger moving forward.

Also, the Director before the finalization of the merger afforded the SLVAVS staff the opportunity to stay under the employment of the Alamosa School District the School Board was obligated to find positions for individuals who wish to stay with the district.”

In the third theme SLVAVS staff had many concerns regarding themselves and their students towards the merger and the transition of control from the Alamosa school district to TSJC. SLVAVS administration relayed that the staff was apprised of the merger and the process on a regular basis. However, the staff perceived a lack of communication and needed additional information and dialogue during the merger process.

Summary for question one. The theme from the community awareness and involvement section is that both Anglo and Latino community interviewees who were not

involved or were not a part of the merger as well as interviewees from Adams State College, area school district administrators, and governmental agency administrators felt there was very limited public knowledge of the merger between the SLVAVS and TSJC. As reported earlier in this chapter, only two SLV newspaper articles, board minutes from two TSJC Advisory Committee Meetings, four Alamosa School Board meetings and one CCCS board meeting were located documenting the progress and process of the merger.

Responses from both Anglo and Latino participants painted a picture of limited knowledge of the merger. Other than the SLVAVS advisory committee, the only others perceived to have had some knowledge of the merger were the Alamosa Board of Education members and SLVAVS and TSJC administration. The community at-large was not apprised of the merger and how it would affect them.

The second theme addressed Adams State College's role in the merger. A key TSCJ administrator indicated four meetings between the Alamosa Board of Education, and the SLVAVS advisory committee took place. The Alamosa School Board was involved with the sale and transfer of the SLVAVS property. However, the SLV community was not really involved in the merger dialogue. There was no indication, from the interviewees, Alamosa School, TSJC or SLVAVS board minutes that Adams State College, the local school districts, or other SLV agencies were involved or invited to participate in the merger talks.

An Adams State College administrator, who felt he would have been the most logical person to be involved or included in the merger dialogue because of his administration position, stated he knew nothing about the merger. Adams State College was not included nor was Adams State College a part of the merger process. The

interviewee further indicated the merger had very little impact on Adams State College in regard to student transition from TSJC-VC to ASC and that ASC did not understand the role and mission of the community college. Adams State College was designated as the Associate of Arts and Associate of Science Degree (AA/AS) granting institute in the Valley, and TSJC-VC would offer the Associate of Applied Science Degree.

The third theme addressed SLVAVS staff awareness of and concerns related to the merger. These issues included the transition of power, to whom the staff would be reporting, what this new educational system was, the role and mission of the community college system and how this would affect staff pay, status and tenure. Further, the staff felt they needed to be better informed and would have appreciated having their concerns addressed. Interviewees employed by the SLVAVS stated they had little contact with the process, the planning, and/or the determination to merge.

Questions Two, Three, Four and Five

Unlike Question One, Questions Two, Three, Four, and Five will be merged. Rationale for merging these questions was to avoid confusion since the responses to the questions crossed over one another. As in Question One I formatted the results and perceptions into a common flow and sequence for each question asked. Listed below are Questions Two, Three, Four and Five including rationale for each question asked.

The questions were asked to identify any general perceptions or changes that specifically affected the Latino community. The interview data collected were put into the following sequence: educational, employment, and fiscal benefits of the merger to the Latino and SLV community. Also, the questions address student readiness, interviewee

concerns over the absence of Latino faculty at the TSJ-VC campus, and the disadvantages and transferability of the Associate of Applied Science Degree.

Question Two: “How did the merger between the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School and Trinidad State Junior College affect the Latino Community in the San Luis Valley?”

Question Two explores the perceptions which both the Anglo and Latino representatives had regarding the merger. These perceptions are specific to the educational results and educational attainment related to job placement, continued education, and graduation. Of concern was whether there were any differences between actual results achieved by the merger as well as perceived changes from both Anglo and Latino interviewees, specific to the Latino community.

Question Three: “Has the merger provided additional employment or postsecondary opportunities for the Latino population in the San Luis Valley?”

Question Three asked if the merger had provided additional employment or post-secondary opportunities for the Latino population in the SLV and if so was it a direct result of the merger? With Trinidad State Junior College-Valley Campus now located in the San Luis Valley, I wanted to ask the specific question : Did agencies such as the Chamber of Commerce or other businesses and industry in the SLV community, solicit new businesses and industries to move into the area because of a better prepared workforce.

Question Four: “Has the San Luis Valley’s business community been affected in any way by the Merger?”

Question Four asks if the business community within the San Luis Valley had been affected by the merger between the SLVAVS and TSJC. One reason to ask the question was to explore the possibility of the merger providing a better-trained application pool from which employers can select? Another reason to ask the question was that the merger provided the SLV with a renovated and updated facility, as well as additional funding from state and federal sources. Further, additional funding was available for the expansion of the program area of study, equipment and technology, as well as the addition of the associate of applied science degree which provided additional educational training opportunities for SLV students.

Question Five: "How well prepared were the graduates from the San Valley Area Vocational School compared to Trinidad State Junior College-Valley Campus graduates?"

Question Five was asked to compare the perceptions which Anglo and Latino interviewees had regarding the SLVAVS campus before the merger and the TSJC-VC campus after the merger. This included the differences or quality in students, employability, and educational outcomes. The focus of this question was not to discover if one school was better than another, but rather to research the positive and negative perceptions that the merger provided.

Further the question looks at the community perception of an Area Vocational School opposed to a Community College. This includes the duration of programs, quality of equipment, overall funding, and student transfer opportunities. The question was asked to discover if the merger provided a bettered trained workforce due to the additional educational opportunities provided.

Interview data collected were put into the following subgroups: (a) positive effects on the Latino community with an increase in Latino students attending the TSJC-VC campus; (b) provided an educational bridge; (c) the merger provided for the addition of the Associate Degree Nurse (ADN) and associate degree early childhood programs; and (d) the merger provided remedial and English as a Second language ESL services for individuals with limited English speaking abilities.

Positive affects on Latino community. Interview and TSJC student service data shows that there was an increase in the number of Latino students attending TCJC-VC. Interviewees felt that the merger also provided an affordable educational bridge to a four year degree. The merger also provided for the expansion of the health and early childcare programs. Finally, interviewees felt the merger provided for remedial and ESL programs for students with limited English speaking abilities.

An Anglo SLVAVS county elected official said:

What they told me is that the (Latino) student enrollment numbers were up after the merger. But I never did ask what the differences in numbers (students) were. I have a hard time separating whether they are Latino students from the whole community.

Another Anglo county official stated:

I don't know if it (merger) particularly helped the Latino population; I think it has helped a lot of people; I could not tell you one specific group more than another. There are a lot of people taking a lot of different programs.

A Latino SLVAVS staff member voiced:

According to (TSJC-VC student service reports) more Latino students are going to college (TSJC-VC) enrollments are up several times, that means more Latinos have access to higher education within the San Luis Valley

Four interviewees said the Valley Campus has opened its doors to the community and offers an educational opportunity to the SLV, with campus name change firmly embedded and accepted in the SLV.

Another Latino SLVAVS staff member indicated:

TSJC-VC has been visible and also has attended all Career fairs in the Valley, which targets valley high school students.

Eight interviewees also indicated the merger offered more educational resources such as the Cisco lab and distance learning technology in addition to expanded program offerings such as the Associate Degree of Nursing (ADN) and early childhood programs.

Educational Bridge or Ladder

A Latino governmental agency administrator stated:

The merger offered a career ladder kind of thing. You do not have to go out of the Valley as there were no other postsecondary opportunities for Latinos in the Valley.

Stated a Latino SLVAVS student:

The SLV needed an additional mode of training other than Adams State College. TSJC-VC helped the student's perception of themselves, to go after a degree instead of a vocational certificate.

A Latino governmental agency respondent said:

I think it (TSJC-VC) has programs that the Latino community is interested in. It (TSJC-VC) provides an alternative educational program for anyone that's interested in. I think the merger has provided a different postsecondary opportunity than say Adams State does for the Latino community

A Latino governmental agency administrator stated:

You're only as good as what you can provide. TSJC-VC does offer more programs including the associate of applied science degree and a new building and facilities. From what I have seen, TSJC-VC does provide good opportunities, good instruction, more educational resources and visibility.

Another Latino student responded:

The fact that it's a junior college also probably helps just having the title of junior college instead of vocational school. That helps Latinos with transferring credits and everything else, if they do go on with their education.

This line of reasoning was also indicated by an Anglo SLVAVS staff respondent who stated:

The community college degree and community college has more prestige and pride than a vocational certificate and the old vocational school.

Interview data indicate the merger provided additional programs and training, with the AAS degree providing a more educated workforce. Interviewees felt that the merger provided for a more attractive community, and the merger provided a better business climate and an employee with additional skills.

An Anglo Adams State College administration stated:

The business community needed employees with work skills rather than a four-year degree; the merger fulfilled these employers' needs.

A Latino governmental agency member indicated:

The merger provided a two-year college that gave them (Anglo and Latino) entry skills that they could sell right away.

Said a Latino governmental agency director:

I think that the business community here has been affected positively in that, again people are coming out of programs that are skilled and have employment opportunities.

Said an Anglo TSJC-VC administrator:

Well I think that this (merger) has been a two-way street. The business community has benefited by the merger by the additional opportunities that have been brought in. In addition, we got positive feedback from business.

Indicated a TSJC Anglo administrator:

I know that the teaching staff is very aggressive, regarding working with the business community and establishing some relationships, so I'm sure that the business community has been impacted and does welcome that type of opportunity for future employees.

From this section interviewees felt the merger had provided an affordable, educational bridge or an educational ladder for Latinos. Interview data also show that the merger provided a better trained workforce through additional programs and training. Interviewees also felt the merger brought prestige to the community and the merger was embraced by the community. Interviewees agreed that the merger provided an additional avenue for Latino students to gain a college education or training beyond Adams State College or needing to leave the Valley to continue their two-year degree as was necessary for the nursing program. The merger provided the bridge from the area vocational school to a community college to a four-year degree all within the San Luis Valley. In addition, residents and students felt the merger provided the Valley with an institution which instilled pride and prestige more than the old vocational school.

Interviewees indicated the merger provided an improved and expanded curriculum to include academics, while TSJC-VC staff kept the curriculum connected to SLV business needs and technology. Two interviewees said the merger has strengthened the local area business and industry advisory committees.

Addition of health and childcare programs. Throughout the decades there has been a local, state and national nursing shortage. The merger provided for the addition of the Associate Degree in Nursing program as well as the expansion of the Licensed Practical Nurse program.

Seven interviewees said the merger not only helped student employment opportunities in the SLV, but also helped community college enrollments throughout the state especially in the health and childcare areas.

A Latino public service employee said:

I've heard a lot of people are going over there to take nursing classes at TSJC-VC. That would be the only place that I would see people getting more jobs in the hospital field.

A Latino (retired) faculty stated:

Additional employment, I don't think so because we didn't get any more health care facilities. No, there's the same number of doctor's offices, same number of nursing home, same number of hospitals, so that didn't change.

A Latino SLVAVS staff member stated:

The merger has strengthened and expanded the local area business, health advisory committees.

An Anglo SLVAVS staff member voiced:

The merger helped expand the nursing from the LPN to ADN; the merger helped to open a new program as a career path and doubled the number of students in these programs.

A Latino governmental agency administrator indicated:

On the personal level I have a relative who participated in the LPN program, when she chose to go beyond that, she had to leave (the Valley) and she left and became a RN. Now it's my understanding that the student can work on a RN here (TSJC-VC).

Interviewees felt the merger had enhanced the health and childcare programs with the expansion of the programs to the associate degree level. They felt that more students would take these programs and have better employment and earning opportunities.

Interviewees stated students who qualified for the health programs increased with the addition of the ADN program and gave opportunities for more students to take advantage

of an employment field that is in a critical shortage. An interviewee also said TSJV-VC merger helped expand the advisory committees to include more business, health, and industry owners and managers.

Remedial and English as a Second Language. Several Latino interviewees felt the merger had helped to expanded remedial and ESL opportunities and offerings to Latino students at TSJC-VC with limited English speaking abilities. This was of concern to Latino interviewees as limited English speakers could not receive or start into mainstream programs without remediation.

A Latino governmental agency administrator stated:

There's been a language issue for some of the mono-lingual Spanish-speaking individuals in this area. I think that TSJC-VC is effectively serving the Latino students with limited English abilities.

An Anglo SLVAVS administrator voiced:

The learning resource lab has been changed and developed to offer English as a Second Language (ESL) for tutoring Latino students, so I believe this has been positive for the Latino community.

Eight interviewees suggested the merger was a second chance for many students, especially the Latino student who has a significantly higher dropout rate.

Further, interviewees saw initial student-placement testing as a starting point from which students could begin their education. In some cases students could use ESL and GED opportunities as levels of completion. These successes could be used as an educational staircase allowing Latino students to transfer credits and further their education.

Financial benefits of the merger. Interviewees said that the merger provided the SLV with fiscal gains that included following: (a) the merger provided affordable

education; (b) the merger helped to ensure every student who qualified had the ability to apply for financial aid; and (c) the merger provided additional federal and state funding from the community college merger.

Affordable education. Interviewees stated that the merger provided economic development for the SLV and also provided affordable and reasonable educational opportunities to the Latino population.

A Latino governmental agency administrator stated:

The coincidence is that the community college enrollment (TSJVC-VC) is increasing and that the town (Alamosa) is sort of taking off more in economic development.

An Anglo business owner said:

I don't know about more employment opportunities, but the costs may have prohibited many Latinos from attending college because of the cost differences associated with higher education.

A Latino SLVAVS staff member voiced:

I think it's (merger) had a tremendous impact on the community by making education available for Anglo and Latino students at much more reasonable costs and in a different manner than Adams State College

A Latino SLVAVS student indicated:

The merger has provided educational opportunities for married and working students who can now take a program of study or a single course dependent upon their needs, time and resources.

The merger provided for economic development within the SLV by the increased number of students and their tuition, increase in program offerings, 5.2 million dollar facility renovation and increase in faculty and support staff.

Financial Aid

Under the SLVAVS students had to be enrolled in an entire program to qualify for financial aid. After the merger TSJC-VC was able to offer financial aid to students enrolled in a program but taking a course or courses related to the program.

An Anglo TSJC administrator responded:

With the merger came lower tuition costs at the community college level than a four-year school, which in many cases was a deterrent because of the high cost and low income (Anglo and Latino) students.

A Latino TSJC-VC support staff stated:

Changing over to a community college afforded students to qualify for more student aid. As an area vocational school students had to take the entire program to qualify for student aid. Under the college system, students can qualify for aid with just one course.

An Anglo TSJC-VC administrator responded:

Not only additional financial aid but because of the merger there was the impact of the state and federal funds that both the students and the TSJC-VC campus had access to.

Interviewees said the merger provided affordable tuition and financial aid, which in many cases prohibited Latino's from starting or continuing with their education.

Additional state and federal funding. Interviewees felt the merger provided additional avenues of funding. Through the merger additional state and federal funding was now available under the community college system.

The job market is definitely improved with the influx of the monies from the state.

Said a TSJC Anglo administrator:

The TSJC-VC benefited from 5.2 million in state capital construction dollars and the ability to receive Carl D. Perkins equipment funding.

A TSJC-VC Anglo administrator stated:

SLVAVS administration and support staff salaries will increase as a result of the merger.

One interviewee stated the merger provided higher salaries for staff. With the conversion from the SLVAVS to the community college system the staff were integrated into classified, exempt, or professional classifications.

The merger did provide additional state and federal funding. Additional merger funding provided for 5.2 million dollars in state capital construction dollars, an increase in salaries for TSJC-VC staff and additional student financial aid.

Interviewees stated the merger was a positive financial gain for the SLV; the merger also benefited the business community in that the merger offered a better-trained and educated employee, additional and expanded program offerings to students, and gave students additional financial aid funding, and increased state and federal opportunities available to the school. An interviewee said with the merger came a higher funding source as the area vocational schools were funded in 1994 at \$2,300 per FTE and the community colleges were at \$3,000 per FTE (CCCS, 2000).

Concerns or Disadvantages of the Merger

Several interviewees had concerns that (a) the associate of applied science degree is terminal; (b) the lack of employment opportunities for faculty at the TSJC-VC; (c) no instrument was in place to measure student success at SLVAVS (before merger) or TSJC-VC (after merger); and (d) the loss of personalized student instruction due to the merger.

Associate of Applied Science degree is terminal

Several Latino interviewees felt that the Associate of Applied Science degree is terminal, and that Latino students do not understand that the degree has limited transferability.

Indicated a Latino governmental agency employee:

Latinos were encouraged to take several terminal degrees at the Valley Campus and are pigeon holed into low-level jobs instead of pursuing a four-year degree.

Responded a Latino advisory committee member:

They think that they have done well (Latinos), but the merger closed educational doors on (Latinos) when they tried to continue on with their education both inside and outside the Valley

Voiced a Latino governmental agency administrator:

One example is that students (Latinos) who score low on the acu-placer test need to take their first semester in remedial programs. We fund on a calendar year; we can't close the case in a timely manner and close out the student. We need students in a two-semester course, and we need to close out that student in the fiscal year; this is a stumbling block for our (Latino) clients.

Interviewees related that Latinos may have been educationally hindered by the merger since TSJC-VC could only offer the associate of applied science degree which is terminal, instead of offering a transferable associate degree. A Latino interviewee said that low-end terminal degrees tend to put individuals into the work force offering immediate gratification as opposed to continuing in the pursuit of a higher degree or educational obtainment. Another concern to the Latino interviewees was that Latino students were kept in remedial programs, exhausting sponsor or other agency funding and leaving the students lacking funds to continue with their education.

Lack of employment opportunities for the Latino population within TSJC-VC

Interviewees felt that after the merger Latino's were under represented in the administration and faculty. Latino interviewees voiced their concern to the lack of Latino administration and faculty at the TSJC-VC after the merger.

There were some negative responses indicating a lack of Latino administration and faculty at the TSJC-VC campus.

Stated a Latino SLVAVS staff member:

A lack of Latino teaching staff at a campus with Latino students as the majority should have a support staff and faculty that is representative of the surrounding communities and student make-up.

Said a Latino SLVAVS staff member:

I don't know how many Latino leaders (TSJC, TSJC-VC) deans, administrators, we have. I don't believe very many, and so consequently, we need student advocates. I only know of one full-time Latino teacher at the Alamosa campus; students need these role models because of the student (Latino) percentage.

A Latino governmental agency said:

You know it is my understanding that the (staff) that were hired at TSJC-VC, I think came from somewhere else than the SLV, they were not Latino.

Two interviewees indicated that the TSJC president is now Latino, which was viewed as a positive change to reflect the student and community populations of the *TSJC and SLV communities*.

Latino interviewees generally felt the representation of Latino staff at TSJC-VC should mirror the population of the student body at the campus and the population of the San Luis Valley. Also, they felt the staff had remained the same after the merger.

No instrument in place to gauge differences between campuses.

Interviewees felt ill equipped and unprepared to gauge or make references to how well prepared students were. They also felt they did not know of nor was there an instrument previously in place to tell if there were any differences in student preparedness.

Interviewees voiced the following concerns (a) there have not been any studies on the impact of the merger; and ; (b) there was no evaluation to judge how well each of the school's graduates were prepared to go into the workforce.

A Latino governmental agency administrator stated:

Not that we have been able to see, we really have not done any studies on the impact of the merger between the SLVAVS and TSJC-VC.

An Anglo Adams State College administrator stated:

I really don't know or have a good way of judging how well prepared the students from TSJC-VC are, nor did I know exactly how well prepared the students from SLVAVS were.

A Latino SLVAVS staff member indicated:

I don't have anyway of gauging if the students are better trained or prepared. I do know that there is an issue in the newspaper here recently that the LPN students or maybe even the RN students are having an extremely difficult time passing the State of Colorado nursing exam.

An Anglo TSJC administrator said:

The SLVAVS graduates were well prepared in a particular skill area. However, the SLVAVS students had fewer educational opportunities in which to develop their academic and interpersonal skills. The merger provided an opportunity for students to increase their educational level above what they were able to achieve at the SLVAVS because the SLVAVS was simply limited in scope

An Anglo Alamosa administrator indicated:

Both (SLVAVS and TSJC-VC) did a good job. This is something (the merger) that was really needed, and I think that they are doing a good job in that area (education).

An Anglo TSJC administrator stated:

I think as far as the preparedness of the Valley students for TSJC-VC, it's comparable; and maybe in some cases, I would say those students (TSJC-VC) are more focused. The reason I say this is that the programs offered at TSJC-VC are more specific, more geared to the job market like nursing

A Latino governmental agency employee stated:

On the surface it would appear that going from a vocational school to a community college would mean better trained students; however, the curriculum has probably not changed that much due to the merger. Maybe there are some new programs that are offered. But the SLVAVS staff has stayed the same with instructors who have been there for many years and who are probably teaching the same thing they did when the school was an AVS.

Interviewees said both SLVAVS and TSJC-VC did a good job in preparing students however, TSJC-VC has an expanded curriculum and now offers the AAS degree. Interviewees felt they did not have the knowledge nor were they equipped to gauge the difference between the SLVAVS and TSJC-VC graduates. The only knowledge they could draw from was personal experience or by reading about it some where. Also, interviewees felt students were well prepared from both campuses. However, the educational opportunities at the SLVAVS were limited to certificate in scope.

Loss of personalized one-on-one instruction. Some negative responses to the merger were largely related to the health occupations programs, specially the nursing program and the lack of one-on-one personalized instruction.

Several interviewees said that after the merger (a) the school lost one-on-one personalized instruction and (b) negative feedback on the health programs, especially the state nursing exam passing rates.

A Latino SLVAVS staff member indicated:

I see a big difference because when we were an area vocational school, we had a lot of one-on-one instruction. I think that the students were better prepared than they are now under TSJC. We now have the technology but have lost the one-on-one interaction in the distance technology classrooms.

A former Latino SLVAVS staff member stated:

I have been receiving negative feedback (personalized instruction) the TSJC-VC health programs, especially the LPN program.

Several interviewees felt not only the loss of the one-on-one instruction, but interviewees also cited the drop in the passing rates in the health programs at the TSJC-VC campus after the merger was completed.

Summary of Questions 2,3,4,5

The majority of those interviewed stated the merger had a definite positive educational, economic, and fiscal impact on the Latino community. The TSJC President's

Office, as well as those interviewed, confirmed there has been a sustained increase in Latino enrollments at the TSJC-VC campus since the merger.

Interviewees also indicated the merger afforded full post-secondary educational opportunities which were not limited to the Latino community only but were also of benefit to the Anglo communities in the SLV. Interviewees felt the educational impact spanned the spectrum from remedial courses to the associate of nursing degree.

Six interviewees said that before the merger, the SLVAVS was a traditional vocational school which offered terminal one-year vocational certificates. However, with the merger and the addition of the AAS degree, students not only received occupational training experience but were also introduced to general education classes including

English, math, humanities, arts, and sciences which provide a more rounded employee. Interviewees voiced that TSJC-VC is stronger now than it would have been had it continued as a vocational school. Interviewees indicated that prior to the merger students were limited to earning a certificate in a vocational program which resulted in a terminal degree. Now, an associate degree can be earned allowing students the availability to transfer to a four-year school to complete their degree.

..... The merger also provided additional educational options to Latino students. Before the merger, a college education other than at Adams State College meant having to leave the Valley to complete a two-year vocational/technical/allied health degree program. The merger bridged the gap from an area vocational school to a community college to a four-year degree, all available within the San Luis Valley. Residents and students also felt the merger provided the Valley with an institution that instilled pride, ownership, and more prestige than did the old vocational school.

..... Interviewees also felt the new community college afforded working adults the flexibility to take one course or a program, according to their work or personal schedules. The community college system also offered students expanded educational programs and affordable tuition. This helps students receive skills and an education they can put to use right away.

..... Interviewees said the merger offered more opportunities in the form of expanded course and program offerings. These new resources included academic offerings, remedial tutoring, full-or part-time student aid, GED, and ESL, programs to help with Latino student success and retention rates. Interview responses indicated the merger offered more full-service and advanced educational opportunities for Latinos. These

choices ranged from vocational certificate programs to the Associate of Applied Science degree. This Latino student growth includes additional participants in remedial, ESL, and GED programs. The merger also provided additional remedial programs with more instructional design towards academic programming, and transfer opportunities for students to obtain higher education.

Interviewees felt the merger was a benefit to the English as a Second Language (ESL) and helped revamp TSJC-VC remedial programming. This significantly helped with the increase in Latino students especially those with a language deficiency.

Employment opportunities

Interviewees indicated the merger provided new employment opportunities with the expansion of the nursing program from the licensed practical nurse (LPN) certificate program to the Associate Degree Nurse (ADN). The childcare program also expanded from a certificate to an associate degree with the addition of a childcare center. Students can now receive both a certificate and an AA degree. Interviewees stated the reality is that students no longer have to leave the Valley to gain entrance into the health programs with the possibility of obtaining an Associate Degree in Nursing.

Also, interviewees said as the nursing program expanded from Licensed Practical Nurse to Registered Nurse, the merger provided the opportunity for TSJC-VC to add more health program advisory committees. This helped to increase the employment exposure and potential for both students and staff. Several interviewees expressed that in the SLVAVS the nursing program was understaffed and underutilized since the only certificate offered in nursing was the LPN. Further, they said the merger helped the nursing programs throughout the state, and that TSJC-VC was actually able to expand the

nursing program through the merger. The current sequence for the health professional is Nurse Aide, LPN, RN.

The new educational opportunities resulting from the merger were perceived by the respondents to include: vocational certificate programs, associate of applied science degree, remedial programs, academic programming, and transfer opportunities for students to continue on to higher education.

Fiscal Opportunities

Both the Anglo and Latino interviewees felt the merger served both communities. Further the interviewees said the merger brought affordability to residents who could not afford a four-year education. Additionally, interviewees felt the merger was an opportunity for students to get acquainted with the rigors of financial aid and student life in an educational setting.

Interviewees also felt the merger provided TSJC-VC more state support in the form of higher FTE student reimbursement, capital construction money, and Carl Perkins federal money. With the additional funding, respondents saw possibilities for TSJC-VC to improve programs, purchase equipment, and add additional state of the art technology and training equipment. Interviewees also felt additional federal and state funding could be addressed because the merger afforded such improvements as state capital construction dollars for the addition of new programs that secured the renovation of the SLVAVS to the TSJC-VC campus. Also, the federal Carl D. Perkins funding became available as a result of the merger.

The respondents saw the merger as a benefit to the SLV. However, they did not see additional business, industry, or customized training that had been enticed to locate in

the Valley. One reason for the lack of growth within the SLV, interviewees felt, was that the Chamber of Commerce did not promote growth in the SLV. This mentality of keeping the status quo is another reason interviewees suggest the SLV does not have the population or commercial zoned regions to support any type of major industry.

Concerns or Disadvantages of the Merger

Terminal Degree

Concerns voiced from Latino interviewees surrounded the fact that the Associate of Applied Science degree was a terminal degree; additionally students may not have been informed of the need for additional coursework to have the full transferability to a four-year school.

Interviewees also said students in sponsored programs such as Rocky Mountain Ser and Vocational Rehabilitation were kept in lower end or remedial coursework thus using up their student funding or eligibility instead of using their resources in the occupational program area. Interviewees felt students were not made aware of their options to delay sponsor funding until they were educationally prepared to enter programs. Thus, they used other sources such as financial aid while in remedial courses. Interviewees also voiced the concern that students did not receive information about the sequence of the educational ladder which could affect their future educational goals.

Interviewees also felt Latino's were under represented in administration and faculty areas at the TSJC-VC campus. Further, they felt staffing of the TSJC-VC campus should be representative of not only the student population but also of the population in the SLV.

Interviewees stated they had no way of gauging how successful the graduates were from either school. They also had no knowledge of what the success rate was before or after the merger.

Several interviewees not only felt the one-on-one personalized instruction was lost in the transition, but they also cited the drop in student passing rate on the State Nursing exam following the merger.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter Five presents the overall summary of the study and discussion of the findings in relation to current literature. In addition, based on findings and interview data collected, recommendations will be given for further research regarding educational mergers that affect postsecondary institutions with a high ratio or majority of Latino student populations.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the educational merger between the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School (SLVAVS) and Trinidad State Junior College (TSJC) and how the merger affected the Latino community. The study asked five major questions. First, the study sought to determine if there was San Luis Valley (SLV) community involvement in the merger. Secondly the study set out to determine what effects the merger had on the Latino population in the San Luis Valley. Third, the study tried to determine if the merger had brought additional employment to the Valley's Latino population due to the new educational opportunities. Fourth, the study set out to determine whether the merger affected the business and industry community in the San Luis Valley. Finally, the study sought to determine if students were better prepared for the work world before the merger or after the merger.

The participants interviewed in this study included 15 Anglos and 15 Latinos, all residents of the San Luis Valley. The criteria used for participant selection included each individual's record of involvement in the SLV, longevity in the SLV, and his or her vested interest in and/or knowledge of the merger.

A case study design was used since the study was of one merger between two schools at the same location. The data were generated by interviewing the 15 Anglo and 15 Latino participants for their understanding, knowledge, and perceptions of the merger between the SLVAVS and TSJC. Also, the effect of the merger on the Latino community was studied.

The findings of the study were organized around the five research questions. Research question one was coded and grouped as question one, with the remaining four research questions analyzed and grouped into a final section. Unlike question one, the rationale for merging questions two, three, four and five was due to the respondents' replies which appeared to cut across the four questions. I then used the interview results and perceptions to develop a common flow which details the respondents' answers and emerging themes.

Findings for Question One

Three themes emerged from the interview data and follow-up correspondence. The first theme was community involvement and the findings which indicated the merger awareness was limited to SLVAVS employees, TSJC board members, the SLVAVS advisory committee, the Alamosa School District Board of Education, and top administrators from the SLVAVS and TSJC. The second theme was that Adams State College had limited knowledge of the merger until its completion. The final theme was

that SLVAVS staff felt they should have been more involved and should have received additional information concerning the merger as it was progressing.

Discussions of Themes

Question One- Theme 1: Community Involvement or Awareness of the Merger

Data collected from the interviewees' original responses as well as follow-up discussions and document analysis made it apparent that in late 1993 the Alamosa Board of Education requested that the SLVAVS director look for a different governance structure with a goal of finalizing a governance structure with TSJC by June 1994. The merger dialogue progressed at an accelerated rate in order to complete the merger by the beginning of the fiscal year July 1, 1994. Merger related literature indicates that business and educational mergers flourished in the 1990s (LaJoux, 1997). In the first theme the interviewees' data suggest that community awareness and involvement were very limited and then only to the entities and memberships directly involved in the management and administration of the merger. Literature indicates that mergers need to involve the top leadership and community in the start of merger dialogue (Marks & Mirvis, 2003). However, responses from both Anglo and Latino participants not part of the merger process presented a picture of limited knowledge. Literature also showed that Latinos in particular do not generally take part in the policy or planning process at educational institutions because Latinos are not often CEOs or in upper echelon positions and, therefore, not directly involved (Brown, Santiago & Lopez, 2003). Research also points out that student, alumni, and faculty are left out of private merger dialogue and have no idea that discussions are occurring (Buono & Bowditch, 1989). The literature and the study data agree that the community at-large is, for the most part, uninformed concerning

the merger. Although membership on the SLVAVS advisory committee was considered representative of the San Luis Valley, the information concerning the merger seemed to remain with the advisory committee. This does contradict some literature indicating a broad based steering committee should be formed (Buono & Bowditch, 1989).

A TSJC administrator did state: “As far as community meetings, they just did not happen. But there was community awareness through the local board of education.” This same respondent also stated: “I can't tell you how many, at least four meetings, possibly more with the Alamosa Board of Education prior to the merger to discuss it. The original involvement was probably more with the SLVAVS advisory council and the school board. The community in itself other than the advisory committee really wasn't much involved in it” (Anglo, TSJC, Administrator).

Interview data from Adams State College, TSJC, SLAVS administration, Alamosa School District, SLVAVS, TSJC and CCCS Board minutes showed community involvement and awareness was limited to SLVAVS employees, board members of TSJC, the SLVAVS advisory committee, the Alamosa School District Board of Education, and top administrators from the SLVAVS and TSJC.

Question One- Theme 2: Adams State College Involvement

The second theme that ASC had limited knowledge of the merger until its completion was borne out by the responses from interviewees at Adams State College and TSJC administration. This supports research which indicates top leadership needs to form a steering committee comprised of members from the community composed of business partners, community agencies, and related fields (Marks & Mirvis, 2003). Alamosa Board of Education, SLVAVS, TSJC, and community college board minutes

clearly show that Adams State College was not included or represent in any merger dialogue.

To support that Adams State College was not a part of the merger an Adams State College administrator, who felt he would have been the most logical person to be involved or included in the merger dialogue because of his administrative position, stated he knew nothing of the merger. The interviewee further indicated the merger had very little impact on Adams State College in regard to students transitioning from TSJC-VC to ASC. To further distance Adams State College's awareness of the merger, the respondent indicated that ASC did not understand the role and mission of the community college. ASC administration perceived ASC to be the institution of higher learning in the Valley, and they felt they should have been involved in the merger process. This response illustrated research which shows community opposition was well documented as an attitude of "not in my backyard" (Currie, Trute, Tefft & Segall 1989). Additionally, the interviewee felt merger dialogue between Adams State College and TSJC-VC would have opened the door to the different educational departments and enlightened ASC's staff to potential student educational transfers from TSJC-VC to Adams State College. Additional dialogue would have helped enhance Adams State College's understanding of the role and mission of the community college system which was about to be introduced into the San Luis Valley. To reinforce the lack of Adams State College involvement, an ASC administrator concluded that the merger was primarily a deal only between the community college and the local school board. Adams State College was not involved in the merger dialogue or process and had limited knowledge of the merger until its completion.

Question One, Theme 3: SLVAVS Staff Involvement

In the third theme, SLVAVS staff felt they should have been more involved, and should have received more information concerning the merger as it was progressing. Interview data showed that the SLVAVS staff who were interviewed had knowledge of the merger; however, they were concerned about it. They felt more information was needed concerning a merger which would affect their livelihood. SLVAVS staff had fears they could lose or not have the option to continue their Public Employee Retirement Account (PERA) benefit package. Literature shows student and staff concerns are centered on restructuring of programs, culture, seniority, anxiety, and confusion within students and staff (Martin & Samuel, 1994b). The literature also indicated that mergers which happen rapidly tend to make the affected staff feel disoriented, frustrated, unsettled, and not ready for the change (Marks & Mirvis, 2003). The SLVAVS staff were also concerned that the benefits accrued as part of the SLVAVS and Alamosa School District employment such as retirement, service time, and sick and vacation leave balances would not be continued or honored. Faculty, support staff, and students asked whether a certificate program articulated to a two-year degree program. Faculty, support staff, and student responses indicated that the SLVAVS staff had many personnel and student-related concerns regarding the merger and wanted more information and dialogue regarding the process.

SLVAVS staff also wondered for whom they would be working. This is reflected in research literature which discusses the pre and post-merger human elements and culture when they are not taken into consideration as part of the merger (Pritchard, 1993).

Supporting literature shows that in most mergers, communications were unclear (Marks & Mirvis, 2003), and in the research literature students and staff felt they were not informed of merger decisions and progress.

SLVAVS staff concerns also related to how clock hours used by the SLVAVS to measure student credit would be transferred to credit hours as required in the community college system. Another question was how financial aid would be calculated. The vocational school model required students to take the entire program, full time, every day to qualify for financial aid; however, in the community college financial aid model, students could take one course at a time and still qualify for financial aid. Staff also were concerned as to where the money would come from to support student financial aid. This supports research that the benefit of the merger to the students and community must include acceptance of student transfer credit, availability of additional financial aid, and additional state and federal dollars (Marks & Mirvis, 2003). As importantly, faculty, staff, and students must be aware that the benefits are there and agreed upon.

The classified SLVAVS staff had concerns and questioned the different classifications for support positions and the continuation of benefits within the community colleges. Under the Alamosa school district, support staff were classified through the rules and regulations of the school board and the Alamosa Teachers Education Association (AEA). SLVAVS staff members were unclear as to the new classifications within the community college system and what the transfer and status process would entail.

The SLVAVS director at the time of the merger indicated through his interview and follow-up correspondence that the SLVAVS staff had been involved and were

informed about their classification and transfer status. The director stated that both the SLVAVS director and the TSJC president reported back to staff periodically while the merger progressed. The SLVAVS director said several staff meetings were held in which the SVLAVS director and the TSJC president updated SLVAVS staff and SLVAVS advisory committee on the status of the merger. Review of the literature does indicate that the leaders set the tone and give information on a constant basis regarding the merger process (Campbell & Goold, 1998). Further research shows that faculty concerns and anxiety are reduced if through faculty meetings, policy, procedure, educational qualifications, and direction are spelled out (Martin, 1994). The director had given a status report on the need for fiscal change of governance and took a straw vote from SLVAVS staff which was in favor of the merger moving forward. Also, the director, before the finalization of the merger, informed the SLVAVS staff that the Alamosa School District would be obligated to find positions for individuals who wish to stay with the district. However, SLVAVS staff still felt they should have been more involved and should have received more information concerning the merger as it was progressing. It also appears from the interviews that clear communication and assurances was not forthcoming.

Findings for Questions Two, Three, Four and Five

Unlike Question One, Questions Two, Three, Four, and Five were merged using interview data and follow-up interviews. I formatted the interview results and perceptions into a sequence of each question asked for reader clarity. Four themes emerged from questions two, three, four and five. Within the four themes, four supporting themes emerged from the educational and employment data collection section.

Interview data collected indicated the following four themes and four supporting themes: theme one (1) the merger was an educational benefit to the Latino and SLV community in that the merger would provide (1a) two-year educational opportunities for the Latino and SLV community; (1b) an educational bridge i.e., post-secondary certificate, to the associate degree, and then associate degree to the four-year degree possibilities; (1c) opened doors to expanded health and childcare careers; and (1d) ESL and ABE opportunities for limited English speaking students and Latinos who were deficient in basic skills. Theme two interview data indicated the associate of applied science degree is terminal. Theme three stated there is a lack of Latino faculty representation in relationship to the Latino student population. Theme four demonstrated a lack of one-on-one student interaction, and no instrument being in place to gauge Latino student success before or after the merger.

Discussion of Themes

Questions Two, Three, Four and Five- Theme 1. Interview data from Questions two, three, four and five indicated the merger had a positive effect on the Latino community and the San Luis Valley community in general because more Latino students attended the TSJC-VC campus than attended SLVAVS. As stated by a county elected official, the Latino student enrollment numbers were up after the merger. Interviewees did not know exactly how many new Latino students were enrolled or what the total increase to the Latino student population was, and interviewees had a hard time separating Latino students from the whole community. Interviewees felt that more Latino students were attending college (TSJC-VC) and that Latino enrollments were up significantly. Literature shows that the national Latino student enrollment at the

community college level is 56 percent (Apodaca, 2001) and that Latinos are attending community colleges at a far greater rate than any other ethnic group; community colleges have become the educational choice for Latinos (Santiago, 1996). To the interviewees higher enrollments meant more Latinos now have access to higher education within the San Luis Valley.

However, most interviewees were not concerned whether the Latino community was the sole beneficiary or whether the entire SLV benefited together from the merger. This supports literature that communities with poor socioeconomics tended to look at the general benefit to a community not their personal gains or agendas as compared to higher socioeconomic groups (Hogan, 1986), and that socio cultural issues receive little attention during the merger process (Buono & Bowditch, 1989). However, very few studies have been completed to understand the cultural side of mergers (Pritchard, 1993).

Interviewees said the merger provided not only a postsecondary educational opportunity other than Adams State College, but also provided a structured career ladder or path in which students could earn a certificate, an associate degree, and then to continue on to a four-year degree. Interviewee data also showed that students could obtain an education without having to leave the SLV. The merger was a positive not only to the Latino community but the entire SLV community.

Interviewees felt the merger was a positive for the entire SLV. They did not see ethnic division, class structure, or any specific population gain more than another because of the merger. The data received from TSJC president's office show an increase in the Latino student population from 47 percent before the merger to 53 percent after the merger. The researcher felt the reason that interviewees looked past the educational

benefit to just the Latino population is due partly to the culture and the Latino mix in the SLV population which is about 50 percent. Most interviewees whether involved in the merger or not aware of the merger did not see or pay attention to ethnicity of students at TSJC-VC.

Subgroup 1a. Latino Educational Opportunities

Interviewees felt the merger now offered two-year educational opportunities for Latinos and the SLV in general. Also, interview data show the merger provided an alternative postsecondary opportunity that Adams State College did not provide for the Latino community. Interviewees said the Valley Campus is part of the community and offers an educational opportunity to most students and community members with the campus name change firmly embedded in the SLV. This supports research that socio-cultural needs should be studied in regard to the benefits of educational mergers in communities where minority, underserved populations, and cultural differences are the norm (Pritchard, 1993).

Educational Bridge for San Luis Valley

Subgroup 1b. Interviewees also expressed that the merger provided an educational bridge within the SLV. Interviewees perceived that the merger provided an educational bridge from a vocational school certificate to a community college associate degree to four-year degree opportunities at Adams State College without students having to leave the SLV. Merger literature shows that without the merger, students would not have educational choices and would have to leave their area of residence to continue their education (Rappaport & Sirower, 1999). Also, the merger provided additional educational and employment opportunities in the health and childcare professions.

Merger research, again, shows that mergers provide for additional programs and expanded curriculum (Mark & Mirvias, 2003).

New Health and Childcare Programs

Subgroup 1c. Interview data show the merger provided the addition of the associate of degree nursing program and early childhood programs. Interviewees' data suggest the merger not only helped student employment and educational opportunities in the SLV, but also helped community college enrollments throughout the state by enhancing the curriculum especially in the health areas. Interviewee and student service admission data show the merger expanded the nursing program in the SLV from the LPN to the ADN program and increased the potential for additional students to enter the program who meet program entrance requirements.

Remedial Programs

Subgroup 1d. Interviewees said the merger provided remedial programs and English as a Second Language (ESL) for individuals with limited English-speaking abilities. U.S. Bureau of the Census (2000) showed an increase in migrants and Latinos under the age of 19 in the San Luis Valley. The migrant influx to the SLV validates Latino interviewees who were concerned there had been language issues for Spanish-speaking individuals in the SLV. Interviewees stated the TSJC-VC is effectively serving Latino students with limited English abilities. Further, interviewees said the learning resource lab had changed and now offers ESL for tutoring Latino students. The interview data show the merger was a second chance for many Valley citizens; especially Latinos who, in many cases, had a high school drop out rate. Another reason to maintain remedial programs is that research shows more Latinos are attending community colleges

than any other ethnic group with community colleges becoming the educational choice for Latinos (Santiago, 1996).

Further, interviewees saw initial student-placement testing as a starting point from which students could begin their college education. In some cases students could use ESL and GED opportunities as levels of completion.

The Associate of Applied Science degree

Theme 2. Interviewees said low-end terminal degrees tend to put individuals into the work force offering immediate gratification as opposed to continuing in the pursuit of a higher degree or educational obtainment. One Latino interviewee said, “Latinos were encouraged to take several terminal degrees at the Valley Campus and are pigeon-holed into low level jobs instead of pursuing a four-year degree.” Not being able to transfer or continue on with their education is reinforced in literature, showing Latino enrollment at the community college at 56 percent. However, research also indicates that Latinos have the lowest retention rate in college, which is 42 percent. This is followed by research that shows Latinos receive 12 percent bachelor’s degrees, only 4.3 percent of master’s degrees and 3.7 percent of the doctorates in 1997-1998 (Brown, Santiago & Lopez, 2003).

Another Latino interviewee referring to students who had obtained the AAS degree responded by stating, “They think that they have done well (Latinos), but the merger closed educational doors on (Latinos) when they tried to continue on with their education both inside and outside the Valley”

Latino governmental agency. To support the lack of transferability, interviewees pointed out that ASC is designated as the AA/AS degree granting institution in the San

Luis Valley. The concern of the interviewees was that the AAS degree is terminal. Interview data suggest Latinos may have been educationally hindered by the merger due to the fact that TSJC-VC can only offer the AAS degree which is terminal, rather than offering a transferable associate degree. This supports the lack of transferability when the only credit which transfers to a four year college from an associate of applied science degree is the academic core.

Theme 3. Interview data, especially from Latino interviewees, point out there were few Latino faculty at the Valley Campus, and they indicated the Latino faculty representation at VC was lacking after the merger in contrast to the majority of the student population being Latino. Related literature shows that with Latino student population growing, it is expected that Latino leadership will not come close to student population growth (Santiago, 1996). Literature reviews shows that the Latino CEO percentage at the community college level is below 4 percent; merger research literature says that faculty and administration should mirror the student population (Santiago, 1996).

Interviewees felt there was a lack of Latino leadership and Latino faculty and that there was a shortage of successful Latino mentors and role models for the Latino student population. This is reinforced by research that surveyed Latino administrators who felt the need to serve as mentors and role models. Research shows that Latino students are more likely to succeed if they have access to Latino mentors and role models (Sedlacek & Fuentes, 1993). Interviewees saw that a Latino had been selected as TSJC president in the year following the finalization of the merger and this was a positive change, reflecting the student and community populations of the TSJC and SLV communities. Interview

data, especially from Latino interviewees, also indicated a lack of Latino faculty at the TSJC-VC. The North Central Association site evaluation in 1995-96 showed only four of the eighteen faculty/administrators were Latino at VC with a Latino student population of 53 percent (TSJC president's office 2000) after the merger.

Theme 4. Interview data shows a need for an instrument to gauge student success before and after the merger. Interviewee data showed mixed results for student preparedness, and several interviewees said the merger showed weakness in the health programs' graduation rates.

Interview data showed there was no plan in place nor tools to measure student success at either at SLVAVS or TSJC-VC before or after the merger. This reinforces that mergers fail to plan or gauge the value and future benefits that a merger will have (Rappaport & Sirower, 1999). Interviewees felt they were unqualified to judge how well prepared the students are from VC, neither did they know exactly how well prepared the students were from SLVAVS. Interviewee data did show that, especially in the health programs, the nursing students had a difficult time passing the state of Colorado nursing exam. This is confirmed by State Board of Nursing notification to TSJC concerning the combined passing rates in the Licensed Practical Nursing program, and TSJC needed to address and improve those passing rates.

Interview data showed mixed results for student preparedness before and after the merger, with the exception that interviewees felt students were less prepared in the health programs citing the decrease in the state board of nursing graduation rates. Interview data also showed interviewees indicated they were unaware of a plan or of tools to measure student success at either SLVAVS before the merger or TSJC-VC after the merger, and interviewees felt they were not qualified to judge how well students were prepared. This supports merger

literature that efforts must be in place to improve competitive position and performance (Campbell & Goold, 1998).

Theme 5. Loss of personalized one-on-one student instruction after the merger.

Several interviewees especially SLVAVS staff said that after the merger the school lost its one-on-one personalized instruction. Interviewees reinforced the lack of one-on-one instruction with data showing negative feedback on the health programs, especially the state nursing exam passing rates. Interviewees, especially SLVAVS staff, felt the merger lost the one-on-one instruction they felt at the SLVAVS. An interviewee stated, "I think the students were better prepared than they are now under TSJC; we now have the technology but have lost the one-on- one interaction in the distance technology classrooms" Latino SLVAVS staff member. This supports literature studies which indicate that merging different campus cultures is a challenge (Marks & Mirvis, 2003), and that there also is the potential for different cultures to meet head on during the merger process when two cultures are forced to become one (Buono & Bowditch, 1989). The feeling of the lost personal touch is proven by literature studies which show the autonomy, structure, and allegiances of the old campus being attacked (Hodgson, 1996). The staff cited negative feedback on the health programs, especially the state nursing exam passing rates and the lack of personalized instruction lost in the distance technology classrooms.

Concluding Statements on the Merger

My Analysis and Conclusions

1. Participants involved in mergers need to understand the complexity and rationale for the merger as well as the affected populations. This suggestion is

made because of the lack of community awareness and especially the short time frame in which this merger took place (Marks & Mirvis, 2003).

Rappaport and Sirower (1999) show that mergers fail because they underestimate the synergy and long lasting effects the merger will have on the community. This directly correlates with other literature studies which show the community needs to understand the rationale for the merger (Campbell & Goold, 1998). Individuals responsible for an education merger need to canvas the region, participants, staff, community, businesses, school districts, post-secondary institutions, governmental agencies and other potentially affected parties before, during, and after the merger process for support, input and participation (Marks & Mirvis, 2003). Before the merger process starts a template that includes populations, community leaders, communities, agencies that could be potentially affected by the merger should be adopted, and it should be in place before merger dialogue proceeds especially in areas where there is a potential growing and underrepresented population (Marks & Mirvis, 2003).

2. Other educational institutions, such as Adams State College, need to be part of the dialogue, planning, and implementing with the Alamosa Board of Education, TSJC, or SLVAVS. This reflects merger literature which shows that mergers often lack community communication and cooperation (Campbell & Goold, 1998). Merger literature also supports the negative synergy that the merger had on Adams State College with administration feeling they had very limited knowledge of the merger since they perceived

themselves to be the institution of higher learning in the SLV (Rapport & Sirower, 1998). Dialogue with Adams State College could have facilitated student transfer issues. Interviewees felt merger dialogue with Adams State College would have opened the door to the different educational departments and would have enlightened the college staff to the merger. This would have been helpful in student educational transfer to Adams State College as well as having enhanced Adams State College's understanding of the role and mission of the community college system that was about to be introduced into the SLV.

3. SLVAVS staff concerns were addressed by both TSJC's president and the SLVAVS director several times before and during the merger. Because of the short time frame in which to complete the merger, staff felt they were not well enough informed on the timelines and progress of the merger. Merger literature shows that when a merger is rushed, it slows success and leads to poor relationships and mistrust (Marks & Mirvis, 2003). Suggestions to help with staff fears and concerns are having meetings or scheduled events which address the rationale for the merger, the nature of the educational systems being merged, and providing a full description of the educational requirements (Marks & Mirvis, 2003). Recommendations of scheduled events to take place before, during, and after the merger are: interdepartmental meetings between campuses, meetings with state representatives regarding employee benefits, interfacing with other educational institutions, utilizing local media and regularly scheduled staff meetings. These suggestions will help staff

perceptions while enhancing communications and the need for additional information and dialogue during the merger process. In addition, this will help to alleviate fears concerning job loss (Pye & Camm, 2003).

4. TSJC-VC needed to showcase the fact that the merger now offered two year educational opportunities for Latinos and the SLV and that the Valley Campus is part of the community with the campus and name change firmly embedded in the SLV. A review of literature indicates that one way to help with faculty concerns is to select a name change that comes from within the organization and community and shows a strong association with the geographical region (Marks & Mirvis, 2003). Also, merger literature demonstrates the need to expose and educate the host community to the economic and social gains the merger will provide (Armstrong, 1976). The SLVAVS needed to educate the SLV that the merger would afford the residents of the SLV an educational bridge from a vocational school (certificate) to a community college (associate degree) to the four year opportunities that Adams State College (baccalaureate degree). An articulation agreement to include K-12 schools, the Valley Campus and Adams State College should be put in place to provide a career ladder which would allow the Latino population the opportunity to continue with their education. The articulation agreement should also include vocational and educational common core numbering as the platform for transfer and credit. Merger literature shows students do want to attend a larger institution to get a better degree (Armstrong, 1976). This reinforces

research by Santiago (1996) which will show the community the new educational opportunities the merger can offer.

5. VC needs a continued effort to provide remedial programs and ESL for individuals with limited English speaking abilities. The reasons for continued remedial programs are two-fold. The Census 2000 data show the U. S. Latino population is 35.3 million (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000), which is a 57.5 percent growth rate, up from 22.4 million since 1990. Latinos now account for 17.4 percent of the population, which appears to be fueled by immigration and a younger population in its prime childbearing years (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000). With a language issue for Spanish-speaking individuals in the SLV, the VC needs to effectively serve the Latino students with limited English abilities, especially Latino students who, in many cases, have dropped-out of high school. The VC needs to continue initial student-placement testing as students use ESL and GED opportunities as levels of completion. Research also shows that 56 percent of Latinos are in the community college system but also have a high dropout rate. Remedial programs are needed to help keep students in college (Santiago, 1996). The second reason for remedial programs is the pyramid-like age structure of Latinos with nearly 40 percent below the age of 19, compared with 29 percent for the total population (Fan & Zuiker, 1998). Another suggestion from sponsoring agencies is to keep students in remedial programs with alternative funding. This will allow students to continue their education without

exhausting sponsor or other agency funding when they are ready to enter college level programs.

6. The second theme of concern to the interviewees was that the applied science degree is terminal. This was confirmed by both Adams State College and CCHE board minutes which had designate Adams State College as the AA/AS degree granting institution in the SLV and VC the Associate of Applied Science degree. Suggestions would be for the VC to address, as part of student orientation, the options and transferability of the degree. Also, VC should work with Adams State College to expand its articulation agreements to ensure student credit transferability.
7. VC needs to address the lack of Latino faculty and administrators. A campus with a Latino population of 53 percent should have administration, faculty, and support staff representative of the student population. Santiago (2003) shows national Latino student population in community college at 56 percent with Latino faculty at fewer than 4 percent. Research shows reasons for the low Latino faculty staffing after mergers is due to the fact that there is less resistance to mergers and the staffing patterns in communities which are comprised of lower class populations (Segal, Bauhmohl, & Moyles, 1980). The second reason for the low faculty staffing pattern shown is because of the low Latino college graduation rates especially at the master's and doctoral levels. Brown, Santiago, and Lopez (2003) stated there are no graduates to fill these college level positions. However, a final suggestion would be to meet

with Adams State College or other state colleges which have high Latino undergraduate and graduate graduation rates and attempt to compile a list of potentially qualified faculty.

8. A recommendation is made to address future mergers by measuring student graduation rates, placement rates and continued education. This measurement would have addressed the perceived weakness in the State Board of Nursing passing rates. The literature asks the question whether the merger truly represents the changes and new programs that were presented to the community (Hatton, 1997). This instrument will help in further studies with interviewees who felt they did not have the tools and were not qualified to judge student's success. Further, due to the perceived loss of personalized one-on-one student instruction, the recommendation would be to revisit the distance technology classrooms and technology programs. Educational literature shows mergers tend to lead toward self-directed learning while embracing distance learning and delivery of programs on the web (Hattton, 1997). Research also shows cultural awareness is essential to the mergers success. The literature also shows that older established firms almost always have negative feelings about the merger (Marks & Mirvis, 2003). To support the research, it may take up to ten years to overcome the negatives of the merger (Marks & Mirvis, 2003). Suggestions would include open communications to address concerns related to the merger, the new culture and the perceived changes.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STATE BOARD FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND OCCUPATIONAL
EDUCATION

Report of the Personnel and Policy Committee
Glenda Barry, Chair
June 10, 1994

TOPIC: San Luis Valley Area Vocational School Merger

Presented by Mary Ellen McEldowney, Director
Legal Affairs and Affirmative Action

EXPLANATION:

The Alamosa School Board has requested that the State Board assist it in delivering educational services to residents of the San Luis Valley. The School Board adopted a Resolution at its March 22, 1994 meeting directing its staff to work toward a merger with Trinidad State Junior College. Merger discussions have progressed rapidly.

The SLVAVS is authorized to deliver vocational certificate programs in the San Luis Valley. Adams State College can offer "two year transfer programs with a community college role and mission but shall not offer vocational education programs" in the Valley. No college is authorized to offer the Associate of Applied Science degree in the Valley. TSJC is willing to meet this need.

The essential terms of the agreement, subject to State Board approval, are as follows:

1. Effective July 1, 1994, the School Board will transfer title for no additional consideration to the SLVAVS facility, fixtures and equipment to the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education subject to a reverter in the event that the facility is no longer used for the delivery of public post secondary educational services.
2. The School Board will contract for services with Trinidad State Junior College for the term July 1, 1994 through June 30, 1995. TSJC will offer employment to all staff formerly employed by the SLVAVS, including ten full time faculty, seven support staff, two staff working on sponsored programs, and the director. TSJC will continue to offer the certificate programs currently offered by the SLVAVS and will add the AAS degree. The School Board will pay TSJC all tuition and fees received from students plus the state general fund allocation received for the SLVAVS.

3. The School Board is requesting that the State Board take back its designation as the administrative body for the SLVAVS effective June 30, 1995 and TSJC shall administrator directly commencing July 1, 1995.

TSJC and SLVAVS are working with Adams State College to assure a smooth transition. We anticipate taking the acquisition of the property and service area issues to the CCHE for its review.

Attachment: School Board Resolution

RECOMMENDATION:

That the State Board approve the essential elements of the merger between TSJC and SLVAVS as described above and authorize staff to enter into any and all agreements necessary to accomplish the merger.

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Note: Retyped from original, 1/5/02.

APPENDIX B

RESOLUTION

ALAMOSA SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-11J BOARD OF EDUCATION

Whereas the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School is the primary institution for the delivery of post secondary education programs in the San Luis Valley; and

Whereas the Colorado Department of Labor predicts that 70% of the emerging careers in Colorado will require education beyond high school but less than a Baccalaureate Degree; and

Whereas the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School has provided vocational, avocational, adult and community education programs throughout the Valley that addressed the present and ongoing educational needs of the communities; and

Whereas the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School is only authorized to award certificates, it is limited in the amount of financial aid available to its students, in its ability to articulate courses and programs between and among secondary, post secondary and with other institutions of higher education, and in implementation of prep-tech 2 + 2 concepts; and

Whereas the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School has limited resources to grow and expand the post secondary vocational and technical education offering; and

Whereas Adams State College is only authorized to offer two year transfer programs but cannot offer vocational education programs; and

Whereas the residents of the San Luis Valley would benefit by having access to an Associate of Applied Science Degree thereby meeting not only the changing labor demands but also providing another educational alternative for the Valley.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ALAMOSA SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-11J, BOARD OF EDUCATION.

That the administration be directed to work toward a merger of the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School and Trinidad State Junior College; and

Be it further resolved that as soon as this merger is accomplished the Alamosa Board of Education will request that the State Board of Community Colleges and Occupational Education take back the School Board designation as an area vocational school.

RESOLVED AND PASS this 22nd day of March, A.D. 1994

Leroy Teem, President

ATTEST:

Theresa Rudder, Secretary

Note: Retyped from original, 1/5/02.

APPENDIX C

GENERAL CONTRACT

THIS CONTRACT, made and entered into this ____ day of _____, 19__ by and between the STATE OF COLORADO, THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education ("SBCCOE") and ALAMOSA SCHOOL DISTRICT RE11-J, ("School Board").

Recitals

1. The School Board has been providing certain post-secondary vocational training, technical education and continuing education to residents of the San Luis Valley at the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School ("SLVAVS");
2. The School Board was designated as an area vocational school by the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education in approximately 1978.
3. The School Board wishes to contract with a state system community college, Trinidad State Junior College ("TSJC" and "College"), for delivery of the post-Secondary programs at the SLVAVS.
4. TSJC is willing and able to deliver post-secondary training at the SLVAVS.
5. The parties agree to work cooperatively to assure the delivery of quality education which meets changing local needs and is responsive to business and industry in the San Luis Valley.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of their mutual promises herein contained and other good and valuable consideration, the parties agree as follows:

1. Programs.
The College agrees to deliver secondary and post-secondary programs to students located in the San Luis Valley at the SLVAVS during the term of this contract. College agrees to offer at a minimum those programs identified in Exhibit "A". After the 1994-95 school year, College shall have authority to provide such Post-Secondary Programs as it shall determine to meet the needs of the San Luis Valley and the spirit of this agreement.
2. The School Board shall pay the College any and all monies received from students and any paid by the state for area vocational school students and any and all SLVAVS fund balances remaining on June 30, 1994.

3. The term of this contract shall be July 1, 1994 through June 30, 1995.
4. Personnel
 - a. The College shall employ all exempt staff identified on the attached Exhibit B. These staff shall be exempt from the State Personnel System and shall receive benefits provided to exempt staff by SBCCOE policy.
 - b. The College shall employ all SLVAVS staff identified on Exhibit B within the State Classified System. State law and regulations provide for the manner of transferring these employees into the state system. They shall be entitled to salary and benefits available to State Personnel System.
 - c. Job descriptions, contract days, and other terms and conditions of employment shall be determined by the College and communicated to the individuals involved as soon as possible.
 - d. All SLVAVS staff shall be transferred into the College and will not be considered "new hires" for Board purposes.
 - e. All annual and sick leave for SLVAVS employees on the books as of June 30, 1994 shall be carried over to the College on July 1, 1994 and may be used consistent with state law, rules and policies of the State Board. Exhibit C describes the anticipated carryover of SLVAVS employees.

Note: Retyped from original, 1/5/02.

APPENDIX D

**Colorado State University
Informed Consent to Participate in
a Research Project**

Title of Project: The merger between the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School and
Trinidad State Junior College: It's Impact on the Latino Community
Principal Investigator: Timothy G. Davies, Ph.D., School of Education
Co-Investigator: Anthony Romero, Vocational Director, Department of Corrections

The purpose of this research is to identify, classify, analyze and interpret the San Luis Valley's community's perceptions of the merger between the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School and Trinidad State Junior College. The study which, consists of five interview questions, will allow the School of Education to gather data from the study participants, which will assist in future mergers.

If you agree to participate at this time, each interview will take approximately 60 minutes to complete. Participants will be assigned a code number to assure confidentiality.

The College of Education believes that your participation will provide important information to the College regarding future mergers. The College will be able to utilize this information in discussions. All data collected will be shared in aggregate form. No individual data will be available.

There are no known risks to the participants involved in this assessment project. However, it is not possible to identify all potential risks in an experimental procedure, but the researchers have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

The Colorado Governmental Immunity Act determines and may limit Colorado State University's legal responsibility if an injury happens because of this study. Claims against the University must be filed within 180 days of the injury.

Page 1 of 2 Subject Initials _____ Date _____

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

Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide not to participate after you have read this consent form, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

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 two pages.

Please retain one copy of this document for your records returning the other signed copy to the interviewer at the time of the interview.

Participant name (printed)

Participant signature

Date

Investigator or co-investigator signature

Date

Page 2 of 2

APPENDIX E

Telephone script

In 1994, The San Luis Valley Area Vocational School and Trinidad State Junior College merged to form Trinidad State Junior College-Valley Campus. Academic year 1994-95 was a transition year for both institutions. During that year, the president of Trinidad State Junior College, the Systems President for the Colorado Community Colleges and Occupational Educational System of Colorado- (now Community Colleges of Colorado), the State Board of Colorado Community Colleges and Occupational Educational Systems and the Alamosa School Board agreed to transfer the San Luis Valley property and governance from the Alamosa Board of Education to the Community Colleges of Colorado.

The purpose of this research is to identify, classify, analyze and interpret the San Luis Valley's community's perceptions of the merger between the San Luis Valley Area Vocational School and Trinidad State Junior College. The study which, consists of five interview questions, will allow the School of Education to gather data from the study participants, which will assist in future mergers.

To better understand the effects that the merger had on the San Luis Valley, we are asking for your assistance. We would appreciate an hour of your time to answer five questions relative to this merger, so that we can better determine your interest in this project.

Attachment B