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NATIONAL-LOUIS UNIVERSITY

MULTIPLE ROLES: THE CONFLICTED REALITIES OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENTS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

In

COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

BY

MARK D. MROZINSKI

Chicago, Illinois

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Community College Leadership Doctoral Program

Dissertation Notification of Completion

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Title of Dissertation: MULTIPLE ROLES: THE CONFLICTED REALITIES OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE MISSION STATEMENTS

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Date of Final Approval Meeting: February 22, 2010

We certify this dissertation, submitted by the above named candidate, is fully adequate in scope and quality to satisfactorily meet the dissertation requirement for attaining the Doctor of Education degree in the Community College Leadership Doctoral Program.

Signature	Date
Rebecca S. Lake	2/22/2010
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Bruce Aldrich	2/22/2010

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Vonnie, without whose support and encouragement, I could not have accomplished this. No one will fully understand the love, commitment, and selflessness you have demonstrated to me. I love you and thank you with all my heart.

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First, I would like to acknowledge Oxford University Press for the permission to use figures 6, 7, and 8, which so elegantly represent various facets of Henry Mintzberg's strategy formation theory. Additionally, Prentice Hall graciously granted permission to adapt Hunger and Wheelen strategy formation framework, which was used as a foundation for figures 5, 10, and 14.

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Abstract

Questions of efficacy have always plagued the use of mission statement as a strategic planning tool. In most planning models, the mission statement serves to clarify goals and guide the formation of strategies. However, little empirical evidence exists validating that mission statements actually improve the performance of organizations, even though regional accrediting commissions in higher education include mission statement and affiliated processes as criterion for accreditation. For community colleges, the question is how can mission statements best be used to move the institution forward in a climate of change and challenges?

The purpose of this study is to explore the role and efficacy of community college mission statements in the strategic planning process. Role refers to the function of the mission statement within the institution's planning framework, both actual and desired, whereas efficacy refers to how well the statement fulfills the desired function.

This national qualitative research employed an instrumental case study design and included nine community colleges geographically distributed throughout the United States. Mintzberg's strategy formation theory and the research of Lang and Lopers-Sweetman into mission statement roles provided a framework for the study. The findings clearly corroborate the multiple roles required of mission statements, and that certain of these roles can facilitate mission statement efficacy. Nevertheless, the findings also unmistakably found some roles are inherently in conflict with one another. The implications of the findings are that institutional planners must be unambiguous at the outset of the mission statement development process as to which roles will be required of the mission statement. This clarity of utility assists in the development of a comprehensible mission statement and will improve its efficacy. A model mission statement development process is presented that combines findings from the research

with other model mission statement development processes. The resulting process can be used by governing boards, presidents, institutional planners, and planning committees at community colleges to improve the efficacy of their mission statement and the strategic planning process.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"The acquisition of knowledge is the mission of research, the transmission of knowledge is the mission of teaching and the application of knowledge is the mission of public service."

– James A. Perkins, President (1963-1969), Cornell University (Simpson, 1988)

Background of Study

The mission statement has been highly revered in business and management literature for over four decades. Mission statements have been thought to improve institutional performance from the early management writings of Peter Drucker (1974), widely considered the father of modern management theory, to Renato Tagiuri (2002), currently professor at the Harvard Business School. Through these last three decades mission statements have been consistently viewed as an indispensable management tool for organizations in the public and private sector. In addition, there is a plethora of popular management literature that puts mission identification as the first and most important task of an organization's leadership (e.g., Abrahams, 2007; Brinckerhoff, 2000; Bryson, 1995; O'Hallaron & O'Hallaron, 2000). Strategic planning theory for higher education seems to hold the mission statement in the same high esteem (Kotler & Murphy, 1981; Norris & Poulton, 1991). By some estimates, mission statements have risen to the level of mythology in what they have done and can do for organizations. Even more optimistically, some contemporary writers say that they have not yet reached their full potential for unifying and driving organizations forward (Sidhu, 2003).

Almost in spite of this confidence, a second voice has arisen questioning whether the promised performance has actually materialized (Davis, Ruhe, Lee, & Rajadhyaksha, 2007; Newsom & Hayes, 1991; Sidhu, 2003). Moreover, there is little empirical evidence that clearly demonstrates a relationship between mission statements and organizational performance. What

does exist shows only a weak or tentative relationship (Bart & Baetz, 1998; David, 1989; Meacham, 2008; Pearce & David, 1987; Sidhu, 2003). A counter argument to the exuberant mission statement supporters posits that the weak or tentative relationship to positive organizational performance is not a result of mission statement as a strategic concept, but rather is the result of poorly formulated or ineffectively implemented statements. To explore these issues, a wide range of researchers and authors have focused on the construction, content, and implementation of mission statements in a wide variety of organizational types (e.g., Abrahams, 2007; De Haan, 1990; Kimball, 1992; Kreber & Mhina, 2007; O'Gorman & Doran, 1999; Pearce Ii & Roth, 1988; Smith, 2006; Wattananimitkul, 2002).

Irrespective of their espoused benefits, vapid performance, and implementation issues, mission statements are now requisite in higher education. Indeed, all six regional accrediting associations include mission as a criterion for accreditation (cf. Accreditation handbook, 2003; Accreditation standards, 2002; Candidacy: Handbook for applicants and candidates for accreditation, 2002; Handbook of accreditation, 2003; The principles of accreditation: Foundations for quality enhancement, 2008; Standards for accreditation, 2005).

Consequently, the overarching value of this study is not in affirming or refuting mission statements as a management tool; for the present and into the near future, they are a compulsory element in higher education planning. The value is in exploring how community colleges are using mission statements and the perceptions of efficacy in those conceived roles. Thus, since the mission statement is an established part of the planning mix, how can it best be used to move the organization forward? Mission statements may feign self-evidence, but a deep, rich understanding will demonstrate that they are complex, purposeful although elusive tools whose definition and practice can be sharpened. Because the rhetorical question is not “if” but “how”,

organizations such as community colleges must continue to examine the practices surrounding their mission statement, understand how mission is used in strategy formation to therefore increase the quality and efficacy of their institution.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to explore the role and efficacy of community college mission statements in the strategic planning process. Role refers to the function of the mission statement within the institution's planning framework, both actual and desired, whereas efficacy refers to how well the statement fulfills the desired function.

Driving Questions

The driving questions arising from the purpose are:

1. What are the identified definition and meaning of a mission statement to the purpose of a community college?
2. What are the similarities, commonalities, or differences among the identified definition and function of community college mission statements?
3. How are community college mission statements used within the strategic planning process?
4. How are mission statements used to assist the implementation of institutional strategy post planning?
5. How well does the collective intention of the mission statement fulfill the explicit role as articulated by the community college?

Context for the Study

This context will provide a brief overview of categories of literature that will be reviewed and synthesized in chapter 2, as well as theoretical and conceptual frameworks for the study.

This background is organized into four sections: (a) the mission in the community college in the United States, (b) hierarchy of mission, (b) conceptual and theoretical frameworks for the study, and (c) current research regarding mission statement function, content, and efficacy.

The Community College in the United States

Community colleges have always been flexible, amorphous institutions. From their early years as junior colleges, to the 1947 Truman Commission Report and the birth of the "community" college, to today's poly-functional educational bodies, they have adapted and changed to meet local and regional educational and workforce needs (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Indeed, the junior college has become much more than the original transfer institutions envisioned by the early pioneers of the movement. Vocational and career education have grown with the colleges, and developmental and community education were added to the portfolios of offerings and services in the 1960s.

It is clear that the mission of the community college has and will continue to grow and change, as it has for the past hundred years. This change is a direct result of its close ties to the local community and its need to address local and sometimes urgent needs. Communities expect their colleges to be vital, agile, and proactive organizations. Considering the dynamic and changing role of community colleges, the role and efficacy of mission statements are quite germane from both a strategic planning and a stakeholder communication perspective.

Hierarchy of Mission

The purpose of the mission statement as defined in the planning literature is to assist organizations in selecting strategies that will shape their future in ways that foster quality and effectiveness (e.g., Bryson, 2004; Hunger & Wheelen, 2007; Kotler & Murphy, 1981; Norris & Poulton, 1991, 2008). In the moment of strategy formation, the mission statement serves as a

litmus test, or a criterion against which to measure one or more possible futures. Thus, its quintessential function is one of delimitation. Multifaceted, complex organizations, such as community colleges, will always be faced with a myriad of opportunities for program development, capital development, growth, and quality improvement. In such cases, the mission statement serves as the bright-line test, assisting the organization by reminding leadership, faculty, and staff of their core business. All strategies pursued by the organization must be measured against such a standard. More often than not, the ill-fitting strategy is tossed aside; new ones are formed, nurtured, and tested against the mission.

By design and composition, community colleges are dynamic organizations. Their purpose, stakeholders, resources required, and outputs generated grow and change over years and decades. Their structure fosters responsiveness. Their ties to local community and their organizational structure foster responsiveness. Moreover, community colleges that do not recognize shifts in key environmental factors create significant problematic vulnerabilities. Mission statements serve as an important way of articulating a response to internal and external shifts, thus influencing the strategy formation process. Of course, strategy formation is just the first step in addressing the changing nature of the environment. Strategy implementation, quality measures, and a feedback loop assist in anchoring change for community colleges in such a dynamic and unpredictable environment.

To many, the terms surrounding mission and mission statement possess a degree of ambiguity. The following framework will be utilized to bring clarity to mission-related terms used in this study: greater mission, local mission, and mission statement. Understanding the subtleties of these terms will also assist in codification of the existing research and scholarship surrounding mission and mission statement.

Greater Mission. Greater mission is generic in nature, describing the overarching purpose of the institutional type (e.g., community college, university, proprietary training school). For example, the greater mission of the community college is distilled from a synthesis of historical literature and present practice. Greater mission is a social construct held by various stakeholders within a system (e.g., institutions and their staffs, consumers of their outputs, the public at large, empirical and scholarly researchers). As such, it is dynamic, although the rate of change can be quite slow due to the size, variation, and disparity among the stakeholder groups. Since change in greater mission requires both a synthesis and discussion of current scholarship as well as an understanding of historical and current practice, change is typically incremental and slow. Moreover, greater mission is seldom articulated clearly and consistently by all stakeholder groups. While organizations may collectively "buy in" to a greater mission, there is an element of selection and variation on the institutional level. Institutions, to a very limited degree, may often pick and choose, specialize and generalize various elements from a greater mission as transposed to the institution. In spite of this, a collective understanding of how the institution fits among its peers with regard to function and purpose is common.

Organizational Mission. Organizational mission describes the purpose of a specific institution. Organizational mission will vary from greater mission to the extent that the local institution addresses specific local environmental and stakeholder factors in its functionality. Like greater mission, organizational mission is a collective construct that is dynamic and subtle, but, because of the reduction in stakeholders and increasingly facile communication among those stakeholders, change in organizational mission can occur at a much faster rate than that of greater mission. Generally, organizational mission is a subset of greater mission; however, there can be specific variant elements that present themselves in organizational mission long before they

would emerge in greater mission. Indeed, a mission function may be tried and discarded long before it would ever emerge in a greater mission discourse. Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between greater mission and organizational mission.

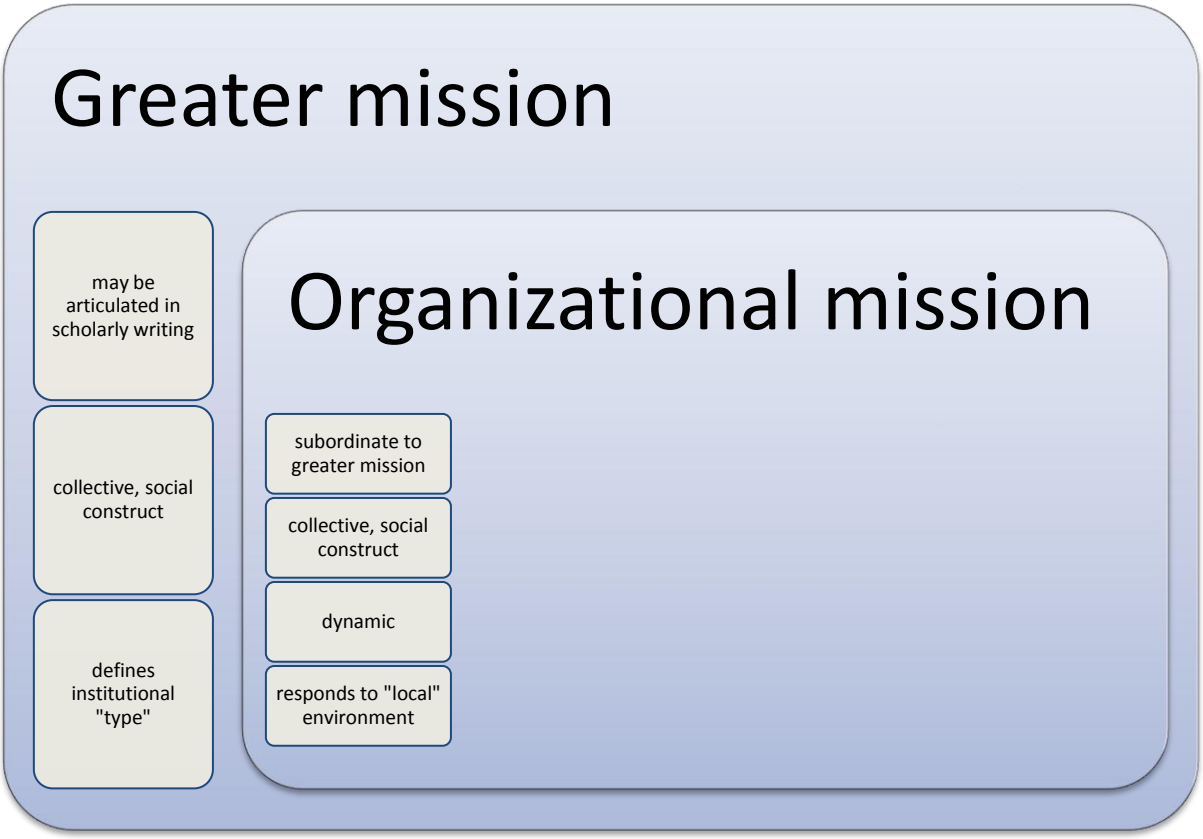

Figure 1. The relationship of greater mission to organizational mission.

Mission Statement. At their best, mission statements attempt to capture organizational mission as a snapshot in time to assist in consensus building and strategy formation. This snapshot is never comprehensive and rarely current. Because of the resources involved in developing and updating mission statements, they are revisited only intermittently. It is important to note that not all organizations have mission statements, but all have an organizational mission, whether or not it is articulated in writing.

It stands to reason that organizational mission would be the most dynamic of the three constructs. Mission statement by its nature is static, and greater mission by virtue of the size of

the stakeholder groups is sluggish and changes incrementally. Not surprisingly, mission statements do not always clearly reflect the mission of the institution. Elements of greater mission can also be subsumed by organizational mission even though they may not be emphasized or fully adopted by the institution. In this way, mission statements can sometimes reflect a desired, ideal functional state rather than a portrait of how things are; local understanding of greater mission can affect the character and scope of a mission statement. The subordinate and overlap relationships between the three constructs are illustrated in Figure 2.

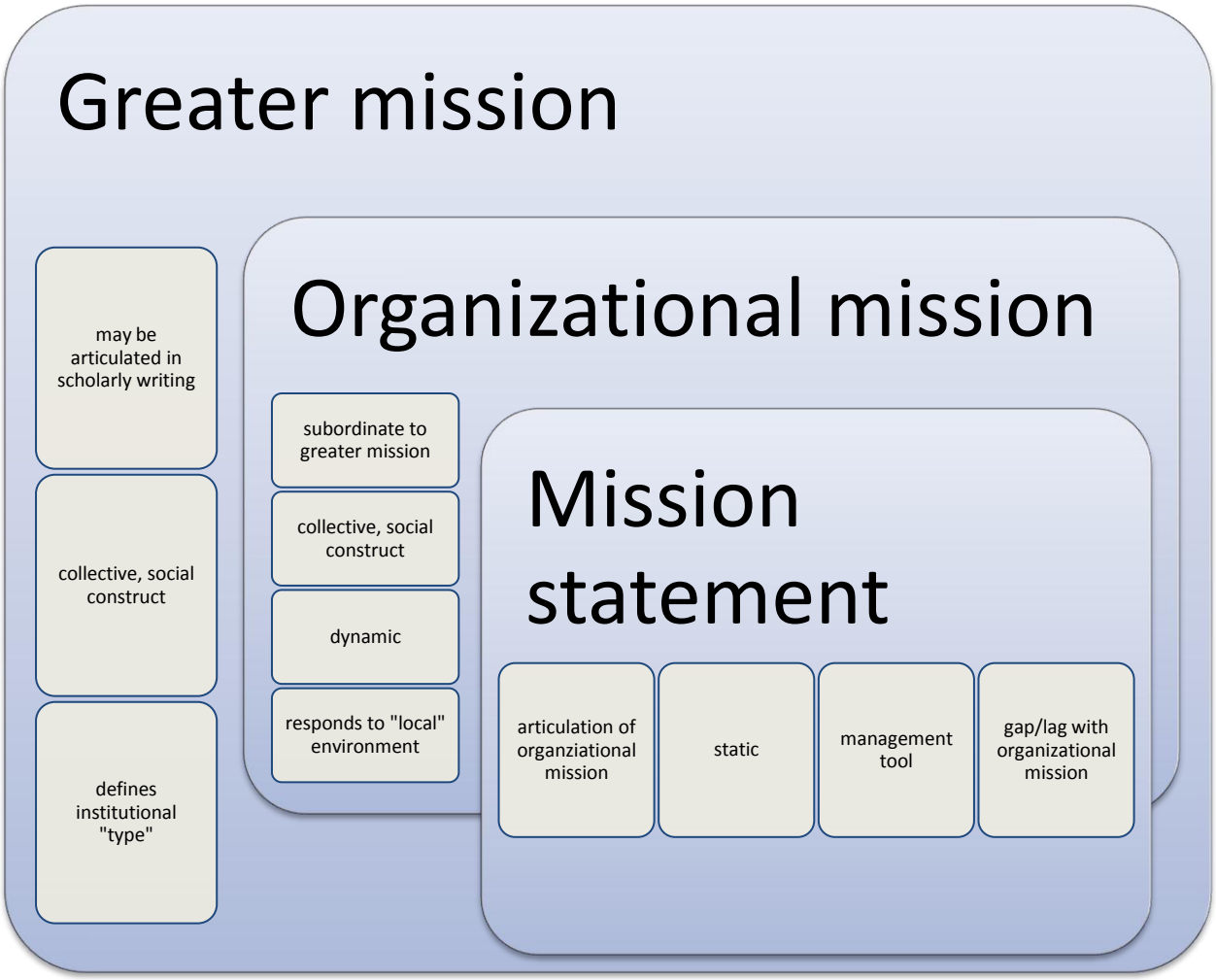

Figure 2. The relationship of greater and organizational mission to mission statement.

Finally, it is important to understand that mission statement is a management tool. Greater mission and institutional mission would exist quite apart from their articulation and communication in a mission statement. The phenomenon of mission statement evolved with specific purposes in mind: to assist in strategy formation, and ultimately improved quality of output. It is this tool, within the community college context, which is the focus of this study. Moreover, the focus is not to explore the "if", but the "how." As demonstrated, mission statements are a mandate of higher education accreditation. Thus, if community colleges must

engage in mission statement creation, maintenance, and integration practices, those efforts must be fruitful and efficacious.

Conceptual and Theoretical Frameworks

There is broad consensus among planners that mission statements should provide direction to institutions in the strategic planning process. In spite of this, and though common elements have been identified, a single formulaic model for mission statements does not exist (Graham & Havlick, 1994). Consequently, it can be inferred that there will be corresponding variation in the perceived function of mission statements among community college planners (i.e., what role does the mission statement play in the planning process, does the statement actually guide the institution, is it irrelevant or not dynamically related to the direction of the institution). There will be multiple perspectives and lenses impacting planners' perceptions of mission statement. Moreover, small variations in perception, attitude, and paradigm can have a subtle yet meaningful impact on the mission statement's role in guiding institutions. Ultimately, this research endeavors to explore the stated function as posited by the college, the function as perceived by the institutional planner, and actual function that the mission statement plays in guiding or reflecting the direction of the college as demonstrated in its planning documents.

The development of strategic planning theory over the past four decades has led to the emergence of a common planning framework, which is represented in the literature. Although various scholars and practitioners recommend variant models, some common components can be observed. David Hunger, professor emeritus at Iowa State University, and Thomas L. Wheelen, professor of management and administration at the University of South Florida, have developed a framework that represents the mainstream of current thought in the strategic planning literature. Hunger and Wheelen's (2003) strategic planning framework consists of four discrete phases: (a)

environmental scanning, (b) strategy formation, (c) strategy implementation, and (d) evaluation and control. Because of the simplicity and elegance of this model, it is helpful to use as a baseline when comparing various strategic planning models in the literature and practice, and how mission statement might function within these processes. For this reason, the Hunger and Wheelen framework has been chosen as the common planning framework for this research, and it will be used as a baseline model when comparing various strategic planning models and functions.

Strategy formation theory as posited by Henry Mintzberg (2007), professor of management studies at McGill University, will provide a broader framework for understanding how strategies form within organizations and will enrich the understanding of what role mission statement might play in the formation of strategies. Mintzberg's theory can best be described as a series of continuums that when combined provide a perceptive model of how strategies form within an organization. The first continuum describes strategies as either a tangible position or a broad perspective. The second continuum describes strategies as either planned or emergent. Those continuums can be combined in a quadrant diagram that describes four basic strategy formation processes: (a) strategic planning, (b) strategic venturing, (c) strategic visioning, and (d) strategic learning. Finally, Mintzberg combines two additional continuums (i.e., internal power structure and external environment) to create four basic organizational forms: (a) the Entrepreneurial Organization, (b) the Machine Organization, (c) the Adhocracy Organization, and (d) the Professional Organization. These concepts will be more fully described and explored in chapter 2.

Finally, Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991) outline a useful framework for viewing the role of mission statements in higher education. Daniel W. Lang is currently professor of

Management at the University of Toronto, and Rosanne Lopers-Sweetman is currently Director of Special Projects to the Vice President and Provost at the University of Toronto. Their research explores the role or function of mission statements and identifies a taxonomy of mission statement content. Lang and Lopers-Sweetman outline five roles that mission statements can fill: (a) goal clarification, (b) smoke screens for opportunism, (c) descriptions of things as they are, (d) statements of aspirations, and (e) mission statement as marketing tool. Additional roles beyond those identified by Lang and Lopers-Sweetman will be described and synthesized as they emerge from the data. Their roles of mission statements will provide a helpful lens through which to view this research.

In summation, a common planning framework adapted from the strategic planning model of Hunger and Wheelen (2003) will be used as a framework for comparing participant college processes and functions. Mintzberg's (2007) strategy formation theory will provide a framework for exploring strategy formation and how mission statement might function in that process. Lang and Lopers-Sweetman's (1991) five roles of mission statements will provide a lens through which to view the function and efficacy of such statements. Together, these frameworks will provide scaffolding upon which the study can be organized, codified, and triangulated.

Mission Statement Research

There is considerable ambiguity with regard to exactly what a mission statement is, or should be. Interlaced in the literature are such terms as purpose, principles, philosophy, distinctive competencies, business definition, business scope, core values, critical success factors (see Sidhu, 2003, p. 441). Some quite detailed guides have arisen to aid organizations in creating and revising mission statements, some with detailed meeting plans. J. Kent Caruthers and Gary B. Lott (1981) lay out a well-developed methodology for engaging community and stakeholders

in mission statement development and revision. Caruthers is currently Senior Partner and Director of Higher Education at MGT of America, a management consulting firm, and Lott is currently Executive Vice President Emeritus at St. Johns River Community College, Florida. As expected, they feel that the mission statement is the first and most important part of the planning process; interestingly, they concede: “The most important result of strategic planning may well be proposed change in the mission statement itself” (p. 19).

A great deal of research has followed the implementation of mission statements in higher education in the last two decades. Most has focused on content comparisons between like institutions (e.g., Kreber & Mhina, 2007; O'Hearn, 2004; Smith, 2006; Wattananimitkul, 2002). A summation of the literature on mission statement analysis is presented in chapter 2 along with a taxonomy of mission statement research, which codifies existing research into five subsets: (a) general research, (b) content analysis, (c) relationships, (d) efficacy, and (e) roles.

In an example of research from Subset II: content analysis, Spencer Stober (1997), currently Associate Professor of Biology at Alvernia College, Reading, Pennsylvania, studied 120 mission statements of institutions accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. Stober found that:

> Colleges and universities within this research sample distinguished themselves according to the six major Carnegie Classifications, but when the research sample was considered according to public/sectarian/non-sectarian categories, it also became clear that these same institutions described themselves using descriptors not found in the Carnegie Classification scheme. Public institutions were more likely to reference words such as "access," "opportunity," and "support." Sectarian institutions were more likely to reference words such as "life," "faith," and "values." And non-sectarian institutions were more likely to reference words such as "arts," "sciences," and "society." These missions complemented one another and should remind us that all educational sectors may be necessary to serve the "public good." (pp. v-vi)

While such detailed analysis of mission statement documents will not be part of this study, a review of similar research literature will provide a helpful context for examining the

statements, identifying their role, and assessing efficacy. Additionally, this analysis and synthesis will provide a useful context for the study as many of the perceptions of the participant planners may reflect either the promise or the disappointment with mission statement as a planning tool. These perceptions may be a result of theoretical imprinting, personal experience, or some amalgamation of both. It is fully expected that these amalgamations will be transparent and unconscious to the institutional planners and will provide opportunity for rich discussion.

The use of the mission statement as a tool for organizational effectiveness has been questioned almost from the earliest days of the Design School of strategic planning (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, & Lampel, 2005) in the 1950s. Chapter 2 contains a well-developed section on the efficacy literature in both the business arena and higher education (e.g., Bart & Baetz, 1998; Bartkus, Glassman, & McAfee, 2000; Davis, et al., 2007; Newsom & Hayes, 1991; Pearce & David, 1987). For example, in his article entitled "Mission Statements: Is It Time to Shelve Them?", Jatinder Sidhu (2003), currently Assistant Professor of Strategic Management at Erasmus University, Rotterdam, was concerned with the lack of empirical evidence demonstrating the benefits of mission statement as a planning tool, thus he attempted to demonstrate a relationship between mission statements and institutional performance as measured by sales growth. His results showed such an association did indeed exist. To summarize: "It would seem to early yet to discontinue with mission statements. While clearly much more research is needed to establish a definitive link between mission statements and performance, [this research] does point in the direction of such a link" (p. 445). However, because of the small size of the study sample, the results must be considered tentative at best. Sidhu concedes this and offers his study as exploratory, and encourages additional research in this area.

Definition of Terms

Goal – an aim or end to which efforts are directed; often synonymous with objective; generally a component of a strategic plan.

Greater mission – purpose of the institution type (e.g., the community college in the U.S.) as socially constructed; may differ to varying degrees from the local mission or the mission statement; sometimes articulated in policy briefs and scholarly literature.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – quantifiable measurements or benchmarks typically tied to mission statement that can demonstrate mission fulfillment; a measurement of performance.

Local mission – the non-articulated, socially constructed form of mission for a single institution (i.e., the commonly understood mission of the local organization); is represented in written form in the mission statement.

Mission statement – written statement of purpose published in the college's catalog, on the college's web site, or other planning documents; generally required by accrediting bodies; represents local mission.

Planner – point person responsible for the institutional planning process, in whole or in part at a participant college; may play a role in designing the process, shepherding plans through the process, or actually writing the plan in whole; not a group, taskforce, or committee, although this person may serve on such a body; used interchangeably with strategic planner, institutional planner, and participant planner.

Role – a discrete functional purpose within a framework or process.

Strategic planning process – the institutional process whereby the participant college creates a written, organizational plan of action for presentation and approval to its governing

board; process is typically comprehensive in nature, which includes various stakeholder input points and environmental scans; plans are typically multi-year in scope; typically has four phases: (a) environmental scan, (b) strategy formation, (c) strategy implementation, and (d) evaluation and control.

Strategies – inclusive of goals, objectives, priorities, and other action statements; Mintzberg et al. (2005) define strategies quite broadly as either a plan of action (i.e., planned) or a realized pattern of action (i.e., emergent).

Vision statement – represents an idealized picture or aspiration of what the institution will be at some point in the future; in the traditional planning model (see Bryson, 2004) vision statement is generally separate from the institution's mission statement, although mission statement may serve a visionary function or have a visionary component (Lang & Lopers-Sweetman, 1991).

Concept Mapping

A concept mapping process was utilized to assist in identifying elements, frameworks, and concepts relating to the research. The purpose of concept mapping is to help bound the research, and to help give shape to the purpose, driving questions, and the literature review. The mapping also provided a venue for soliciting feedback from peers and mentors, which assisted in shaping the study. Figure 3 illustrates the final outcome of the concept mapping process. Theoretical and conceptual frameworks are represented in purple; stakeholders to the mission statement process are represented in blue; and foci of the research are represented in green.

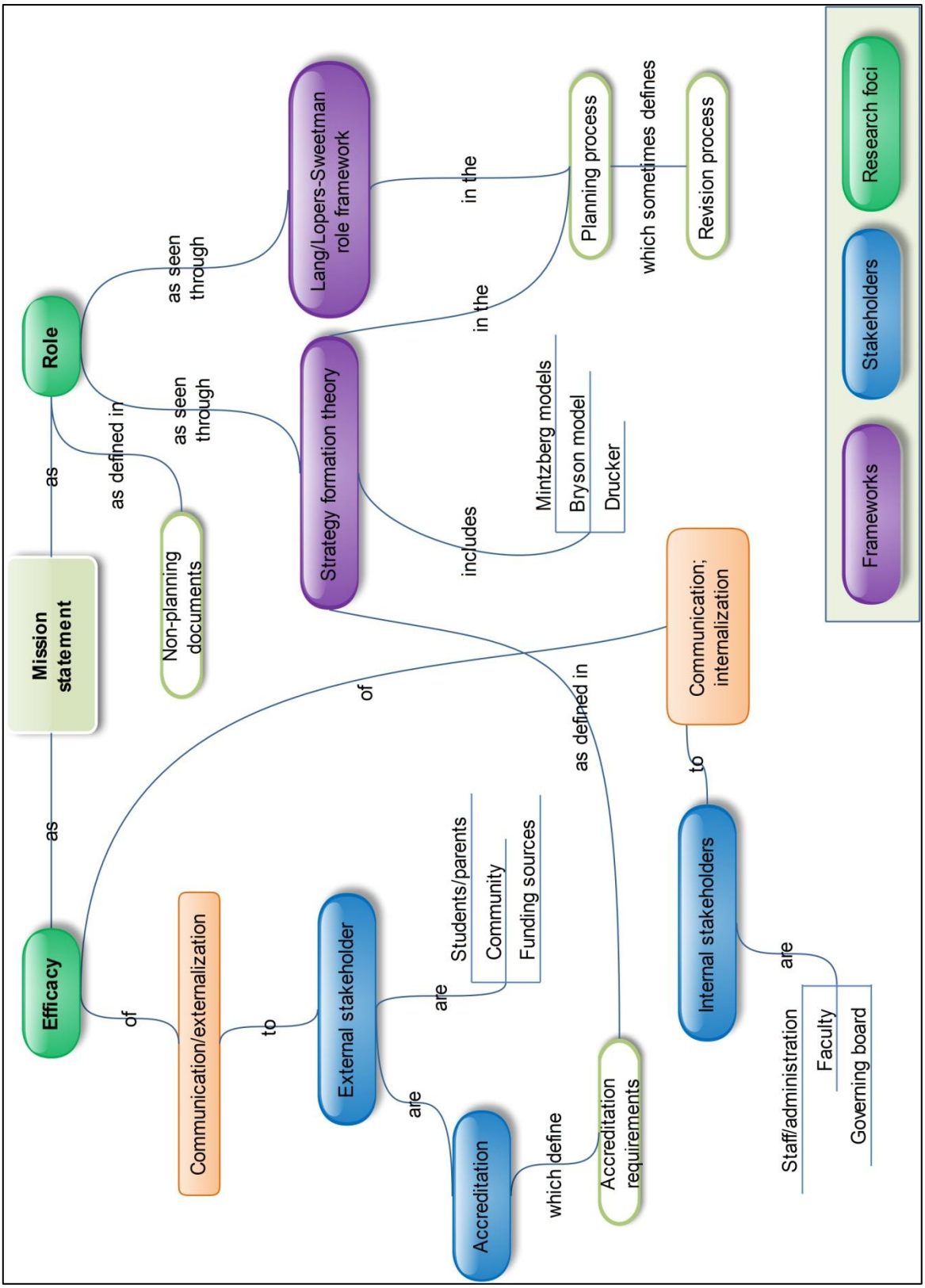

Figure 3. Mapping of research concepts relating to the roll and efficacy of community college mission statements.

Brief Description of Study Design

This qualitative study will use an instrumental case study design. Eight to ten nationally disbursed community colleges will be selected for participation in the study through a combination of purposeful sampling and maximum variation sampling criteria. Institutional planners will be identified at each of the selected community colleges to participate in an interview and to serve as an institutional contact for obtaining planning documents.

Techniques for Data Collection and Analysis

The primary data collection techniques will be a pre-interview questionnaire, interviews with the executive-level person responsible for strategic planning at the participant colleges, and review of the colleges' strategic plans.

Pre-interview Questionnaire. A survey will gather preliminary data on the participant college's strategic planning process and the role and function of mission statement. The survey will also gather basic demographic information on the participant planner. Data from the pre-interview questionnaire will inform the interview with the participant planners, serve as a triangulation source, and provide contextual information to facilitate the transferability of the results.

Interviews of Institutional Planners. Institutional planners will be identified and interviewed by telephone at each participant college. Interviews will be semi-structured, or standardized open-ended (Patton, 1987), based on sub-questions addressing the driving questions of the study. The semi-structured nature of the interview will allow for the researcher to cover the same essential driving questions with each participant while allowing the latitude to pursue any variation and diversity in planning processes and philosophies. The participants will be provided the interview questions one to two weeks in advance for review. The interview will be

recorded and transcribed for later analysis. Interviews will last approximately 30 to 60 minutes in length; field notes will be taken. Each participant will have the opportunity to review and correct the interview transcript prior to theming and coding.

Document Review. Mission statements will be gathered and reviewed from participant schools. Various publication methods for the mission statements will be documented (i.e., college catalog, course schedule, web site, strategic plan). Current mission statements will be examined as well as the earliest statement available for each participant college.

Strategic plans will be gathered as well as any collateral material from the planning process (e.g., environmental scans, presentation materials). Any printed description of the planning process and the mission statement function will be gathered. It is understood that all institutions may not have such documents available. As such detail will be the core of the participant interviews, any documents gathered will provide triangulation of the interview data. Additional context will be provided by basic descriptive data describing the college as found in the IPEDS data base (*Integrated postsecondary education data system*, n.d.). This data will cast a broad organizational context for the role and efficacy of the mission statement, thereby providing practitioners further detail to assist with transferability of the results.

Data Analysis. Creswell's (2007) data analysis spiral will be utilized as a framework for data analysis, and is loosely ordered as: (a) data managing; (b) reading and memoing; (c) describing, classifying, and interpreting; and (d) representing and visualizing. Data analysis will include a priori theming and coding of interview transcripts and documents. In the analysis of the mission statement function, Lang and Lopers-Sweetman's (1991) roles will be used. Any descriptions of the function found in planning documents will serve to triangulate the analysis. Qualitative data analysis software will be utilized to assist with the data analysis process.

Field notes can provide a further triangulation of perceptions, attitudes, and other non-verbal communication in interview settings (Merriam, 1998). It is helpful for the researcher to "record his or her reactions to something that the [participant] says, to signal the [participant] of the importance of what is being said, or to pace the interview" (p. 87). Field notes will be used to triangulate the interview transcripts and provide further illumination to participant responses.

Significance to the Community College Field

The significance of this study to the community college field is demonstrated in three distinct ways, all related to economy and efficacy of efforts: (a) as a result of declining resources, planning efforts must be efficient; (b) the community college mission is dynamic and shifting; and (c) accreditation requires mission efficacy. Strategic planning and, by extension, mission statements, continue to fascinate and engage planning professionals in higher education. By nature, these professionals are adept at research, learning, and complexity, and as a result, much time and energy has been devoted both to pure research on the issue and to armchair extemporizing. For purely pragmatic reasons, community college planners are in many ways leading the charge (e.g., Grummon, 2007). Declining resources and increased accountability from various stakeholders (e.g., governmental bodies, tax payers, elected officials, parents, and students) make planning effectiveness even more urgent and essential. As these forces become even more acute, it is vital that the efforts of community college planners be focused and effectual.

One of the key external stakeholders to community colleges is regional accrediting commissions. Without accreditation, community colleges would be, among many things, unable to disperse federal financial aid. Moreover, the ability of students to transfer coursework to other post-secondary institutions would be jeopardized. To the point, the six regional accrediting

commissions for higher education in the United States (i.e., North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Middle States Commission on Higher Education, Western Association of School and Colleges, Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities) each requires mission review and implementation as part of their accreditation criteria. The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association, the largest regional accrediting body in the United States, dedicates one of its five criteria for accreditation to the mission statement. Criterion one states "the organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments" (Handbook of accreditation, 2003, p. 3.1.1). Sub-criteria are more specific:

> 1.a. The organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments.
>
> 1.b. In its mission documents, the organization recognizes the diversity of its learners, other constituencies, and the greater society it serves.
>
> 1.c. Understanding of and support for the mission pervade the organization. (Handbook of accreditation, pp. 3.1.1-3.1.2)

Community colleges must address this criterion to achieve accreditation, and addressing it requires processes, time, and resources. In an era of dwindling resources, it is critical that these efforts be focus, efficacious, and fruitful.

The community college, perhaps more than any other higher education institution, has seen its mission expand and shift. The "people's college", by definition, must respond to local needs: the needs of the community it serves (i.e., workforce, economic, and political needs). For example, offering of the community college baccalaureate has shifted the paradigm of the junior college construct. At present, sixteen states are permitting community colleges to offer select bachelor's degrees (*Community College Baccalaureate Association*). This is just one example of how the mission of the community college is not static but very much alive and dynamic. As

such, appropriate and effective use of mission statements is vital if community colleges are to remain relevant, responsive, and flexible, and the processes built in and around mission statements must serve these ends.

Chapter Summary

Therefore, this study will provide important insights into the role and efficacy of mission statement as practiced by community colleges throughout the United States. Mission statements are a central part of the planning and accreditation processes for all community colleges, and as such, significant resources are committed to their generation and maintenance. This research seeks to understand how mission statements are being utilized within these contexts and arrive at naturalistic generalizations that may assist strategic planners at community colleges in making their mission statement processes more effective and fruitful.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction

It would seem that "the mission" should be one of the most self-evident constructs within an organization. It is also reasonable to expect that the employees of an organization would have an understanding of their own function within the organization, and how that function contributes to a larger purpose. Granted, large, multi-functional organizations have missions that reflect, to some degree, the complexity of their outputs and stakeholders. However, it still remains a reasonable expectation that organizations should be able to articulate their purpose to internal and external constituents with a certain degree of confidence and simplicity.

Why then do organizations find articulating "the mission" in the form of a mission statement so elusive, ambiguous, and even perhaps fruitless? A great deal of effort and resources are often devoted to developing and maintaining organizational mission statements, yet few can agree with certainty on an effective model, an integration strategy, or a measurement for efficacy. In this regard, community colleges are no exception.

Yet, in spite of uncertainty, and beyond the reality of their self-evidence, organizations are compelled to create them. Indeed, mission statements have become de rigueur for all well-managed organizations. Moreover, in higher education, they are a requirement for accreditation by all the six regional accrediting bodies. For community colleges, the discussion regarding strategic planning and mission statements has moved from "if" to "how". If community colleges are to expend the effort and resources in creating and maintaining mission statements, as they are required to, how best can they capitalize on their efforts? Questions of function, practice, process, and effectiveness come to the forefront. Organizations such as community colleges must continue to examine the practices surrounding their mission statements to understand how

mission is used in strategy formation and thereby increase the quality and efficacy of their institutions.

Historical Context: Evolution of the Community College Greater Mission

Community colleges have always been perceived as flexible and adaptable institutions. From their early years as junior colleges, to the 1947 Truman Commission Report foundational transformation of the "community" college, to today's poly-functional educational institutions, they have adapted and changed to meet local and regional educational and workforce needs (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). The original concept of the junior college was quite different. Junior colleges were conceived to lighten the burden of four-year colleges and universities by offering lower division coursework with the goal of an associate's degree and transfer. The 1947 Truman Commission Report, a progressive document, called for "junior colleges to become an avenue to enhance access and used the term *community college* to convey the intent of these institutions offering the comprehensive curricular mission that permeates community colleges today" (Bragg & Townsend, 2006, p. xx). Vocational and career education have grown with the colleges, and adult and community education were added to the portfolio in the latter half of the century (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

There have been three important mission shifts in the evolution of the community college in the United States: (a) from a singular focus on pre-baccalaureate, transfer curricula (i.e., junior college), to multiple focus, with a more complex mission (i.e., community college) in the 1950s; (b) from the multiple focus of the community college, to the explosive development of vocational and career training in the latter half of the 20th century; and (c) from the career and pre-baccalaureate institutions of the 20th century, to offering select baccalaureates in the first decade of the 21st century.

Figure 4 illustrates the development the community college mission overlaid with key milestones in functional development.

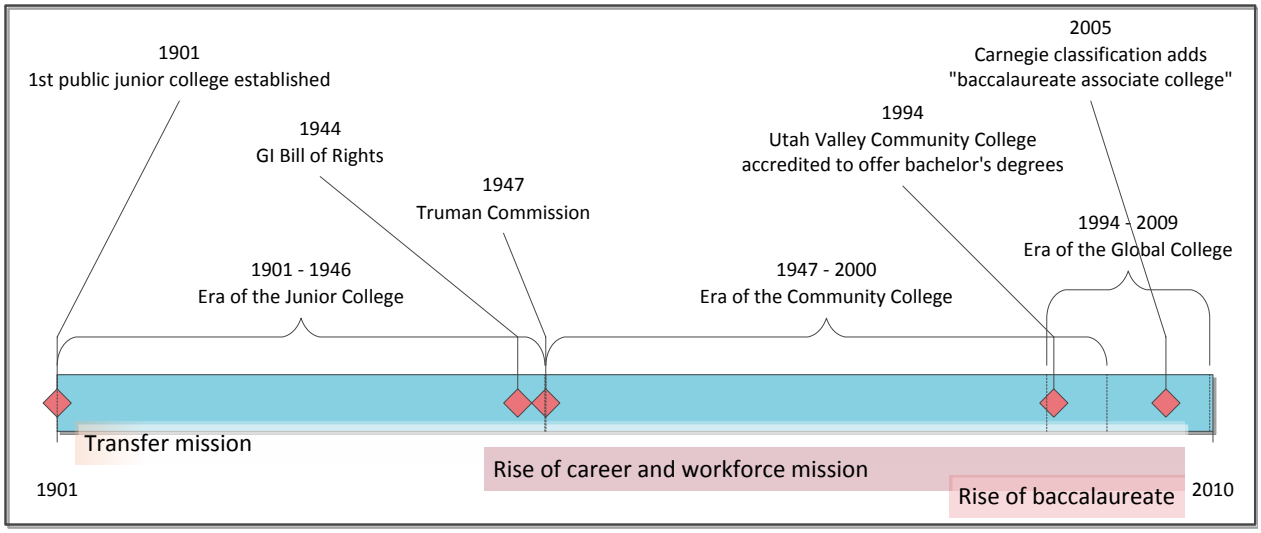

Figure 4. The development of the community college mission in the United States.

At its inception in 1901, the junior college movement was primarily single-focused, the pre-baccalaureate transfer curriculum (Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Townsend & Bragg, 2006). Even today, with multiple and often contradictory curricular missions, many stakeholders, both internal and external, still cite this single focus as the primary function of the community college. Notwithstanding this perception, it is clear today that students come to colleges with diverse educational goals. Not all those enrolled at community colleges are seeking the baccalaureate degree. For example, in the 2003-04 academic year, only 36% of students enrolled in community colleges expected to transfer to a 4-year college (Horn & Nevill, 2006). Then, why are they coming? Table 1 illustrates that predominantly, students are attending to prepare for a career (i.e., complete an associate's, complete certificate, obtain job skills).

Table 1. *Percentage of Community College Students Reporting Various Reasons for Enrolling in a Community College: 2003-04 (Horn & Nevill, 2006)*

Reason for enrolling	Percent
Transfer to a 4-year institution	36%
Transfer to another college	15%
Complete an associate's degree	43%
Complete certificate	17%
Obtain job skills	42%
Personal interest	46%

Note. Respondents could cite more than one reason for attending.

The rapid growth of career and technical education (CTE) in the latter part of the 20th century, what Brint and Karabel (1989) called "the great transformation" (p. 102), dramatically altered the original transfer mission. This transformation was further accelerated by state and federal grant funding legislation specifically targeting career and technical programs. In view of the primary stakeholders, the student, career training has become an equal, if not primary function at community colleges (Horn & Nevill, 2006). Although there have been social criticisms of this shift (e.g., Brint & Karabel, 1989; Clark, Townsend, & Bragg, 2006), career and technical programs at community colleges are firmly embedded in the curriculum, the community college funding model, and the collective social construct or mission.

Today, the most controversial and dramatic of the mission shifts is just commencing. Beginning in the late 1990s, a small number of community colleges began offering select bachelor's degrees to their students (Burke & Garmon, 1995; Floyd, Skolnik, & Walker, 2005). Until this time, the functionality and positionality of community colleges within the higher education spectrum was firmly established. Community colleges fulfilled a specific role with

regard to their four-year counterparts, and it seemed that both institutional types had settled into a symbiotic, although not equal, relationship; it has always been clear that 4-year colleges and universities still held the power of prerogative. They chose which community college students they would accept and which coursework they would articulate in partial fulfillment of their degree requirements. In many states, they hold the purse strings of the higher education system.

In response to the challenge of upper division course dominance, 4-year colleges and universities have strongly opposed this mission shift commonly claiming "mission creep" on the part of the community college, and countering with evidence that 4-year colleges and universities are meeting the need (e.g., Farnsworth, 2006; Fliegler, 2006; Floyd, 2006; *News - IBHE to review report on bachelor degrees at community colleges*). At present, 17 states permit community colleges to offer bachelor's degrees in one permutation or another (*Baccalaureate conferring locations*, n.d.). While this shift in mission has not yet permeated to the level of the greater community college mission, it has established itself in select organizational missions, if not their mission statements (Cohen & Brawer, 2008).

It is clear that the greater mission of the community college has and will continue to grow and change, as it has for the past hundred years. This change is a direct result of the community college's close ties to the local community and its increasingly prominent role in national policy. The George W. Bush administration and President Obama's higher education agenda have identified community colleges as a key factor in responding to local workforce needs in the form of retraining and job skills (Bush; *President-elect Obama and community colleges*, n.d.). Cohen and Brower (2008) affirm the continuing prominence of workforce education: "there can be no reversing the perception that one of the [community] colleges' prime functions is to train workers, and ample funds are available to support this function" (p. 468). Considering the

dynamic and changing role of community colleges, the role and efficacy of community college mission statements are quite germane from both a strategic planning and a community and political relations perspective.

Theoretical Frameworks for Mission Exploration

The concept of organizational mission has existed as long as there have been purposeful organizations. Governments, armies, and religious sects have been present in society since ancient times, and each had a mission, whether or not it was clearly articulated or written. However, the intentional articulation of mission (mission statement) is a relatively new practice. Indeed, the *Oxford English Dictionary* cites the first usage of the term *mission statement* in 1967 (*Mission statement*, 2009). Although it is clear that mission statements, regardless of their moniker, were in use far before 1967, there use as a prescriptive planning tool only come in the later part of the 20th century (see Drucker, 1974).

Articulation of the mission in the form of a mission statement serves three purposes: (a) to guide the strategic planning process; and (b) to assist in the implementation of the organization's planned strategies; and (c) to communicate to external constituents the purpose, values, or product of the organization to secure some strategic advantage (Bryson, 2004; Caruthers & Lott, 1981; Kotler & Murphy, 1981; Tagiuri, 2002, 2007). The first two of these functions are the focus of this research and have directly guided the selection of conceptual and theoretical frameworks: (a) strategic planning as represented by the common planning framework; (b) strategy formation theory; and (c) Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (2005) schools of planning.

Strategic Planning in Higher Education

Planning has always been one of the primary functions of management. Henri Fayol (1987), a French mining engineer, industrialist, and widely considered one of the patriarchs of 20th century management, identified planning as the first of five primary functions of management. Planning is followed by organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling. In spite of Fayol's identification of the planning function as an essential function of management, it was not until the mid-1950s that formal strategic planning (i.e., "long term planning") became firmly rooted in the practice of the private sector (Steiner, 1979). Perhaps the more significant insight is that planning, like most other concepts and theories, is evolutionary (Dooris, Kelley, & Trainer, 2004), and as such, pinpointing the precise genesis of a practice is not as instructional to practitioners as tracing its evolutionary process.

Donald M. Norris, president of Strategic Initiatives, Inc., and Nick L. Poulton, president emeritus of the Texas International Education Consortium, have developed an excellent, well detailed, historical analysis of strategic planning in higher education starting with the 1950s (Norris & Poulton, 2008). Their model in Table 2, Eras in Planning and Decision Making (pp. 66-71), examines each decade (era) and identifies various characteristics under the categories of environmental conditions, focus of planning, nature of decision-making, and the nature of planning. This discussion regarding the evolution of strategic planning in higher education will loosely follow Norris and Poulton's eras; the final two decades, the 1990s and 2000s, will explore their analysis more closely.

Table 2. *Norris and Poulton's (2008) Eras in Planning and Decision Making in Higher Education*

Decade	Era	Nature of planning
1950s	Age of Authority	Traditional, less sophisticated models
1960s	Age of Developing Quantitative Techniques	Facilities master planning, experimentation with management techniques, emergence of institutional research and planning
1970s	Age of Pragmatic Application	Comprehensive master plans, program planning and evaluation, planning as staff function, emergence of "strategic management"
1980s	Age of Strategic Redirectioning	Strategic planning becomes embedded, focus on external environments and conditions, emphasis on application rather than techniques, unit-level planning becomes accepted, focus on external partnerships
1990s	Age of New Paradigms for Universities	Cost containment, quality, and productivity; linking strategy to process reinvention
2000s	Age of Globalization, Sustainability, and Performance Improvement	Sustainability, navigating change, accountability and performance improvement, workforce issues, emphasis on executing and refining strategy

1950s and 1960s. Strategic planning in higher education evolved quite purposefully in the late 1950s and 60s (Dooris, et al., 2004; Norris & Poulton, 2008). Due to the incredible growth in enrollment and funding during that period, "strategic planning was originally focused on facilities and space planning" (Dooris, et al., 2004, p. 6).

1970s and 1980s. The process became more inclusive of other academic functions with the publication of George Keller's seminal work, *Academic Strategy: The Management Revolution in Higher Education* (1983). Through his 25-year career in higher education, Keller held varied positions (e.g., faculty member, dean, editor, assistant to the president) at Columbia

University, State University of New York, and the University of Maryland. In his book, Keller provided an understanding of how higher education had taken strategic planning from the private manufacturing sector and made it its own. Moreover, he laid out six features that distinguished strategic planning in the academic context from the systematic, scientific, incremental planning of the past:

1. Higher education planners are active participants in the evolution of academic planning.
2. Academic planning is about the fit between internal and external conditions, much as described in Bryson (1990, 1995, 2004).
3. Higher education is a competitive market.
4. Decisions are the focus of academic planning, not the plan.
5. "Strategy making is a blend of rational and economic analysis, political maneuvering, and psychological interplay" (Keller, 1983, p. 148).
6. The welfare of the institution is the highest concern, and therefore, is the focus of planning.

Keller was quite persuasive and successful in casting a primarily business-focused planning paradigm in terms understandable by the academe. As a result, more sophisticated and contextual approaches to planning began to appear in higher education (Norris & Poulton, 2008).

1990s. They have titled the 1990s as "the Age of New Paradigms" (p. 68). Those new paradigms focused on the utilization of administrative and instructional technology, institutional transformation, and contextual planning. The quality movement began to emerge during this period through such programs as Baldrige, Total Quality Management (TQM), and Continuous

Process Improvement (CPI). Perhaps most importantly, strategic and tactical planning became a requisite tool in the higher education management process.

2000s. Norris and Poulton (2008) identify four themes that have dominated strategic planning and decision making in the first decade of the 21st century: (a) globalization, (b) sustainability, (c) performance improvement, and (d) the analytics that support decision making. Globalization has increased the scope of the forces that act on colleges and universities, and thus, increase the complexity of planning and strategy formation. The increasing granularity of data enabled by technology have led to increased performance and assessment metrics; all these data have become inputs into planning process adding increased complexity in the scanning phase. Additionally, a greater emphasis on execution of planning has emerged.

Through the last half century, strategic planning in higher education has matured and has moved from a usurped business practice to a functional and contextual process firmly established in the culture of higher education. Through its evolution, planners have moved from simple linear models of planning to more complex, contextual models. Furthermore, planning of the 21st century is once again in transition as higher education adjusts to the "flat world" of globalization (see Friedman, 2007). Strategic planning is again evolving to meet the challenges of a global environment and synthesize the torrent of data that technology can readily produce.

Mission Statement and the Common Planning Framework

In spite of the myriad of approaches to strategic planning and the various nuances applied to the practice by various disciplines, some common, sequential components appear in most every iteration. J. David Hunger, professor emeritus at Iowa State University, and Thomas L. Wheelen, professor of management and administration at the University of South Florida, capture these components quite elegantly in their basic model for strategic management: (a)

environmental scanning, (b) strategy formation, (c) strategy implementation, and (d) evaluation and control (2003). This common planning framework will be used as a common foundation for understanding the role of and efficacy of mission statements both as part of the strategic planning process and for purposes peripheral to planning.

From its beginnings, strategic planning has put the mission statement first in the process of leading and managing an effective organization. Peter Drucker (1974), former professor of social science and management at Claremont Graduate University and prolific management writer and thinker, states quite unequivocally:

> Only a clear definition of the mission and purpose of the business makes possible clear and realistic objectives. It is the foundation for priorities, strategies, plans, and work assignments. . . . Structure follows strategy. Strategy determines what the key activities are in a given business. And strategy requires knowing "what our business is" and what it should be. (p. 75)

Drucker (1974) goes on to state that identifying the mission is never an easy process. Although on the surface the question seems quite inane, Drucker asserts rather directly: "Nothing may seem simpler or more obvious than to know what a company's business is. . . . Actually, 'What is our business?' is almost always a difficult question and the right answer is usually anything but obvious" (p. 77). It would seem, from Drucker's assessment that mission statements are: (a) foundational to all strategy and planning, (b) not easy to create, and (c) never obvious or self-evident. Drucker's view of mission has been embedded in contemporary strategic planning theory, thus forming the foundational step for most organizations engaged in the strategic planning process.

Most typically, the development or refinement of mission falls concurrent or immediately prior to environmental scanning. Norris and Poulton (1991, 2008) indicate mission as an input to strategy formation along with the environmental scan. This view is supported by John M. Bryson (1990, 1995, 2004), professor planning and public affairs at the University of Minnesota, who

includes values and stakeholder mandates among the inputs. However, taking a different approach, Mintzberg (1994) does not overtly place mission within his assessment of the common planning framework; mission is understood within the context of "social responsibility" and "managerial values" (p. 37), which serve as an input to strategy formation along with an internal and external appraisal (i.e., environmental scan).

Philip Kotler and Patrick Murphy's (1981) model places mission between environmental scanning and strategy formation as part of goal formulation (a prerequisite to strategy formation). Kotler is professor of international marketing at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, and Murphy is professor and co-director the Institute for Ethical Business Worldwide at the University of Notre Dame. Kotler and Murphy's inference is that mission should be developed directly from, rather than concurrent with, or prior to, the environmental scan. While other models (e.g., Bryson, 1990, 1995, 2004; Mintzberg, 1994; Norris & Poulton, 1991, 2008) allow for input from the concurrent development of the environmental scan, mission could stand quite separate from the internal and external assessment in those models. Kotler and Murphy correct for this by their insistence on environmental scan as a prerequisite for mission statement development. In a similar vein, Hunger and Wheelen (2003) place the development of mission squarely within strategy formation, not as a precursor to the process: "[strategy formation] includes defining the . . . mission, specifying achievable objectives, developing strategies, and setting policy guidelines" (p. 6).

In their updated work, Hunger and Wheelen (2007) expand their model of strategic planning by expanding the number of steps from four to eight. However, one of the most salient change in the strategic planning model comes in the detailed description of the role of the mission statement. The mission statement appears twice. Immediately prior to the environmental

scan, the mission, objectives, strategies, and policies are examined and evaluated. The mission and objectives are reviewed and revised immediately after to the environmental scan and prior to strategy formation. The second review was designed to incorporate strategic intelligence distilled from the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis.

The relative positioning of mission statement development within an expanded common planning framework as adapted from Hunger and Wheelen (2003) is illustrated in Figure 5. Although the largest cluster of authors (i.e., Bryson, 1990, 1995; Bryson, 2004; Mintzberg, 1994; Nolan, Goodstein, & Goodstein, 2008; Norris & Poulton, 1991, 2008) place the mission definition in box 1b, the functional placement is the same as that of Kotler and Murphy (1981) in box 2a; both boxes flow into box 2, strategy formation. It is important to note that those authors that place mission within box 1b may actually envision development of mission as a precursor to box 1, although there is no dependency in the process flow. Mission content rarely provides a function within the environmental scanning process (box 1). The primary role of mission statement within the planning process is to test various strategies as they are formed later (box 2). Inversely, one could also argue that mission definition is vital to establishing a focus and scope for the environmental scan.

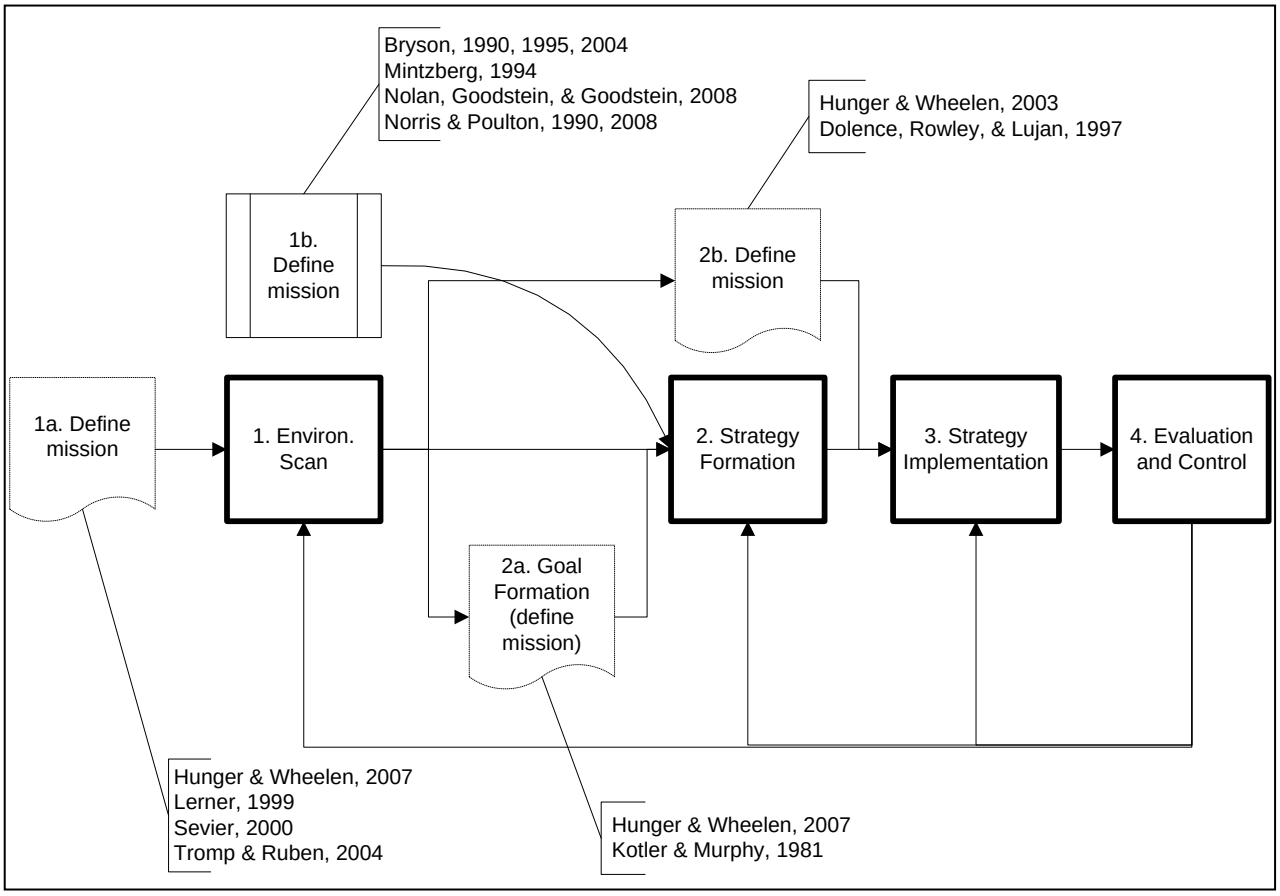

Figure 5. Relative placement of mission statement within the strategic planning framework.

It is the placement of Hunger and Wheelen (2007), Lerner (1999), Tromp and Ruben (2004), and Sevier (2000) that forces one to compare the relative placement of mission statement development as prerequisite to, or parallel to, environmental scan. Kotler and Murphy's (1981) position is clear: mission falls sequentially between the environmental scan and strategy formation. It is boxes 1a and 1b that create a degree of ambiguity. For example, although Bryson (1990, 1995, 2004) lists mission definition as functionally parallel to environmental scan (along with other foundational pieces), there is an implied sequence in his texts. And, although dependencies are not overtly articulated, the reader gains an understanding that Bryson's sequence may be purposeful. Conversely, although Sevier's (2000) placement is clearly sequential, falling before environmental scan, there is no overt utilization of mission in the

environmental scanning process. Further exploration of these perspectives might reveal that the ambiguity is, indeed, intentional; the structure allows for organizational learning while providing varying degrees of structure relative to the culture of the organization

In the case of Hunger and Wheelen (2003) and Dolence, Rowley, and Lujan (1997), mission statement is developed in box 2, concurrent with or immediately after strategy formation. Dolence et al. are emphatic in their rationale for placement:

> One of the chief tenets of this method of strategic planning is that while a statement of mission cannot lead the process of strategic planning on colleges and universities, the results of the exercise can lead to a statement of mission. This use of a mission statement better fits the central definition of a mission statement, and a statement developed in such a manner can usefully serve as a formal statement for public consumption of the purpose and direction of the organization. (Dolence, et al., 1997, p. 137)

Thus, it would seem that Dolence et al. are at odds with Drucker's (1974) assertion that little can be done by way of planning until an organization understands and can clearly articulate its mission. Dolence et al. see mission statement primarily as a means of communicating to external constituents, and to help create unity of direction once the goals and strategies are communicated and assimilated.

Two primary schools of mission statement function emerge from a synthesis of the literature: (a) pre-strategy formation, which makes mission identification a prerequisite for strategy formation; and (b) intra-strategy formation, which believes that mission identification should be concurrent with or following strategy formation. A third alternative, articulated by Hunger and Wheelen (2007), develops the mission statement prior to and immediately after the environmental scan, thereby merging the benefits of the first two approaches.

Table 3 summarizes the placement of mission statement development as articulated by the authors reviewed for this study. In some instances, philosophy had to be surmised by the placement within the strategic planning process (i.e., all the cited authors did not overtly

articulate the function of mission as it relates to strategy formation). It is clear from this summation that most authors support mission statement development as a pre-strategy formation concept.

Table 3. *Mission Statement Development as It Relates to Strategy Formation*

Pre-strategy formation	Intra-strategy formation	Two stage mission integration
Bryson, 1990, 1995, 2004	Dolence, Rowley, & Lujan, 1997	Hunger & Wheelen, 2007
Kotler & Murphy, 1981	Hunger & Wheelen, 2003	
Lerner, 1999		
Mintzberg, 1994		
Nolan, Goodstein, & Goodstein, 2008		
Norris & Poulton, 1990, 2008		
Tromp & Ruben, 2004		
Sevier, 2000		

Strategy Formation Theory

Henry Mintzberg details a well-developed general theory of strategy formation in his work *Tracking Strategies: Toward a General Theory* (2007). This work is based on over 40 years of research in the field of strategy formation and planning. Many of the themes, such as the eight ideal types of strategies and the five Ps of strategy, date back to earlier works (e.g., Mintzberg, 1979, 1987). Whereas Mintzberg's concepts, such as the ten schools of planning, have developed over a period of decades (e.g., Mintzberg, 1990, 1994, 2007; Mintzberg, et al., 2005; Mintzberg & Lampel, 1999). The two continuums of the theory will be discussed: deliberate vs. emergent strategy, and strategic positions vs. strategic perspectives. These

continuums will then be overlaid to create four processes of strategy formation. In addition, institutional form will be examined with regard to degree of stability and degree of centralization of strategy formation.

Deliberate vs. emergent strategy. To understand the dynamic between deliberate and emergent strategies, one must first understand the definition and components of strategy. Mintzberg (2007) describes strategies in four ways: (a) planned or intended strategy; (b) patterns of action or realized strategy; (c) positions, which relate to product marketing; (d) and perspectives dealing with abstract and theoretical business constructs. This continuum of deliberate vs. emergent strategy invokes the first two of these strategy characteristics; more specifically, it addresses the origins of strategy.

Strategy can either be a plan, perfectly or imperfectly executed; or a pattern of action, partially or fully unplanned; or lay somewhere along this continuum. The early planning literature (e.g., Drucker, 1974; Fayol, 1987; Kotler & Murphy, 1981; Norris & Poulton, 1991) is heavily weighted toward planned strategy. Indeed, emergent strategy is either not mentioned, or it is reflected in an undesirable light. As a result, strategic planners have a natural bias toward formal plans and have only recently come to recognize that relevant strategies do emerge quite separate from the formal planning process. As expected, Mintzberg (2007) contrasts the two quite eloquently: "if deliberate strategy is about control, then emergent strategy is about learning" (p. 5). In Figure 6, Mintzberg illustrates the relationship between the deliberate and emergent strategy processes. He also believes that aside from the intent of planners, "almost every sensible real-life strategy process combines emergent learning with deliberate control" (p. 5). Planners and managers have responded to this understanding and as a result, there has been a

clear shift in the literature from control schools of planning to more emergent, learning schools, both in the private sector and higher education (Dooris, et al., 2004; Mintzberg, et al., 2005).

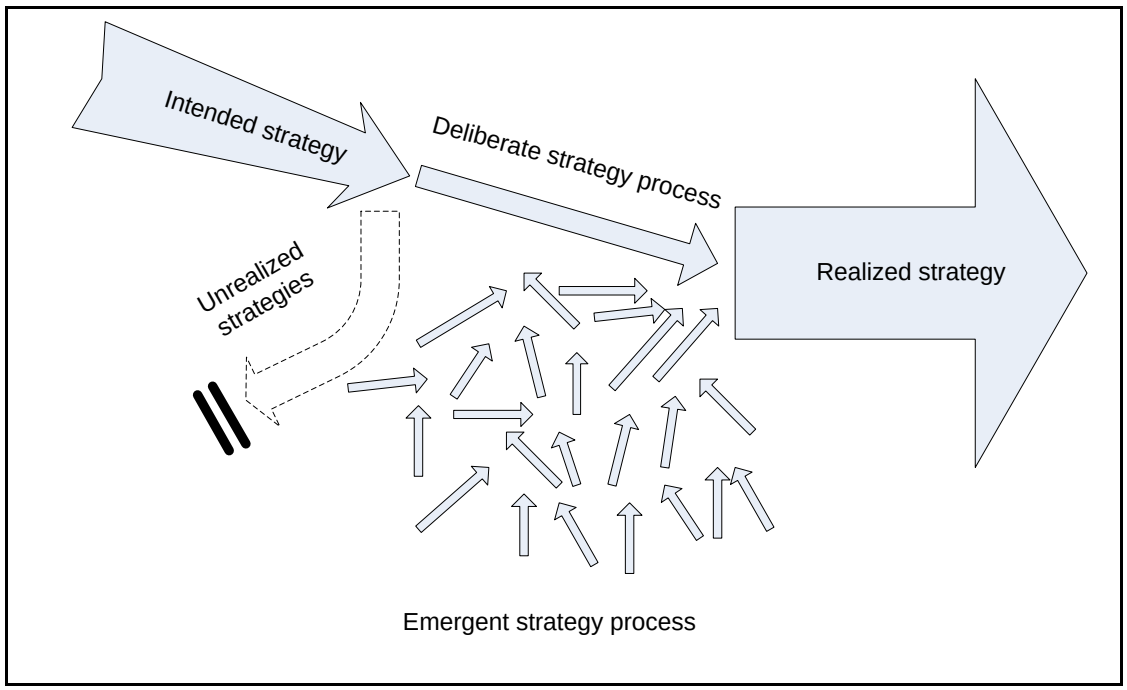

Figure 6. Mintzberg's (2007) forms of strategy.

Strategic positions vs. strategic perspectives. The position/perspective continuum addresses the nature, not the origins, of the strategy. Where strategic positions are view as more finite and tangible, strategic perspectives are broader and more visionary. Mintzberg (2007) gives a more enlightened explanation the concept by comparing changing a strategic position with changing a strategic perspective:

> Changing a position within a perspective . . .is relatively easy: doing new things in the accustomed way. Changing a position together with a perspective is another matter . . . simply because perspectives are deeply rooted in organizations, in their cultures. Indeed, even having to change a perspective in order to retain a position—that is, to keep the same markets, as some bookstore chains have had to do to meet the competition from Amazon—can be extremely difficult. (pp. 8-9)

Thus, in their extremes, a strategic perspective is a paradigm, a mindset, or a way of viewing a problem; strategic positions are finite variations of existing patterns. In practice, these two themes combine easily and frequently in an infinite degree of variation.

Strategy formation process. Mintzberg (2007) creates a full description of the strategy formation process by overlaying these two continuums on a matrix, thus creating a quadrant diagram. Four basic forms of strategy formation are revealed in Figure 7.

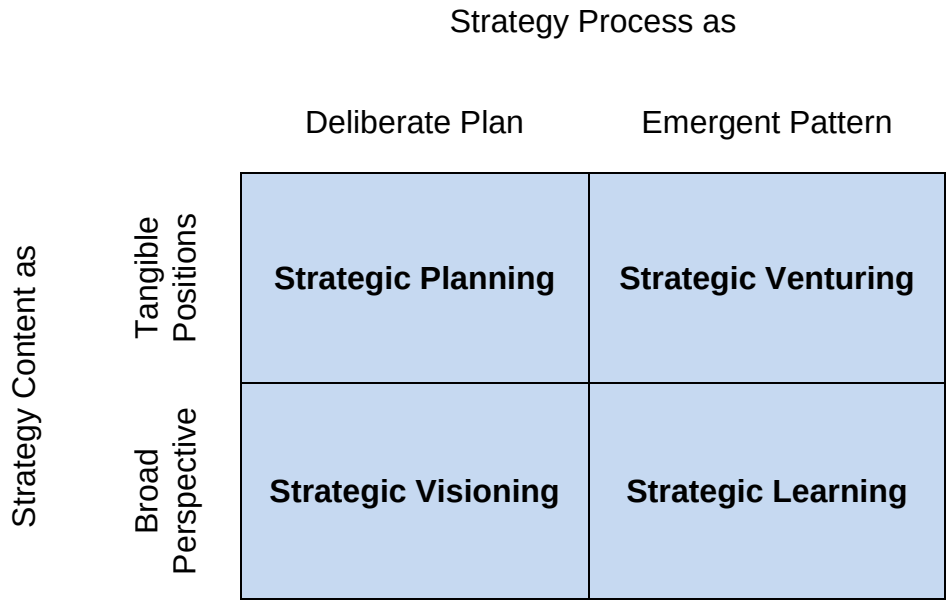

Figure 7. Mintzberg's (2007) four processes of strategy formation.

As with most organizations, placing higher education within this framework creates some problems of intent, perception, and actual practice. Clearly, most colleges and universities aspire to engage in several of these four processes of strategy formation. However, the strategic planning process overwhelmingly dominates institutions because of its deliberate and proactive positioning; it appeals to the finite, sequential, quantitative minds of higher education (Dooris, et al., 2004; Norris & Poulton, 2008; Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence, 1997; Rowley & Sherman, 2001; Trainer, 2004). However, regardless of the espoused planning philosophy or institutional intent,

actual practice in strategy formation tends to lay closer to Strategic Venturing (Mintzberg & Rose, 2003). When asked to describe their strategy processes, most institutions point to their written plans and the supporting processes, which fall squarely within the strategic planning quadrant. No doubt, this deliberateness moves the needle somewhat from emergent to planned. Moreover, intentions aside, emergent strategy can and does shape the formal plans of institutions. The larger question is what is the prescribed role and form of planned strategy in an organization dominated by emergent strategy.

Four organizational forms. Mintzberg (2007) combines two additional continuums, internal power structure (centralized vs. decentralized) and external environment (dynamic vs. static), to create four basic forms of organizations:

1. The Entrepreneurial Organization. "Controlled personally by a single leader (or sometimes a small, tight team)" (p. 342); common in new and startup companies; dynamic environment, centralized power.
2. The Machine Organization. Mass production of a specific product and service forces control and standardization; common among large, mature organizations; stable environment, centralized power.
3. The Adhocracy Organization. "Organized around teams of experts working on projects to produce novel outputs" (p. 342); common in highly dynamic environments (e.g., technology development); dynamic environment, decentralized power.
4. The Professional Organization. "Depend on highly skilled worker who work rather autonomously" (p. 342); work is controlled by professional norms from outside the organization; stable environment, decentralized power.

While higher education has some elements of each of the forms depending on size, maturity, and environment, most colleges and universities fall squarely within the professional organization quadrant. Combined with the four strategy formation processes, this construct provided a rich framework for the exploration of planning practice, strategy formation, and ultimately mission statement role and efficacy in the community college. Figure 8 illustrates Mintzberg's (2007) four basic forms of organizations within a matrix diagram.

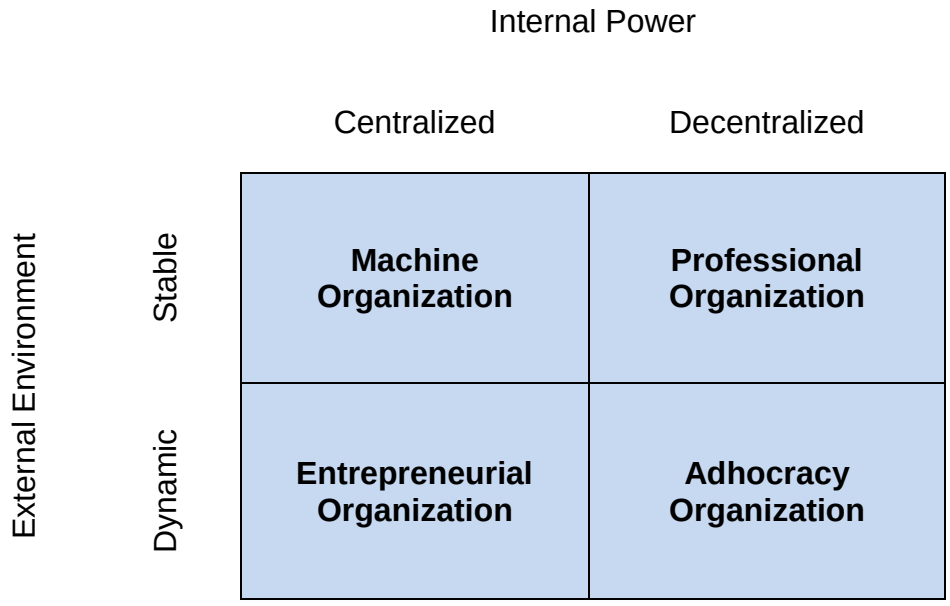

Figure 8. Minzberg's (2007) four basic forms of organizations.

Mintzberg's schools of planning. By the end of the 1990s, strategic planning had developed to the point where distinct models and schools of strategy formation could be delineated. These schools provide a helpful context from which to view the mission statement and its role in the strategic planning process. Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel (2005) codify the vast array of planning philosophies and methodologies into 10 distinct schools. The first three schools are prescriptive in nature (i.e., focus on a recommended theoretical process), and the remaining seven are descriptive in nature (i.e., focus on a particular aspect of formation

process). It is important to note that Mintzberg et al. see the first group as "more concerned with how strategies *should* be formulated than how they *do* form" (p. 5). The second group serves not as models for planning but rather instructional descriptions of strategy formation.

The prescriptive schools. Three schools can be grouped together because of their prescriptive nature: (a) the Design School, (b) the Planning School, and (c) the Positioning School. The process of planning is a central tenet to these schools. In fact, in spite of a paucity of evidence supporting the efficacy of these schools, planners persevere with their prescription (Mintzberg, 1994). Mintzberg distilled the prevailing sentiments:

> How do planners respond to this [lack of] evidence, the failure to prove that planning paid amidst the many stories in the many stories in the popular press as well as the occasional deeper research study that strategic planning was not working as prescribed? . . . Instead of questioning planning, conventional planners retreated into a set of behaviors that psychologists might label various forms of "flight"—withdrawal, fantasy, projection. They denied the problem, falling back on faith; they acknowledged some superficial difficulties, but promoted the process anyway. (Mintzberg, 1994, p. 135)

From this indictment, it is easy to understand how the process can be elevated above the strategic outputs themselves.

The first of the prescriptive schools, the Design School, draws immediate parallels to the common planning framework synthesized from such works as Bryson (2004), Kotler and Murphy (1981), Norris and Poulton (1991, 2008), and Dooris, Kelley, and Trainer (2004), as well as other popular strategic planning writers (e.g., Allison & Kaye, 2003; Barksdale & Lund, 2006; Nolan, et al., 2008; Olsen, Olsen, & Olsen, 2004; Staton-Reinstein, 2003). The crux of the Design School model is "the fit between internal capabilities and external possibilities" (Mintzberg, et al., 2005, p. 24). Strategies form from the confluence of forces and factors within and outside the organization. The goal is to establish a "fit" between internal and external forces (Bryson, 2004).

The second of the prescriptive schools, the Planning School, views the strategy formation process as formal and deliberate. The process is quite calculated and self-conscious. Although one could assume that the Planning School naturally evolved from the Design School, Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel (2005) note interestingly that "the Planning School originated at the same time as the Design School" (p. 48). Mintzberg (1994) further codifies six characteristics of the Planning School: (a) strategy formation is a controlled, conscious process of thought; (b) responsibility for the process rests with the CEO; (c) the model is elaborate and sequential; (d) strategies must come out of the planning process fully developed; (e) strategies must be made explicit and articulated; and (f) the strategies must then be implemented. While the borrowing the basic form and components of the Design School, the Planning School is distinguished by its formality and complexity. The Planning School is more prescriptive, detailed, and sequential.

The last prescriptive school, the Positioning School, views strategy formation more as an analytic process. Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel (2005) state:

> Although the Positioning School accepted most of the premises that underlay the Planning and Design Schools, as well as their fundamental model, it added content in two ways. It did so in the literal sense of emphasizing the importance of the strategies themselves, not just the process by which they were to be formulated. And it added substance: after all those years of general pronouncements of the Planning School, the repetition of the Design School model, the Positioning School, by focusing on the content of strategies, opened up the prescriptive side of the field to substantial investigation. (p. 82)

Moreover, there is another key difference between the Positioning School and the Design and Planning Schools. Whereas the Design and Planning Schools view the possible strategies as limitless or as a blank canvas on which to create, the Positioning School does not entertain strategies beyond those that delineate the organization in its competitive environment

(Mintzberg, et al., 2005). In other words, the focus of strategy is the organization's defense against competitors (i.e., one's market position).

While the prescriptive schools dominate much of the higher education planning landscape, as they do in other disciplines, clear dissenting commentary has come both from within higher education and from business and strategy theorists. In Mintzberg's seminal work, *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning* (1994), he directly addresses the process-heavy planning structures as self-preservationist in his summation of the literature to date: "Strategy formation is a planning process, designed or supported by planners, to plan in order to produce plans" (p. 32). Thus, the focus is on the output, not on the actual content of the strategy or how the strategy is formed within the process.

Ten years after publication of Mintzberg's seminal work, Dooris, Kelley, and Trainer (2004) observe a shift occurring in higher education planning away from the prescriptive schools toward more creative and emergent approaches. "A rational-deductive, formulaic approach to strategic planning is being tempered with a cultural-environmental-political perspective" (p. 7). Evidence of broader, more diverse approaches to planning have begun to appear in the literature (e.g., Norris & Poulton, 2008), which support the observation of Dooris et al. (2004). Even Bryson (1990, 1995, 2004), whose writing belies a the prescriptive schools, recognizes that there can be a mismatch between the rational-sequential nature of the prescriptive planning and governmental/non-profit culture.

Birnbaum (2000) is stronger in his indictment of the prescriptive schools. In his study of management fad in higher education, strategic planning is one focus. If prescriptive planning can be viewed as establishing a fit between internal attributes and external environmental factors (Bryson, 2004; Dolence, et al., 1997; Mintzberg, et al., 2005; Mintzberg, Lampel, Quinn, &

Ghoshal, 2003; Rowley & Sherman, 2001), studying internal attributes in an objective way and responding to external variables is extremely difficult:

> Strategy was particularly problematic in colleges and universities because most of them were too complex to explicate the implicit; in a world of contending values, clarity can cause rather than diminish conflict. Moreover, the most important strategic variables for most organizations—price, location, and program—were not under institutional control in much of higher education. The options available to public institutions in particular were quite limited. (Birnbaum, 2000, pp. 72-73)

Birnbaum (2000) believes that the ambiguity of the higher education environment was not particularly well suited for prescriptive planning. The collegial nature of colleges and universities juxtaposed with the desire to respect and encourage competing ideas, created conflict, not consensus with regard to strategy formation. Thus, Birnbaum affirms Mintzberg's (1994) assertion that prescriptive planning in higher education was indeed a mismatch. While much had been learned, there was little evidence of efficacy. Mintzberg's conclusion is scathing:

> The result [of prescriptive planning] has been a great deal of waste, trying to fit the square pegs of planning into the round holes of organizations. At best, the pegs were damaged—the planners failed, they merely wasted their time. This seems to have been the common result in the universities, which have generally resisted extensive action planning. . . . But at worst, the holes were damaged—the planners succeeded, and the *organization* wasted its time, possibly becoming dysfunctional in the process. (p. 405)

Moreover, prescriptive planning is *sine qua non* in large, formally structured organizations, and by extension colleges and universities. Large organizations prescribe process as an imperative of coherence, cohesiveness, and efficacy (Jones, 2007; Mintzberg, et al., 2003). A more moderate and generous view would be to understand the prescriptive schools as a necessary stage in the evolution of planning. The descriptive schools of Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel (2005) will demonstrate an increasing richness in an understanding of strategy formation in varied organizational cultures and environments.

The descriptive schools. Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel (2005) delineate seven discrete schools that are descriptive in nature (i.e., they describe how strategies are formed rather

than describing a process for how they should be formed). However, in order to focus the discussion, only two have been chosen for presentation: the Entrepreneurial School and the Learning School. Although the remaining schools of planning (i.e., the Power School, the Cognitive School, the Cultural School, the Environmental School, and the Configuration School) may have a degree of relevance in the community college context, the two described here are directly applicable to the research reviewed, specifically the work of Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991).

Where the prescriptive schools were process focused and tried to remove the more intuitive aspects of strategy formation, the Entrepreneurial School is leader-focused; strategies are follow directly from the vision of the leader of the organization. Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel (2005) stress the visionary aspects of this school:

> The Entrepreneurial School has done exactly the opposite [of the prescriptive schools]. Not only has this school focused the strategy formation process exclusively on the single leader, but it has also stressed the most innate of mental states and processes—intuition, judgment, wisdom, experience, insight. This promotes a view of strategy as *perspective*, associated with image and sense of direction, namely *vision*. (p. 124)

Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel (2005) suggests four characteristics of entrepreneurial organizations (i.e., those engaged in Entrepreneurial School strategy formation): (a) they focus on identifying new opportunities, (b) power is centralized in the CEO, (c) the organizations make large intuitive surges into the unknown, and (d) organizational growth is the primary goal.

More than any other school, the Learning School is characterized by emergent strategy. Control structures are highly decentralized, and there is a certain "logical incrementalism" (Mintzberg, et al., 2005, p. 180) to how strategies are implemented. Although the planning structure can appear formal and ridged, as in the design or planning schools, "the organization is less obedient; it has a mind of its own, so to speak" (p. 181). Such an approach suites an

organization comfortable with ambiguity and experimentation. It suites organizations of professionals, like law firms, engineering firms, hospitals, or colleges.

Mintzberg and Rose (2003) further this concept of the learning school and its match to higher education in their historical study of strategy formation at McGill University. Mintzberg and Rose place McGill University within the quadrant of the professional organization (i.e., emergent strategies in a decentralized power structure). Within this framework, they identify three key decision making strategies: (a) professional judgment, for those decisions falling within the academic purview (e.g., academic freedom); (b) administrative fiat, for those decisions falling within the administrative purview (e.g., allocation of resources, supervision of non-faculty employees); and (c) collective choice, for those decisions representing a middle ground. In some institutions, collective choice would represent a shared governance or committee process.

To summarize, three frameworks are used in this research. The common planning framework provides a template for comparing various planning processes and the functionality of mission statement within that process. Strategy formation theory provides a context and language that lends richness to the discussion of organizational dynamics, strategy formation, and ultimately mission efficacy. And finally, Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, and Lampel's (2005) schools of planning will provide an additional layer of understanding to the larger framework of mission statement function and efficacy.

Mission Statement Research

In order to provide a framework in which to situate the literature and the current study, the researcher offers a taxonomy of higher education mission research. Although there are a moderate number of studies exploring various facets of mission and mission statements, only the

Lang and Loper-Sweetman (1991) study specifically explored the role of mission statement within the planning process. However, tangential studies will be discussed in summative format to establish a broader context for this study. Consequently, a gap in the literature is apparent.

A Taxonomy

Before reviewing the current understandings that result from recent research in the general area of mission statements, it is helpful to codify some conceptual subsets of the research. The term mission and mission statement are sometimes used interchangeably and yet can have quite different meanings. To bring some clarity and assist in providing relevance, the following subsets of research have been developed:

- Subset I: General research. This research focuses in a general way on either the mission statement as socially constructed by the specific organization, or the greater mission of the organization type. Research often focuses on relationships within the organization and how various divisions and department relate to the organizational mission. Research has also explored the relationship between organizational mission and greater mission. In some instances, this type of research often has explored specific relationships and efficacies of interest to the researcher. As a result, there is little sequential development between studies, and theory is not systematically developed nor was it the desire outcome of the research. Examples include Nadolny (2006), Frost (2005), Rice (2007), and Pellow (2006).
- Subset II: Content analysis. By far the largest area of research, this research explores the themes and foci of formal, articulated mission statements, either in print or on the web. Much of this research examines the direction, focus, and priorities of colleges through the lens of their mission statements. Examples include Clifton (2003); Ayers

(2005); Kreber and Mhina (2007); Hegeman, Davies, and Banning (2007), and Stober (1997).

- Subset III: Relationships. The mission statement is explored with regard to its relationship with internal or external divisions, agencies, and strategies. Examples include Dickson (2007), Mussi (2008), and Boylan (2005).
- Subset IV: Efficacy. This research explores the impact that mission statements have had on the effectiveness or productivity of the organization. Examples include Davis, Ruhe, Lee, and Rajadhyaksha (2007); and Sidhu (2003).
- Subset V: Role. The role or function of the mission statement is examined within the context of the college or university with a particular focus on internal and external functionality of the statement. The primary study in this subset is Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991).

While much research has been conducted in subsets I, II, and III, subsets IV and V (efficacy and role) are quite unexplored. This is understandable since it is difficult to examine these areas without making several assumptions with regard to appropriate effectiveness measures and conducting complex qualitative inquiry into organizational, social, cultural, and political relationships. It is into this final category that this research falls.

It is important to understand the efficacy of mission statements as expressed in the third category of research is not the same as that expressed in the purpose of this research. The important differentiation is that efficacy as defined in category four explores the impact of a mission statement on the overall effectiveness and productivity of the organization; efficacy in the context of this research refers to how well the statement fulfills the desired function or role.

This delimited context provides for various institutional cultures and processes, from a higher prescriptive planning process to a more emergent process.

Subset I: General research. General research in the area of higher education mission statements has revealed key themes, relationships, and meanings within the context of the broader mission of higher education and community colleges. The research has also explored mission within the local, organizational context, as well as inter-organizational contexts, exploring alignment and relationships to the whole or other divisions or departments.

Nadolny (2006) examined the evolving mission of the community college through 100 years of development. He analyzed seven seminal texts to reveal an evolution of purpose. Nadolny used a hermeneutical methodology to unpack these key texts; the purpose development in the American community college is compare to the development of plot and characters in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1997) by Baum and Wolstenholme. This idiosyncratic analysis of greater mission development provides some new and interesting interpretations of historical documents associated with the development of the community college and its greater mission.

Several researchers have focused on the changing organizational and greater mission of the community college (e.g., Frost, 2005; Luna, 2007; Rice, 2007). The community college, by nature of its attachment to local community, has experienced more development of organizational and greater mission than other institutions of higher education. This is, in part, due to its relatively short history, and the dynamic nature of local society and culture in the developing United States (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Indeed, the number of community colleges in the United States has tripled since 1960 (Phillippe & Sullivan, 2005), thus it can be expected that there will be a reciprocal evolution within these dynamic institution. The greater and organizational mission has been measured against such trends as economic agreements and free

trade (Luna, 2007), globalization (Frost, 2005), and the community college baccalaureate (Rice, 2007). In a report prepared for the Community College Research Center, Bailey and Morest (2004) first challenge the concept of the comprehensive mission of the community college by citing competing functions (e.g., career degrees and certification vs. the transfer mission). They then offer a strategy for pursuing these disparate missions with greater efficacy and without sacrificing breadth of program quality.

Higher education administration's role in defining and articulating organizational mission has been researched in several contexts. Webb (2006) studied the development of mission and vision within the School of Education at Duquesne University. This historical study focused on how the Deans within the School of Education formed strategy and tactics based on the evolving mission. Webb concluded that the School of Education had maintained its relevance and vibrancy by consistently scanning and responding to the needs of the education community; he further presented recommendations for maintaining the past vibrancy and success of the School of Education.

Pellow's (2006) case study of St. John's University explored a period of change and actions on the part of leadership that helped ensure the transition was successful. As part of his findings, he fully described the mission statement change process at St. John's. With regard to the role of leadership setting institutional direction, Pellow argues that "while leaders impact [organizational] culture in many ways, their interpretation of mission is central" (p. viii). St. John's University provides an excellent case study into effective mission evaluation and change in an established liberal arts university with a complex web of stakeholders.

Subset II: Content analysis. Research on specific themes and language in local mission statements has been extensive and varied. Moreover, the higher education mission statement has

been explored, discussed, and compared in single and multiple institutions of varied types. Studies have focused on institution type (e.g., Augusta-Dupar, 2003; Clifton, 2003; Jinhao, Gibson, Salinas, Solis, & Slate, 2007; Zingales, 2001), geographic regions (e.g., Ayers, 2002; Kreber & Mhina, 2007; Wattananimitkul, 2002), and their respective specific mission components as they relate to various values and ideologies (e.g., Ayers, 2005; Peters, 2000; Williamson, 2000), and the mechanics of mission statement language and communication (De Haan, 1990; Hegeman, et al., 2007).

Mission statements have been and will be a convenient data point for assessing the direction and purpose of an organization. Because mission statements tend to be very finite and readily accessible, they lend themselves well to theming, coding, and analysis. However, caution must be exercised when mission statement becomes the primary source for observing and codifying mission itself (i.e., the actual work of the institution as represented in its practice, not its written statements). As Hegeman, Davies, and Banning (2007) demonstrated in their study comparing web and print publication of community college mission statements, there can be variation and error in various iterations of the statement as they appear in various media.

Although much research exists in mission statement content analysis, a larger scale study has not been done. Such cross-case analysis could identify themes and functions by institution type, by region, and by decade, and plot those against significant historical events and trends. The results would provide insight into the evolution of the greater mission of the community college as it relates to national and global influences and forces.

Subset III: Relationships. Several researchers have explored the relationship between the mission statement and various programs, divisions, and practices. Alignment with the mission statement among various divisions, programs, and curricula within the organization can

challenge institutions (Dickson, 2007). Perhaps most importantly, there can be perceptions of misalignment between mission statements and administrative strategies. Such a misalignment can lead to a low level of organizational commitment and overall job dissatisfaction among faculty. In response to these findings, Dickson (2007) propose that "reinforcing the mission statement in a consistent manner is something that senior administrators should consider" (p. 122). The implication is that reinforcing the mission statement will help to correct misperceptions. In a related vein, Mussi (2008) studied student affairs staff at five Jesuit universities to ascertain their understanding and alignment with the greater Jesuit, Catholic mission. Perhaps most meaningful finding is that in spite of the fact that many held exception to one or more aspects of the Jesuit mission, most had a high awareness of the mission and said it mattered to them (82%).

Boylan (2005) studied local mission and its relationship to student engagement and the learning environment. He focused on the perceptions of students with regard to the institutional mission statement concluding that "the relationship between the goals of institutional mission and student assessment of the learning environment [was] observed and measured" (Boylan, 2005, p. 74). Thus, the presence of thematic elements and goals in the mission statement had an effect on students' perceptions of the campus environment. Although his research does not reference organizational mission, Alaby (2002) explores program-level mission as it relates to learning outcomes. Additional research exploring the relationships between program-level and institutional mission statements would contribute greatly to the understanding of mission statements and their role in strategy formation at multiple levels in the institution.

Subset IV: Efficacy. Understanding the effectiveness of mission statement as a strategic management tool is difficult to determine for a number of reasons. It seems that almost from the

infancy of the strategic planning movement and its reliance on mission statement as a foundational tool, there have been dissenting or questioning voices from those who need more substantive findings of efficacy (Bartkus, et al., 2000; Newsom & Hayes, 1991). One of the primary challenges for higher education is to determine just what type of findings are needed (i.e., how does one measure the effectiveness of a mission statement). These findings would seem inextricably bound to institutional effectiveness, continuous quality improvement, benchmarking, and other business-like practices, which are loath in many circles of the academe.

The prospect of measuring mission statement effectiveness seems a bit more straightforward in the business environment, where organizational performance can be quantified quite readily. Pearce and David (1987) found that high performing firms were more intentional in addressing core values and priorities, competitive strengths, and the positive brand/image. It is interesting that in spite of this finding, a decade later, Bart and Baetz (1998) would frame their research as an exploratory study. In fact, they posit that "there is little empirical evidence to support [the efficacy of mission statements]" (p. 823). They conclude:

> Our study showed that the presence of mission statements were not automatically associated with superior firm performance. In fact, our results were somewhat mixed. At the same time we found a significant and positive correlation between: (a) firm performance and mission statements with which managers were satisfied; and (b) firm performance and the process to develop mission statements. (Bart & Baetz, 1998, p. 823)

Rather than finding evidence of mission statement efficacy, Bart and Baetz found a relationship between performance and involvement in the mission statement development process. Moreover, the firm was more likely to perform better if managers were satisfied with the outcome of the creation process.

With the outset of the 21st century, it is rare to find one example of an established organization, corporation, college, or university without a published mission statement. Yet, the questions surrounding efficacy continue (Davis, et al., 2007; Sidhu, 2003). Jatinder Sidhu (2003),

assistant professor at Erasmus University Rotterdam, presents the most complete, thoughtful, and compelling analysis of mission statement efficacy in the contemporary literature. He succinctly states the problem:

> Since the inception of the business policy discipline, scholars have emphasised the importance of formulating a mission statement as the first fundamental step in the strategic management process. However, the thesis that a mission statement influences organisational performance has remained an article of faith because of the absence of any corroborating empirical evidence. Not surprisingly then, there has been a gradual erosion of managerial confidence in mission statements. Indeed, management practitioners have become increasingly skeptical of investing valuable organisational resources in developing mission statements when the returns from these are uncertain. This is an unfortunate state of affairs because it threatens to lead to a premature abandonment of a key managerial tool. (Sidhu, 2003, p. 443)

Sidhu's (2003) research demonstrated an association between the success of an organization and mission statement. He attempted to control for different variables such as business domain, strategic planning components, and system flexibility, and he attempted to remedy shortcomings of earlier research by including mission components as a possible variable in mission statement efficacy. By his admission, the sample size was small, thus, the study will need to be replicated in various setting with a larger sample. One could also challenge that since Sidhu's study involved only corporate, for-profit entities, the generalizability of the results can be problematic. Additionally, Sidhu's measure of performance was sales growth. Higher education has long abhorred such lone benchmarks of performance (e.g., enrollment growth, degrees awarded). Such cultural differences and the ambiguity of efficacy measurements make the generalizability of the findings to the higher education paradigm difficult. Until the academe can agree on an efficacy measurement, findings of mission statement efficacy will be elusive in higher education.

While Sidhu (2003) concedes that his results are not unequivocal evidence supporting the mission statement as a management tool, he effectively argues that "it is probably too early to

relegate mission statements to the shelf" (p. 444). Such statements, while encouraging to a host of strategic planning practitioners who are passionate about the success and efficacy of mission statements, may ring somewhat hollow after 40 years of theory, research, and advocacy.

Davis, Ruhe, Lee, and Rajadhyaksha (2007) measure efficacy from a different perspective. Their study assumed a more specific goal to mission statement than one of institutional effectiveness. Davis et al. endeavored to measure whether the ethical content of a mission statement had an impact on student perceptions of ethical behavior and character traits. It is commonly held that the primary benefits of mission statement are found in the creation process itself, rather than being content driven or a result of driving strategic initiatives (Bart & Baetz, 1998; Krohe, 1995; Tagiuri, 2002). Moreover, Davis et al. poignantly observe that "simply having a mission statement for political or accreditation purposes without institutional, operational reinforcement of the statement should led [*sic*] the end described by the mission statement. Previous research examined mission statements, but failed to examine whether the organization reinforced the mission once written" (p. 101). Once again, it seems the crux of efficacy lies not in the strategic philosophy or content, but in the ancillary processes mission statement creation and implementation.

Although the Davis et al. (2007) study measures efficacy in a very specific way (i.e., the impact on student perceptions of ethics and character traits), the results demonstrate that, indeed, mission statement content does impact learners who are quite separate from the statement creation and implementation process. This conclusion supports the broader and more direct purpose of mission statements in higher education: to impact and improve the learning process.

While mission statement efficacy is clearly an area that demands further research, preliminary studies demonstrate two benefits for higher education: (a) a well crafted mission

statement can impact the broader performance of an organization, and (b) the content of the mission statement can have a direct effect on the learner's perceptions of values. Unfortunately, the measurement of organizational efficacy in higher education continues to stall substantive research into mission statement efficacy.

Subset V: Role. Although the role of the mission statement within the planning process has been prescribed by numerous planning theorists and practitioners (e.g., Bryson, 2004; Caruthers & Lott, 1981; Dooris, et al., 2004; Drucker, 1974; Frigo, 2003; Kotler & Murphy, 1981; Lerner, 1999; Norris & Poulton, 1991; Reeves, 1988), research into actual planning practice is virtually non-existent. Many single and multiple case studies have been conducted exploring the broader umbrella of strategic planning in numerous contexts; however, only Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991) focus specifically on the functional role that mission statement fulfills within the strategic planning process and the larger organization. Although the research is approaching two decades in age, the findings provide an indispensible foundation for this study.

The study (Lang & Lopers-Sweetman, 1991) is based on an examination of 32 mission statement and 12 strategic plans from colleges and universities. From these statements and plans, Lang and Lopers-Sweetman distill a taxonomy of mission statement content. They admit that "in terms of content and form, mission statements can and do vary widely" (p. 613). With few divergences, the mission statements fell within six clearly delineated categories:

1. The historical-philosophical statement. The focus of this type of statement is a picture of the current institution and a tracing of the historical events, values, and philosophies that created the institution.
2. The action plan statement. These statements describe the reconciliation between internal assets and external forces, always in a positive light.

3. The interrogative statement. These statements focus on process rather than outcomes. In fact, they often fall short of such directive, delineative language.
4. The statement as expression of scale or capacity. These statements focus on enrollment, physical plant, and differentiation from other institutions based on sized or scope of function.
5. Statements as “messianic tablets”. These statements tend to be a very personal or visionary expression of one leader, usually associated with the president of institution.
6. Anthologies of missions. These missions serve as a summary or compilation of various units across the institution, thereby establishing equitable representation of various functional areas.

Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991) describe the complexity and difficulty in divining the role or utility of mission statements within the organizational context:

> The utility of [mission statements] depend on separate planning mechanisms for adoption, adaptation, and refocusing, or in technical terms, other types of planning. The utility of a mission statement depends in the first instance on the constituency using it. Faculty, students, administrators, governors, legislators, and coordinating agencies may and often do view the same mission statement in widely varying ways. (p. 604)

Table 4 summarizes the five roles identified by Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991). The table lists the roles identified in the research along with a succinct description synthesized from their report. It is important to note that mission statements may fill one or more of these roles concurrently with some degree of overlap between the content analysis and roles.

Table 4. *Roles of Institutional Mission Statements Identified by Lang and Lopers-Sweetman*

Role	Description
Goal clarification	Traditional role in planning process; used to determine institutional direction and provide clarity
Smoke screens for opportunism	Generic, homogeneous description of institution; provides room for development and shifting to meet changing needs; statement of means rather than ends
Things as they are	Description of institution as it currently exists; not an ideal or distant, abstract model; may include past and future description; may include description of what the institution is not
Aspirations	Focuses on vision of the future, not of present; can represent institutional wish list; becomes useful tool in resource allocation
Marketing tool	Focuses on the market being served, its needs, and how the institution meets those needs; usually motivating and very concrete

Interestingly, Lang and Lopers-Sweetman's (1991) research stresses the point that the process used in developing the mission statement is at least as important as the statement itself. In other words, much of the presumed efficacy of mission statement is actually a product of the creation (and maintenance) process. This conclusion has been reiterated by both theorists and researchers alike (Bryson, 2004; Evans, 1990; O'Hallaron & O'Hallaron, 2000; Sidhu, 2003). Rather than delineating and limiting the understanding of mission statement, Lang and Lopers-Sweetman maintain a certain ambiguity in their conclusion:

> The planner should recognize that the term *mission statement* is at best broadly generic. There are at least six different types of mission statements. Each type takes a different form and serves a different purpose. Some types may operate outside those processes. And some may never function as planning at all. (Lang & Lopers-Sweetman, 1991, p. 620)

In summation, numerous studies have been conducted in the area of institutional mission statement. Such foci as content, efficacy, role, and relationships have been explored to some extent. The largest area of research has been in content analysis, which provides meaningful insight both for the construction of effective mission statements and in studying the evolution of the greater mission of various types of institutions. Efficacy research associated with college mission statements is as of yet immature. Although there seems to be some correlation between efficacy and a well-crafted statement, just as much of the efficacy may be the result of an effective development process (Sidhu, 2003). Finally, Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991) provide a useful framework for further research regarding the institutional role of mission statements. Indeed, their classification of roles will provide a framework for initial a priori theming of this study's findings.

Arguments for use of the mission statement as a strategy tool are found in planning and strategy theory. As mission statement efficacy research matures, it is expected that these arguments will become more compelling. However, in the arena of higher education, regional accrediting bodies obligate colleges and universities, regardless of their level of conviction, to implement their strategic planning based on mission statement, which reflects the organizational articulation of the of the institution's greater mission.

Regional Accreditation Requirements

Regardless of their foundational role in the common planning framework and promising efficacy research, colleges and universities find themselves required to identify mission in a formal manner, and to build institutional priorities, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), goals, objectives, outcomes and other such planning tools that align with the institutional mission. The

ultimate question of accreditation is: how [well] is the institution fulfilling its mission. To answer this question, organizations must start with the mission statement.

Each of the six regional higher education accrediting bodies requires a mission statement as a standard for accreditation as shown in Table 5. For example, the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools has very specific standards regarding mission statement (Handbook of accreditation, 2003). Sub-criterion 1a states that the institution's mission statement (a) must clearly communicate to the public the institution's purpose, (b) must be adopted by the governing board, (c) must identify constituencies to serve, (d) must represent the institution's commitment to academic excellence, (e) must have a regular, systematic evaluation and revision, and (f) must be readily available to students and the public. There are four additional sub-criterion addressing mission statement in reference to diversity of learners and constituencies, internalization of mission within the organization, and administration and governance practice is built upon the mission statement.

Table 5. *Mission as a Standard for Accreditation*

Regional accrediting body	Standard
Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools	"The institution's mission is clearly defined and adopted by its governing board, consistent with its legal authorization, and is appropriate to a degree granting institution of higher education." (Handbook of accreditation, 2003)
New England Association of Schools and Colleges	"The institution's mission is set forth in a concise statement that is formally adopted by the governing board and appears in appropriate institutional publications." (Candidacy: Handbook for applicants and candidates for accreditation, 2002, p. 3; Standards for accreditation, 2005, p. 3)
North Central Association of Colleges and Schools	"The organization's mission documents are clear and articulate publicly the organization's commitments." (Handbook of accreditation, 2003, pp. 3.1-1)
Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities	"The institution's mission and goals derive from, or are widely understood by, the campus community, are adopted by the governing board, and are periodically reexamined." (Accreditation handbook, 2003, p. 26)
Southern Association of Schools and Colleges	"The institution has a clearly defined, comprehensive, and published mission statement that is specific to the institution and appropriate for higher education. The mission addresses teaching and learning and, where applicable, research and public service." (The principles of accreditation: Foundations for quality enhancement, 2008, p. 16)
Western Association of Schools and Colleges	"The institution has a statement of mission that defines the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment to achieving student learning….The mission statement is approved by the governing board and published." (Galloway, 2002, p. 2)

It is clear from the thoroughness of the treatment that mission statement is an accepted and expected foundational component to institutional effectiveness. Because of this accreditation requirement, colleges and universities have little choice in devoting considerable resources to developing, maintaining, and otherwise integrating mission statements into their planning and operations. Thus, although the question of efficacy is important and engaging, it is somewhat moot to those institutions wishing to maintain accreditation. The question becomes not whether institutions should devote resources to mission statement; that must be done. Rather, the question is if organizations must devote resources, how best can they net the greatest impact on institutional effectiveness?

Chapter Summary

In the interest of disclosure, and in the absence of compelling evidence, mission statements have been viewed through bias of benefit (i.e., their presence and effective implementation bring benefit to the college). At the heart of prescriptive planning there is a core belief that unity of purpose (Caruthers & Lott, 1981; Drucker, 1974; Mintzberg, 1994) is necessary for effectiveness in an organizational setting . There is also a belief that that unity must be clearly articulated to internal and external stakeholders, and that the process of identifying and articulating that purpose is, in and of itself, beneficial. Moreover, since mission statements are required by all regional accrediting bodies, it is in the interest of efficiency that colleges use the process to the maximum benefit of the organization. In an era of declining resources for community colleges, it is imperative that their planning efforts be as efficient and effective as possible. The exploration of the role and efficacy of mission statements will serve to illuminate these and other constructs. Consequently, this research does not endeavor to prove or disprove the effectiveness of mission statement as a planning tool.

Chapter 3: Research Design

Introduction

This chapter details the design and criteria that guided the research providing a source of accountability and a framework for establishing the soundness of the research. In order to establish such transparency and credibility within the research process, it is important to articulate in a logical and systematic manner the research methodology and process utilized. Chapter 3 describes and presents rationale for: (a) the selection of the qualitative paradigm and case study methodology; (b) site and participant selection protocol; (c) the data collection process, and survey and interview protocols; (d) data analysis procedures; (e) the limitations of this study; and (f) trustworthiness and validity related to this research.

The Qualitative Paradigm

In order to select an appropriate research paradigm, an understanding of the contrasting lenses of quantitative and qualitative paradigms is required. Where quantitative research focuses with a narrow-angle lens with the purpose of testing a specific hypothesis, qualitative research focuses with a wide- and deep-angle lens to understand a phenomenon in all its depth and richness. Where the nature of quantitative research is objectivity and finite measurement, the nature of qualitative research is subjective, personal, and socially constructed (Johnson & Christiansen, 2004).

Merriam (2002b) agrees stating: “the key to understanding qualitative research lies with the idea that meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world” (p. 3). A community college strategic planning process is reflective of socially constructed meaning found within that specific community college. Mission statements, therefore, exist in a complex web of social constructs. While many of these constructs are overt and articulated, many are

more subtle and implied. While meaning may be articulated in planning documents, the social understanding of meaning, function, and efficacy is rich and varied. Thus, the narrow-angle, numerical lens of quantitative research is simply not a sufficient tool for studying such a complex, social construct. In contrast, the goal of this research (i.e., situated, contextual understanding of mission statements), which requires the wide- and deep-angle lens capable of discovering rich thick data, places this research clearly in the interpretivist qualitative paradigm.

Willis (2007) makes the contrast between the quantitative and qualitative paradigms even more pronounced: "The purpose of interpretivist [qualitative] research is not the discovery of universal laws but rather the understanding of a particular situation. Even this goal is subjective. Interpretivists eschew the idea that objective research on human behavior is possible" (p. 111). To Willis, the goal of interpretivist qualitative research is "to understand a particular context" (p. 189) and not to deduce generalizations that may be applied in any number of contexts. Lincoln and Guba (1985) are reticent when discussing the generizability of qualitative research:

> [The researcher] is likely to be tentative (hesitant) about making broad application of the findings because realities are multiple and different…because the extent to which findings may be applicable elsewhere depends upon the empirical similarity of sending and receiving contexts. (p. 42)

Thus, it is the role of the reader to deduce the *transferability* of the findings to their particular context. Conversely, it is the role of the researcher to provide sufficient description for the reader to ascertain whether the findings are transferable. The goal of this research is to develop such a situated understanding of mission within the context of select community colleges.

Finally, in selecting an appropriate research paradigm, the nature of the research purpose and driving questions being posed must be considered. Creswell (2008) provides an elegantly simple test to apply to the driving questions. He states that the choice of the research paradigm or approach can then be guided by two concise factors: (a) explanation, which indicates a

quantitative design; or (b) exploration, which indicates a qualitative design. These factors have been alternatively framed as deductive (quantitative) and inductive (qualitative) (Johnson & Christiansen, 2004). Furthermore, Creswell (2007) expands the factors considered for the qualitative paradigm, stating that qualitative research is conducted (a) when a problem or issue needs to be explored; (b) when a complex, detailed understanding of the issue is needed; (c) when an understanding of the contexts or settings in which participants in a study address a problem or issue is needed; and (d) when quantitative measures and the statistical analyses simply do not fit the problem (pp. 39-40).

Creswell's (2007) expanded factors compliment and illuminate the choice of the qualitative paradigm as most appropriate for this study. When Creswell's factors are overlaid, they reveal that this research (a) facilitates the exploration of meaning and the theoretical constructs that surround the role of mission statement within various planning models, (b) allows for a complex and detailed understanding of attitudes and perceptions of mission statements within the planning process, and (c) provides an essential understanding of institutional context for strategic planning. For these reasons, the interpretivist qualitative paradigm has been selected for this research.

Case Study Methodology

It is important to have a clear understanding of the various qualitative research methodologies and what benefits and limitations they bring to bear on the research purpose. Merriam (1988) provides one of the most succinct and instructive definitions of a case study: "A qualitative case study is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 21). A case study is comprised of these holistic descriptions in rich, thick detail needed to understand or make meaning of an instance or a system. Moreover,

according to Merriam (1998), it is the instance that is most important to defining the methodology: "…I have concluded that the single most defining characteristic of case study research lies in delimiting the object of the study, the case" (p. 27). To Merriam, it is the bounding of the instance, phenomenon, or system that creates the case. Therefore, because understanding the role and efficacy of community college mission statements, which are contextually situated in a particular community college, requires the study of the bounded systems in which they exist, the case study is the most appropriate choice for this research.

Stake (1995) supports Merriam's (1998) conclusion by his assertion that a case study is more a choice of what to be studied (a bounded system) rather than a choice of methodology. Stake (1995) infers that when one chooses a bounded system to study, the methodology is a case study. He further identifies two types of case studies: intrinsic and instrumental. With an intrinsic case, "we are interested in it, not because by studying it we learn about other cases or about some general problem, but because we need to learn about that particular case" (p. 3). Instrumental case studies serve to provide understanding beyond the case in point, "to understand something else" (p. 3).

Interestingly, Yin's (2003) definition of case study goes beyond the description of a bounded system and provides additional criteria for the selection of case study methodology. Yin delineates the purpose of the case study from its technical characteristics. He states that the purpose of a case study is to "investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (p. 13). Furthermore, Yin codifies the technical characteristics of the case study: (a) it copes with "technically distinctive situations in which there will be many more variables of

interest than data points" (p. 13), (b) it relies on many sets of data and triangulation, (c) it uses a conceptual or theoretical framework to guide and develop the data.

Yin (2003) describes three conditions that assist the researcher in deciding which research methodology is most appropriate: (a) the nature of the driving questions, (b) the amount of control the research can exercise in the research environment, and (c) the historical lens of the research (i.e., does the research focus on historical or current events). He clarifies his description by also summarizing the conditions for case study as (a) the research answers "how" and "why" questions, (b) the research has no control over behavioral events, and (c) the research focuses on contemporary events. Applying Yin's (2003) conditions to this study, case study was the most appropriate choice. First, this study is exploratory in nature. It explores the role and efficacy of community college mission statements (i.e., *how* are community colleges using mission statements). Second, this study was conducted within their bounded system of practice with no control over behavioral events. Indeed, the function of mission statement cannot be discerned apart from the systems in which they exist. Lastly, this study focuses on contemporary practice in the community college.

In summary, the selection of instrumental case study methodology is supported by two constructs:

1. The study will explore a bounded system, the most important element of a case study (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995).
2. The study meets Yin's (2003) three conditions for case study selection.

Case Selection

Participant colleges will be selected through a process of purposeful sampling based on reputation for strategic planning and geographic disparity. Maximum variation criteria will be

applied when multiple colleges exist within a single geographical region. According to Creswell (2007), purposeful sampling "means that the [researcher] selects individuals and sites for the study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon to be studied" (p. 125). It is important to note that the purpose of the nominated sample is not to establish a group of peer institutions for comparison or benchmarking. This maximum variation purposeful sampling of community colleges that have both distinguished themselves from the norm regarding strategic planning and are geographically dispersed provides multiple perspectives on mission statements and planning and strengthened triangulation and transferability of the results. Maximum variation sampling serves to emphasize divergent contexts and perspectives, which can increase the transferability of the findings (Creswell, 2007; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990). According to Creswell (2007), maximum variation sampling "documents diverse variations and identifies important common patterns" (p. 127), and most importantly, strengthens the transferability of the study findings.

> [Maximum variation sampling] consists of determining in advance some criteria that differentiate the sites or participants, and then selecting sites or participants that are quite different in the criteria. This approach is often selected because when a researcher maximizes differences at the beginning of the study, it increases the likelihood that the findings will reflect differences or different perspectives—an ideal in qualitative research. (p. 126)

In determining appropriate study sites, the site selection criteria will be based on four characteristics: reputation for excellence in planning, geographical distribution, institutional size, and degree of urbanization. The first selection characteristic, reputation for innovation and excellence in planning, will be achieved through a nomination process. The second characteristic, geographical distribution, will be determined using the Standard Federal Regions (*Standard federal regions*, 1974). The third characteristic, institutional size, is chosen as a maximum variation selection criterion because it is assumed that larger institutions have more

resources to devote to the strategic planning process, therefore, the processes and outputs at such institutions could vary dramatically in terms of complexity and depth from smaller institutions. The fourth characteristic, degree of urbanization is commonly used as a maximum variation selection criterion for suburban, urban, and rural institutions can vary dramatically in terms of curriculum, student services provided, and the demographic makeup of the student population. The characteristics will be satisfied sequentially in the order listed in Table 6.

Table 6. *Characteristics Utilized in the Purposeful Sampling Process*

Order	Characteristic	Process	Sampling purpose	Rationale
I	Reputation for innovation and excellence in planning	Nomination from SCUP	Purposeful sampling criterion	Explores innovative planning practices
II	Geographical distribution	U.S. Federal Regions	Purposeful sampling criterion	Creates a nationally representative sample
III	Institutional size	IPEDS data	Maximum variation sampling criterion	Creates variation in complexity and depth of planning process
IV	Degree of urbanization	IPEDS data	Maximum variation sampling criterion	Creates variation in complexity and depth of planning process

Characteristic I. Reputation for innovation and excellence in planning will be ascertained through a nomination process with the assistance of the Society of College and University Planners. The participant college nomination process will proceed through two stages as illustrated in Table 7: (a) an initial nomination stage, and (b) a secondary nomination stage. The Society of College and University Planning (SCUP) will be invited to initially nominate ten to twelve community colleges recognized for their effective or innovative planning practices, and that represent the diversity of planning philosophies and frameworks in practice throughout

United States community colleges. SCUP's Director of Planning and Education will provide the initial list of community college nominees with a reputation for innovation and excellence in planning.

Table 7. *Participant College Nomination Process*

Stage	Input	Delineating characteristic
Initial Nominations (13 colleges)	SCUP Director of Planning and Education	Reputation for innovation and excellence in planning
Secondary Nominations (19 colleges)	SCUP Community and Two-year College Advisory Group	Reputation for innovation and excellence in planning

The Director of Planning and Education will email the initial nomination list to SCUP's Community and Two-year College Advisory Group (CTCA) along with a précis describing the purpose of the research, participant and site selection criteria, techniques for data collection and analysis, informed consent and data storage procedures, and contact information. The précis will be prepared from the summary document approved by the National-Louis University Institutional Research Review Board. The CTCA, which consists of ten individuals with extensive experience in community college planning, will be solicited for feedback on the initial nominees and will be invited to submit additional nominations. Additional nominees will be added to the initial nominee list by the CTCA and the SCUP Director of Planning and Education to form the secondary nomination list of 19 community colleges.

Characteristic II. The U.S. Standard Federal Regions (see *Standard federal regions*, 1974) will be applied to the secondary nomination list with a goal of securing one participant college from each of the ten regions. Figure 9 illustrates the distribution of states within the federal regions.

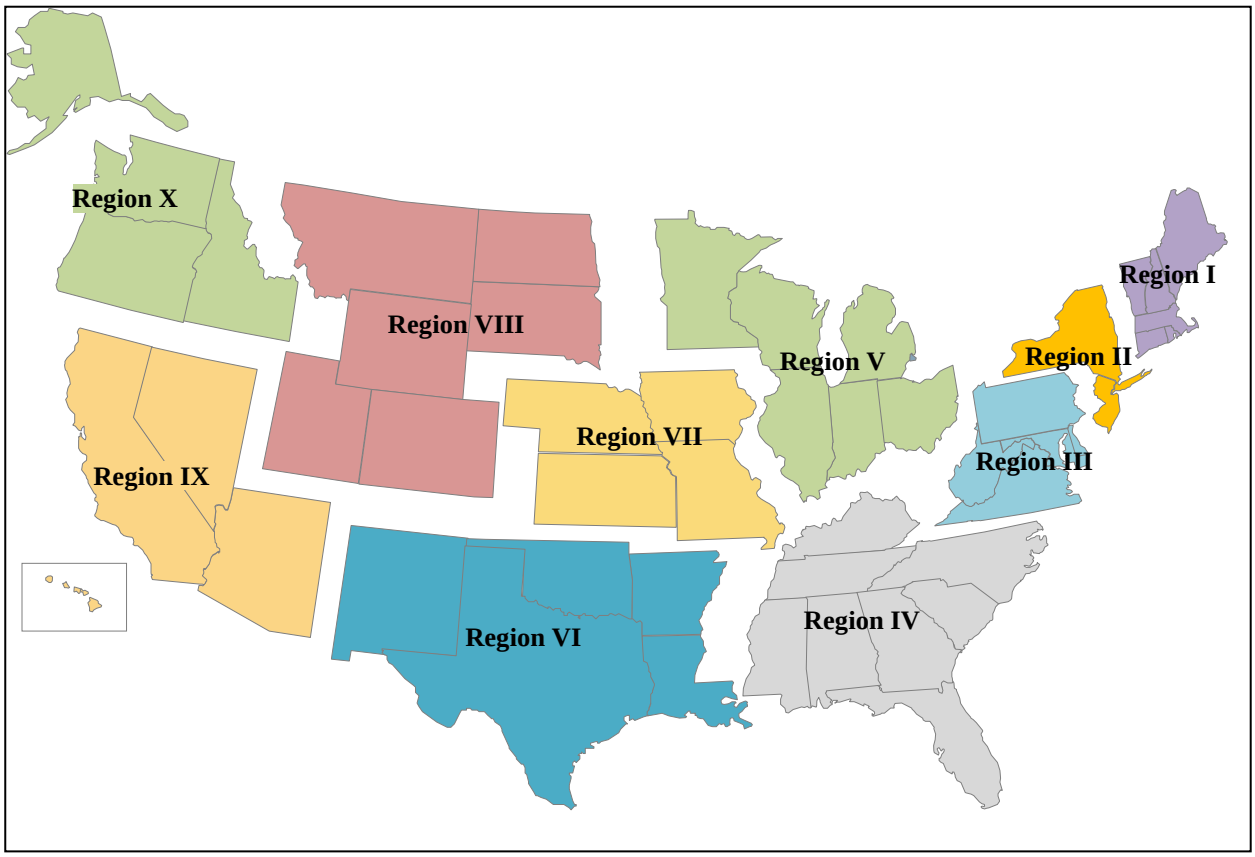

Figure 9. U.S. Standard Federal Regions.

The U.S. Standard Federal Region will be the first variation criterion applied because geographical distribution is the priority selection criterion after planning excellence and innovation. A geographically dispersed nominated sample will be initiated to produce an expectable degree of variation due to regional differences of culture, workforce needs, and community college system structures.

Characteristics III and IV. Subsequently, the final selection characteristics will be applied to those regions having more than one nominated college: annual FTE enrollment and degree of urbanization. Enrollment and degree of urbanization will be determined from data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

Strategic Planning Professional Participant Selection

Because one of the foci of this research is to explore how mission statement function within the planning process, one strategic planning professional from each of the participant community colleges will be selected to be interviewed. The strategic planning professional (i.e., the executive-level position responsible for strategic planning) will be identified by the president of that institution.

Participant College Contact Protocol

A protocol will be established to ensure consistency of data gathering and uniformity of the contact procedures, and to ensure consistency of the multiphase data collection process. Yin (2003) believes that "protocol is a major way of increasing the *reliability* of case study research and is intended to guide the investigator in carrying out the data collection from a single-case study (again, even if the single case is one of several in a multiple-case study)" (p. 67). Moreover, as Yin posits that "preparing the protocol forces [the researcher] to anticipate several problems" (p. 69).

The following sequence will be utilized with each participant college as a contact protocol for participant selection.

1. Introductory Email to President. The president for each participant college will be identified from the college's web site along with the name and title of the administrative or executive assistant. Subsequently, an introductory email (Appendix A) will be sent to the president, and copied to their administrative or executive assistant. The email will outline the nature of study and asked for the president's agreement to participate in the study. Subsequently, the president will be asked to

identify the person within their college responsible for strategic planning at the executive level.

2. Orientation Telephone Call to Strategic Planning Professional. An orientation telephone call will be placed to the identified strategic planning professional at each participant college. The orientation will consist of the following: (a) brief overview of the nature of the research, (b) review of the pre-interview questionnaire and telephone interview process, (c) discussion regarding institutional planning documents and their availability (e.g., are they available on the web, only in print, etc.), and (d) scheduling of the telephone interview. Informed consent will be secured as part of the completed online pre-interview questionnaire process. A topical outline of the orientation is provided in Appendix B.
3. Confirmation Email to Strategic Planning Professional. Following the orientation telephone call, an email (Appendix C) will be sent to the strategic planning professional summarizing the orientation discussion, directions for completing the online pre-interview questionnaire, and confirming the date and time for the telephone interview.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

Merriam (1998) captures well the difference between quantitative and qualitative data collection. She explains that "data conveyed through words have been labeled *qualitative,* whereas data presented in number form are *quantitative*" (p. 69). Indeed, qualitative research traditionally has focused on word-centered data collection in the form of interviews, observation, and document review (Creswell, 2008; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). For this

study, data will be collected from five sources. Table 8 lists each data source, categorizes the method or methods employed, and data-collection technique.

Table 8. *The Five Data Sources Employed for the Study*

Data source	Method	Data collection technique
Strategic planning professional	Pre-interview Questionnaire	Online survey using SurveyMonkey.com yielding demographic and planning process data, prerequisite for telephone interview
Strategic planning professional	Telephone Interview	Telephone interview approximately 30-60 minutes in length with a possible follow-up interview yielding digital recording of interview, interview transcript, field notes
College strategic plan	Document	Gathered from institutional web site or print if online version is unavailable
College strategic planning process description	Document	Gathered from institutional web site or print if online version is unavailable
College mission statement	Document	Gathered from college catalog, marketing materials, college web site

Document Collection

Mission statements will be gathered and reviewed from the participant colleges. In general, community colleges utilize various dissemination methods for mission statements such as the college catalog, course schedule, web site, and the strategic plan. Documented descriptions of the planning process and the mission statement function will also be gathered.

Pre-interview Questionnaire

The function of the pre-interview questionnaire (Appendix D) is to obtain demographics and background information for the interview participants. In addition, it will provide an avenue

to obtaining pertinent information on the institution's strategic planning process, as well as the framework used for developing and disseminating the college mission statement.

The pre-interview questionnaire will be administered using SurveyMonkey.com, which is an online survey tool web site developed in 1999. The site provides a variety of support functions for online surveys such as survey design and distribution, tracking, data analysis. The site also provides support for exporting raw data for import quantitative or qualitative analysis software.

The information gathered from the pre-interview questionnaire will allow the telephone interview to be more productive and time efficient. Rather than devoting large amounts of time describing and clarifying the planning process, which can be quite complex and convoluted, the telephone interviews can focus more on perceptions of efficacy and clarification of point made in the pre-interview questionnaire.

Informed Consent and Confidentiality Procedures

Informed consent will be secured as part of the pre-interview questionnaire. The consent form will be provided to the participants to communicate a clear understanding of the study, their role in the process, and the role and responsibilities of the researcher. The participant strategic planning professional will affirm their willingness to participate by completing contact information at the bottom of the online form. Confidentially of the study participants and their employer colleges will be maintained by the use of assigned pseudonyms in the final report.

Also, a signed confidentiality agreement will be obtained from the professional transcriptionist who will transcribe the interview recordings into data text. All informed consent and confidentiality forms are included in Appendices E and F.

Telephone Interviews

Since state community college systems tend to produce a degree of homogeneity in policy, a national nominated sample was chosen to explore a diverse array of planning philosophies, methodologies, and practices. However, expanding the nominated sample to be reflective of a national distribution can create a resource issue, from the perspectives of cost and time. Travel for nationally distributed face-to-face interviews is not an option for the researcher. Moreover, the value of having a nationally distributed nominated sample outweighs the value of face-to-face interviews. For this reason, telephone interviews will be employed to collect data.

The efficacy of telephone interviews is still a matter of concern to some in spite of decades of research that demonstrate their validity and reliability. Bauman (1993) summarizes the literature thusly:

> A large, impressive literature exists on the strengths and weaknesses of telephone interviewing. Methologically strong studies have been conducted to compare data collected by phone with data collected through personal interviews, mail questionnaires, and self-administered forms. The clear conclusion from this literature is that telephone interviews are equivalent to in-person interviews in terms of validity, reliability, precision of estimates, and response rates. (p. 256)

Specific research in such areas as nursing, psychology, and education has supported Baumann's contention and demonstrated the same consistency (e.g., Chwalow, Balkau, Costagliola, & Deeds, 1989; Herman, 1977; Musselwhite, Cuff, McGregor, & King, 2007; Wishart, 2003).

However, advantages and concerns have been identified relating to telephone interviewing. The primary advantage cited by most researchers is one of cost (Bauman, 1993). This is especially true when the researcher desires a large or dispersed sample; the cost of travel and salaries of those employed to assist with data collection can be prohibitive. Time is also a consideration as often it is desirable to collect data within a specific time period to help control

the impact of sudden environmental changes (e.g., a sudden change in economic conditions) on the data.

Bauman (1993) identifies three areas of weakness or concern when employing a telephone interview methodology: (a) item non-response, (b) length of interview, and (c) complexity of questions. While item non-response is generally not an issue with routine attitude questions and factual information, it can be an issue of concern when discussing confidential, sensitive, or personal information. Bauman believes that this shortcoming can be overcome with appropriately crafted interview questions and interviewer training. Since the nature of this research is the exploration of process and efficacy, and the study participants will be planning professionals, there is little concern for non-response limitations due to the professional nature of the driving questions.

Regarding the length for the telephone interview, Bauman (1993) argues that effective telephone interviews can be of varying lengths but with a caveat: "Although methodologists recommend that telephone interviews be no longer than 20 to 30 minutes, there are many examples of successful interviews that last an hour or more" (p. 256). Participant interest in the topic seems to be an important factor in the success of longer interviews. Once again, since study participants will be strategic planning professionals speaking within the area of their professional practice, a high level of engagement is expected.

Finally, there is concern that telephone interviews might not serve an effective methodology with regard to administering complex questions. In this regard, McCormick, Workman-Daniels, Brooks-Gun, and Peckham (1993) found that telephone interviews were as effective as in-person interviews in the area of multi-category responses (i.e., their definition of a complex question). Great thought and consideration was given this particular concern when

designing the research protocol. This concern will be addressed in the study in three ways. First, the pre-interview questionnaire will address specific areas of planning process that can be difficult or tedious to communicate in a telephone interview. Second, the telephone interview questions are not complex by the McCormick et al. definition (i.e., multi-category responses). The questions are perceptive in nature and semi-structured to allow for exploration and clarification. Third, the interview questions will be provided to the participants a minimum of one week in advance for the purposes of reflective preparation for the interview and for reference during the interview. In summary, based on the neutralization of common telephone interview weaknesses and the benefits of a more geographically distributed participant pool, telephone interviews have been chosen for the interview technique.

Conversely, significant advantages to telephone interviews beyond that of conservation of time and resources were present. One of the perceived benefits of telephone interviews is that a certain degree of intimacy and the perception of discretion can often be achieved (Bauman, 1993). This can lead to more candid and provoking discussions than may be realized in face-to-face interviews.

The telephone interviews will range from 30-60 minutes in length. The interview questions will be semi-structured, or standardized open-ended (Patton, 1987), crafted to address the driving questions of the study. The semi-structured nature of the interview will assure that each participant will answer each of the questions while allowing the latitude to pursue any variation and diversity in planning processes and philosophies with probing questions. The telephone interview also will allow for clarification of questions from the pre-interview questionnaire.

Each telephone interview will be recorded using redundant recording technologies. A direct digital audio recorder will be used in conjunction with an online digital audio recording service provided by Cogi.com. Digital audio recordings will be transcribed for later analysis. Each participant will be provided with a copy of the interview transcript for review and comment. Any corrections or clarifications to the transcripts will be made based on the feedback from participants and will be described as part of the study's audit trail.

The planning process is by nature complex, political, and contextually constrained. In order to garner in-depth and richly detailed descriptions and perceptions from participants, it will be necessary to discern and explore peculiar facets and issues as they arise in the course of the telephone interview. Such details provide context and richness to each case and assists readers in establishing a naturalistic situated understanding for the strategic planning process at each college, what Merriam (1998) calls reader or user generalizability. This understanding assists practitioners (readers) in deciding whether and which facets of the case may be applicable and transferable to their contexts (Willis, 2007). Lincoln and Guba (1985) quite convincingly describe this application process: "the [researcher] can not specify the external validity of an inquiry: he or she can provide only the thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility" (p. 316).

Field Notes

Field notes, although most closely related observational data gathering, play an important part during interviews (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 2009). Field notes are a written account of the observation and/or interview by the researcher, which provide a description of the setting, the themes and substance of the dialogue, and reflective perceptions captured during or after the

event (Merriam, 2009). Moreover, Merriam charges researchers with being "highly descriptive" (p. 130) in their field note accounts. She believes "that enough detail should be given that readers feel as if they are there" (p. 130).

In a similar manner, Creswell (2008), describes field notes as consisting of two parts: observations and reflections. The observations are descriptive accounts of what was perceived through the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Parallel to the observations, the researcher captures reflections that loosely correspond to the observations. Such a process helps the researcher understand how thoughts and reflections can impact perceptions.

Field notes are traditionally viewed as an observational tool in capturing visual cues not necessarily transmitted to audio tape or the subsequent transcript. Although visual cues will not be present due to the use of telephone interviews, field notes will be written for each interview. Rather than focusing on visual cues, non-linguistic cues will be captured along with any important impressions or reflections to add richness and depth to the transcript analysis. Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide a useful taxonomy of these non-linguistic cues: (a) synchrony, which is the relationship sensed between the participant and the researcher; (b) chronemics, which relate to the timing, cadence, and pacing of the conversation; and (c) paralinguistics, which relate to the quality of voice (e.g., dynamic level, inflection, accent). These characteristics will provide an important framework for both perceiving and capturing essential particulars of the telephone interviews, comments regarding the logistics and technical elements of the call, notes and themes relating to the discussion content, non-linguistic cues, and researcher perceptions and reflections. The field notes form will separate researcher reflection from other content of the field notes. The form was modeled after Creswell (see 2007, pp. 136-137). One form will be completed for each participant interview.

Data Collection Pilot

In order elicit any problems or difficulties associated with the research protocol, a small focus group will be utilized to pilot each step of the data collection process. Three content experts will be selected based on convenience factors and purposeful criteria to participate in the pilot. The content experts will be community college strategic planning professionals (i.e., the person at their college responsible for the strategic planning process). No question-responsive data will be captured or maintained for use in the final study.

Careful attention will be taken with the content expert focus group to replicate each step and technique used during the data collection process. Following the established protocol, the content experts will be sent an email outlining their participation, the research purpose, and driving questions. The pre-interview questionnaire will be completed and returned and the telephone interview with the researcher will be digitally recorded. The digital file will be erased immediately after ascertaining the functionality of the recording technology.

Data Storage

Only the researcher will have access to the data. All paper documents will be destroyed after they are transferred to a digital format. All digital documents and media including institutional documents, field notes, audio recordings, and transcripts will be kept securely stored for five years. Digital documents and media will be maintained in an encrypted format in protected data storage to provide redundancy, data integrity, and increased data security. All digital documents and media will be completely and safely destroyed after the five years.

Data Analysis

Stake (1995) describes the scope of the qualitative data analysis cycle quite elegantly: "There is no particular moment when data analysis begins. Analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as final compilations" (p. 71). Data analysis is not necessarily nor usually a linear process. Creswell (2007) agrees depicting this process as a spiral where the researcher "engages in the process of moving in analytic circles rather than using a fixed linear approach" (p. 150). Creswell notes that analysis procedures are loosely ordered as (a) data managing; (b) reading and memoing; (c) describing, classifying, and interpreting; and (d) representing and visualizing. This study follows Creswell's data analysis spiral framework through the data analysis phase.

Data Managing Stage

All digital data files for the research will be directly imported into QSR's NVivo 8 (paper documents will be first scanned and then the resulting text and image files will be imported into NVivo). NVivo is powerful qualitative data analysis software available for purchase from QSR International (www.qsrinternational.com). Its use will strengthen the level of transparency and will establish analytical distance when working with large amounts of data. The software assists researchers in managing and codifying textual data and other media common to qualitative research. Because of the volume of data anticipated from the participant colleges (e.g., interview field notes, transcripts, planning documents, mission statements, web sites), NVivo will be used in each phase of the data analysis spiral proving most helpful in the data managing phase.

Several data sources, documents, memos, and externals (material in various formats) will be created in NVivo and populated upon import of data files. Some document will be created and maintained directly within the NVivo software (e.g., research notes, methodological log, case

management and contact files). Other document types will be transcribed into NVivo from hand-written notes or forms (e.g., field notes). The data files will be organized by case and by type (e.g., interview transcripts, strategic plans). Links will be created for external data sources (e.g., web sites) that are not easily imported into the software.

Reading and Memoing Stage

In the initial stages of analysis, the researcher must gain a sense of the whole by immersing oneself in the data (Creswell, 2007). This will be accomplished by thorough and multiple readings of all transcripts and print documents. Similarly, audio recordings will be reviewed along with the field notes. Throughout the process, memos and annotations will be created within the NVivo 8 software to capture initial thoughts and ideas as they emerge from the data.

Describing, Classifying, and Interpreting Stage

After initial reading and memoing, the following data will be coded and themed using the node and tree node function of NVivo 8: (a) interview transcripts, (b) strategic plans, (c) strategic planning guidelines, and (d) mission statements. Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991) identified five roles of college mission statements. These five roles will serve as a priori themes to assist in accelerating the initial coding phase of the data analysis process. Table 9 lists these a priori roles along with a succinct description. In order not to lose any data, emergent themes will be captured during the coding.

Table 9. *Lang and Lopers-Sweetman's (1991) Roles of Institutional Mission Statements*

Role	Description
Goal clarification	Traditional role in planning process; used to determine institutional direction and provide clarity
Smoke screens for opportunism	Generic, homogeneous description of institution; provides room for development and shifting to meet changing needs; statement of means rather than ends
Things as they are	Description of institution as it currently exists; not an ideal or distant, abstract model; may include description of what the institution is not
Aspirations	Focus on vision of the future, not of present; can represent institutional wish list
Marketing tool	Focus on the market being served, its needs, and how the institution meets those needs; usually motivating and very concrete

The interpretation of data lies at the heart of the qualitative paradigm. Indeed, for Willis (2007), the two terms are synonymous (i.e., interpretivist and qualitative). The interpretivist approach emphasizes situated understanding of phenomena rather than the discovery of universal truths. Where Willis (2007) described the larger philosophy underpinning the interpretive paradigm, Stake (1995) describes the act of interpretation in a more pragmatic manner: "[interpretation] concentrate[s] on the instance, trying to pull it apart and put it back together again more meaningfully—analysis and synthesis" (p. 75). This understanding provides a framework for the approach to the coding and theming. After the initial stage progresses from analyzing the particular (coding), it will move towards synthesis of the larger (theming), with an ultimate goal of situated understanding. Creswell (2007) names this synthesis process *categorical aggregation*.

Representing and Visualizing Stage

A concept model will be created in NVivo 8 using the themes aggregated from the coding. Using a graphical interface, codes and themes will be drawn to demonstrate hierarchal, dependency, and corroborative relationships. From this final concept model with its themes, naturalistic generalizations can become known, and such naturalistic generalizations represent the transferable elements of the research. Stake (1995) defines naturalistic generalizations as "the conclusions arrived at through personal engagement in life's affairs or by vicarious experience so well constructed that the person feels as if it happened to themselves" (p. 85). It is up to the researcher to provide enough detail and context for readers to determine the transferability based on their particular setting. Creswell (2007) agrees and feels that naturalistic generalizations can be directly transferred by readers to their setting, or they can be "applied to a population of cases" (p. 163).

Trustworthiness: Reliability, Validity, and Rigor

Reliability and validity are a concern in academic scholarship and research. One must be able to place confidence in the research findings. Once this confidence has been established, the reader can then make the determination of whether or not the findings may be generalizable, for quantitative research, or transferable, for qualitative research. Qualitative researchers have developed a different lexicon of concepts (e.g., credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability) to address reliability and validity.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) define trustworthiness under the broad umbrella of naturalistic inquiry (i.e., qualitative research) and clarify its meaning to the qualitative researcher:

> The conventional criteria for trustworthiness are internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity….Guba (1981a) proposes that these conventional formulations be replaced with four new terms that have a better fit with naturalistic epistemology; these he has named "credibility" (in place of internal validity), "transferability" (in place

> of external validity), "dependability" (in place of reliability), and "confirmability" (in place of objectivity. (pp. 218-219)

Lincoln and Guba (1985) then suggest specific means for establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility can be established through five strategies: (a) specific credibility activities of engagement (prolonged engagement with the environment and participants, persistent observation of the environment, and triangulation of data sources, (b) peer debriefing, (c) negative case analysis, (d) referential adequacy (with regard to raw data), and (e) member checks. Transferability is enabled through thick, rich description of the natural environment, which allows readers to ascertain sufficient contextual information to decide for themselves whether the findings are transferable to their situation. Dependability and confirmability are established by the construction of an incontrovertible audit trail, which provides sufficient information for methodological replication, a rationale for methodological decisions, and a complete documentation of each act of the research process.

Even though Yin (2003) writes extensively regarding case study in relationship to qualitative research, he summarizes trustworthiness by the traditional terminology of quantitative research. Yin speaks of four tests for judging the quality of research designs: (a) construct validity, (b) internal validity, (c) external validity, and (d) reliability. Construct validity relies on the tactics of multiple sources and chains of evidence, and member checking of preliminary results. Internal validity relies on pattern matching, explanation-building, addressing "rival explanations" (p. 34), and using logic models. External validity is created using a theoretical framework and replication logic. Finally, reliability is achieved through case study protocol and a case study database.

Similar to those of Yin (2003), Stake (1995) suggests a list of strategies to establish trustworthiness. Stake's strategies speak more directly to the specialized work of the case study

researcher than those of Lincoln and Guba (1985), which are more general in nature. Stake (1995) speaks of two trustworthiness issues: validation and transferability. Validation is achieved primarily through triangulation of data sources and member checks. Transferability, what Stake calls naturalistic generalizations, is achieved by applying a variety of strategies and techniques. He posits that the following elements must be present to establish the trustworthiness of naturalistic research and to aid in the transferability of the findings:

1. Detailed accounts of information already familiar to readers: there must be some commonly known elements of information contained in the research to assist the reader in judging "the accuracy, completeness, and bias of reports on other matters" (p. 87).
2. Adequate raw data.
3. A detailed methodology description in plain language.
4. Background information on the researcher.
5. Member checks and peer review.
6. Clearly define validity as based on internal factors, not on replication statistical generalization.

When these various frameworks and constructs for trustworthiness are compared, certain commonalities emerge. Table 10 compares trustworthiness concepts from various authors in the qualitative paradigm. Commonalities are vividly apparent as to the ways and means of establishing research trustworthiness, even though the designation of the concepts differ.

Table 10. *Comparison of Trustworthiness Frameworks within the Qualitative Paradigm*

Trustworthiness concept	Lincoln & Guba (1985)	Yin (1995)	Stake (2003)
Internal validity	Credibility: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy, member checks	Internal validity: pattern-matching, explanation building, addressing rival explanations, logic models	Validation: triangulation, member checks
External validity	Transferability: rich, thick description	External validity: theoretical framework, replication logic	Naturalistic generalizations: adequate raw data, detailed methodology, define validity, peer review
Reliability	Dependability: audit trail	Reliability: case study protocol, case study database	Naturalistic generalizations: detailed methodology
Objectivity	Confirmability: audit trail	Construct validity: multiple sources, chain of evidence, member checks of preliminary findings	Naturalistic generalizations: Researcher bio, detailed methodology

For this study, Stake's (1995) six validation aids for naturalistic generalizations are used as a guide for trustworthiness. Such a guide provides an essential guideline when constructing the research and generally supports the rigor and transferability of the findings. Table 11 illustrates each of Stake's validation aids for naturalistic generalization and describes its application to this research.

Table 11. *Stake's Validation Aids for Naturalistic Generalizations*

Validation Aid	Location	Description
Detailed accounts	Chapter 2	Detailed accounts of information with which the reader is already comfortable includes much of the reviewed literature on strategic planning.
Adequate raw data	Chapters 5 & 6	Raw data will be provided throughout the data analysis and concluding sections.
Detailed methodology in plain language	Chapter 3	Throughout text.
Background information on researcher	Chapter 3	Biographical information on researcher is provided for the purpose of reflexivity.
Member checks and peer review	Chapter 3	Member checks will be performed after interview and after case analysis. Peer review was not used.
Define validity	Chapter 3	"Trustworthiness: Reliability, Validity, and Rigor" section.

To ensure reliability of the data and enhance the internal validity, three additional strategies will be used: (a) triangulation of data sources; (b) researcher field notes and memoing; and (c) a methodological log. The methodological log will provide an audit trail and document important decisions, processes, and reflections.

Institutional planning processes, particularly those that guide mission statement generation, revision, and function are not generally well documented. In such cases, triangulation of interview data with regard to print documents may not be possible. The absence of triangulating documents will be noted as it occurred. Such absence, in and of itself, provides for a point of engagement in the interview process as to why such documentation does not exist and what historical and undocumented practices govern the process.

Limitations

Every study has weaknesses within the design that can affect its findings. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) explain that "no research study can be perfect, and its imperfections inevitably cast at least a hint of doubt on its findings. Good researchers know—and they also report—the weaknesses along with the strengths of their research" (p. 276). Such weaknesses are commonly referred to as limitations.

Creswell (2008) defines limitations as "potential weaknesses or problems with the study identified by the researcher" (p. 207). Moreover, he explains that limitations "…often relate to inadequate measure of variables, loss or lack of participants, small sample sizes, errors in measurement, and other factors typically related to data collection and analysis" (p. 207). Since limitations will directly affect the transferability of the findings, it is important to document them clearly and comprehensively. Three limitations will be discusses as they relate to this research: (a) telephone interviews, (b) the absence of a Region I college representation with the nominated sample, and (c) researcher bias.

Telephone Interviews. Beyond those previously cited by Bauman (1993), there are elements of perception and interpretation that may be hampered or constrained by the use of telephone interviews. Any visual cues (e.g., position of one's body, extent of eye contact, degree of focus, extraneous movements) will be absent in telephone interviews. Therefore, care and attention was taken during the interviews to recognize non-linguistic cues, such as pace of conversation, inflection, content and meaning.

Absence of a Region I College. After completion of the participant college nomination process, no community colleges were nominated from Region I (i.e., the Northeast Region). Multiple attempts were made to secure a nomination from Region I based on leads provided by

the SCUP Director; those efforts were not successful. Although the participant college nominated sample is large and well dispersed, the absence of a community college representing the northeastern region of the United States can be viewed as a limitation. In spite of focused efforts to generate this nomination, the researcher and SCUP were unable to generate a nominee from Region I of the U.S. Standard Federal Regions.

Researcher Bias. Critical self-reflection, or reflexivity, provides an important element in mitigating the bias and subjectivity inherent in the interpretive paradigm. Merriam (2002a) defines reflexivity as "critical self reflection by the researcher regarding assumptions, worldview, biases, theoretical orientation, and relationship to the study that may affect the investigation" (p. 31). Guba and Lincoln (2005) describe the process as "reflecting critically on the self as researcher" (p. 210), which centers on the researcher, or more specifically the lens through which the researcher views the world. This view is in contrast to Merriam's focus on the critique process. Key actions and decisions will be documented in what Lincoln and Guba (1985) refer to as a "methodological log" (p. 327) or what is often referred to as an audit trail. The log will record the process of methodology development, implementation, and data analysis. Juxtaposed to this log, the researcher will capture important reflections, internal analytical dialogue, and syntheses of themes and interpretations evolving throughout the evolution of the research. Each step of the research process will be documented (e.g., sample selection, communication logs with participants, orientation notes, field notes) creating an exhaustive audit trail for the research.

Researcher as Research Instrument

Qualitative research in the interpretive paradigm should not feign objectivity. Indeed, qualitative researchers see this subjectivity, this bias, as a strength of the paradigm (Lincoln &

Guba, 1985; Willis, 2007). It is the role of the interpretivist researcher to explore, to contextualize, to reflect, to situate (Willis, 2007), and upon critical reflection, each will bring with it growth, understanding, and the acceptance of multiple perspectives. Since the researcher is the instrument or the tool through which the data is collected, it is important for the reader to have an understanding of the researcher's prior experience.

The researcher began his career in the community college in 1989 as a program coordinator for a non-credit music program; the program served avocational music students of all ages. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in music, both in piano performance. Concurrent to this appointment, he served as an adjunct music instructor for both credit and non-credit courses at the same college. In this role, he was responsible for all aspects of the program operations, from hiring faculty, planning, and financial accountability.

In addition to his work at the college, he was active in the professional music educator community having served in leadership positions in national professional associations. He was an active composer and author between 1996 and 2005. He composed both solo and ensemble works for teaching purposes. Additionally, he was co-author of a teaching series for elementary piano students.

In 2001, he accepted the position of operations manager for the newly formed continuing education division at his community college. In this role, he was responsible for developing and managing all operational aspects of the division (e.g., financial reporting, instructor and student support, process flow, registration, benchmarking, outcomes assessment).

In 2005, he was promoted to director of programming for the continuing education division. Again, the position reported to the dean of continuing education. As director, he was responsible for program and curriculum development, and marketing for the continuing

education division. In 2006, he was promoted to the role of dean of continuing education at the same community college. As dean, he is ultimately responsible for all aspects of non-credit instruction at the college. He is also responsible for select credit programs and extension services, which manages all college-owned extension sites. In all, he has served twenty years at the same community college in various progressive appointments in non-credit instruction.

Concurrent to his professional appointments at the college, the researcher served in a strategic planning role in the shared governance system for over nine years; he served on the institution's strategic planning committee, ultimately serving as chair for his final four years of service on the committee.

This intimate involvement with the process of planning brings a certain bias toward the prescriptive schools described by Mintzberg et al. (2005). However, it is important for one to fight the bias of self-preservation decried by Mintzberg (1994) and be willing to openly question the efficacy of the very function of planning. The researcher has grown in this regard. Now, with the distance of time and the growth that only a rigorous review of the literature can bring, long held values become veiled and less clear. And, this is only fitting, for as Willis (2007) argues, it is this critical reflection that forms the crux of the interpretivist paradigm.

Chapter Summary

This exploratory qualitative study will utilize an instrumental case study design. Community colleges from across the United States will be selected by a combination of purposeful sampling and maximum variation criteria. Purposeful sampling will be achieved through a nomination process, assisted by SCUP, and geographical distribution in each of the U.S. Federal Regions. The maximum variation criteria are annual enrollment of the college and degree of urbanization. One participant strategic planning professional will be identified from

each college by their respective president. The primary data collection methods will be a pre-interview questionnaire, telephone interviews, and planning documents.

Data analysis will follow Creswell's (2007) data analysis spiral, which consists of data managing; reading and memoing; describing, classifying, and interpreting; and representing and visualization. NVivo 8 will be utilized for most of the functional elements of data analysis.

Finally, issues of trustworthiness were discussed with reference to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability including ways to enhance each. The primary limitations of the study were those inherent in telephone versus face-to-face interviews and the absence of a Region I college. Researcher bias will be addressed through a process of reflexivity: the researcher will maintain a methodology log and audit trail documenting the process of methodology development, implementation, and data analysis. Ultimately, an audit trail will be maintained for each step of the study to provide for a transparent and credible research process.

Chapter 4: Data Collection and Presentation

Introduction

As with any research process, data are at its heart. Analysis of data in the qualitative paradigm is inductive. It begins with the particular and moves to the common, with those thematic elements worthy of transposition or transfer to other environments, what Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe as naturalistic generalizations. Moreover, in order to facilitate understanding of the vast amount of data gathered and analyzed for this study, tables have been used to summarize participant responses and the categorical aggregations emerging from the data. Such categorical aggregations represent Stage 3 of Creswell's (2007) data analysis spiral (i.e., describing, classifying, interpreting).

The purposes of this chapter are: (a) to describe case management documents, which aid in the credibility and confirmability of the research; (b) to provide a rich description of the case colleges, thereby affording a context for understanding and dependability; (c) to summarize the data gathered in the research; and (d) to describe the utilization of the qualitative data analysis software, NVivo, which provided corroboration of the analysis.

Management and Description of Case Study Colleges and Participants

Because of the intricacy of the contact protocol and such a geographically dispersed sample of colleges, multiple case management documents were maintained to assist in documenting and tracking communication and progress at each participant college. These documents will be listed and described prior to the detailed descriptions of the participant colleges and their interview participants (i.e., the executive-level staff person responsible for strategic planning).

Case Management Documents

The participant college contact protocol also added a layer of complexity to the research, which required increased diligence to maintain continuity throughout the data collection process. The various case management documents utilized in the data collection process are found in Table 12 along with a description of the purpose.

Table 12. *Case Management Documents*

Document	Description
College confirmation status	Documented the process of securing confirmation of participation from the nine case colleges.
Communication logs	Nine separate communication logs were maintained to document email and telephone communications with the case colleges.
Data collection task list	A daily list of data collection tasks which included the various steps of the data collection process (e.g., emails, telephone appointments, follow-up calls).
Member check log	Recorded the process and status of the member checks.

Not unexpectedly, after the initial contact was made with the school, several routes were taken to facilitate the identification and contact of the appropriate study participant. For example, the first contact with the school was an email to the president, asking the president to affirm participation in the study and to identify the executive-level person responsible for strategic planning. In a few cases, the president did not respond directly but directed their administrative assistant to contact the planner who would then contact the researcher. In another case, the president was non-responsive after several communication attempts. Upon contacting the administrative assistant to the president, that person identified the executive-level strategic

planner and contact was made. Indeed, each college presented some permutation of this type of communication flow.

Regardless of these small variations, the content of verbal and email communications was consistent from college to college. In the end, each of the nine nominated colleges was successfully recruited to participate in the study. One participant college required the researcher to obtain approval from its own institutional review board. This was accomplished and obtained.

Case Description

To provide a more encompassing picture of the characteristics of the nine community colleges included in the study, five attributes are provided in Table 13. These attributes include degree of urbanization, annual FTE enrollment for 2007, and FTE staff were extracted from IPEDS data (*Integrated postsecondary education data system*). Size classification data was obtained from the Carnegie Foundation web site (*Basic classification description*, 2009). Annual FTE has been rounded to the nearest thousand, and FTE staff has been rounded to the nearest hundred. This has been done to protect the confidentiality of the participant colleges.

Table 13. *Participant Community College Attributes*

College	US Standard Federal Region	Degree of urbanization	Size classification	Annual FTE enrollment 2007	FTE staff
A	II	Suburb: Large	L2	10,000	1,600
B	III	Suburb: Large	VL2	15,000	2,000
C	IV	City: Midsize	VL2	21,000	1,700
D	V	City: Small	L2	8,000	500
E	VI	City: Large	L2	10,000	900
F	VII	City: Midsize	VL2	11,000	1,400
G	VIII	Suburb: Large	VL2	16,000	1,700
H	IX	City: Large	M2	5,000	400
I	X	City: Midsize	L2	9,000	900

Note. Size classification represents the Carnegie size classification system: VS2=Very small two-year--Fall enrollment data show FTE* enrollment of fewer than 500 students at these associate's degree granting institutions; S2=Small two-year--Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 500–1,999 students at these associate's degree granting institutions; M2=Medium two-year--Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 2,000–4,999 students at these associate's degree granting institutions; L2=Large two-year--Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 5,000–9,999 students at these associate's degree granting institutions; VL2=Very large two-year--Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of at least 10,000 students at these associate's degree granting institutions.

Some important observations can be made from these highlighted college attributes. There is a noticeable lack of representation from smaller community colleges (i.e., VS2, S2, and M2) and from rural community colleges. This is an unintentional consequence of the selection criteria. The first criterion for inclusion in the study was reputation for planning, identified by the Society for College and University Planners (SCUP). The second criterion was geographical dispersion as represented in the U.S. Federal Regions. Maximum variation sampling criteria were not applied until these first two criteria had been satisfied. This resulted in a lack of representation from smaller, more rural community colleges.

Pre-interview Questionnaire Data

The pre-interview questionnaire served two purposes: (a) to gather basic demographic, professional, and organizational information; and (b) to provide a basic outline of the colleges' processes regarding strategic planning and mission statement. Summary demographic information describing the participant planners is found in Table 14, which includes information regarding gender, age, race/ethnicity, and degrees earned. It is important to note that the interview with one college (College F) involved two participants: the executive-level position, marked as F1; and his subordinate, marked as F2. Participant F1 alone was nominated by his president to participate in the study. However, Participant F1 subsequently invited F2 to take part in the interview to offer additional information and insights regarding the process in that college. Both Participants responded conversationally to the semi-structured questions, one filling in where the other had less knowledge. In summary, the interview was very productive and responsive to the driving questions.

Table 14. *Demographic Data Describing Participant Strategic Planners*

College	Gender	Age range	Race/ethnicity	Holds doctoral degree
A	Male	over 60 years	White, non-Hispanic	No
B	Female	over 60 years	White, non-Hispanic	No
C	Male	56 - 60 years	White, non-Hispanic	No
D	Female	over 60 years	White, non-Hispanic	Yes
E	Female	41 - 45 years	White, non-Hispanic	Yes
F1	Male	51 - 55 years	White, non-Hispanic	Yes
F2	Female	41 – 45 years	White, non-Hispanic	No
G	Female	51 - 55 years	White, non-Hispanic	No
H	Male	56 - 60 years	White, non-Hispanic	Yes
I	Female	41 - 45 years	Asian or Pacific Islander	No

The participant planner's role within the college and how many years the planner had served in that role is described in Table 15. Six of the nine planners reported to the president or chancellor of the college, while three reported to vice presidents or deans. While the goal of the research was to interview an executive-level position (i.e., presidential direct report) responsible for planning, each college identified its own representative to participate in the study, and consequently three of the participants were not executive-level staff as had been requested. However, since each community college defines executive-level differently, the representative identified by the college served as the study participant and by default represents the executive-level at the college.

Table 15. *Participant Planner Position Data*

College	Participant position	Superior	Yrs in current position
A	Executive Director	President	22
B	Vice President	Executive Vice President	3
C	Vice President	President	15
D	Executive Director	President	20
E	Director	Dean	<1
F1	Executive Vice President	President	4
F2	Director	Executive Vice President	1
G	Director	Vice President	2
H	Director	Chancellor	3
I	Vice President	President	<1

Noteworthy is the fact that two of the participants had been in their current role as planner for less than a year. New hires into these executive-level positions at community colleges are not unusual, becoming more common in recent years due to the volume of retirements in community college leadership. In both cases, the participants participated in the interview and responded to the interview questions to the best of their knowledge. However, when gaps in knowledge occurred, especially with regard to historical practice, the participants were quick to refer the researcher to historical documents that provided the information. References to a lack of knowledge of the subject and subsequent apology were noted in annotations to the interview transcripts. These annotations, descriptively correlated to years in current position, assist in understanding the findings (see Table 28. *Participant's Attitude and Sentiment Themes by Number of Years in Current Position (count of coding instances)*).

Finally, the study participants held a diverse array of responsibilities and functions beyond that of strategic planning. Their additional functional responsibilities are described in Table 16, which were reported in the pre-interview questionnaire. Because the research function and the institutional effectiveness function were prominent in both the questionnaire and the interviews, those functions have been identified in separate columns. The remaining functions are listed in the final column.

Table 16. *Functional Responsibilities of Participant Planners beyond Strategic Planning*

College	Research function	Institutional effectiveness function	Additional functions
A	Yes	Yes	Institutional assessment and evaluation
B	Yes	Yes	Market research; outcomes assessment; records management; faculty governance; curriculum; academic regulations
C	No	No	Marketing; media relations; resource development; community relations; staff organizational development; alumni relations; federal relations
D	Yes	No	Grants and alternative funding; curriculum projects
E	Yes	Yes	Curriculum; outcomes assessment
F1	Yes	No	Workforce, community, and economic development; student services; CIO; campus facilities; accreditation; continuous quality improvement
F2	No	No	CIO; Information Technology
G	No	Yes	Accreditation; assessment
H	Yes	No	Grants; service-learning; civic engagement; accreditation
I	No	No	Finance; auxiliary services; campus operations; institutional advancement; administrative services

Data Collection and Process Pilot

In order to pilot the pre-interview questionnaire, the telephone interview schedule, and to test the telephone recording technology, a pilot was executed. The pilot was comprised of three experts, who are currently community college strategic planners and resulted in refinements to the pre-interview questionnaire and telephone interview schedule. Two were vice presidents, and one was a director of strategic planning all at northern Illinois community colleges. Each will be discussed and subsequent changes noted.

Another important purpose for the pilot was to test the redundant audio recording technologies. All three recording tests were successful, and they provided an important opportunity to practice the sequence and timing of operating the redundant recording technologies while conducting a telephone interview.

Pre-interview Questionnaire

The data collection pilot resulted in minor changes to the pre-interview questionnaire and the interview schedule. The questionnaire and interview schedule are found in Appendices D and G respectively. The commentary from the pilot of the pre-interview questionnaire is summarized in Table 17. The final column of the table identifies actions or revisions resulting from the feedback. As a result of the feedback, question two was edited as indicated.

Table 17. *Data Collection Pilot Results: Pre-interview Questionnaire*

Focus of commentary	Expert A	Expert B	Expert C	Subsequent revisions
General Comments	"Be sure that free fields are truly that, free, so that folks can cut and paste the appropriate stuff into there, from documents, for example."	--	--	Fields are unlimited text.
Q2	Function may be the wrong word. Perhaps "how" or "where" does mission statement fit into your strategic planning process. Or, what "role" does mission statement play in your strategic planning process.	--	--	Reworded question by rearranging phrases. Resolved.

Telephone Interview Schedule

The experts in the pilot also provided feedback regarding the interview schedule as well, which is described in Table 18. The insights and suggestions from the experts were slightly more significant than that provided for the pre-interview questionnaire with important changes made to the interview schedule as a result. Their suggestions regarding the telephone interview schedule were quite helpful in refining the terminology and sequence of the interview questions. The final column of Table 18 describes the changes or actions resulting from the feedback.

Table 18. *Data Collection Pilot Results: Interview Schedule*

Focus of commentary	Expert A	Expert B	Expert C	Subsequent revisions
General Comments	--	--	Would like to add "How do we know it is being accomplished?" That would be something that she would be interested in hearing about.	Question outside the scope of this research.
Q1	--	This question may be broken down into two questions.	Was not sure how second half of question was different from the first. Might not need to use if they address this in first part of question.	Moved the second half of question to a prompt if not in participant response.
Q2	--	--	--	--
Q3	--	--	Would like to see this question first. Is concerned that by putting some of the mission statement info first that the participant might overplay the role of mission in the planning process.	Rearranged order of questions to address strategic planning process first, then lead into mission statement questions. This flows more naturally.
Q4	--	--	--	--
Q5	--	--	--	--

Q6	Q6 and 7 are confusing. Confused between function and process. Perhaps combine or remove one or the other.	This may be two questions. Not clear. May need to split to make clearer. Was not clear how a statement could be used. May be redundant with Q7.	Strike words “post planning” from question six.	Struck words “post planning”
Q7	--	--	--	--
Q8	Remove “collective intention of the”.	Didn't understand “collective intention”.	Strike words “collective intention of the”.	Struck words “collective intention of the”.

Summary of Data Collected

This summary of data collection strategies to be discussed will include: (a) data gathered through the telephone interviews, (b) data from the participant colleges’ planning documents, and (c) field notes and the reflexive journal. The telephone interview data will be presented in tables that display the presence of various categorical aggregations (i.e., themes) found in the responses of the various participants. Planning documents will be also displayed indicating the number examined, the type, and the participant college.

The Data Analysis Process

The nation-wide sample of participant strategic planning professionals was interviewed by telephone. The participants were provided the interview schedule one week in advance for review and preparation, along with an email describing the nature of the research and confirming their participation. The interviews lasted approximately 30 to 60 minutes. After the interviews were transcribed, member checks were performed with the participants. Each participant planner was given the opportunity to review and correct the interview transcript prior to coding and

theming. Minor changes were submitted by the participants, and the changes incorporated into the final transcripts prior to analysis.

The analysis of the data followed the steps of Creswell's (2007) data analysis spiral, which provided an analysis framework for the study. Creswell's spiral loosely progresses through four stages: (a) data managing; (b) reading and memoing; (c) describing, classifying, and interpreting; and (d) representing and visualizing. Data managing, and reading and memoing are described more fully with the discussion of NVivo and its role in the data analysis process. Creswell's Stage 3, describing, classifying, and interpreting, provides the foundation for chapters 4 and 5, while chapter 6 corresponds to Stage 4: representing and visualizing.

In adherence with Creswell's (2007) second stage of the data analysis framework, the transcripts were read multiple times checking for word alignment and agreement the interview audio recordings. Memos were created that captured initial reactions, annotations, thoughts, reflections, and themes as they emerged from the data. Following this reiterative process, Stage 3 (i.e., describing, classifying, and interpreting) commenced.

The transcripts were coded in two phases: descriptive coding and analytical coding. Descriptive codes are a way of representing the meaning of the text in its simplest terms, thus describing the data; analytical codes can be thought of as answering basic questions of significance (e.g., "Why is this important?"), or in the words of Richards (2005), "from interpretation or reflection on meaning" (p. 94). The codes were then categorized and re-categorized to create themes, or what Creswell (2007) calls categorical aggregations. This process of coding and categorizing was repeated and reviewed multiple times. This continuous reductive process of defining and testing codes as they emerge from the data lies at the heart of the qualitative analysis process (Creswell, 2008) and was richly enhanced by the use of the

analytical software, NVivo. NVivo facilitated multiple and complex coding schemas that can be layered and easily redefined as meaning emerges.

The a priori themes indentified by Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991) served to facilitate the data analysis process. There was a natural confluence of the emergent themes with those of Lang and Lopers-Sweetman. The themes not identified and coded into the a priori themes were retained and designated with EMG to indicate an emergent theme. No themes were lost. The following tables reflect an organization of the themes by driving question. Driving question 2 (i.e., what are the similarities, commonalities, or differences among the identified definition, and function of community college mission statements?) will not be addressed here as the commonalities and differences will be presented as they directly relate to driving questions 1, 3, 4, and 5.

Driving Question 1

What are the identified definition and meaning of a mission statement to the purpose of a community college?

Themes that correspond to the first part of driving question 1 (i.e., what is the definition of mission statement) are described in Table 19, *Mission statement defined.* This table shows that the definition of mission statement was clearly addressed in all but one of the interviews. When defining mission statement alone was unclear or ambiguous, participants were asked to compare the definition of a mission statement with that of a vision statement. The presence of such a comparison is also noted.

Table 19. *Mission Statement Defined*

Theme	College								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Mission statement as defining the work of the college	X	X	X	X	--	X	X	X	--
Mission statement defined by comparing mission vs. vision statement	X	X	--	X	X	--	--	X	X

Note. X=addressed in interview; --=not addressed by participants in interview

Table 20 describes themes that correspond to the second component of driving question 1 (i.e., what is the meaning or role of mission statement). A priori themes from Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991) are prefaced by LLS, while emergent themes are prefaced by EMG. Nested analytical codes beneath the primary aggregations represent subsets of categories or specificity with regard to participant responses.

Table 20. *The Role of Mission Statement by College*

Theme	College								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Roles and functions									
LLS mission statement as aspirations	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
LLS mission statement as marketing tool									
Marketing function of mission statement	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Length of mission statement	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	--
LLS mission statement as smoke screen for opportunism	--	X	--	--	X	--	--	X	X
LLS mission statement as things as they are	X	X	--	--	X	--	X	X	X
LLS mission statement as goal clarification									
Inclusive list of functions	--	X	--	--	--	--	X	X	--
Measure to focus Efforts									
All things to all people	X	X	--	X	--	--	--	--	--
Providing specificity	X	X	--	--	--	X	X	--	X
Allocating resources	X	X	--	--	--	--	X	X	--
Focusing efforts	X	X	X	X	--	--	X	X	X
Synchronicity issues	X	X	X	--	--	X	X	--	--
EMG mission statement as accreditation requirement									
Accreditation	--	X	X	X	--	--	X	X	X
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	X	--	--	X	X	--	X	X	X
Mission fulfillment	X	--	--	--	X	--	X	--	--
Role in assessment	--	X	--	X	--	X	X	X	X
EMG mission statement as teambuilding tool	--	X	X	X	--	X	X	X	X

Note. LLS=Lang & Lopers-Sweetman (1991) a priori theme; EMG=emergent theme; X=addressed in interview; --=not addressed by participants in interview.

Driving Question 3

How are community college mission statements used within the strategic planning process?

Themes that correspond to driving question 3 are described in Table 21. This driving question explored mission statement function within the planning process in its broadest sense (i.e., the interview did not focus exclusively on the structural placement of mission within the planning framework but explored any and all functions of mission in planning).

Table 21. *The Function of Mission Statement within the Strategic Planning Process*

Theme	College								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Mission statement function within the strategic planning process									
Linkages to other planning components	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
The path from mission statement to goals	--	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

Note. X=addressed in interview; --=not addressed by participants in interview.

Table 22 describes the placement of the mission statement within the strategic planning process of each college as viewed through the common planning framework. The Data Sources column describes the source used to discern the placement of the mission statement. In most cases, multiple sources were required to triangulate the placement. For college A and D, the placement of the mission statement was not discernable because either the participants were non-responsive to the question or the placement was ambiguous or non-existent.

Table 22. *Mission Statement Placement within the Strategic Planning Process*

College	Mission statement placement in the strategic planning process	Data sources
A	Ambiguous - not discernable	Pre-interview questionnaire, interview, planning documents
B	Pre-strategy formation	Pre-interview questionnaire, interview
C	Intra-strategy formation	Planning documents, interview
D	Ambiguous - not discernable	Pre-interview questionnaire, interview, planning documents
E	Pre-strategy formation	Planning documents, interview
F	Intra-strategy formation	Planning documents, interview
G	Pre-strategy formation	Pre-interview questionnaire, interview
H	Pre-strategy formation	Pre-interview questionnaire, interview
I	Pre-strategy formation	Pre-interview questionnaire

Table 23 represents the roles played by mission statement matched with the placement of mission statement within the planning framework. For example, four colleges articulated the role *LLS mission statement as aspirations* and identified mission review as part of the pre-strategy formation stage of their strategic planning process.

Table 23. *Number of Colleges Identifying the Role Themes by Mission Placement within Planning Framework*

Theme	Ambiguous - not discernable	Pre-strategy formation	Intra-strategy formation	Two stage mission integration
LLS mission statement as aspirations	1	0	0	0
LLS mission statement as goal clarification	2	4	2	0
LLS mission statement as marketing tool	2	4	2	0
LLS mission statement as smoke screen for opportunism	0	0	0	0
LLS mission statement as things as they are	2	6	0	0
EMG mission statement as accreditation requirement	2	5	2	0
EMG mission statement as teambuilding tool	1	4	2	0

Note. LLS=Lang & Lopers-Sweetman (1991) a priori theme; EMG=emergent theme.

Table 24 represents by college size, the identified roles held by mission statement. For example, four colleges of the Carnegie size classification L2 expressed the theme *LLS mission statement as aspirations.*

Table 24. *Number of Colleges Identifying Role Themes by Size Classification*

Theme	VS2	S2	M2	L2	VL2
LLS mission statement as aspirations	0	0	1	4	4
LLS mission statement as goal clarification	0	0	1	3	4
LLS mission statement as marketing tool	0	0	1	4	4
LLS mission statement as smoke screen for opportunism	0	0	1	1	1
LLS mission statement as things as they are	0	0	1	3	2
EMG mission statement as accreditation requirement	0	0	1	4	4
EMG mission statement as teambuilding tool	0	0	1	2	4

Note. LLS=Lang & Lopers-Sweetman (1991) a priori theme; EMG=emergent theme; size classification represents the Carnegie size classification system: VS2=Very small two-year--Fall enrollment data show FTE* enrollment of fewer than 500 students at these associate's degree granting institutions; S2=Small two-year--Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 500–1,999 students at these associate's degree granting institutions; M2=Medium two-year--Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 2,000–4,999 students at these associate's degree granting institutions; L2=Large two-year--Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 5,000–9,999 students at these associate's degree granting institutions; VL2=Very large two-year--Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of at least 10,000 students at these associate's degree granting institutions.

Driving Question 4

How are mission statements used to assist with the implementation of institutional strategy post planning?

The themes corresponding to driving question 4 are described in Table 25. The themes *"talking mission"* and *"teaching the plan"* represent in vivo codes/categories that emerged from the data. In vivo codes are those "that are the exact words used by participants" (Creswell, 2007,

p. 153). They were represented as in vivo codes rather than topical descriptions because of the particular eloquence of the participants' words in communicating the sense of the code.

Table 25. *How Mission Statement Assists with Strategic Plan Implementation*

Theme	College								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Mission statement assisting with implementation of the strategic plan									
Creative communication	--	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	--
"Talking mission"	X	X	X	--	X	X	--	--	--
"Teaching the plan"	--	--	X	X	X	X	--	--	--

Note. X=addressed in interview; --=not addressed by participant in interview.

Driving Question 5

How well does the collective intention of the mission statement fulfill the explicit role as articulated by the community college?

The themes corresponding to driving question 5 are described in Table 26. Themes of satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and mixed satisfaction represent the participants' personal evaluation of their current mission statement.

Table 26. *Fulfillment of Mission Statement Role*

Theme	College								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Fulfillment of mission statement role									
Efficacy of mission statement as planning concept	X	X	X	--	X	X	--	--	X
Satisfaction with mission statement	X	--	X	--	--	--	--	X	--
Dissatisfaction with mission statement	--	X	--	X	--	--	X	--	--
Mix satisfaction with mission statement	--	--	--	--	X	X	--	--	X

Note. X=addressed in interview; --=not addressed by participant in interview.

Participant Attitudes

Various attitudes regarding strategic planning and mission statement expressed by participants in the interviews are described in Table 27.

Table 27. *Attitudes Regarding Strategic Planning and Mission Statement as Expressed by Participants*

Theme	College								
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Apology	X	X	--	X	--	--	X	--	X
Cynicism	X	--	--	X	--	X	--	--	--
Desire that more is needed	X	X	--	--	--	X	--	--	X
Lack of knowledge	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	X
Urgency	--	X	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Note. X=addressed in interview; --=not addressed by participant in interview.

The attitudes become more meaningful when correlated with participants' personal and professional attributes. Table 28 illustrates the descriptive correlation of participant's attitudes

and sentiments regarding strategic planning and mission statement with the number of years in current position. This is represented as a count of coding instances as they occurred in the data. For example, there were three expressions of apology among those participants who had been in their position less than one year. It is important to note that a single transcript could have multiple occurrences of the code.

Table 28. *Participant's Attitude and Sentiment Themes by Number of Years in Current Position (count of coding instances)*

Theme	<1 yr	1-3 yrs	4-6 yrs	7-10 yrs	>10 yrs
Apology	3	5	0	0	5
Cynicism	0	0	1	0	4
Desire that more is needed	1	1	2	0	2
Lack of knowledge	5	0	0	0	0
Urgency	0	1	0	0	0

A few patterns warrant comment. Not unexpectedly, there is more apology and lack of knowledge among those participants that have been in their jobs three years or less. However, there is more expression of cynicism among participants who have held their positions for four years or more. Both patterns intuitively reflect how attitudes can change relative to longevity in a position. Planners in their positions a short period of time naturally might not be as comfortable in the interview as those with more experience in the position. Conversely, those participants who have been in their roles for 10 or more years might naturally express more cynicism with regard to a prescriptive planning process.

Planning Documents

The majority of the planning documents were gathered from participant colleges' web sites. However, a few documents were email directly to the researcher in instances where they were not available on the web site. The type and number of planning documents reviewed are listed in Table 29. Relevant excerpts from the planning documents were also coded and categorized as they provided information pertinent to the driving questions. Undoubtedly, there can be considerable overlap of content among the various types of planning documents. For example, many strategic planning documents contain foundational statements, thus, a separate review of each and every document found to be redundant and is not represented in Table 29.

Table 29. *Number of College Planning Documents Reviewed*

	College									
Document type	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Total
Accreditation self-study				1					1	2
Environmental Scan					1					1
Foundational statements	1				2		1	2	2	8
Memo								2		2
Planning matrix	1							1		2
Planning presentation		1			1					2
Planning process			4			1	1	1	1	8
Strategic plan		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
Strategic plan executive summary		1							1	2
Grand Total	2	3	5	2	5	2	3	7	6	35

Qualitative Data Analysis Utilizing NVivo Software

Creswell's (2007) four stages of data analysis were strongly supported by the utilization of the qualitative data analysis software NVivo. This provided additional rigor and strength to the study's data analysis process. The various data sources and research tools utilized are represented in Table 30 along with the corresponding NVivo module, Creswell's (2007) data analysis stage, and whether the source or tool was included in the coding process.

Table 30. *The Function of NVivo in Managing and Analyzing Data according to Creswell's 4 Stages*

Data source/ research tool	NVivo module	Creswell's analysis stage(s)	Coded?	Function
Concept drawings	Illustration	4	Yes	Provided code-able drawing tool linked to the data to assist in representing and visualizing the data and exploring meaning of various themes.
Data observations	Annotations	2, 3	No	Provided comments to interview audio and transcripts similar to field notes.
Interview audio and transcripts	Audio/ transcript synchronizing	1, 2, 3	Yes	Interview audio synchronized with transcripts were reviewed to ascertain clarity and correctness. Such synchronization facilitates the observation of affective meaning that may not be apparent in a transcript alone.
IPEDS data	Casebook	1, 3	No	Imported into the casebook function for relation to other data sources.
Memoing	Memo	2, 3, 4	No	Provided word processing tool for capturing initial analysis and interpretation.

Planning documents	File management	1, 2, 3	Yes	Provided code-able text to triangulate participant interview data.
Pre-interview questionnaire	Casebook	1, 2, 3	Yes	Imported into the casebook function for relation to other data sources. Provided demographic background on the participant planners. Provided code-able text to triangulate participant interview data.
Reflexive journal	Memo	All	No	Provided word processing tool for capturing and organizing decisions and personal reflections relating to the research process.
Research management documents (e.g., communication log)	File management	1	No	Provided a single data warehouse for all data and research management documents relating to the study.

Note. Creswell's analysis stages are 1=data managing; 2=reading and memoing; 3=describing, classifying, and interpreting; 4=representing and visualizing.

All relevant data and research management documents, including the reflexive journal were imported and maintained within the software. This assisted with the data managing stage, which is often one of the most daunting challenges for qualitative researchers (Merriam, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Case college attributes were loaded into NVivo using the software casebook functionality. The case college attributes were later used in analysis that matched categorical aggregations with various attributes of interest (e.g., school size and aggregations regarding role of the mission statement). Such a matrix query analysis is helpful in revealing facets of the data not readily apparent through multiple readings of the data. Additionally, the participants'

demographic attributes were downloaded from surveymonkey.com into NVivo into the software casebook.

The audio files from the participant interviews were transferred to computer for import into NVivo, and for transmission to the transcriptionist. After transcription, the text of the interviews was imported into NVivo and synchronized with the audio recordings. The synchronized transcripts were reviewed concurrent with the audio recording to ascertain clarity and correctness, and to provide insight into non-linguistic cues, such as pace of conversation and inflection.

Field notes were maintained for each telephone interview. The notes were typed directly into NVivo during the interview process and were summarized immediately afterward. Key observations and reflections were later transferred as annotations directly into the interview transcripts within NVivo. Annotations led to observations such as are summarized in Table 27.

The reflexive journal was maintained directly within NVivo recording key research decisions and other personal reflections on the research process. This process was particularly important in the beginning stages of the research when the research design was being contemplated and constructed. The reflection process was also helpful in documenting the assumptions and bias of the researcher. Because the researcher has considerable experience in community college strategic planning, there are natural assumptions that occur regarding the function and efficacy of common planning practices, such as mission statement. By documenting these reflections alongside decisions relating to the research, the process becomes intentional and transparent. It is important for the qualitative researcher not to feign objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher must accept subjectivity as intrinsic to naturalistic inquiry. Indeed,

such subjectivity becomes a strength of the paradigm when there is an awareness of the biases and assumptions that it may bring, and when these reflections are presented to the reader.

Chapter Summary

This chapter described the data collection pilot, the primary case management and data sources, and the data obtained. The data collection pilot resulted in minor changes to the pre-interview questionnaire and the interview schedule. In addition, the data collection pilot served as an excellent test for the audio recording technology utilized during the telephone interviews. The case management documents aided in managing an intricate contact protocol. The documents also served to as an audit aid in establishing dependability, confirmability, credibility, and transparency to the research process.

In summary, NVivo facilitated a rich exploration of the data, while providing a detailed audit trail helpful in establishing the trustworthiness and confirmability of the findings. The software proved particularly helpful in managing the multiple data types and research management documents, providing concept drawings that were integrated with the data and themes, and providing query functions that integrated case attributes with codes and themes from the data.

Transparency of data poses particular problems for the qualitative researcher due to the sheer volume and complexity of the data collected. The goal of this chapter has been to display the data in a manner that communicates a sense of its scope and meaning, while keeping its display manageable. The display also supports the transparency and credibility of the data by providing a more finite understanding of the data that lies behind the analysis.

Chapter 5: Data Analysis

Introduction

Chapter five organizes the data analysis around the study's five driving questions. For each question, key themes are first discussed followed by examples from the pre-interview questionnaires and interview transcripts that illustrate particular facets of the aggregations. The data are displayed to assist in comparing and contrasting various participant responses.

Qualitative research seeks to uncover both factual and meaning-based facets of a phenomenon under study from the participants' perspective. When answering a specific interview question, participants frequently provide information relevant to one or more additional questions. For example, when participants addressed the ultimate efficacy of mission statement in driving question five, they often cited previously discussed roles (e.g., accreditation requirement, teambuilding function). Therefore, judicious coding of interview transcripts was done to capture all relevant themes irrespective of the interview question posed. In spite of the fact that certain quotations may support multiples roles, each quotation is displayed only once to simplify the data analysis presentation.

Lang and Lopers-Sweetman's (1991) research provided a framework for coding themes found in the data. The following roles provided by Lang and Lopers-Sweetman's research were employed as codes:

- Role 1: Goal clarification
- Role 2: Smokescreen for opportunism.
- Role 3: Description of things as they are
- Role 4: Aspirations.
- Role 5: Marketing tool.

A few a priori codes were strongly represented in the data: *Role 1: Goal clarification*, and *Role 5: Marketing tool*. Additional themes not found in the research by Lang and Lopers-Sweetman were also captured as they emerged from the data. These two additional emergent themes were: *Emergent role 1: Accreditation requirement*, and *Emergent role 2: Teambuilding tool*.

Two assumptions were applicable to the data analysis: (a) there can be significant overlap between roles (e.g., *Role 4: Aspirations* and *Emergent role 2: Teambuilding tool*), and (b) a review of mission statement content would further illuminate these roles. Indeed, Lang and Loper-Sweetman included a mission statement content analysis with their research. Such a detailed analysis was beyond the scope of this study, however, a review of the participant colleges' mission statements was performed to triangulate the emerging themes from the pre-interview questionnaire, and interview data.

Data garnered from driving question 2, which addresses similarities, commonalities, and differences between colleges, are found to be pertinent and applicable to all driving questions. In order to show contributing relevancy of the participant responses, they were integrated throughout the analysis of driving questions 1, 3, 4, and 5. Therefore, driving question 2 is not addressed separately; presentation of driving question 1 will be immediately followed by a presentation of driving question 3. Finally, although there were two interview participants for College F (i.e., Participant F1 and F2), their responses have been combined into a single response and indicated F (combined).

Driving Question 1: The Definition and Meaning of Mission Statement

The data addressing driving question 1 revealed information on two facets: (a) the definition of mission statement, and (b) the overall role (i.e., function) of the mission statement. It differs from that explored in driving question 3 in that this discussion is inclusive of mission statement functions beyond the strategic planning process, whereas driving question 3 analysis is limited to functions within the strategic planning process. The definition of mission statement was queried by using two perspectives, first as a direct question of meaning (e.g., "what is a mission statement?"), and second as a comparison to the definition of a vision statement (e.g., "what is the difference between a mission and a vision statement?"). The role of mission statement is explored first through the a priori roles of Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991), followed by two additional roles that emerged from the data.

Definition of Mission Statement

The concept of mission statement as a planning tool has been in use for decades. Thus, one would expect a high degree of consensus with regard to its definition and meaning. Indeed, most participants articulated the common definition of mission statement as expressed in the literature (e.g., Bryson, 1990; Drucker, 1974; O'Hallaron & O'Hallaron, 2000; Tagiuri, 2002). However, the participants believe that a degree of ambiguity exists, primarily resulting from the multiple roles now expected of mission statements. Table 31 displays responses from participants as they defined mission statement. Three participants clearly stated that mission statements should describe the "daily business" of the institution.

Table 31. *The Definition of Mission Statement*

Participant	Response
A	"It is that the mission is really describing or should be describing what we are and what we want to do…"
C	"It's our purpose and our reason for being."
G	"Basically, I would say that a mission statement says who we are, what we do, and for whom we do it. And I think I would like to leave it at that—that concise."

Ambiguity of the definition of mission statement is illustrated when participants were asked to consider the definition of mission statement in light of vision statement. A few of the participants found it helpful to compare the definitions of mission versus the vision statement. Table 32 displays the responses from participants addressing the comparison of the two. It was found that most of the participants felt the mission statement describes the daily business of the institution, whereas the vision statement describes a point in the future to which the institution aspires. Vision statements are typically lofty, idealized descriptions, which help the institution grow and advance.

Table 32. *Comparing the Definition of Mission Statement vs. Vision Statement*

Participant	Response
A	"The mission is really describing or should be describing what we are and what we want to do. But it's not…you know, there are almost fine dividing lines between what one would look at as a mission, for example, and a vision. The vision is…hopefully trying to think a little bit more out of the box. But the mission says, okay, but what are you really doing?…Our mission and related goals to that mission really should reflect what it is that we are and… A vision might say that we want to be the best on the block in whatever. The mission is going to say we're going to do whatever."
B	"It should be sort of an overarching map on how to accomplish the vision of your institution….Your mission statement really should be telling you how you're going to get from Point A to Point B for your vision."
E	"I think a mission captures what it is that you do and vision is more what that looks like or how you will accomplish. I mean, in an ideal setting, what that is."
H	"Well, the vision statement is getting closer to what some campuses would call a mission statement….It captures at a… more…in anthropological terms, this would be the super structure of the culture….This is…what's leading us forward…. I've had people come to me before over the years and say, '…can't the vision statement be our mission statement?' because they like the larger sort of super structural mentalistic piece of this—the larger sort of ideological piece of the framing here….I think the mission connotes getting some things done. It's sort of the pragmatic what is it that we're going to do? The vision is sort of this larger ideological position of the college. It really does speak to sort of institutional identity. And then the values are sort of the things that people need to have in their hearts and minds to get things done. So it's a cultural anthropological kind of approach, I think."

While the planning literature carefully delineates the differences between mission and vision statements, this study found such a precise definition might not be the case in practice. Some ambiguity begins to emerge as the participants reflect carefully the colleges' practical application of mission statement and vision statement. Participant A framed the issue:

> There is no accepted definition for what a mission statement should be that I'm aware of. There are a lot of hypotheses as to what a mission statement should be, but when you reach out and take a look at what folks say a mission statement ought to be, you find a lot of variety. And also you find that there are mission statements out there that in other

> places they call them vision statements. And there are mission statements out there in other places you'd look at and you'd see all the goals in the mission statement….I'm telling you what's out there. I mean, that is the reality. So you can't go at it in a cookie - cutter kind of way because there are no cookie - cutter answers to what it is.

From Participant A's perspective, a clear delineation is not evident between mission statement and vision statement; practice does not reflect theory. Even though aspirations are typically expressed in vision statements, Lang and Lopers-Sweetman found this role often being subsumed by an organization's mission statement. Consequently, when a mission statement is constructed as a vision of the future or with visionary elements, it can be viewed under *Role 4: Aspirations*.

Concurring with Participant A, Participant I expressed the difficulty in delineating differences between mission and vision statements. While in theory, their form and function are clear; in practice, there is indistinctness. She stated: "the mission statement is really who we are and our purpose. The vision statement is where we want to be in the future. What do we look like? I know it is always difficult to separate the two."

Interestingly, Participant H expressed concern over the cultural interpretation of strategic planning terms, such as *mission* and *tactics*. Such terms can be laden with values of Western expansionism, colonialism, and militarism and can be an impediment in some communities and cultures. He stated: "…let me start with a sort of really local perspective on the word *mission*. There has been quite a history of mission-izing in [our state]. And there were a lot of people that really didn't want to use the word mission." He further clarified and discussed issues regarding the basic terminology of planning and cultural contexts:

> Well, you know, missionaries, mission-izing….Words like *tactics* and *strategies*, for example, come out of a kind of militaristic discourse, right? Mission-izing comes out of a sort of faith, religious, and even colonizing discourse….So some of our faculty wanted…core commitments or some of the language moved away from mission because of the sort of negative influence, negative connotations of mission-izing in a society. So there was some conversation around saying can we use core commitments or some other

> language that got away from the word mission. I think beyond that, there was a sense that the notion of being mission-driven was coming from the corporate sector….And there was sort of an anti-corporate corporatism discourse that went on around the mission.

Perhaps, one might expect that as community colleges and the communities they serve become more demographically and culturally diverse, the contextual meaning of common planning terms may become an impediment to strategic planning efforts. Consequently, planners should become more aware of the need to exercise sensitivity to local cultural contexts when adopting planning language that may inhibit the role of strategic planning in building consensus. Planners will need to be more flexible in their language and not wedded to the language permeating the planning literature as they create planning processes specific to their institutions.

The Multiple Roles of Mission Statement

A priori roles. The participants' perception of the definition of mission versus vision statements and the resulting ambiguity is just one example, demonstrating the multiple roles being thrust upon mission statements. The study data reveal several varied roles. Each role is presented and discussed followed by illustrative excerpts from the data.

Role 1: Goal clarification. One of the traditional roles of a mission statement is to provide clarification of purpose and goals in the strategy formation step of the strategic planning process. Mission statement can serve as a bright-line test of whether a proposed strategy aligns with the stated purpose of the college. After application of this test, some strategies are pursued and some discarded.

This goal clarification role raises some important questions with regard to the construction of the mission statement. For example, inherent generic questions requiring elucidation include the following:

- Must every function of the college be overtly represented in the mission statement?

- Is there a degree of risk for those functions not clearly articulated in the mission statement?
- What is the connection between evolution of the community college mission and the construction of the mission statement?
- Should the mission statement be constructed as broadly as possible to encompass any of many futures?
- Shall the mission statement be perpetually chasing the evolving functions of the institution or anticipating them?

In such a case where mission statement is chasing the unavoidable evolutionary development of the community college, the statement would not serve the role of clarifying goals, but rather of trying to represent things as they are. Deliberate and continuous revision of the mission statement would be needed to synchronize with reconstituted goals and functions of the college. In this scenario, the statement could be in a perpetual state of "catching up" to the college. The participants addressed these issues, but without substantive resolution. Table 33 displays participant responses as they discuss mission statement's role in goal clarification.

Table 33. *Mission Statement's Role as Goal Clarification*

Participant	Response
A	"The reason for going after mission, aside from just time...you know, the time between when you did it the last time to the current time, is are you doing things that may be potentially outside a mission?"
B	"We've had this mission statement now for about four or five years, and prior to that point we really had nothing. We were just groping in the dark. People would come up with these goals and…at least now, one of the things that we can say to people is, 'How does this relate to the mission? Is this really what you're asking for? And what you want to assess? Does this really relate to where we want to go?'"
C	"I think that it helps keep focus in a world that is increasingly turning to the college and thinking that we're the solution to their problem. And it keeps our resources and our focus from being really hijacked."
D	"I think ideally a mission statement tells you as much about what you're not going to be as what you are."
F (combined)	"The fact that the mission and the fact that those two things are, and I don't want to say one in the same, but are certainly in alignment. What that does is gives us a direct connection from our day to day tasks, our projects that we are working on every day and aligns us straight up with the goals and the mission."
G	"A mission statement, in my opinion—I won't say ours, but a mission statement—really helps focus people's thinking and work. If you don't agree with an institution's mission, you shouldn't be there. And so I think it's very good for a college to have its mission statement."

One of the challenges of today's community college is the temptation to be, in the words of Participant D, "all things to all people." Frequently, one hears the community college described as the "comprehensive community college." Mission statement can be used to delimit the functions of the college or assist in selecting from many possible strategies. The community in which the community college resides can place many demands on the institution. Mission statement can serve as a bellwether assisting the college in making difficult choices among which current needs to serve.

Participant B expressed the frustration of trying to meet the seemingly infinite needs of the community, "When you say we are the community's college, for example, that means you can do anything for anybody." Participant B also articulated that the role of mission statement is to focus the work of the college. When funding is flat or declining, such as in today's economic climate, colleges are forced to be selective when allocating resources. "We are the community's college, so you're going to do everything for the people in the community. But do we…when we have tight resources…it needs to be more focused. We all need to get on the same page. What's the focus?"

Four of the nine participants described how the mission statement provides clarity in the budget process. Participant G explained her college's budget process:

> We have what we call an informed budget process. Budget requests throughout the college on a yearly basis come through this grassroots process and every budget request, either for a reallocation or allocation of new funds, has to be tied to mission and previous goals announced strategic priorities. So people have to index their requests under the strategic priorities….They have to index to them. And they also have to articulate what are the outcomes that they're expecting from these…the use of these funds that they're requesting and how do those support mission fulfillment? So we ask everybody to ask for money under the guise of how does it support priorities in our college mission?

Expressing the same theme, Participant H described the need for more focused efforts as a result of the recent economic downturn: "I think that the key piece of this, and this is the hard part, particularly in this economy, is budgeting through this whole process. You know, moving money to what we said what our mission was….I think the overall challenge will be to…show how we're moving internal and external budget to the mission statement, particularly when the general fund allocations are being cut by 15%." Mission statement then becomes an essential tool in divining the allocation of the college's limited funds and resources.

Some participants believe that specificity as it relates to the mission statement role of clarifying goals need not exclude any stakeholders. For example, a mission statement can be

constructed that is quite specific and focused, yet inclusive of all functional areas of the college. Participant B stated, "I think that we can get our mission statement so that it can be directed yet not be exclusive or exclude anybody." Interestingly, Participant F (combined) posited that a restrictive or delimiting mission statement may actually make the faculty and staff more creative and exploratory in their work:

> I would not want to enlighten it too strongly, but you know how it is when the studies that they have done on kids when they play in a playground setting that does not have fence? What they do is collect in the middle and when you actually have children play in a fenced environment, they will spread out and actually go to the perimeter to explore the entire space. That is what I watched happen at this college during that time in that people tended to huddle and not take a lot of risks. Instead of going to explore and trying new things, people stayed stagnant and didn't go out and explore at all. So I think we are going to see some of that rejuvenated with this whole framework in place now that we understand the fence we are operating in, we can go and push those outer limits rather than having to huddle in the middle.

Another participant felt having a very inclusive mission statement can be both a strength and a weakness. In the words of Participant G: "[one of the strengths of our mission statement is] that everybody can find something in it that they connect with. But that's also a weakness in my opinion. It's pretty…all-encompassing." Therefore, in Participant G's opinion, inclusivity may work against the goal clarification role. Although specificity of mission statement is helpful in establishing strategies and allocating resources, such specificity may work against the need for faculty and staff to feel included through direct functional representation in the college's mission statement. Conversely, creating a mission statement that is all-encompassing might not provide the direction needed to clarify strategies.

There is little doubt, issues of non-synchronicity between the mission statement and the strategies of the college need to be addressed. The study participants cited examples of this disconnect or non-synchronicity. Participant A described the participation of his college in post-

associate learning (i.e., college-level curriculum beyond the freshman and sophomore years) and how it was not represented in his college's mission statement:

> And when we last did this…. we had developed at that time something called [Our State Regional Consortium] which was a partnership (and is still there as a partnership) between us and a number of senior institutions whereby students can go on and obtain baccalaureate degrees and beyond [on our campus]. And with significant [College A] control, but the degrees would be granted from…those other institutions….In order to really focus on post - associate learning, we needed to look at our mission, because it wasn't there.

The mission statement was subsequently revised to reflect this new initiative. Participant A cited another example of non-synchronicity:

> We also went about creating the process of branch campuses. We didn't have that in our mission, so we needed to revise that mission to accommodate those kinds of changes. . . . Now it's 2009, but we started this, at least the cabinet started briefly looking at it, in 2008. Are there things that we're doing or would want to do, etc., as we engage in a planning process that starts taking us outside of or changing what we're doing with regard to mission?

When challenged as to whether the mission guides the institution or whether it will always "chase" the emerging functionality, he replied: "well, the reality is we're more in a chase mode than anything else." Moreover,

> …as we looked at the stuff that was coming out of the cabinet and some things from the president…we have some question and some concerns in terms of making sure that this mission really does reflect who we are and hopefully where we're going. And it doesn't…there are things that we're doing, not included that we think, yes, and therefore we need to take a look at this to make sure that they're included. Or not to do these other things.

In summation, Participant A eloquently expressed the reality of practice with regard to the role of mission statement in testing future strategies:

> It's not that people are going back and saying, "What is the mission statement say about that?" A president will go back and say that. A cabinet might go back and say that. But if you go out into the community, what you're asking is—I think what you're asking—is in terms of the mission statement being really understood by the community….Do you really sit around saying, "Boy, look what our mission statement is saying about this."

While it may be common for the president and the senior staff to refer to the mission statement in making decisions, the community and campus may not. This can be a problem if the community college is firmly entrenched in a strategy formation model where the development of strategies is more emergent (see Mintzberg, et al., 2005); the emergent strategies may or may not be tested against the mission statement.

Role 2: Smokescreen for opportunism. Mission statements can be constructed in a way that can validate many possible futures, and as a result, *Role 1: Goal clarification* can be desultory and inadequate. According to Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991), *Role 2: Smokescreen for opportunism* describes a means rather than an end. Participants A and I shared examples demonstrating different facets of the mission statement as a smokescreen role. Traditionally, the function of a community college is to provide a transfer curriculum (comprised of liberal arts and sciences courses and associate degrees), career and technology certificates and degrees, community service courses and programs, as well as professional development courses and programs. Of the nine colleges in the study, both College A and College I, developed and instituted new collegiate functions (i.e., the conferring of bachelor's degrees, partnering to deliver post-associate learning). College I's mission statement was expansive enough to easily allow for the incorporation of the new collegiate function. Whereas, College A's statement was subsequently changed to reflect the new function. The important point is that in both cases, the mission statement did not limit the strategy of the college. The colleges pursued strategies, and then updated the mission statement, if needed.

In 2009, College I began conferring baccalaureate degrees for specific programs. When queried regarding the absence baccalaureate-level education in the college's mission statement, Participant I responded that this new function undertaken by the college "is justified by our

saying we are providing access to people to be successful in the workforce. There is limited access for them to get a baccalaureate degree, and so we are stepping up to the plate. It is the institution goal of access."

A similar theme was described by Participant A. Once College A had decided to participate in the baccalaureate-level consortium (i.e., a partnership in which four-year colleges and universities offer completer degrees on the community college campus), the mission statement was revised to reflect the new function. However, in addition to adding the new function, College A also added language restricting their ability to offer baccalaureate degrees directly:

> We discussed offering baccalaureate degrees [directly], as you can probably imagine. It has been part…of our discussion…and one of the things when I looked at the new mission statement that the cabinet has been working on. I don't see the flexibility to do that, which is okay, but I'm not so sure that they realize that they have taken the flexibility out of what they talked about. And so that's why it's so important.

The length and detail provided in the structure of mission statements can also be a reflection of *Role 2: Smokescreen for opportunism*. For example, when the mission statement includes a finite list of functions, *Role 1: Goal clarification* is facilitated. Typically, such statements are longer with multiple paragraphs and bulleted statements of functions. However, mission statements filling *Role 2: Smokescreen for opportunism* tend to be shorter, but the language more broad in scope.

Role 3: Description of things as they are. As defined by Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991), this role describes the college as it currently exists. It is not an altruistic, visionary, or idealized model, but expresses the current reality of the work of the college: a "snap-shot" or "picture in time." These statements often contain historical descriptions of the evolution or origins of the college. Considerable overlap was found between this role and the *Role 1: Goal clarification* in that such clarification is often achieved by a finite list of the college's current

functions. However, mission statements can define where an institution wants to be and still fill *Role 1: Goal clarification* as long as the vision is clearly defined in the statement.

The role of mission statement as description of things as they are was not directly articulated by the participants apart from their definitions of mission statement described in Table 31. This is significant because, although most participants defined mission statement as a description of the daily work of the college (i.e., description of things as they are), when queried as the role of the mission statement, *Role 3: Description of things as they are* was not commonly referenced. However, it is evident after a review of the participant colleges' mission statements and upon analysis of data relating to other roles that this role was present.

When current mission statements expressed the *Role 3: Description of things as they are,* there was a strong desire for shorter, more marketable statements, which can be in conflict with this role. In summary, although this role was not directly articulated by participants, there appears to be evidence of this role in some of the participant college's mission statements; and seven of the nine participants discussed the need for *Role 5: Mission statement as marketing tool,* which can conflict with role 3. This implies a trend to craft mission statements more for marketing purposes than for utilization in the strategic planning process.

Role 4: Aspirations. Most often, aspirations are represented in the mission statements as expressions of excellence or other virtuous standards. Such mission statements often represent what the college aspires to be, rather than what the college currently is (i.e., the current work of the college). This role lies in direct contrast to *Role 3: Things as they are*. Few participants expressed that the role of the mission statement was to describe the future college aspirations.

Participant C expressed concern with regard to the mission statement being a clear and earnest representation of the work of the college. She spoke of her college president's interest in

"being" rather than "seeming," which often articulates a representation of things as they are. However, she stated that "anybody can write a mission statement….But are you going to live it? So our interest is in being that, not saying that….I think we have a lot of evidence that we are being what we say our mission statement says we should become." This is clearly an expression of aspiration. Once again, there is a blurring between mission and vision.

Role 5: Mission statement as marketing tool. One of the most common themes expressed by participants was a need to have mission statements that communicate succinct messages to the campus or stakeholders-at-large. Table 34 displays participant responses as they discussed mission statement's role as a marketing tool.

Table 34. *Mission Statement as Marketing Tool*

Participant	Response
B	"Our goal would be to get something that would be…around 100 words or so. Something that can sit on the back of a card. Something that everybody would know."
C	"They also wanted it to be something that people could remember. Giving people language that's simple enough that they can remember it has been important for us. And so we decided very deliberately to make it as brief as we could and to have every word count."
D	"This is not a mission statement that is a call to action because it's too big….A mission statement that really calls to action is like one sentence."
E	"[In the last revision of the mission statement,] there was a concerted effort or purpose. One of the purposes was to create something that was very succinct and memorable."
F (combined)	"The fact that this is now in a format that we can actually publish and make available . . . our previous one was a handout. It took multiple pages. You could put it on a scroll. This is something you can go to the point of. . . people can remember it. It is aligned and it's clear and it's true at the end of the day."
G	"The breadth of our mission statement really makes it a cumbersome tool in its entirety. However, they feel it's absolutely a critical statement in chunks, so they use bits of the mission statement, lifting verbiage from it in many different ways. They use it in less formal publications. They use it thematically in press releases, etc. etc. So what they feel…is that the mission statement is very critical to their communication, but not as an entire document, but lifting pieces."
H	"There was this tension between do we want something that sort of sounds like a brand or something...or do we want something that really specifically identifies all of the different things. And then it got to be a question of, I think, because we had a broad-based approach, that people wanted to see their work in the mission statement….In a very specific way."

A general belief expressed by participants was that this type of statement was not congruent with long laundry-list of descriptions about the colleges' functions. In fact, there were multiple expressions of dissatisfaction with the length of participant colleges' current mission statements. Often, participants recounted college divisions or departments, other than those

involved with institutional planning, were also unhappy with the mission statement (e.g. marketing services).

The participants often expressed the desire for a more marketable mission statement describing a need for a shorter, more concise statement. When asked to evaluate their current mission statements, there was surprising consensus among the participants in what was required. There was agreement among participants that mission statements need to be brief and to communicate in simple terms the purpose of the college to internal and external stakeholders.

Participant B expressed her concern at the length of her college's current statement. She felt when statements are long, constituents tend to extract portions that apply in various venues, but such inconsistent messaging does not communicate a holistic view of the college and lacks continuity:

> Right now, part of our problem [is] it's so long. And I know that people were gearing up and hanging it up because it takes up so much room. What people would really like, and what people have done, is they've taken little snippets of the mission statement and used the snippets of the mission statement that they like to put on business cards and stuff like that or put on pamphlets or things that they hand out. And that's not good for the institution. We all need to be on the same page saying the same thing.

On the other hand, Participant A expressed a certain cynicism with this type of brevity believing this was simply marketing shtick. He stated that "we've had cards printed that you can put in your wallet that would have a mission statement on it and so forth, but a lot of that is just PR." He was expressing his concern that such a marketing focus does not contribute to the effectiveness of mission statement as a planning tool. Participant B shared some of this same cynicism with regard to the role of the mission statement as a marketing strategy:

> The marketing folks want something short and sweet and to the point, and so they said a couple things that kind of relate to the mission statement, but that aren't really said in the mission statement. So they're snappy and cool and people pick up on those. We need to have a consistent message.

She felt mission statement can fill this role, and should. However, her college's current mission statement was not meeting the needs of the marketing department, and so they created their own slogans and taglines, which were not found in the mission statement. She believes that in order to achieve unity of purpose and direction that all areas of the college must work from a single mission statement.

Participant C described her college's 19-word mission statement as an attempt to condense the message. She stated: "the current mission statement is somewhat terse, short…when compared to the 1,500 community colleges in the United States. . . .And that was deliberate. . . .In the past, we had a lot more [words]." Participant E expressed similar sentiments with regard to the length of the statement. Her college revised its mission to a shorter one, which was easy to remember: "we started with the [new] mission [several years ago]. It went from the big old clunky paragraph before that to that really concise memorize-able mission statement." She described the process of developing the mission statement, which started with an already memorized, identifiable marketing slogan:

> There was a discussion of that and [our current marketing slogan] had been one that was used widely at [College E] for a number of years. But it wasn't in its mission statement. It was just used as a phrase that sort of captured the essence of [College E]. And at a strategic planning retreat, senior leadership discussed and adopted that as a mission statement. But it's easily identifiable. Everybody knows it by heart and can see their individual connection to it. So it started out as a discussion of that. From there…you know, of adopting it. From there, they sought input across the campus and I believe outside of the campus as well.

At College E, being easy to remember became one of the primary considerations in the construction of the new mission statement. Eight of the nine participants felt that mission statements should be concise and memorable.

In addition, the data reveal a conflict between an inclusive statement, which represents every functional area of the college, and one that serves the needs of the marketing department.

Participant G expressed criticism at her college's mission statement centered on its length and complexity: "our mission as it's stated…it's too long for recitation or memorization. It's not something that people can say easily." She further states: "I find our mission statement too long. I personally would rather see a much more concise mission statement with the discussion of how you go about fulfilling your mission as a separate document or statement." Later, she cited the need to be inclusive as the reason for the statement's length, stating: "I personally think it is too long because it's too inclusive." Participant G also addressed the dissatisfaction of the marketing department with the length and breadth of the current statement: "the marketing department itself finds that the mission statement in its entirety would probably not be effective in having folks understand what college does."

Marketing a college frequently focuses on the branding of that institution. A brand represents the unique essence of an institution to the public in focused memorable words, images, and sounds. Participant H discussed the role of mission statement in communicating the college's brand to the community: "there was a larger dialogue around…should mission statements be more like a brand. Like a branding statement....There are some people that wanted to argue for something less…like a list than what we have now….And more like a brand." Participant H clearly articulated the potential conflict between a comprehensive mission statement and one that serves a branding/marketing function. When asked to discuss the current statement's weaknesses, Participant H was very direct: "it's too wordy. Not everybody is going to read it. But I think that's a price you pay when you're trying to be… inclusive, both in terms of diversity and in terms of the work that people do."

In summary, after coding, theming and analysis, it was clear that all five of Lang and Lopers-Sweetman's a priori roles were not equally represented in the data. For example, *Role 1:*

Goal clarification and *Role 5: Marketing tool* were very strongly represented in the data, while *Role 2: Smokescreen for opportunism, Role 3: Description of things as they are,* and *Role 4: Aspiration* were marginally present. This imbalance may reflect somewhat of an evolution in the role of mission statement, since the date of their study (1990) is not20 years old. The imbalance may also be reflective of their study design; a strong component of the Lang and Lopers-Sweetman study was mission statement analysis.

Emergent roles. Because one of the goals of the data analysis was to capture any additional themes that emerged from the data, the data were coded using an open coding method. The resulting codes were then aggregated under the Lang and Loper-Sweetman roles as appropriate. The remaining codes and themes that did not fit with the Lang and Lopers-Sweetman roles were subjected to additional coding and aggregation, and they were queried using the query function of NVivo. Two emergent roles resulted from this analysis:

- Emergent role 1: Accreditation requirement.
- Emergent role 2: Teambuilding tool.

Emergent role 1: Accreditation requirement. There is little doubt that mission statement fills an important role in the accreditation process. All of the regional accrediting bodies require a mission statement as part of their accreditation standards. Moreover, the accreditation commissions typically measure the college's mission fulfillment against the mission statement. For this reason, accreditation self-studies and commission visits are often the impetus for a review of the mission statement.

Participant C described the need to fulfill accreditation standards: "We just try to make sure that [the mission statement is] sufficient for whatever our accrediting agency requires."

However, she then added that the development process is very important if colleges want the statement to have some meaning:

> I think [that mission statements are important] if that institution makes it more than just an exercise to satisfy an accreditation body. I think it can be a gigantic waste of time if the only reason you're doing it is so that you can check the box on the accreditation form and show that you have a statement. But if you really use it to talk about who you want to be, then the value is in that dialogue, number one.

Participant G described the review of the mission statement at her college in preparation for accreditation. She also related some changes in the mission statement that resulted from the accreditation review:

> We reviewed the mission. Again, that's something that's sort of required by the accreditors….The general feeling was that we did not want to change the mission statement very much except to place a little bit more emphasis on communication and…as that was a concern of the accreditors. So it was more the accreditation concern about…so if you look at the second bullet in our mission statement, they…nurturing workplace of choice for staff committed to effective communication. That was not in the previous mission statement. That's more a response to the accreditation recommendation [standard], which was around defining communication and governance. So the only change in the mission statement was derived from the accreditation review.

Participant I described her college's process in reviewing the mission statement prior to re-accreditation:

> When we were about to renew our accreditation…one of the things the institution did was engage in the strategic planning process. We [used a] consultant and went through the process of redefining mission, the values statement, the goals and the vision.

Participant D related some criticism that emerged from the self-study process with regard to the construction of the current mission statement:

> As we wrote [our accreditation] self - study report, there was concern on the part of some people on the steering committee…that the mission statement itself was not as clear and as concise and as crisp as it might be. And for a while...some people were saying we really need to go back and redo [the mission statement].

Participant B expressed some concern relevant to a different perspective of accreditation, from their regional accreditation commission. She explained that "when [our higher education

accreditation commission] came, they basically were a little concerned because…our mission statement is…lots of pages. And they were concerned that there's a lot of good stuff in it and a lot of good main points in it, but everybody kind of picks what they want, which is our concern, too."

According to participants, the most salient theme with regard to mission statements fulfilling an accreditation function is the development of indicators of mission fulfillment. These indicators are typically linked directly to phrases or bullets within the mission statement. Participant G related the transition of her accreditation commission to such a model: "[our accreditation commission] is revising its accreditation standards rather dramatically….So we need to incorporate their planning and effectiveness assessment sorts of measures and standards in with our strategic planning process." In response to these changes, she stated: "we really consciously transitioned from goals that did not have measurable performance indicators, and that actually has been noted by our accreditors."

One of the reasons accreditation commissions are interested in mission statement is because it is one yard stick for measuring mission fulfillment as linked to institutional outcomes. In strategic planning practice, these are referred to as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and are matched to key functions or themes from the college's mission statement. Participant A discussed the theme of student success from his college's mission statement and its relation to KPIs: "student success….Then you wouldn't have it. But if you do, then you're going to want to come back and see how well you're fulfilling your mission through the indicators." However, when discussing mission fulfillment in a broader context (i.e., beyond the requirements of accreditation), Participant A was more taciturn concerning the role of mission statement and its role in demonstrating mission fulfillment:

> Folks rarely say things like, "Boy, we're really close to fulfilling the mission when we do that." What they more tend to say is—I'll just pick one as an example. And I'm sure that this exists at different institutions. We say we're an open - door institution. That's usually part of mission in any mission statement of a community college. We're open access. There's some language like that. We provide basic skills. What do you do with students or can you identify students that might not be able to profit from what you have to offer? When you come up against that issue, people will tend to focus back on what is a community college all about? They're not necessarily going to say, "Our mission statement says…" Some may say that, but most are not. What are they going to say? They're going to say things such as, "We have an obligation" or "We don't have an obligation."

Participant G expressed the clear difference between the mission statement and the greater mission (i.e., the overarching purpose of the community college in the United States). He feels that colleges may be more likely to appeal to the greater mission of community colleges than to the mission statement of their own college. In such cases, the role of mission statement as it assists in demonstrating mission fulfillment becomes quite convoluted and ambiguous.

More commonly, participants spoke of linking KPIs to the mission statement as an indicator of mission fulfillment. Participant G described the planning process at her college and how they use an effectiveness matrix (i.e., KPIs), which is tied to the mission statement:

> The institutional effectiveness matrix…shows our priorities and the objectives and performance indicators….Those performance indicators are for the most part outcomes-based and the development of that document was not a linear process at all….Each VP then leading their divisions on looking at the mission and what our performance indicators (or factors was the language that a lot of them used) that we want to change as we move forwards toward mission fulfillment....We looked at what do we want to be measured against. What do we think is related to mission fulfillment?

The question that this example poses is what type of mission statement best fits the KPI model of mission fulfillment? Moreover, how would such a mission statement fulfill other roles, such as *Role 4: Aspirations* and *Role 5: Marketing tool*? Certainly, statements can fulfill multiple roles, but there may be rolls that are difficult to merge or may overtly conflict with one another.

Participant G described the process at her college for establishing KPIs that are directly related to "chunks" of their mission statement. Her example demonstrates a working process from mission to KPIs to demonstrate mission fulfillment:

> I have been leading for the past several months a work group of…I think it's 15 folks from across the college-very different roles at the college-to basically deconstruct our mission statement. And we all have our mission statement. We all have the statement of our goals. And what we're looking at is how can we articulate very concisely those chunks or aspects of our mission that will form the framework for the development of performance indicators and the assessment of our effectiveness in meeting our mission.

This process of linking goals, strategies, and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), etc. to the mission statement was reiterated by many of the participants. This linkage function will be explored in more detail in the discussion of driving question 3.

Emergent role 2: Teambuilding tool. Several participants mentioned the use of mission statement as a means of building internal consensus and motivating faculty and staff. Although there can be some overlap of this function with that of the marketing function, this role is more focused on internal stakeholders, while *Role 5: Marketing tool* is more focused on the external.

Participant G distinctly expressed the role that mission statement should play in creating an identity and culture as it relates to the work of faculty and staff:

> I think a mission statement, in my opinion….I won't say ours, but a mission statement really helps focus people's thinking and work. If you don't agree with an institution's mission, you shouldn't be there. And so I think it's very good for a college to have its mission statement.

It was Participant G's belief that a mission statement not only can serve as a test of future strategies, it can serve as a test of values for faculty and staff: if an employee does not resonate with the mission statement, he or she may not be a good fit for the college.

Moreover, there is an important visual element to the mission statement. Again, Participant G described the statement in team-laden language, "Visually, it's kind of a rallying point, a focal point for folks. In terms of how it relates with strategic planning, we in strategic

planning did look very carefully at really what is our mission and we see as a comprehensive community college."

Participant B eloquently summarized the best qualities of the teambuilding role: focus, consensus, bringing together, finding ones role in the college. She explained,

> I think [mission statements] keep people focused and they keep people looking and going…going together rather than everybody thinking what I'm doing is important. It brings everybody in an institution together. And I think that it helps people see how they fit in to the institution. I have just found that when…like the facilities folks would say, "Why do I need to hear this?" And when they would sit and listen to what was happening in some of the academic units, or when human resources folks would listen, they came back with a whole different perspective of, "Oh, okay, that's why we're doing this." So I think if nothing else, it really helps people understand how what we're doing at the institution and why we're doing it. And, you know, I'm not the only little tree in the forest type-thing.

Interestingly, Participant C described the role that mission statement can play as a stimulus for organizational reflection, which is important even apart from the strategic planning process:

> The mission statement is used to drive that reflection. It also happens that it coincides with creating the plan, but the product of the reflection on that mission statement isn't just the plan. It is the perpetuation of a culture that understands what it is about. It is unity across an institution that's very large.

She believes that the mission statement process drives a reflection that helps to create an institutional culture, a culture that runs far deeper than the strategic plan or an accreditation self-study. Each college has its unique culture, which is a major force in maintaining and sustaining institutional effectiveness, and is found in the shared beliefs and values of all employees.

Administrations sometimes use the mission review process to initiate the change to a new vision, a new college agenda. Participant F (combined) recounted the importance of their recent mission review process, "one of the things that definitely was striking about this process is that it marked a new era, and we had a lot of change at the executive level and it reflects the new

administration." He explained how the process, which included mission review, helped to launch a new president and a new vision:

> You should have watched this organization during the several years when this was in flux. For example, we had a president that had been in place for [over two decades] and then we had an interim president for a year….We were operating under tired goals….We were in that spot where our goals really needed to change. They weren't necessarily relevant to what we were doing and it was becoming difficult to align to for units. It was interesting to watch people's morale through that process. I think it does make a difference personally with planning because people have a sense and commitment that goes with where we are headed and they have some reassurances.

This mission review process, embedded in a comprehensive planning process, created a renewed sense of purpose for the college. Morale improved, and a sense of direction and vitality were recaptured. Likewise, Participant F (combined) was optimistic for the benefits gained from the mission review process: "I think the enthusiasm both within the community and the organization, was outstanding. There was a lot to be gained from the process and again I think the results will be huge too." As is posited by the strategic planning literature (e.g., Bryson, 2004; Sevier, 2000; Sidhu, 2003), it is difficult to separate the benefits of mission statement apart from the process that is used to create and revise it.

Participant G described the sense of pride that the mission statement embodies and the role that it plays in creating a sense of an organizational culture:

> I would also say that our mission statement is a source of pride for folks at [College B]. In [our state], we're very proud of being really the only comprehensive community college in the state, which is unique. I mean, it's not like states [that] have had systems of community colleges. We are the only comprehensive community college.

Thus, College B has a unique identity, "if you ask in a nutshell who [we are], we're an open-access comprehensive community college. And I think almost anybody on campus in our college could say that and understand what that means."

Similarly, Participant I expressed the role of mission statement in pulling faculty and staff together, and in giving direction to the shared governance process:

> There is the consequence of not having a [clearly articulated mission] particularly with…professionals or experts. They could go their merry way if we don't help them focus their vision. The sense of academic freedom [and shared] governance could go anywhere if you're not able to articulate it for what we need to go together.

She felt that a danger of the higher education culture is that emergent strategies may not be tested against a mission statement, and as a result, the college's efforts could be stilted or diffused due to lack of focus. Participant I also inferred that mission statement can be a point of dialogue between faculty and administration, which helps to focus the energy and efforts of all. According to Mintzberg (2007), in spite of the many prescriptive planning processes in higher education, because of the loosely coupled system and decentralized power of shared governance, strategy formation in colleges and universities still tends to be emergent in nature. In such cases, mission statements can serve as a high level rudder to control the course of the institution.

Driving Question 3: The Role of Mission Statement within the Strategic Planning Process

As the literature has demonstrated, there are clear functions that the mission statement should play in the strategic planning process. The primary role is to affect the formation and selection of strategies for goal attainment. However, there is little agreement demonstrated in the literature as to whether the mission review should take place prior to the environmental scan, should be informed by the environmental scan, or some permutation of these two placements. After reviewing, analyzing, and triangulating multiple data sources (e.g., participant interviews, pre-interview questionnaire, planning documents, participant college web sites), the placement and subsequent role of mission statement within the strategic planning process was ascertained. This analysis will discuss the role of mission statement from two perspectives: (a) the sequential placement within the strategic planning process, and (b) how strategies (e.g., goals, objectives, priorities) are linked to mission statement as part of the planning process.

Sequential Placement of Mission Statement

The sequential placement of mission statement review within the strategic planning process affects its review of mission statement and the impact of mission on strategy formation. For example, when mission review occurs in a pre-strategy formation model, the environmental scan tends to have little or no impact on the content of the mission statement. However, when mission review occurs in the intra-strategy formation model, the environmental scan impacts the formation of mission, and there can be concurrent development of mission and strategies. The placement of mission statement in the strategic planning process is identified by college in Table 35 along with the primary roles that emerged from the data.

Table 35. *The Placement of Mission Statement in the Strategic Planning Process*

College	Mission statement placement in the strategic planning process	Primary roles of mission statement
A	Ambiguous - not discernable	Goal clarification, accreditation requirement
B	Pre-strategy formation	Goal clarification, marketing tool, accreditation requirement, teambuilding tool
C	Intra-strategy formation	Goal clarification, marketing tool
D	Ambiguous - not discernable	Goal clarification, marketing tool, accreditation requirement
E	Pre-strategy formation	Marketing tool, accreditation requirement
F	Intra-strategy formation	Goal clarification, marketing tool, accreditation requirement, teambuilding tool
G	Pre-strategy formation	Goal clarification, marketing tool, accreditation requirement
H	Pre-strategy formation	Goal clarification, marketing tool, accreditation requirement
I	Pre-strategy formation	Goal clarification, accreditation requirement

Five of the nine participant colleges place mission statement review clearly in the pre-strategy formation stage (i.e., prior to, or concurrent with, the environmental scan). This is consistent with the majority of the planning literature reviewed, which placed mission statement review in the pre-strategy formation stage. Two colleges indicated mission review at the intra-strategy formation stage (i.e., after the environmental scan and concurrent with strategy formation). Unexpectedly, the role of the mission statement within the planning process was either ambiguous or non-existent at the two remaining participant colleges. Figure 10 illustrates where participant colleges place mission statement development and review within a common planning framework adapted from the Hunger and Wheelen (2003) model.

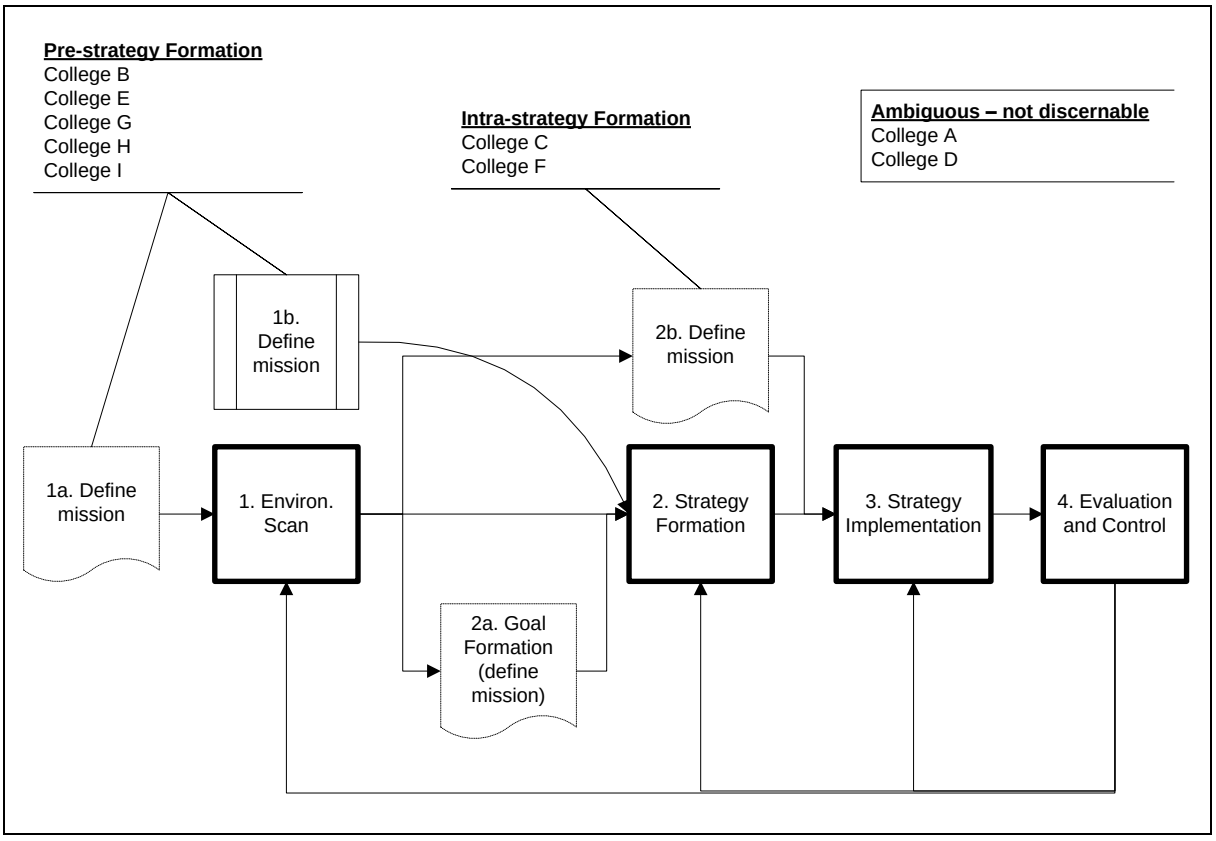

Figure 10. Participant college placement of mission statement within common planning framework adapted from the Hunger and Wheelen (2003) model.

However, the most striking aspect for use of mission statement in the planning processes at the participant community colleges was the diversity and variation that each applied to the common planning framework. Surprisingly, only two of the participant colleges had a process that closely mirrored the common planning framework of Hunger and Wheelen (2003). The remaining colleges digressed from the model in varying degrees. Unexpectedly, participant D noted: “we do not have a specific process; it has changed each time we've done planning.” She also stated that it had been three to four years between the two most recent planning cycles.

It is interesting that while the majority of the participant colleges had well articulated planning processes, it was sometimes difficult to discern the rate of change for those processes. In other words, it was difficult to ascertain how long the current process had been in use, or how many cycles of the process were planned or expected. Reasons for this inability to validate the planning process cycle were unclear. However, it may be the result of factors described in *Emergent role 2: Teambuilding tool*; a change in leadership can sometimes precipitate a new planning cycle and/or a new planning process.

Linking Goals to Mission Statement

One common use of mission statement within the strategic planning process is to link from the mission statement to specific institutional strategies (e.g., goals, objectives, priorities). This aids in ensuring mission fulfillment, and assists in the development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Although these linkages are executed in a number of ways, some very formal and others more obtuse, a clear theme emerged from the data. The findings strongly indicate the linking of goals to the mission statement as a means to create clear outcomes and demonstrate mission fulfillment. Participant responses regarding linking goals or strategies to mission statement in the strategic planning process are shown in Table 36.

Table 36. *Linking College Goals to Mission Statement in the Strategic Planning Process*

Participant	Response
B	"[The mission statement] is the basis for the goals we use. The goals for the plan drive the rest of the planning process."
C	"It's the basis for the goals to be suggested back against the mission statement."
E	"We have four strategic planning priority goals, which are derived directly from the mission statement."
F (combined)	"I think there was some influence from the goals but I don't know that it was direct. I think it was just the thought process of going through the creation of the goals and came back and influenced that mission and visa versa."
G	"The priorities came from us asking ourselves what does it mean for us to fulfill this mission."
I	"[The mission statement] drives planning priorities and objectives."

The data derived from the participant interviews and analysis of the participant college's planning documents reveal linkages to mission statement as a dominant theme. Although not consistently articulated by the participants, it can be surmised that this trend is driven by accreditation requirements and the need to demonstrate mission fulfillment as described in *Emergent role 1: Accreditation requirement*.

Driving Question 4: The Role of Mission Statement in Plan Implementation

The planning literature does not clearly prescribe a tactical role for mission statement in the implementation of a strategic plan. Driving question 4 explored the role that mission statement plays in plan implementation in the participant community colleges. Most of the participants could not relate any direct role that mission statement played in plan implementation. However, from the data three related findings emerged: (a) "teaching the plan," (b) "talking mission," and (c) creative communication methods for mission statement.

Teaching the Plan

Participant C described a concept used by her college, which she called "teaching the plan." She cited the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) annual planning workshop as the source of the phrase and the concept. Teaching the plan refers to the concept of facilitating the internalization of the plan by those constituents and stakeholders who have power or influence over its success. There is no doubt that a college must inculcate (i.e., teach) the plan to its faculty and staff, fostering an expectation of execution, continuity of purpose, and synergy of efforts. To facilitate the "teaching" of the plan, language becomes a crucial tool in the endeavor. The language must communicate clearly and concisely the plan to all stakeholders.

Participant C expressed the importance of starting with mission in this teaching process, "We always start with the vision, mission, and values….People need to clearly get those things because if they don't get that, then the rest of it…[it] just has to start there." The foundational statements (i.e., vision, mission, and values) become the framework through which the plan is viewed. She also addressed the language of the plan and how it contributes to the plan's teach-ability, "The issue really did become one of teaching people what that plan says. And a number of things have been done towards that end. One thing was to start with, we had insisted that the plan itself be teachable….So that's why you see those brief statements under each goal."

When identifying the need for a simple and memorable mission statement, Participant E expressed similar thoughts regarding teaching the plan but without using the same "teaching" terminology. Certain characteristics (e.g., simple, memorable), along with the clear linkages to the strategic plan, are essential for effective plan implementation. This is especially true as the plan filters down to the unit or department level. She explained the mission statement's importance at the department level:

> I have always found in departments where I function [the mission statement is] used heavily in that, in the implementation phase of the plan….Since the statement is so simple and memorable, and since the strategic plan is so tightly aligned to the mission statement and each of the strategic goals, the actions that each department takes throughout the year align with one or more of those goals.

The study findings indicate that apart from general communication of the mission statement to the faculty, staff, and community-at-large, mission statements were primarily used in two ways: (a) to provide a broad framework for understanding and making relevant the strategic plan, and (b) to demonstrate direct linkages to strategies and goals.

Talking Mission

Talking mission connotes a college's attempts to keep the concept of mission statement, and any or all of its roles and content, in the consciousness of the faculty and staff. A few participants expressed the need to maintain an ongoing dialogue on campus regarding mission. However, there is a sense from the data that even as the importance is identified by Participant A, that current efforts to "talk mission" are insufficient or non-existent. He expressed:

> I really would wish that we spent more time really talking mission to the institution as a whole. I think that that should be a major part of professional development of any institution, any community college, anyway, is folks ought to really know what the mission is and the mission and goals and why. And have the ongoing dialogue and discussion about what they are. I just don't think we do that….I think there's an assumption on the part of senior leadership often that people just know what it is, but I don't think that's an appropriate assumption….I think that by really talking about mission and goals on an ongoing basis is a very healthy activity and one that will mitigate many of the problems that come up and focus back.

Even though there is a sense that keeping mission statements in the active consciousness of the organization can be beneficial, there may not be sufficient urgency or conviction that mission statements are a central or efficacious leadership tool.

Similarly, Participant C expressed the importance of mission statement to the organization. She indicated that the size of her college accentuated the importance of talking mission:

> We have an awful lot of people who work here. We serve almost 60,000 students a year. So finding a way for the center to hold—if that's a term that makes sense to you—is not easy. And so the dialogue around the mission is really about that, too. It's not just about, "Okay, so because we have a mission statement we can set these goals." Because we have a mission statement, now this is who we are.

She went on to describe how her college began the strategic planning process with a discussion of mission, which then led to the genesis of goals. Once again, the aspiration role of mission statement is expressed in the language of "what we say we are, is what we want to be." In the words of Participant C:

> We have a series of those kinds of meetings to talk about the mission in light of what we've learned. So we don't say to people that the point of that meeting is to come up with goals. We say that the point of the meeting is to decide whether we are what we say we are and whether what we say we are is what we want to be.

It is clear from Participant C's description that her college is very intentional in how it uses mission to provide context to the strategy formation phase of the planning process.

Creative Communication Methods

Participants were asked how the mission statement was communicated both on and off campus. Most participants responded with the standard list of venues: web site, catalog, brochures, handbooks, various marketing materials, etc. Noteworthy non-traditional examples also emerged that may be instructive to institutions seeking creative ways to communicate the mission statement to all their stakeholders. These included: (a) thematic infusion, (b) discussion and review with advisory boards, (c) use at staff in-service days, and (d) placing framed copies in every office.

College E extracts three key words from its mission statement, which it then infuses into marketing pieces, logos, promotional banners, etc., and which appear "on every sign, on every building." This infusion can create a very tangible link to the mission statement, which increases the ease with which the full mission statement can be recalled from memory.

College H reviews and discusses the mission statement with each career and technical education (CTE) advisory board. The discussion with advisory boards is to be a helpful way to disseminate the mission of the college into the community and local businesses. Since advisory boards are generally comprised of community and industry stakeholders, such members would benefit greatly from a clear understanding of the college's mission. Moreover, these stakeholders would also be in an excellent position in the community to promote the mission of the college to the community-at-large.

Colleges B and F (combined) communicate the mission to faculty and staff at departmental meetings and college-wide in-service functions. By regularly communicating and reinforcing mission, both visually and orally, faculty and staff can more easily recall the mission statement.

College G has a framed presentation of the mission statement and the goals in every office on campus. The mission statement is presented in one frame, and the goals are presented in the other. This visual representation of the mission statement allows for easy reference by faculty and staff and communicates a sense of the cohesion, centrality and importance to the statement.

Driving Question 5: Efficacy of Mission Statement as a Planning Tool

Participants were asked if mission statement, as a planning tool, is effective. With the ambiguity in the literature with regard to mission statement efficacy, it was important to gain the participants perspective concerning the efforts and resources invested in the development and maintenance of their mission statement. Perspectives and insights were gathered concerning: (a) the participants' level of satisfaction with their current mission statement, and (b) the participants' summative opinion of mission statement as a planning tool.

Satisfaction with Current Mission Statement

The participants were queried as to their level of satisfaction with the current mission statement at their college. The level of satisfaction was expressed in a number of ways. For example, some participants provided detailed strengths and weaknesses of their mission statements, while others only gave a general overview or refrained altogether for various reasons.

Of the nine participant colleges, the level of satisfaction was evenly split three ways: satisfied, dissatisfied, and mixed satisfaction. Three participants were satisfied with their current statements, three had a mixed evaluation or were reticent to evaluate due to either the newness of the statement or their short tenure in their current position, and three expressed some level of dissatisfaction. Those participants who expressed satisfaction were modest in their appraisals. Participant A simply stated: "…I don't know what you found in other institutions, but we have a pretty good mission statement….The one that we have now, it ain't bad."

Of those expressing dissatisfaction, the most common negative characteristic was the length of the current statement. In the words of Participant G: "I find our mission statement too long….I personally would rather see a much more concise mission statement with the discussion of how you go about fulfilling your mission as a separate document or statement." This response was characteristic of the other dissatisfied participants.

Overall Efficacy of Mission Statement as a Planning Tool

When challenged as to whether or not the mission statements were worth the effort, time, and resources to create and maintain, most felt they were. This is predictable response from professionals whose livelihood was devoted to such planning processes. Participant B answered the question forthrightly: "Are they worth the effort? I think they are because I think they keep

people focused and they keep people looking and going…going together rather than everybody thinking what I'm doing is important. It brings everybody in an institution together."

Participant E ties the mission statement more directly to the strategic planning process when summarizing its efficacy. The reason she thinks that they are worth the effort is because they aid in demonstrating mission fulfillment, which demonstrates a facet of *Emergent role 1: Accreditation requirement*:

> Mission statements and strategic planning, I think, are in combo…vital to fulfilling…a mission. Having one and then a direction for obtaining that or attaining what those goals are is imperative. Otherwise, you know, you might say this is what you do. But how do you tell that you're doing what you claim you're setting out to do? I think in tandem. Yes, they are resources well spent.

Two participants gave their endorsement to mission statement as a planning tool, but with reservations. They believed the processes surrounding the statement must be deliberate, focused, and have the support of the entire campus community. In response to whether mission statements are efficacious, Participant C expressed:

> I think they are if that institution makes it more than just an exercise to satisfy an accreditation body. I think it can be a gigantic waste of time if the only reason you're doing it is so that you can check the box on the accreditation form and show that you have a statement. But if you really use it to talk about who you want to be, then the value is in that dialogue, number one.

In the end, the process may be as important as the output. This theme of process being equal to output in planning is a common one in the literature (see Bryson, 2004; Caruthers & Lott, 1981; Newsom & Hayes, 1991; Sidhu, 2003)

Chapter Summary

After coding and categorical aggregation resulting in themes, the data were codified by the driving questions for the study. Each question was taken in turn, and key themes were presented followed by supporting examples gathered from the data. Most participants defined mission statement using the common concepts and language described in the literature, that of an

institution's purpose. Participants used such phrases as "our purpose" and "who we are" to describe a mission statement. However, when compared to vision statement a degree of ambiguity emerged. It is apparent that some disagreement exists regarding to what degree mission statements should represent future aspirations. Consequently, the more aspirational the character of the mission statement, the more it resembles the traditional role of a vision statement.

A few of the participant colleges have well-documented, linear planning processes that contain the basic components of the common planning framework. Some have processes that diverge in significant ways, while still other colleges' planning processes are more emergent in nature. With regard to the specific placement of mission review within the strategic planning process, five of the nine colleges place this function prior to strategy formation, two colleges place this function concurrent to strategy formation, and two colleges had no clear role for mission statement in the planning process.

Another common role of mission statement within the strategic planning process was the use of linkages between strategies and mission. This practice, along with linked Key Performance Indicators, assists in demonstrating mission fulfillment, which is related to accreditation.

With regard to the use of mission statement in plan implementation, the most important themes emerging were the concept of "teaching the plan" and "talking mission." The first, teaching the plan, does not directly relate to mission statement, although mission statement can be used to assist in communicating and anchoring the plan in the college. "Talking mission" does not apply directly to plan implementation, but rather refers to an institutional conversation regarding the importance of mission and mission statement in the life and planning of the

college. Additionally, a few interesting and novel communication strategies for mission statement emerged.

Finally, with regard to the overall efficacy of mission statement, it was found that satisfaction with the statements themselves was evenly mixed: satisfied, dissatisfied, and mixed satisfaction. Also, it was found that most colleges had either just reduced their statements to a more concise, marketing-style statement or they expressed a desire to move in that direction. Overall, the participants affirmed the importance of mission statement as a planning tool, but echoed the literature by supporting the assertion that the process of developing and maintaining mission statement is sometimes as important as the outcome: the statement itself.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Introduction

This qualitative study involved nine community college planners each from a different region of the country and discovered insights into the mission statement's role and efficacy within their strategic planning process. Their perspectives were perceptive, relevant, and insightful, answering the research purpose and driving questions. This final chapter includes the following: (a) brief summary of chapters 1 through 5, which establishes a context for the research findings; (b) summary of the findings followed by implications for practice, organized by driving question; (c) mission statement development process; and (d) recommendations for further research.

Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the purpose and driving questions for the research, the significance to the community college field, brief description of the study design, and research assumptions. A concept map documented an initial visualization of the primary concepts relating to the research and their relationships to one another. Detailed definitions of the terms greater mission, local mission, and mission statement were included.

In chapter 2, the literature relating to the research was reviewed. The historical context for the research centered on the development of the greater community college mission in the United States. An historical timeline was presented that illustrated the major shifts in this mission with regard to the development of new functional areas (e.g., career and technical education). The primary frameworks for the study were the mission statement research of Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991), strategic planning theory, and strategy formation theory as developed by Henry Mintzberg (2007). An overview of the historical development of planning in

higher education was also presented to provide context for the study findings. Finally, research relating to mission statement was reviewed and gaps in the literature were identified.

Chapter 3 presented a detailed description of the research design for the study, which was an instrumental case study. The design was described including case selection, instrumentation and data collection, data collection pilot, and informed consent. Particular attention was given to the case selection process and the participant contact protocol because of its intricate nature. Since telephone interviews were one of the data-collection methods, a brief review of the literature relating to their efficacy was presented. The chapter also included a detailed discussion of concepts relating to trustworthiness: reliability, validity, rigor, and the researcher as the research tool. Finally, the limitations of the study (i.e., the use of telephone interviews and the lack of a Region I college) were identified.

Chapter 4 described the data collection process and summarized the data gathered for the study. Because of the complexity of the contact protocol and the geographically dispersed sample of colleges, the case management documents were described. These documents aided in the credibility and confirmability of the research. A rich description of the case colleges was presented, thereby affording a context for understanding and dependability. The data gathered in the research was summarized in a series of tables, which indicated themes that emerged from the data upon analysis. Finally, the utilization of qualitative data analysis software, NVivo, was described.

Chapter 5 contained the data analysis process and findings organized by the driving questions of the research. Rich, thick data found in the participant interviews were presented in table format as quotations. For ease of comprehension, this was followed by discussion and analysis, which included illustrative passages from the interview transcripts.

Findings and Implications

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore the role and efficacy of community college mission statements in the strategic planning process. Role refers to the function of the mission statement within the institution's planning framework, both actual and desired, whereas efficacy refers to how well the statement fulfills the desired function.

Driving Question 1: The Definition and Meaning of Mission Statement

What are the identified definition and meaning of a mission statement to the purpose of a community college?

Mission statement defined. The findings reveal a clear understanding among the participants of the common definition of a mission statement (i.e., the purpose of the institution). However, a great deal of ambiguity did exist when participants compared the mission statement to the vision statement. This ambiguity presents a conundrum as some functions of the mission statements must be relinquished when the statement describes such a vision of the future as in a vision statement. For example, it is difficult for a mission statement crafted with visionary elements to also serve as a benchmark measuring of mission fulfillment. One statement (the vision) is meant to stretch the institution, to make it grow, while the other (the mission) is a measure of the daily functioning or a statement of purpose. This blurring of roles will be more fully discussed with the a priori and emergent roles.

A priori and emergent roles. Use of a priori themes served as a framework for data analysis, which culminated in five a priori roles and two emergent roles. The a priori roles were: (a) *Role 1: Goal clarification,* (b) *Role 2: Smokescreen for opportunism,* (c) *Role 3: Description of things as they are,* (d) *Role 4: Aspirations,* and (e) *Role 5: Mission statement as marketing*

tool. The emergent roles were: (a) *Emergent role 1: Accreditation requirement*, and (b) *Emergent role 2: Teambuilding tool*. The roles most strongly identified by participants were *Role 1: Goal clarification*, *Role 5: Mission statement as marketing tool*, and *Emergent role 1: Accreditation requirement*.

Role 1: Goal clarification. This traditional role uses mission statement to bring clarity to the planning process by assisting with the formation of strategy, setting priorities, and ultimately allocating resources. This role becomes particularly important when resources are in a period of decline. When fewer resources are available, important and often difficult decisions must be made regarding just what is the core work of the college. Mission statements should assist in making these decisions. They can serve as a litmus test for planned and emergent strategies. Mission statements may even be applied as a test to well-established programs and services that may have evolved over many years and now possibly stand outside the institutional mission.

Role 5: Mission statement as marketing tool. In this era of increased marketing efforts in higher education, marketing professionals are seeking succinct ways of communicating the essence of an institution to its current and prospective students, parents, and other stakeholders. Mission statement appears to be an effective tool for accomplishing this. However, since most mission statements were not conceived with a marketing function in mind, they may be ill-suited for such a function, based on their length, style, and other factors. This role, more than any other, has placed the greatest stress on the traditional functions of mission statement (e.g., to clarify goals and strategies).

Emergent role 1: Accreditation requirement. Clearly, mission statements fill a vital role in the accreditation process. Mission statements are a required aspect of the accreditation processes for higher education institutions in the United States. Moreover, the extent to which

this role has impacted the construction and function of mission statement is not clearly understood. If mission statement was created as planning tool, and accreditation processes seek to borrow that tool, certain issues and challenges may result. Because accreditation commissions wield such immense power, community colleges may find themselves focusing more resources (time, effort, money) on creating and updating mission statements, which can contribute to a successful accreditation process. It is important to consider how this influence might affect the structure and content of those statements.

The conflicting roles of mission statement. It is clear from the study data that multiple roles are being required of mission statements. In their infancy, mission statements filled an important function in providing focus to the work of organizations. Even in this decade, Taguri (2002), who lists some 15 functions of mission statements, focuses on those control functions of strategic management (e.g., making assumptions explicit, accelerating response to change, improving coordination, and facilitating delegation). Indeed, there are striking commonalities between some of the a priori roles and this traditional framework. For example, *Role 1: Goal clarification* and *Role 3: Description of things as they are* fit within the common functional framework of the mission statement. However, *Role 4: Aspirations, Role 5: Mission statement as marketing tool,* and *Emergent role 1: Accreditation requirement* were not represented within strategic planning theory.

Perhaps more salient is that the participants expressed and provided illustrations of apparent conflict between some of these roles. For example, several participants articulated the need to have a short, terse statement that is easy to communicate to stakeholders, and that is memorable. This is a clear expression of *Role 5: Mission statement as marketing tool*. At the same time, mission statements must continue to clarify goals. With increasingly scarce resources,

colleges need to focus their efforts. Mission statement can be one way to guide and validate decisions. However, a brief, visionary mission statement that fulfills a marketing role often does not contain the specificity required to assist in such decisions.

Mission statement cast as *Role 3: Smokescreen for opportunism* creates similar challenges. Such a statement allows for multiple futures, and by definition does not delimit the college in some important strategic ways. This function can be in conflict with accreditation needs and the goal clarification role. For example, the more broad the statement of mission, the more difficult it is to demonstrate to accrediting commissions mission fulfillment. One solution is to create Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) linked directly to various facets of the mission statement. The KPIs facilitate the demonstration of mission fulfillment by making the outcomes of the college more tangible and quantifiable.

Finally, colleges that are asking the mission statement to serve in *Role 4: Aspirations* blur their purpose (mission) with their vision. Indeed, when aspirations are joined with the marketing tool function, the statement can be inspiring and forward-looking. However, such a statement may also cause difficulties when trying to demonstrate mission fulfillment. By definition, the vision statement describes a point in the future to which to aspire. So, when is one's mission being fulfilled? When the college *reaches* the future vision, or must the college only make progress *toward* the future vision? Such questions will need to be more overtly addressed as multiple roles are required of mission statements.

By assembling the roles and functions of mission statement thematically, a diagram can be constructed that contributes to the understanding of how mission statement functions within one of Mintzberg's (2007) strategy continuums. One of the continuums that Mintzberg uses to describe strategy is illustrative of planning from a tangible position to a broad perspective. These

descriptors are also helpful when considering the mission statements that facilitate strategy formation. For example, it can be assumed that mission statements that facilitate strategy as a tangible position would look, feel, and function quite differently than mission statements that facilitate strategy as a broad perspective. Moreover, if one organizes the roles and functions from this research along Mintzberg's continuum, some interesting insights can be gleaned.

In Figure 11, Mintzberg's continuum lies on the vertical axis with broad perspective at the top, and tangible position at the bottom. The roles and functions of mission statement were first categorized into two large functional groups: communication and definition. These groups were developed upon categorical aggregation of the themes that emerged from the data. The communication group functions to communicate various messages to stakeholders internal and external to the college, while the definition group serves to describe the work of the college (i.e., the more traditional definition and function of mission statement). Roles and functions have been aggregated accordingly under these two functional groups. The communication group lies at the top of the figure, and the definition group lies at the bottom.

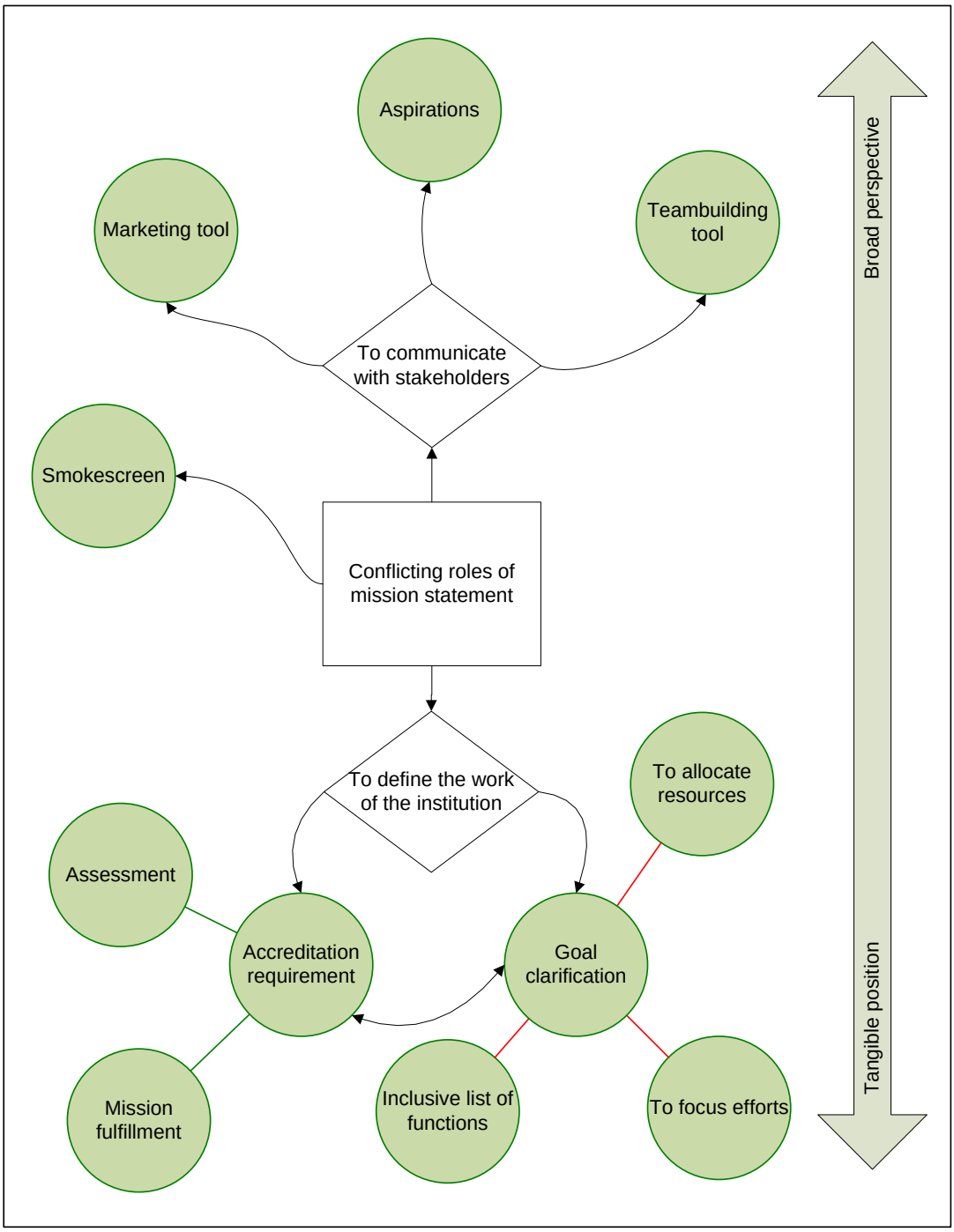

Figure 11. The roles and functions of mission statement placed along Mintzberg's (2007) strategy continuum.

While this diagram implies that tangible positions and related roles and functions cannot coexist with broad perspectives, such efforts can exist in the center of the continuum. However, the centrist position must compromise efficacy from both ends of the continuum. Contingent on

what is expected of the statement, most community colleges will find it most effective to create balanced statements which lie in the center of the continuum. Colleges with desired roles that lie at opposite ends of the continuum will find it difficult to create a statement that satisfies all the desired roles.

Most importantly, if community colleges must satisfy the needs of communication and definition within the same mission statement, important decisions must be made regarding which functions are primary and which are secondary. There must be a clear understanding on the part of all stakeholders that one statement most likely cannot fill all of these roles in an equally effective manner, and that subsequent decisions regarding function must be deliberate and well-considered.

One solution to the problem of competing roles is to have multiple statement types, which accomplish different purposes. If a college desires a mission statement with a strong marketing function, an adjunct statement could be devised that is more descriptive in nature to assist with mission fulfillment and goal clarification. Many colleges have accomplished this through the development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and similar planning methodologies. Likewise, if a college desires a definition-type mission statement to strengthen prescriptive planning and assessment, an adjunct statement that performs a marketing function can be developed (e.g., marketing slogan, market position statement).

Finally, it is important to understand that many of the functions within the communication function group were traditionally filled by vision statements. How and why vision statements are seemingly becoming merged with mission statements is not clear. However, one reason may be that multiple statements as a planning model (i.e., a mission statement and a vision statement) may not meet the current needs of community colleges. If this

is so, careful consideration must be given to the second scenario where the primary function of the statement is more representative of a tangible position and the adjunct statement is reserved for communicating broad perspectives. This bifurcated model is simply a recasting of the mission/vision statement paradigm.

Ultimately, it may be the traditional model itself and its terminology that are serving as an impediment to the evolving planning needs of community colleges. Perhaps some community colleges are still trying to fit emerging roles and functions into statements that were designed to accomplish different ends several decades ago. If this is so, colleges must not be so wed to the traditional terminology and forms of the planning literature, but rather they must remain flexible in order to be responsive to emerging functions and roles of mission statement, and to contextual elements of their planning environments.

Implications for practice. Presidents, governing boards, and strategic planning professionals in the community college need to be clear regarding the purpose of their institution's mission statement. If the mission statement is to fill multiple roles, as is likely, it is important for all involved in the planning process to acknowledge those roles. Once written and disseminated, it may be difficult to force a mission statement into role for which it not intended. If multiple and possibly conflicting roles are required, planners need to consider multiple types of statements to fill these various needs. However, another alternative is to construct a mission statement with multiple sections or parts more suited to the various roles required. For example, the parts could be marketing (or "spirit") statement, purpose statement, and legacy statement (which contains historical information about the institution), and Key Performance Indicators. Whichever scenario is selected, knowledge and agreement of the mission statement purpose will be most beneficial.

Driving Question 2: Similarities, Commonalities, and Differences

What are the similarities, commonalities, or differences among the identified definition and function of community college mission statements?

The prominent commonality of the findings is that the majority of the participants felt their colleges' mission statements were too long and cumbersome. For those participants that were satisfied with their current mission statements, brevity and focus were listed as strengths of the statements.

The findings represent among study participants a predominant similarity regarding the definition of mission statement, which very closely mirrored that found in the planning literature. Strategic planners at community colleges clearly understand the theoretical function of mission statement as described in the literature and were able to clearly articulate this function in the interviews. However, the participants' definition of mission statement did not include some of the more non-traditional roles (e.g., *Role 5: Mission statement as marketing tool, Emergent role 1: Accreditation requirement*), which were later described when discussing how the mission statement was actually used (i.e., *Role 1: Goal clarification* and *Role 3: Description of things as they are)*. This seeming disconnect between theory and practice may be signaling an evolution in mission statement's function that has not yet been represented in the planning literature.

The most striking difference among the identified definition, function, and value of community college mission statements is in the ambiguity between mission statements and vision statements. Those participants who noted this ambiguity stressed how the aspirational qualities of mission statement can blur the line between the two. Indeed, one participant described mission statement with clearly visionary language quite apart from any discussion of vision statement. Some participants strongly felt that this aspirational quality was an important

element of an effective mission statement, while others very clearly expressed the need of mission statements to represent the reality of today (i.e., *Role 3: Description of things as they are*).

Implications for practice. Community colleges must be clear in the functions of both mission and vision statements. If a college desires to include aspirational overtones in their mission statement, they must understand the ambiguity created with a vision statement and the challenge it might create when using the mission statement to measure mission fulfillment. It is apparent that a simple, concise mission statement will serve the institution well. However, use of such a concise mission statements may hamper their traditional role: *Role 1: Goal clarification*.

Driving Question 3: The Role of Mission Statement in the Strategic Planning Process

How are community college mission statements used within the strategic planning process?

The data revealed that five participant colleges placed mission statement in the pre-strategy formation phase of the common planning framework, while two participant colleges placed mission statement in the intra-strategy formation phase. Mission statement placement was confusing or not discernable for two of the nine participant colleges. This finding supports the placement of mission statement as found in the literature, where the majority of models represent mission statement review in the pre-strategy formation phase.

In addition, some participant colleges linked goals (i.e., strategies, objectives, priorities) to various facets or phrases in the mission statement. This practice elegantly satisfied multiple needs. First, the primary purpose for this linkage was to facilitate the documentation of mission fulfillment through Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) or some other type of outcomes measure. KPIs can also serve a key function in the college's continuous quality improvement program,

which is an assessment process. Since this practice initially appears to fulfill *Emergent role 1: Accreditation requirement*, an important question is raised: what type of mission statement would best support KPIs? Could such a statement also serve *Role 4: Aspirations* or *Role 5: Mission statement as marketing tool*? The impact of these multiple roles on mission statement structure and content needs further research.

Implications for practice. Most participants clearly and intentionally placed the mission statement within the strategic planning process. This placement implies a function with regard to strategy formation and delimitation, its traditional role. Indeed, strategy delimitation was strongly represented in the interview data. Several colleges are taking this delimitation one step further by linking goals and strategies directly to mission statement. This finding demonstrates a desire on the part of planners to more tightly integrate mission statement throughout multiple phases of the planning process, from the pre-strategy formation phase through plan evaluation and control, rather than solely in its traditional role at the beginning of the process. At this point, the model of planning with multiple mission statement integration points has resulted primarily from a desire to demonstrate mission fulfillment.

Use of mission statement beyond the preliminary phases of planning seems to be growing. Moreover, because of the inherent power of mission statement to communicate important messages, strategic planners continue to explore various mission statement integration strategies in their efforts to respond to stakeholders and mandates. This abandonment of the traditional prescriptive planning models (Mintzberg, 1994) will accelerate as planners seek to create frameworks that are responsive to the decentralized structure and emergent nature of strategy formation in higher education. Such “professional organizations”, as defined by Mintzberg, will continue to seek creative ways to balance prescriptive planning processes with

the emergent nature of the organization, and with the diffused power structure implicit in shared governance. Mission statement may be one way to provide a broad rudder, guiding the emergent strategy of academe.

Driving Question 4: The Role of Mission Statement in Plan Implementation

How are mission statements used to assist the implementation of institutional strategy post planning?

The findings indicate no direct role that mission statement plays in the implementation of the strategic plan. However, two concepts emerged, which may be helpful to colleges in implementing their plans: (a) "teaching the plan," and (b) "talking mission."

"Teaching the plan" is a concept attributed to Dale Braun, Campus Planner at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, which refers to all aspects of communicating and inculcating the plan to key executers and stakeholders. Mission statement can play a vital role in this "teaching" process by succinctly communicating the broad functions of the college, and by providing a framework to organize strategies and discern priorities.

"Talking mission" describes the efforts of the college to consistently communicate the intent, role, function, and content of the mission statement to faculty and staff. Through this ideological immersion by all employees in an understanding of the mission statement, colleges can find a higher level of continuity, consensus, and effectiveness with regard to broader institutional goals. "Talking mission" may play an even more vital role in shaping and delimiting emergent strategies, which are a common part of the strategy formation process in higher education.

Implications for practice. The role of mission statement in the implementation of the strategic plan is not clear in practice. It is not apparent whether such strategies were tried and

found to be ineffective, or whether the concept simply has not been extensively explored. Strategic planners may want to judicially pilot similar strategies, while carefully monitoring the impact on the efficacy of the plan implementation. Alternatively, since this concept is highly tactical in nature, community college strategic planners may wish to develop a regional or national communication forum for sharing various implementation strategies along with their perceived benefit and efficacy.

Driving Question 5: The Efficacy of Mission Statement as a Planning Tool

How well does the collective intention of the mission statement fulfill the explicit role as articulated by the community college?

Participants expressed mixed satisfaction with their current mission statements: three participants expressed satisfaction, three participants expressed dissatisfaction, and three expressed mixed satisfaction. Among those expressing dissatisfaction, the most common criticism was that the current statement was too long. This criticism implies the need of the statement to fill *Role 5: Mission statement as marketing tool*, which typically relies on a short, memorable statement.

Overall participants felt that mission statement as a planning tool is worth the effort and the resources invested to construct and maintain the statements. In general, the participants endorsed the concept of mission statement and its traditional role in the planning process. However, a few participants added the caveat that the role in the process must be clear, deliberate, and focused, otherwise the efforts surrounding mission statement may be little more than “an exercise to satisfy an accreditation body.” It was apparent that planners felt mission statements served an important purpose for the betterment of the organization.

Implications for practice. Dissatisfaction with current mission statement seems to be related to placing the excessively long mission statement in a role for which it was not designed. This implies that the length of the current statement was an impediment to filling *Role 5: Mission statement as marketing tool*, which was one of the most common themes that emerged from the data. It is clear that the current long and cumbersome mission statement was likely not constructed for such a purpose. In order to increase satisfaction with mission statement and its subsequent efficacy, strategic planners need to clearly and intentional identify the roles that will be required of the mission statement. This intentionality will clarify expectations for all stakeholders with regard to the function of the mission statement. It will also provide a framework for the construction, review, or revision of subsequent mission statements.

Interestingly, one theme supported by the literature posits that the processes surrounding the development and review of mission statement may be as important as the outcome: the statement itself. Strategic planners must ensure that the role of mission statement in the planning process is well defined and communicated to the stakeholders. If mission statement processes are seen as little more than fulfilling an accreditation requirement, little more can be expected of them. In the end, the efficacy of mission statement seems closely related to the time and resources invested in their development.

The Mission Statement Development and Strategic Planning

The study's findings advance the work of strategic planning in community colleges. Mission statements are not an optional component of strategic planning since their utilization is de rigueur for accreditation. Because mission statements are a required practice, and knowing that the efficacy of mission statements can be facilitated or hindered by various forces and roles into which they are thrust, how can governing boards, presidents, and planners be more strategic

and intentional in their use of mission statement as a planning tool? In short, what can be done to increase the efficacy of community college mission statements?

The most efficient way to increase the efficacy of community college mission statements lies in their genesis; efforts to increase their efficacy should be invested in the processes that are used to create them. Moreover, in light of the competing forces impacting the role and efficacy of community college mission statements, any process for developing or substantively revising mission statements must take into account the roles desired and the subsequent complimentary and conflicting forces. Such a mission statement development process must have the following goals: (a) a mission statement that satisfies the deliberate and articulated roles as set forth by the college, and (b) substantive stakeholder input, familiarity, and agreement to facilitate consensus and cohesion in the planning process. These goals necessitate the modification of common mission statement development processes in use today.

While some processes include a step to review stakeholder mandates and expectations, the step does not typically lead to an examination of anticipated roles and functions that the statement must fill. The following process merges Bryson's (2004) mission statement development framework with findings distilled from the study to craft specific steps aimed at addressing the various roles of mission statements. This improved process advances the efficacy of mission statement by: (a) specifically recognizing and addressing multiple roles played by the statement at the beginning of the process, and (b) providing multiple integration points for mission statement throughout the planning process. Governing boards, presidents, and strategic planners can use this process as a model, which can be overlaid on a college's current planning process, or used as a template to create a new planning process. Either option retains the intended benefits and will lead to a more effective use of mission statement in the community college.

The Mrozinski Mission Statement Development Process

Purpose. To develop an institutional mission statement that acknowledges the various complimentary and conflicting roles and functions desired, and creates the best possible configuration of these roles and functions to meet the needs of the community college.

Key innovations. Facilitates the integration of multiple roles of mission statement for increased mission statement efficacy; integrates mission statement development at multiple points for greater cohesion and continuity of the planning process; creates framework for assessing the efficacy of the statement (i.e., how well did it accomplish its desired functions).

Prospective users. Governing boards, presidents, strategic planners, strategic planning committees at community colleges.

The process is divided into three phases: (a) define mission, (b) reexamine mission, and (c) adopt mission. Phase A is illustrated in Figure 12, while Phases B and C are illustrated in Figure 13. Corresponding steps are listed in each phase of the process. Steps adapted from Bryson's (2004) mission statement development framework are marked with an asterisk (*).

Mrozinski Mission Statement Development Process: Phase A	
Phase	**Step**
Phase A: Define Mission Statement	Step 1. Compile a list of outcomes for the mission statement development process including specific roles that will be required of the statement. It is important to specifically note those roles that may conflict and clearly understand where areas of compromise may be possible. The following steps will help identify and understand the competing forces that may be present: a. Identify the roles and functions desired or required. b. Observe the placement of the roles and functions on the Mintzberg continuum (see figure 11). c. Place any new desired roles or functions on the continuum. d. Approximate an average placement for the final statement on the continuum. e. Develop a set of characteristics that describe the final statement (e.g., statement length, tone, language, content elements, and any adjunct statements that may be used in parallel) based on its desired roles and functions, and placement on the Mintzberg continuum.
	Step 2. Formally identify how statement will be used within the strategic planning process (e.g., placement within the planning framework, linked KPIs, matrices).
	Step 3. Compile formal and informal mandates. Make list of required institutional purposes and functions, and those imposed by local, state, regional, and national stakeholders.*
	Step 4. Complete stakeholder analysis. Bryson has developed an exhaustive stakeholder analysis process, which may be helpful to community colleges in identifying key stakeholders and understanding what level of engagement may be required while developing the mission statement (see Bryson, 2004, pp. 107-113).*
	Step 5. Answer six key organizational questions (Bryson, 2004; Drucker, 1974)*: a. Who are we? b. What is our social and political basis, mandate, or need? c. How do we respond to this basis? d. How do respond to stakeholders? e. What do we value? f. How are we distinctive?
	Step 6. Draft mission statement.

Figure 12. Phase A of the Mrozinski Mission Statement Development Process.

Mrozinski Mission Statement Development Process: Phases B & C	
Phase	**Step**
Phase B: Reexamine Mission Statement	Step 7. Reexamine and redraft mission statement as planning group moves through planning process based on input from the Environmental Scan and Strategy Formation phases.*
	Step 8. Assess final draft of mission statement in light of the outcomes identified in Phase A, step 1. Adjust or redraft mission statement to address gaps in outcomes.
	Step 9. Gather feedback on the mission statement draft from key stakeholders. Edit the statement in response to feedback.
Phase C: Adopt Mission Statement	Step 10. Formally adopt the mission statement.
	Step 11. Communicate mission statement widely to all stakeholders.

Figure 13. Phases B & C of the Mrozinski Mission Statement Development Process.

To visualize and contextualize this process, these steps have been transposed onto Hunger and Wheelen's (2007) common planning framework in Figure 14. The three phases of the mission statement development process have been outlined in color. Two important innovations have been integrated into this planning model:

1. The process accounts for the multiple roles and functions that mission statements might play by clearly identifying and articulating those expectations at the beginning of the process (i.e., Phase A, step 1).
2. The model represents a two-stage mission integration process. Mission statement is first developed prior to the Environmental Scan phase and then reviewed throughout the planning process so that the statement can be responsive to anything learned through the Environmental Scan or Strategy Formation phases.

Mission Adoption (i.e., Phase C) is clearly identified within the planning process. This final phase can be augmented by innovative communication strategies such as those identified in this

study. Strategic planners will need to carefully reflect on their own organizational cultures when considering specific communication tactics.

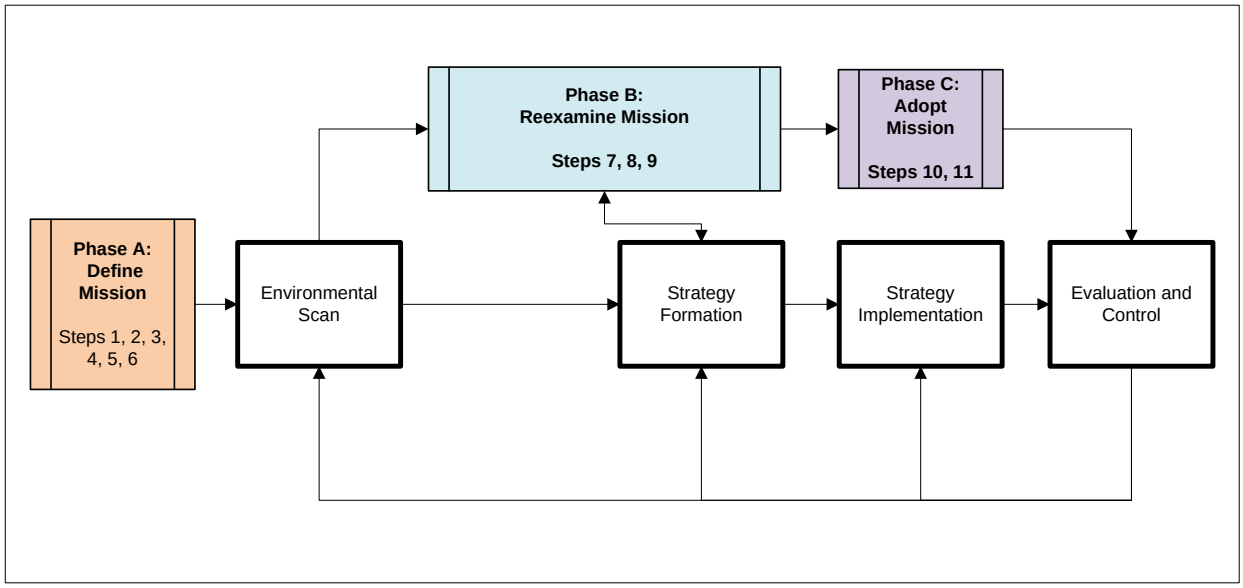

Figure 14. Hunger and Wheelen's (2007) common planning framework modification.

Upon successive iterations of the strategic planning cycle, an abbreviated mission review process can be utilized, for a full review of mission is not typically necessary with each repetition of the cycle. However, it is important to evaluate the strategic plan and how well the mission statement fulfills its intended purpose. This evaluation occurs in the final phase of the planning cycle and then informs the beginning of the cycle as a feedback loop. The substance of this evaluation will be helpful in determining the extent of mission review that is needed on repetitions of the cycle.

Conclusions

The larger question of mission statement efficacy must be considered in light of the findings, the literature, and the common understanding of the community college mission statement. Are they worth the effort? Are they worth the resources that are dedicated to their

development and maintenance? Where is the fruit in the strategic planning orchard that results from mission statement?

If mission statements need not restate the greater mission of the community college, which is quite commonly understood, perhaps those roles and functions that represent tangible positions (e.g., *Role 1: Goal clarification, Role 3: Description of things as they are)* can be reduced in importance or eliminated altogether. It may be time in the evolution of mission statement for a shift toward Mintzberg's broad perspectives. Such statements may not provide the tangibility that guides resource allocation, however, other functions will be better enabled. Such a shift would allow mission statements to focus on those things that make the institution distinctive (e.g., "branding"), rather than restating those elements that are common to most community colleges in the United States.

Ultimately, the efficacy of community college mission statements depends on the clarity of purpose for which they are created. If those purposes are clear, and are clearly articulated to stakeholders, efficacy is likely. Without this clarity, efficacy will seem nebulous and elusive. Traditional measures of efficacy, such as those established in the common planning framework, will be assumed and confusion will result. The assessment of efficacy can only truly begin once expectations and purposes are clear.

Community colleges invest significant resources into the development and maintenance of their mission statements. Thus, it is important to ascertain the return on that investment. Planners must lay the groundwork that makes such evidence possible. In the absence of such evidence, their efforts in advocating for costly, time-consuming, and significant resource utilization to create mission statement processes seem charlatanistic. A careful analysis of desired roles and clarity of functions will provide planners the first step in establishing a

framework for mission statement that can infuse the planning cycle with cohesion and evidence of efficacy.

Recommendations for Further Research

There is sufficient disorder and variation of mission statement practice to cause planning theorists to inquire more deeply into questions of process, practice, and efficacy of recommended models from the literature. In other words, if a sufficient number of strategic planning practitioners vary from the formal models of mission statement practice, of which they are well aware, significant questions must be raised regarding the efficacy of the models and theories presented in the literature.

The practice of mission statement as a strategic planning tool in the community college would greatly benefit from further research in two broad areas:

First, since it is clear mission statements are being required to fill multiple functions (i.e., roles) both internal and external to the planning process, it is important to understand in more detail the content, tone, construction, and other language features of the mission statements themselves that support these varied roles. This area of research may produce detailed recommendations to strategic planners in the community college to aid in the design, construction, and delimitation of mission statements based on desired functions or roles.

Second, since strategy formation in higher education is often characterized as a highly emergent process (Mintzberg & Rose, 2003), it is important to explore those models of strategic planning in the community college that marry mission statement practice with emergent strategy formation in particularly effective ways. Initially, there would seem to be a mismatch between prescriptive planning and the emergent nature of strategy endemic in a shared governance environment. However, since prescriptive and emergent forces of planning coexist in a peculiar

and unconventional form in higher education, it is important to understand how this dichotomy functions. Such an understanding could lead to greater efficacy of planning practice in the community college.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Introductory Email to College President

From: Mark Mrozinski [mailto:mmrozinski@sbcglobal.net]
Sent:
To: [COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT]
Cc: [EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT]
Subject: Community College Mission Statement Research

Dear [COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT],

Your college has been nominated by the Society of College and University Planners as one of nine community colleges nationwide with an exemplary strategic planning process to participate in a research study. I am a doctoral student at National-Louis University in the Community College Leadership doctoral program. The purpose of the dissertation study is to explore the role and efficacy of community college mission statements in the strategic planning process. Role refers to the function of the mission statement within the institution's planning framework, both actual and desired, whereas efficacy refers to how well the statement fulfills the desired function.

I invite your college to participate by asking you to identify the executive-level person in your college responsible for strategic planning. Please respond to this email with the appropriate contact information. The research will require that person to complete a short questionnaire, participate in a telephone interview, and to provide some institutional planning documents from your college. There are no anticipated risks to the participants. However, it is anticipated that this research will generate relevant information and insights surrounding community college strategic planning processes. The identities of participant colleges and strategic planners will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mark D. Mrozinski
814 N. Walnut Ave.
Arlington Heights, IL 60004
Home: 847-797-9371
Work: 847-925-6540
Cell: 847-721-9871
E-mail:mmrozinski@sbcglobal.net

Appendix B: Topical Orientation Guide

Strategic Planner Orientation Checklist

Name:_____

College:_____

Date:_____ Time:_____

☐ Review nature of research

1. Purpose and driving questions
2. SCUP involvement
3. Participant confidentiality
4. No risks/Benefits

☐ Expectations for participants: documents, questionnaire, telephone interview

☐ Review access to strategic planning documents:

1. Mission statement
2. Strategic plan
3. Planning guidelines
4. Others?

☐ Review Pre-interview questionnaire (10 minutes): will provide focus and clarity to phone interview and serve as consent

☐ Stress importance of completing questionnaire a few days prior to telephone questionnaire

☐ Arrange appointment for telephone interview. Date: _____ Time:_____

☐ Review telephone interview (60 to 75 minutes): will provide questions in advance after the completion of the questionnaire; will be taped

☐ Member checks after transcription

☐ "Thank you for your time."

Notes:

Appendix C: Confirmation Email to Strategic Planners

From: Mark Mrozinski [mmrozinski@sbcglobal.net]
Sent:
To: [STRATEGIC PLANNER]
Subject: Study Participation Confirmation

Dear [STRATEGIC PLANNER],

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. As I mentioned in our telephone conversation, your college has been selected by the Society of College and University Planners as one of nine community colleges nationwide with an exemplary strategic planning process to participate in this research. I am a doctoral student at National-Louis University in the Community College Leadership doctoral program. The purpose of the dissertation study is to explore the role and efficacy of community college mission statements in the strategic planning process. Role refers to the function of the mission statement within the institution's planning framework, both actual and desired, whereas efficacy refers to how well the statement fulfills the desired function.

The research will require the following participation from you:

> Complete a short online questionnaire, approximately 10 minutes to complete. The link to the questions is: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=E6UgzsERpqMQFOXc56KlAg_3d_3d. You must complete the questionnaire prior to our telephone interview.
>
> Participate in a telephone interview, approximately 45-60 minutes in length. Our telephone interview has been scheduled for [INTERVIEW DATE AND TIME]. I will call you at the appointment time at [PARTICIPANT'S TELEPHONE NUMBER]. A copy of the interview questions have been attached to this email.
>
> Provide institutional planning documents from your college.

There are no anticipated risks to the participants. However, it is anticipated that this research will generate relevant information and insights surrounding community college strategic planning processes. The identities of participant colleges and strategic planners will be kept strictly confidential.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to our interview on [INTERVIEW DATE]. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you should have any questions.

Mark D. Mrozinski
814 N. Walnut Ave.
Arlington Heights , IL 60004
Home: 847-797-9371
Work: 847-925-6540 Cell: 847-721-9871
E-mail:mmrozinski@sbcglobal.net

Appendix D: Pre-interview Questionnaire

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time from your busy schedule to complete this pre-interview questionnaire. Your careful responses will provide substantive depth and clarity to this study, and will allow us to more effectively use the telephone interview time.

This questionnaire will take approximately ten minutes to complete.

Mark D. Mrozinski
Doctoral Candidate in Community College Leadership
National-Louis University
mmrozinski@sbcglobal.net
847-721-9871

Demographic Information

The following questions will provide some basic demographic information about you.

Gender:

- ○ Male
- ○ Female

Age group:

- ○ 25 - 30 years
- ○ 31 - 35 years
- ○ 36 - 40 years
- ○ 41 - 45 years
- ○ 46 - 50 years
- ○ 51 - 55 years
- ○ 56 - 60 years
- ○ over 60 years

Ethnicity:

- ○ Asian or Pacific Islander
- ○ American Indian or Alaskan
- ○ Black, non-Hispanic
- ○ Hispanic
- ○ White, non-Hispanic

Please list all degrees and certificates earned.

Degree/Certificate 1:

Degree/Certificate	
School	
Location	
Year	

Degree/Certificate 2:

Degree/Certificate	
School	
Location	
Year	

Degree/Certificate 3:

Degree/Certificate	
School	
Location	
Year	

Degree/Certificate 4:

Degree/Certificate	
School	
Location	
Year	

Degree/Certificate 5:

Degree/Certificate	
School	
Location	
Year	

Job Relationships and Functions

The following questions provide information about your position within the college.

Current Position:

Job title	
Number of years in current position	

Previous Position:

Institution	
Job title	
City/State	
Number of years in previous position	

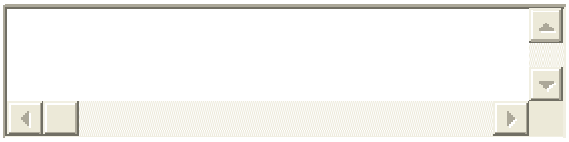
Superior relationship: To whom do you report?

Enter job title:	

Subordinate relationships: Direct reports

1. Job Title	
2. Job Title	
3. Job Title	
4. Job Title	
5. Job Title	

If you have more than five direct reports, please enter their titles here.



Additional functional responsibilities:
Please list those functional areas beyond strategic planning for which you are responsible.

If it is more convenient, please feel free to email your current job description to mmrozinski@sbcglobal.net.

Mission Statement

The following questions gather information with regard to how your college's mission statement functions within the institution and the strategic planning process.

How long ago was your college's current mission statement created?

Which of the following groups were involved in the creation of the current mission statement?

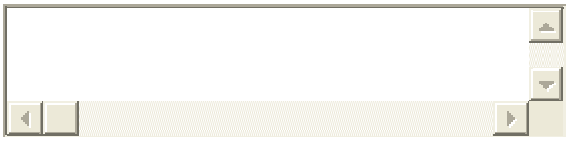
- [ ] Governing Board
- [ ] Administration
- [ ] Planning Committee
- [ ] Faculty
- [ ] Staff
- [ ] Community Representatives
- [ ] Other (see below)

Please provide any additional groups or constituencies not mentioned above who participated in the creation of the mission statement.

Briefly describe the process used to create the current mission statement.

How often is the mission statement reviewed/updated?

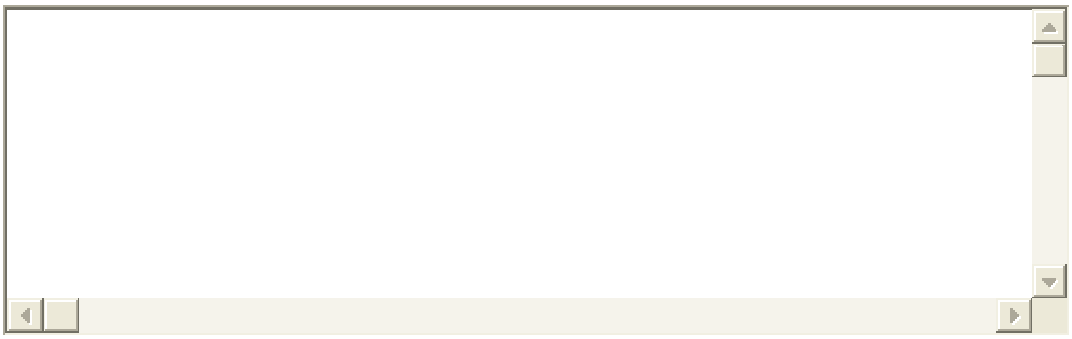
Briefly describe the process used to review/update the mission statement.



Strategic Planning

The following questions address the role of the college's mission statement in the strategic planning process.

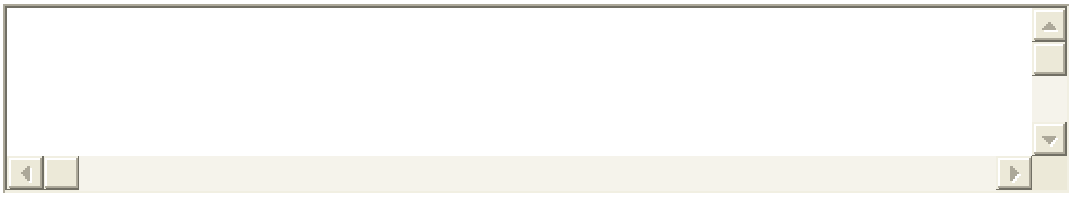
Please outline the steps in your strategic planning process (e.g., mission review, environmental scan, goal development, assessment).



Is the function of your college's mission statement within your strategic planning process clearly defined?

- ○ Yes.
- ○ No.

If yes, briefly describe how it is used in the planning process.



Mission Statement Communication

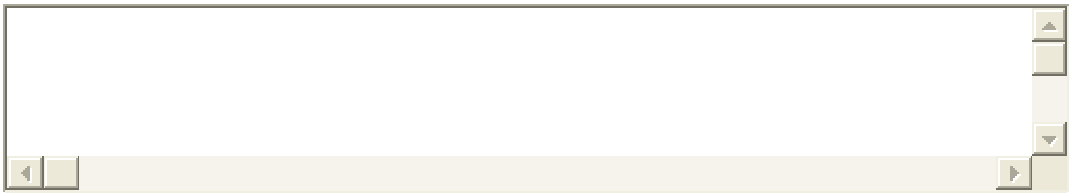
The following questions address how your mission statement is communicated to your campus and the community at large.

Please choose all of the mediums through which your current mission statement is directly communicated to constituents and stakeholders, both on and off campus.

- ☐ College web site
- ☐ College catalog

- [ ] Planning documents
- [ ] Campus signage
- [ ] Print marketing materials and brochures
- [ ] Advertising
- [ ] On campus written communications
- [ ] On campus oral communications
- [ ] Off campus written communications
- [ ] Off campus oral communications
- [ ] Other (see below)

Please provide any additional communication mediums not mentioned above.



Thank you

Thank you for completing this pre-interview questionnaire. Your time is greatly appreciated. Upon submission, the researcher will contact you to schedule a telephone interview. Thank you for your time and commitment to this research.

Mark D. Mrozinski
Doctoral Candidate in Community College Research
National-Louis University
mmrozins@sbcglobal.net
847-721-9871

Appendix E: Participant Informed Consent

Informed Consent Disclosure

This study will take place from October, 2008 to January, 2010. This page outlines the purposes of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant. You may want to print a copy of this page for your records.

--

I consent to participate in a research project conducted by Mark D. Mrozinski, a doctoral student at National-Louis University located in Chicago, Illinois.

I understand the study is entitled The Role and Efficacy of Community College Mission Statements: A Case Study. The purpose of this study is to explore the role and efficacy of community college mission statements in the strategic planning process. Role refers to the function of the mission statement within the institution's planning framework, both actual and desired, whereas efficacy refers to how well the statement fulfills the desired function.

I understand that my participation will consist of this pre-interview questionnaire and an audio-taped interview lasting 45 or 60 minutes in length with a possible second, follow-up interview lasting 45 to 60 minutes in length. I understand that I will receive a copy of my transcribed interview at which time I may clarify information.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time until the completion of the dissertation.

I understand that only the researcher, Mark D. Mrozinski, will have access to a secured file cabinet in which will be kept all transcripts, taped recordings, and field notes from the interview(s) in which I participated.

I understand that the results of this study may be published but my identity will in no way be revealed, nor that of my employer (community college).

I understand there are no anticipated risks to me greater than those encountered in daily life. Moreover, the information gained from this study could be used to assist community colleges in become more effective in their strategic planning processes.

I understand that in the event I have questions or require additional information I may contact the researcher: Mark D. Mrozinski, 814 N. Walnut Ave., Arlington Heights, IL 60004. Phone 847-721-9871 or E-mail: mmrozinski@sbcglobal.net.

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel have not been addressed by the researcher, you may contact my Primary Advisor and Dissertation Chair: Dr. Rebecca S. Lake, National-Louis University (Chicago Campus), 122 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603. Phone (312) 261-3534 or E-mail: rebecca.lake@nl.edu

By typing your name and contact information below, you are acknowledging receipt of the informed consent disclosure above.

Name:

College:

Email Address:

Phone Number:

You may want to print this page now for your records.

Appendix F: Data Transcriptionist Confidentiality Agreement

Confidentiality Agreement

Data Transcription

This confidentiality form articulates the agreement made between Mark D. Mrozinski, the researcher, and [NAME OF INDIVIDUAL AND COMPANY OF A PROFESSIONAL TRANSCRIBER].

I understand and acknowledge that by transcribing the audio files provided to me by Mark D. Mrozinski, that I will be exposed to confidential information about the research study and the research participants. In providing transcription services, at no time will I reveal or discuss any of the information of which I have been exposed.

In addition, at no time will I maintain copies of the electronic or paper documents generated. Further, upon completing each transcription, I agree to provide the electronic documents to the researcher:

Mark D. Mrozinski
814 N. Walnut Ave.
Arlington Heights, IL 60004
847-721-9871
mmrozinski@sbcglobal.net

I understand that breach of this agreement as described above could result in personal and professional harm to the research participants for which I will be held legally responsible.

Transcriptionist's Signature:_____ Date:_____

Researcher's Signature:_____ Date:_____

Appendix G: Driving Questions Mapped to Interview Schedule

Driving question	Interview question(s)
1. What are the identified definition and meaning of a mission statement to the purpose of a community college?	How does your college define mission statement? What process was used to create your college's mission statement?
2. What are the similarities, commonalities, or differences among the identified definition and function of community college mission statements?	[comparative data from driving question one]
3. How are community college mission statements used within the strategic planning process?	Describe your college's strategic planning process. In what ways does your college use the mission statement within the strategic planning process? Do you feel that the college uses the mission statement to assist in the implementation of the strategic plan? If so, how?
4. How are mission statements used to assist the implementation of institutional strategy post planning?	How is the mission statement communicated or used outside of the formal planning process? Are there any other processes or practices that surround your college's mission statement that increase the college's effectiveness?
5. How well does the collective intention of the mission statement fulfill the explicit role as articulated by the community college?	How well does the mission statement fulfill the explicit role as articulated by the college?