Strategic Planning Leadership in Illinois Community Colleges: Who is Leading the Process?

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ABSTRACT

The 21st century will continue to unveil new challenges for community colleges. Beset with many challenges such as an austere funding environment, growing diverse student populations, community issues and needs, impending leadership and faculty retirements, globalization, and mounting pressures of accountability from accrediting bodies and external constituents, community colleges leaders must employ measures that promote institutional viability. Leadership and planning are two essential components for the viability of community colleges. Strategic planning leadership is vital for the survival and growth of community colleges during these uncertain times.

This study explores strategic planning leadership in Illinois community colleges in an attempt to identify the leader responsible for facilitating the strategic planning process, the impact of their role, and how they influence the process. The study also identifies key players employed in the strategic planning process and examines the significance to their roles. In addition, the study examines the similarities, commonalities, and differences in the strategic planning process among Illinois community colleges. Findings of this study are that community colleges in the state of Illinois show great similarities in their strategic planning processes. The study also found that individuals responsible for leadership strategic planning activities highly correspond with the skills associated with behavioral leadership theory, showing both concern for people as well as concern for the tasks of strategic planning. This information will be useful to community colleges attempting to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow through the planning process as well as provide insight into the type of leadership needed for strategic planning in community colleges during these ever-changing times,
DEDICATION

The pursuit of education has had the most profound influence on my life. This exploration for knowledge was instilled in me early on in life by my mother. She taught me the importance of education and supported me through each journey. I am eternally grateful for her love and guidance. After she suddenly passed away in November of 2005, my life was devastated. It was then that I retreated to education for solace and decided to pursue my doctoral studies. I dedicate this degree to her memory; a memory full of love, compassion, and selflessness that she showed to all of her children.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

“I will bless the Lord at all times and His praise shall continually be in my mouth”. I must first thank God for giving me the strength, courage, and perseverance to complete this degree. Without Him, I could do nothing, and with Him, I can do all things. It is from Him that all blessing flow.

This journey has impacted my personal and professional life in ways I never thought possible. From the relationship I have built with the faculty and my classmates, to my dissertation research, my worldview has been enlarged. My entire dissertation committee has been phenomenal. Their expertise in the field and knowledge was instrumental to my research. I would like to especially acknowledge and provide a heart-felt thank you to my dissertation chair, Dr. Rebecca Lake for her immense contribution to my research. She saw in me what I was searching for in myself. Without her mentoring and strong hand, I would not have been able to complete this process. My other two committee members, Dr. Diane Oliver and Dr. Keenan Andrews were instrumental in ensuring that I succeeded.

I would be remised if I did not acknowledge the impact that the community college has had on my life. I graduated from high school ill prepared for college with several other obstacles facing me. At the time, community college was my only viable option. It was the best decision I could have made. It was the community college that laid the foundation for my educational success. I hope my repayment is evident in my unwavering commitment to community college education and the work that I do everyday.
This research did not happen in a vacuum. It required the support of my family and friends. Their listening ear, patience, and understanding of my absence from their lives for the last 3 years is commendable. My three sisters, Carolyn, Paulette, and Andrea, have been constant and their support of their little sister. My daughter, Kristian has always paid the ultimate sacrifice for my pursuit of higher education. She has been my motivation and there is no way that I could give her back to her the years we have lost. Finally, a special thanks to my loving husband, Carlos. His comforting voice of encouragement was the vehicle for my perseverance. Even through the tears and times that I wanted to give up, he wouldn’t let me. He believed in me and my life would not be complete without his presence. I love him whole-heartedly.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Many of the most powerful people in planning were not planners at all in the professional sense, but outsiders: academics, researchers, writers, creators of realities. Their ideas were believed….that is they led…

(Greed, 1994, p. 29)

Planning is a part of our everyday lives. We engage in various types of planning activities, from life, career, and financial planning, to program, business, and disaster planning. We plan out our day by writing ourselves little sticky notes and “things to do” list; we plan our travel vacations months in advance with a travel planner; we plan our finances by consulting a financial planner; we often plan major events, such as weddings with wedding planners; and we plan out our education and career goals with career planners. As a country, the United States plans for natural disasters, but since the horrific events of September 11, 2001 and Hurricane Katrina, this level of planning had been escalated and brought to the forefront of our minds. As a result, the United States government developed a Department of Homeland Security to provide planning for the country around safety and security. However, in these recent times of economic hardship that the country is facing, the focus in the United States has shift to financial planning. Individuals, families, small businesses, and major corporations are all looking to financial planners to assess every aspect of their financial futures, from saving, investments, and taxes, to insurance and retirement planning. People are trying to
figure out how they can survive during this devastating economic period, and are looking to many different types of planners for the answers.

Planning is believed to bring stability, growth and reassurance to our lives. Planning involves being proactive and allows for quick responses to unexpected changes. Any plan, whether it is for someone’s person life or a major organization, must be fluid and dynamic, as any sudden shift can result in dramatic changes. We rely on planning experts to plan and organize the most important aspects of our lives. These people often have years of experience in their respective fields, and are abreast of current and past practices and future trends. We depend on these planners to give us good sound advice and we respect their expertise and judgment. These planners set priorities and goals and provide strategies to determine the appropriate actions needed to reach the desired outcomes. So, when it comes to our community colleges, the fabric of higher education in America, who is leading the planning process?

**Background of the Problem**

Community colleges are facing a great crisis. Support of community education continues to lessen which is evident through decreased funding, at the federal, state, and local levels. Yet the need for affordable, accessible education continues to grow. Community colleges have always been asked to do more with less. Boggs (2001) refers to community colleges as the “workhorses” of higher education. The community college’s mantra has always been its ability to quickly adapt and be flexible to the changing needs of its environment. However, the recent economic downturn in the country and shifting priorities challenge the traditional hallmarks of responsiveness, adaptability, and flexibility that community colleges have valued since their inception.
over hundred years ago. The president of Columbia University’s Teacher College, Arthur Levine (2004), argues that within the next five years, community colleges will be confronted with increased enrollment at the time that its resources are decreasing, resulting in profound questions being raised “about access to higher education and the mission of community colleges” (p. B10). Community colleges are increasingly questioning their future of being comprehensive community colleges. Christine McPhail, professor and director of the doctoral program in community college leadership at Morgan State University, argues, “Whether community colleges can manage their resources to sustain multiple missions to match the resources available to support them will continue to be at the heart of their current challenge” (McPhail, 2004, p. B12).

The 21st century will continue to unveil new challenges for community colleges. Beset with many challenges such as an austere funding environment, growing diverse student populations, community issues and needs, impending leadership and faculty retirements, globalization, and mounting pressures of accountability from accrediting bodies and external constituents, community colleges leaders must employ measures that promote institutional viability. Leadership and planning are two essential components for the survival of any institution of higher education. Strategic planning is the most commonly used planning process in community colleges today. Strategic planning sets the direction and provides the roadmap to move the organization forward in a definitive path to address its challenges and accomplish its goals. Although the future will always includes a sense of the unknown, strategic planning allows community colleges identify potential risks, measure uncertainty, and determine a future course of action. Even though many community colleges go through the “strategic planning
motions” to produce a planning document, few seem to metamorphose their strategic plan into a living, breathing document that guides the organization. For some administrators and those involved in the process, strategic planning has become a ceremonious, ineffective exercise. Roger Kaufman & Jerry Herman, early writers of strategic planning in higher education during the 1990s, contend that “strategic planning is in danger of becoming just an educational fad” (Kaufman & Herman, 1991, p. xiii).

Community colleges are in dire need of strategic planning leadership, not only to achieve its enrollment goals, but also to help sustain the health and viability of its institutions. Simply undertaking strategic planning is not enough. Effective strategic planning can be of great use to community colleges in addressing these challenges. Minatra (1997) warns that community colleges cannot reserve strategic planning for crises or for reactions to changes in the market climate, technology, or demographic trends. Fogg (1994) suggests, “strategic planning is not an end in and of itself. It is a framework for continuous, productive strategic change within an organization” (p. 33). Although strategic planning is not the cure-all, it definitely has some positive aspects that can be utilized by community colleges. Strategic planning ensures that attention is given to the future of the organization, instead of a constant dwelling on current issues or crises that the organization may be facing. Effectively orchestrating this crucial planning process is a great challenge for community college leaders. Having the right person planning and the knowledge and skills of the strategic planning leader is vital to its success.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the dimensions of leadership to define and compare strategic planning leadership practices in Illinois community colleges. The study seeks to identify the leader responsible for facilitating the strategic planning process, the impact of their role, and how they influence the process. In addition, the study examines the similarities, commonalties, and differences in the strategic planning process among Illinois community colleges.

Research Questions Arising from Purpose

Research questions arising from the purpose of the study are the following:

1. Among Illinois community colleges, what are the similarities, commonalties, and differences of the strategic planning process?
2. What is the perceived role and responsibilities of the leader in the strategic planning process?
3. What is the leadership style and skills of the person leading the strategic planning process?
4. How does the strategic planning leader facilitate the process of strategic planning from selecting a committee to gaining buy-in from stakeholders?

Significance to the field of Community Colleges

Leadership in community colleges in today’s readily changing and challenging environment is essential. However, having the right leader for the right position at the right time is crucial. The rhetorical questions of how do community colleges move logically and systematically forward and who guides this process are inextricably linked. These two questions serve as the foundation for the rationale of the study. Strategic
planning answers the question of how community colleges move forward and the leader of the strategic planning process serve as the vital guide throughout this journey. Leadership and planning are two essential components for the survival of any institution of higher education. Administrators and leaders within the community college system must also begin to develop a broader range of administrative skills, including organizational development, financial analysis, and strategic planning, to effectively address emerging trends, such as globalization and entrepreneurship efforts for sustainability. It might be argued that a coherent and dynamic strategic plan directed by a skillful leader leads to the advancement of the institution.

Strategic planning can also bring about transformation to community colleges. It requires a shift from traditional thinking to strategic thinking. Not only is a skillful leader required to facilitate and drive the planning process but competent planning committee members are required as well. Bryson (1995) asserts that when strategic planning is successful, it is a collective process, “many people contribute to its success, some by leading, other times by following.” (p. 219). So, why is there very little in the literature pertaining to the role of leadership in the strategic planning process? The goal of this study is to garner information needed for community college presidents to select the most appropriate leaders for their strategic planning process. This study has significance in the field as it is useful information for community colleges attempting to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow through the planning process as well as provide insight into the type of leadership needed for strategic planning in community colleges during these ever-changing times.
Organization of the Study

This study is organized into six chapters. This chapter includes a microscopic discussion of research problem, the purpose of the study, the driving questions that arose from the purpose, as well as the significance of this study to the field of community college education. Chapter two provides a review of literature relevant to this study. The literature review charts the historical development of community colleges in the United States. Since this research used Illinois as its case study, the history of the Illinois community college system is also provided. The challenges and changing role and responsibilities of community college are explored. The evolution of strategic planning, from its military roots, to business, to higher education and finally reaching community colleges is outlined, along and common definitions of strategic planning. A succinct overview of environmental scanning and SWOT analysis, the most widespread components of strategic planning used in community colleges is also presented. This is followed by a concise examination of the literature as it pertains to definitions and various characteristics of leadership. The review of literature concludes with an extensive review of the four prominent generations of leadership theories, trait, behavioral, contingency/situational, and transformational, which form the conceptual framework for the study.

A description of the research design, methodology, participant selection procedures, and the ethical considerations for the study are presented in Chapter three. This empirical study is grounded in a qualitative interpretive paradigm and makes use of a mixed-method model research design for data collection. A case study design was employed for the study because of its ability to examine a phenomenon of which little is
known and explain real-life, complex relationships and interrelationships. The researcher chose to use Illinois community colleges as the case for this study. The community college system in Illinois has a rich history and represents the diversity in the types of community colleges that exist in the United States, from rural, urban, and suburban to single and multi-campus districts. Because the study applied a sequential mixed-method research design for data collection, the participant selection occurred in two phases. Purposive sampling was used to select all of the single community colleges in Illinois for the first phase of the study, while multiple variation sampling was an appropriate sampling strategy to select four participants from the larger group to participate in the second phase of the study.

Chapter four addresses the data collection procedures and strategies for data analysis. A sequential mixed method process, a defining characteristic of the mixed-model research design, was integral to the data collection of this study. Consequently, the data collection also occurred in two phases. Surveys, interviews, and field notes were the instruments used to collect the data. Chapter four outlines the course of the research and includes a delineation of the entire process. The strategies used in the analysis of the data are also provided. Since the strategies used to analyze data rest upon the methods used for data collection, descriptive statistics were used to analyze the surveys, whereas a priori themes and open coding were the strategies used to analyze the interviews accordingly. The measures taken to ensure the rigor of the study are discussed in this chapter, as well as the background and role of the researcher in the study. The data of obtained from the study is displayed in Chapter five as well as a discussion of the findings and emerging theme, while Chapter six revisits the research
questions, addresses the implications for community colleges, discusses the limitations of the study, and ends with recommendations for future research.

“Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now.” ~Alan Lakein
Leadership of strategic planning in Illinois community colleges is not to be undertaken lightly, or haphazardly. The selection of the leader is important to the institution as a whole. Therefore, how the person is selected, the particular attributes and characteristic of the leader is paramount for the internal process of strategic planning. The purpose of this study is to explore the dimensions of leadership to define and compare strategic planning leadership practices in Illinois community colleges. The study seeks to identify the leader responsible for facilitating the strategic planning process, the impact of their role, and how they influence the process. In addition, the study examines the similarities, commonalities, and differences in the strategic planning process among Illinois community colleges.

Dr. John M. Bryson, a professor and Associate Dean for Research and Centers at the University of Minnesota, teaches in the areas of leadership, strategic management, and the design of organizational and community change processes. He wrote the best-selling and award-winning book, “Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations”, and co-wrote the award-winning “Leadership for the Common Good”. Bryson (1995) asserts when strategic planning is successful, it is a collective process, “many people contribute to its success, some by leading, other times by following” (p. 219). The rhetorical question asked by Cohen & Brawer (1996), well known researchers in the community college field is “why are some colleges consistently more successful that others in effecting student learning, sustaining staff morale, presenting a positive
public image, managing growth, raising funds, and answering every challenge promptly and efficiently” (p. 135)? The answer is effective strategic planning leadership. Good leaders have the ability to move their organization forward by guiding others, setting goals, objectives, and assessing the outcomes. Cohen & Brawer (1996) also make the point that effective leaders are flexible, decisive, and goal-oriented. More importantly, successful leaders plan. This integration of successful leadership and effective planning, working collaboratively can make the difference between the success and failure of any community college.

Theories on strategic planning and leadership abound. Any number of theories from any number of disciplines could have been chosen for this study. Business and industry, education, political and economic institutions have been debating what is the best strategic planning process and the best leader for literally decades. However, this dissertation will not fight the battles of which strategic planning process is the best nor what is the ultimate leadership theory that points to the hiring of a key leader for the position. It is a battle that cannot be won. Since the central tenets of this is study are on the leader of strategic planning, their role and attributes, as well as how they influence the process, leadership theories provide the appropriate lens to view the study. However, leadership, although thoroughly researched in the literature, remains a construct that is difficult to define and even today the definition remains in flux. Rarely do we have a universal consensus on what effective leadership looks like. We only know when leadership is missing and the ramifications of its absence.

Many leadership theories and concepts are applicable to shed light on they type of person who will successfully guide this process. Since no one theory can attend to all
the aspects of the leader, selected concepts from four leadership theories, trait, behavioral, situational/contingency, and transformational have been selected to assist in a more in-depth look at the leader. Because it is the person tied to the outcome of the strategic planning process who is the focus of this study, the attributes and characteristics are singled out as paramount. Inherent in using multiple theories from various disciplines is the baggage that they each bring. To mitigate this intellectual baggage, no validation of the theories will be undertaken in this dissertation. This study’s overarching goal is to present an expansive framework which encourages a more eclectic view of this complex process and its stewards.

The proceeding literature review charts the evolution of the American community college in general, and the Illinois community college system in specific. The current challenges and changing role and responsibilities of community college leadership are examined. An overview of strategic planning and its varying definitions are provided, as well as relevant models and key concepts of strategic planning, which include environmental scanning and SWOT analysis, the most common elements of strategic planning used in community colleges. Definitions and various characteristics of effective leadership are explored as well as the four prominent generations of leadership theories.

Historical Evolution of Community Colleges

The American community college has existed for over one hundred years. There are various factors that contributed to its rise. In the early 1900s, the demand for trained workers in the nation’s expanding industries, the lengthened period of adolescence, and the push for social equality all played critical roles in the development of community
colleges in the United States (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). The social and economic climate of the early twentieth century included the growth of urbanization and the movement from an agricultural to a more industrial society. According to Cohen and Brawer (1996), “the development of community colleges should be placed in the [larger] context of the growth of all higher education in the twentieth century” (p. 5). With more students graduating from high school demanding additional education, coupled with need for a trained workforce, the emergence of the community college supported the mounting need for higher education that four-year institutions were not able to provide at that time.

During the beginning of the twentieth century, community colleges were viewed primarily as extensions of the high school, offering the first two years of liberal arts education. However, the Great Depression of 1929 resulted in a change of focus for community colleges. During the 1930s, community college began to heavily focus on job training programs to help combat the widespread unemployment and to train its growing immigrant population. In 1944, community colleges received a tremendous boost with the passage of the GI Bill of Rights, which provided the first large-scale financial assistance program for veterans of World War II to pursue higher education. Community colleges were advanced again in 1947, when the Truman Commission established a network of public community colleges that would charge little or no tuition and would serve the needs of the community through a comprehensive mission. These developments resulted in the immense growth in number of community colleges. With this boost, there was a shift from being called junior colleges to the now more comprehensive community colleges. By the 1960s, there was explosion in the
enrollments of community colleges, primarily fueled by the birthrates of the 1940s, commonly known as the baby boomers. According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), “Community colleges became a national network in the 1960s with the opening of 457 public community colleges - more than the total in existence before that decade. Baby boomers coming of age fueled enrollment growth.

Despite declining funding and a lengthy recession, during the 1980s, community colleges began to develop more partnerships with high schools to prepare students for vocational and technical two year programs, many of which received some type of federal funding. Today, community colleges are an integral part of American higher education and constitute one of the largest sectors of American higher education with 1,195 community colleges that enroll more than eleven and a half million students annually. The growth of community colleges is evident through its enrollment of 34 percent of all students enrolled in American higher education in the mid-1970s (Cohen & Brawer, 1996, p.16), to 46% today (AACC, 2007). Community colleges are the most comprehensive institutions of higher education, offering credit and non-credit coursework including traditional transfer liberal arts and sciences curricula, career and technical programs, as well as basic adult education, English as a second language, developmental education, lifelong learning (continuing education), and customized training courses for business and industry are also programs offered almost exclusively by community colleges. Community colleges have a rich history and a strong mission of providing accessible, affordable, quality education, responsive to the community in which it resides. Innate to the nature of the community college is its ability to adapt quickly to the changing needs and trends of its students and the community. From its
inception, the hallmark of community colleges has been their ability to be flexible,
responsive, innovative, and dynamic.

George Boggs, president and CEO of the AACC asserts, “Community colleges are a
uniquely American invention. Reflecting the democratic ideals of our nation, community
colleges have broken with higher education tradition….shaped by the core values of
open access, community responsiveness, resourcefulness, and a clear focus on
teaching and learning “(Boggs, 2003, p. 16). From this historical perspective, community
colleges have grown into diverse institutions that focus on a broad range of missions.
The community college evolved various characteristics depending on the needs of the
community it serves. Community colleges have become comprehensive in their mission.
In order to fully carry out their specific missions in the 21st century, community colleges
need leaders to spearhead their strategic planning process. One of the fundamental
tenets of strategic planning is to clarify organizational mission and values fostering the
ability of the community college to foresee and manage change. Strategic planning also
allows the community college to understand how its mission interacts with both its
internal and external environments. This study provides an avenue to better understand
the vital role the leadership of the strategic planning process has in guiding community
colleges in fulfilling their deep-rooted mission, dynamic goals and successfully meeting
complex challenges.

Illinois Community Colleges

Illinois has contributed greatly to the history and development of community colleges
within the United States. Joliet Junior College in Illinois, established in 1901, was the
first junior college in the nation. Currently, Illinois is the third largest community college
system in the nation. Illinois adopted its first junior college legislation in 1931 and it became law in 1937, which provided for the development of the junior college system as a part of the public school system. The law did not specify any requirements for the charging of tuition, nor did it require that educational opportunities be made available to students for no charge. In order to support the operations of junior colleges within the state of Illinois, in 1943 the Illinois General Assembly enacted legislation to allow referendums to establish tax rates for both education and building funds. However, state funding for junior college operations was not appropriated until 1955. Legislation was adopted in 1961 creating the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE), followed by 1965 legislation serves as the foundation for today's system of public community colleges in Illinois. The Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) is the state coordinating board for community colleges in Illinois. ICCB’s primary responsibility as the state coordinating board for community colleges, is “to administer the Public Community College Act in a manner that maximizes the ability of the community colleges to serve their communities, promotes collaboration within the system, and accommodates those state initiatives that are appropriate for community colleges” (ICCB, 2007).

According to ICCB (2007), in Illinois, there are forty public community college districts in Illinois, composed of forty-nine community colleges. The map of Illinois community colleges in Figure 1 illustrates the geographic locations of the community colleges throughout Illinois. Thirty-eight of the districts have a single college while two are multi-college districts. These colleges serve over one-million students each year in both credit and non-credit programs and collectively offer training in over 240 different
occupations. All of the colleges, according ICCB (2007), “meet both local and statewide needs for education and workforce development through high-quality, affordable, accessible, and cost-effective programs and services.”

Figure 1. ICCB Community College Map

The Illinois community college system is very diverse in its geographic and demographic characteristics. Illinois has community colleges in rural, suburban, and urban/metropolitan areas, varying in size from small to very large. Illinois community colleges account for 64% of all undergraduate students enrolled in Illinois public higher
education. Community colleges are the primary provider of the higher education experience in Illinois. Nearly two-thirds of all minorities in public higher education attend community colleges, and nearly 11,000 students with disabilities and 38,000 students with limited English proficiency are served annually. The Illinois community college system is also the major provider of workforce preparation in Illinois” (ICCB, 2007). Community colleges in the state of Illinois have a tremendous task of serving a changing population and the needs of local business and industry.

Illinois was selected for this study not only because of its prominence in the history of community colleges and it being the third largest community college system in the United States, but also because of the diversity of the community colleges. Using a well-recognized system of this size will yield information that other community colleges around the country can use at their respective institutions. Illinois’ community college system is very diverse in its communities, the students it serve, fiscal management, as well the business and political environment in which the colleges must operate. With an FY 2009 estimated budget $307.9 million in state general funds for its community colleges (See Appendix A), the leadership role in Illinois community colleges as it pertains to strategic planning is crucial. Whether the institution is in New York, Oregon, Texas or North Dakota, the leadership of strategic planning is important for all community colleges. This study will provide information garnered from Illinois to share with community colleges across the United States who all, on some level, large or small, engage in the important process of strategic planning.
Community College Challenges

Community colleges are facing great challenges. The role of community colleges is changing. The demand for affordable, accessible education in the country continues to grow. Community colleges are expected to do more with less even as they are confronted with consistent decreases in funding, dramatic shifts in student demographics, changing community economic, political and social issues and needs, and pressures from accrediting bodies to improve student learning assessment.

Community colleges must operate in an environment that is continuously changing; changes fueled globalization, increasingly rapid changes in technology, government mandates, and diverse student populations. Sullivan (2001) cite various challenges for community colleges, including lack of resources; a pedagogical shift from teaching to student learning and outcomes assessment; competition from private, for-profit institutions; and increasing mandates by external agencies.

It is clear the leadership roles and requirements in community colleges are becoming more complex. The charge to community college leaders is extensive and grows each year. Leaders within the community college are expected to respond quickly to not only the mounting needs and expectations of their students and community, but to the demands of the nation as well. The leadership crisis in community colleges is apparent. Boggs (2001), states “the time is growing near for the most significant transition in leadership in the history of America’s community colleges” (p. 15). The responsibilities of community college leaders require them to have a more complex range of skills and knowledge base than in past times. A survey conducted by the AACC in 2001 revealed 45% of community college presidents were to retire in 2007. Another survey by
Weisman and Vaughn (2002) concurred findings that 79% plan to retire by 2012. Shults (2001), who also conducted a study on the impending crisis of leadership in community college, contends that with the approaching retirements of community college leaders, “inestimable experience and history, as well as an intimate understanding of the community college mission, values, and culture will disappear, leaving an enormous gap in the collective memory and the leadership of community colleges” (p. 2). It is the community college president who is at the helm of all activities at community colleges including strategic planning. Although usually not directly involved, it is the president who appoints a person to lead and coordinate the strategic planning initiatives at the college.

Globalization is another challenge facing community colleges. To address the need of global/international education in the United States, in 1996 the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) the created Commission on International/Intercultural Services. The AACC issued the following statement:

The interdependence of the peoples and nations of the world is a dominant factor and an expanding dimension of Twentieth Century life. Education for international/intercultural understanding has thus become imperative for Americans. The urgency of world issues confronting the United States increases the need for an internationally aware and competent citizenry, able to understand and function within the diversity of cultures and systems both within and beyond our national borders (Chase & Mahoney, 1996, p. 47).
John Levin (2001) describes other challenges for community colleges as well. In 2001, Levin’s conducted research three community colleges in the U.S. and four in Canada. He addressed the issue of globalization through the examination four domains: (a) economic, (b) technology, (c) cultural, and (d) political. According to Levin (2001), the mission of community colleges has changes and became “oriented to economic concerns and to the requirements of the private sector” (p. 171). Community colleges must embrace the notion of globalization, as it is one the primary factors in the ability of the community college to be successful in the future. Levin (2001) believes that it is the community college “that exemplifies the globalization process and its effects on organizations” (p. 180).

Community colleges have already undoubtedly begun to face many challenges in the 21st Century; strategic planning within these organizations is essential. While the approaching retirements and changes in the role of community college leaders are evident, the stability and viability of community colleges must remain. It is the vision and the mission that emanate from the strategic planning process that will keep community colleges on an even keel with the upheaval of leadership changes and the various economic, political and social demands that community colleges must confront. This is particularly why this study is of upmost importance to community colleges. Identifying the appropriate person to lead the strategic planning in times of changes and challenges is vitally important.

**Strategic Planning**

Strategic planning is no new phenomenon, with its early origins in military campaigns of the moguls of India, and in ancient Chinese and Greek civilizations. Strategic
planning moved throughout the 20th Century from the military to corporate entities and eventually made its way to the public sector in public and non-profit organizations, including higher education. The historical development of strategic planning and its emergence in higher education is of utmost importance in this research, as it sets the stage for the use of strategic planning in community colleges. Because this research does not contend that one strategic planning process is superlative, only an overview of the varying definitions, relevant models, and key concepts of strategic planning are provided.

**Historical Development of Strategic Planning**

According to many authors, strategic planning has its origin in the military (Keller, 1983; Guralnik, 1986; Blackerby, 1994; Lerner, 1999; Lee & Ko, 2000). Sun Tzu’s famous book, *The Art of War* offers the oldest and most revered work on military operations and strategies in ancient China (Lee & Ko, 2000). S.F. Lee, of the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education in China & Sai On Ko, of the International Management Centre in the United Kingdom collaborated on an article that implemented the strategies of Sun Tzu. Lee & Ko (2000) cite the work of Sun Tzu as the most influential philosophy of military thought. Sun Tzu emphasizes four crucial factors for building unity, including (1) enlightened and motivated leadership, (2) acceptable values and achievable goals, (3) effective communication and feedback, and (4) sacrificial teamwork. The significance of strategies utilized by Sun Tzu has become one of the greatest cultural legacies of the Chinese nation, and is the oldest military treatises in the world (Lee & Ko, 2000).
Interestingly, the classic military writing in “The Art of War” has significant implications for business organizations. The business world adopted strategy from the military as a technique to increase productivity and profitability. Although transformed, Sun Tzu’s significant factor that remained was the fact that the goal for both the military and the business sector was to achieve a competitive advantage. Competitive advantage refers to the philosophy of choosing only those competitive areas where victories are clearly achievable. The concept of competitive advantage suggests that the selecting a competitive arena, which can be sheltered from change in the business environment and in which an advantaged position can be achieved, is the key to successful strategic competition (South, 1991). Lee & Ko (2000) further suggest that gaining a competitive advantage is not only the key for success, but is needed for the sake of survival.

In the early 1920s, Harvard Business School developed the Harvard Policy Model. This model was one of the first strategic planning methodologies for private businesses. The nomenclature of strategic planning surfaced in the business world began in the late 1950s, when American corporations experienced sustained economic growth and there was a greater spread of wealth. At this time, writers began to develop corporate strategy concepts such as SWOT (Lerner, 1999). SWOT, an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats, is a very popular strategic planning strategy in community colleges. The early 1960s, strategic planning was used to refer to long-range, longer-term, or comprehensive planning (Koteen, 1991). Jack Koteen who was a senior official with the Agency for International Development and author of a book on strategic management in public and non-profit organizations suggests that at this time,
top management was concerned with organization-wide decisions, and focused on the long-term direction of the company, as well as the utilization of resources. By the 1970s, planning specialists flourished and strategic planning emerged as corporate America’s panacea for all problems. During the period from the late 1960s to the mid 1970s, strategic planning enjoyed the heyday of almost unquestioned corporate popularity.

Strategic planning developed as a result of the long range planning movement. Large corporations, such as General Electric began utilizing strategic planning as a “new form of cost benefits analysis to improve their return on investment” (Mulhare, 1999, p. 324).

However, several writers of strategic planning including Ian Wilson argue that early strategic planning initiatives had many flaws, including an over-emphasis on the manipulation of internal financial data by largely staff driven exercises. Wilson (1994) furthers outlines other deficiencies in strategic planning, including the fact that the process was dominated by the staff. These flaws resulted in the planning system producing no results, and the planning process failed to develop true strategic choices. During this time, strategic planning became known as just another management tool. Consequently, by the early 1980s, “there was a widespread disenchantment with the planning initiatives of the previous decade” (Wilson, 1994, p. 12). However, during the 1980s there was also a major shift in strategic planning toward an increasing emphasis on the externalities of the business and changing the placement of planning responsibility within the organization (Wilson, 1994).

Francis Gouillart, one of leading authorities on the topic of strategy, co-wrote the best selling book, Transforming the Organization. According to Gouillart (1995), strategic planning during the 1980s was dictated by strategic intent and core
competencies, as well as a market-focused organization. “The use of strategic planning spread rapidly [during the 1980s], moving from large corporations to small businesses, government, public agencies, and nonprofit organizations” (Mulhare 1999, p. 324-5). Eileen Mulhare, a research associate in anthropology at Colgate University argues that several contributing factors increased the widespread use of strategic planning during the 1980s, including innovations in office technology, stakeholder analysis and the popular Harvard SWOT method, economic recession, a reduction in the need for former planners, foreign competition, and major cutbacks in federal dollars (Mulhare, 1999).

The 1990s brought a true revitalization of strategic planning as a process that yielded increased productivity (Lerner, 1999). Mintzberg concurs that the 1990s brought the revival of strategic planning as a “process with particular benefits in particular contexts. Gouillart (1995) suggests that in the 1990s, strategic planning moved toward a holistic approach that centered on organizational transformation. This change required organizations to transform their current strategies based upon the changes in their environment, which Gouillart (1995) refers to as “strategic agility.” The 1990s ushered in strategic planning as corporate America’s powerful management tool that had a specific focus on adaptability to change, flexibility, and the importance of strategic thinking and organizational learning (Wilson, 1994). It was at this time that higher education in general and community college in particular begin to rely more heavily on strategic planning within their institutions.

Strategic planning, as a management tool, has been very successful in the business organizations and is now being applied to the public and nonprofit organizations as well. “During the past two decades or so there have been a number if attempts to transfer
management techniques originally developed for business organizations to public and
not-for-profit organizations (Gummer, 1992; Mintzberg, 1994). During the early 1990s,
Greg Wilkinson & Elaine Monkhouse explored strategy development in public
organizations. Wilkinson & Monkhouse (1994) argue that in an effort to provide
increased value and to improve their outputs, public sector organizations are turning to
the strategic planning systems and models derived from the business sector. Bryson
(1995) argues while public and nonprofit organizations have ventured to borrow
business techniques in the past (i.e., cost-benefit analysis, zero-based budgeting, total
quality management, etc.), these measures, in his opinion, have often fallen short.
Bryson (1995) also affirms this is not the case with strategic planning. Bryson (1995)
strongly believes that because strategic planning takes in account the political nature of
public and nonprofit organizations, its transference from the business sector will be
more permanent in both public and nonprofit organizations (Bryson, 1995).

The literature does not dismiss the fact that business organizations are significantly
different from public and nonprofit organizations. Koteen (1991) suggests the
fundamental distinction between these types of organizations is purpose and further
argues while “a profit-oriented organization aims to make a profit, public and nonprofit
institutions exist to render a service p. 10).” Success in public organizations is
measured by how well it renders its service. Wilkinson & Monkhouse (1994) point out
the primary financial driver of public organizations is not profit, but instead to maximize
its outputs within a given budget. Many other differences exist as well, including funding
sources, stakeholders, mandates, and politics. Public organizations are usually
constrained by statute and regulations, which often predetermine their purpose, level of
freedom, as well as their vision and goals (Wilkinson & Monkhouse, 1994). Both business organizations and public organizations make use of strategic planning for some of the same reasons. Although there are definitely some major differences in these types of organizations, J. Steiner, Gross, & Murray (1994) argues one significant similarity is both process and outcomes are keys to successful planning in both types of organizations. Both of the business and public sector want to find ways to be more cost efficient, to improve their revenues, motivate their employees, satisfy their consumers, and gain public support (J. Steiner et. al, 1994).

Strategic planning is needed in public organizations for many reasons. Bryson (1995) concludes the following reasons about strategic planning in public and nonprofit organizations:

Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations is based on the premise that leaders and mangers of public and nonprofit organizations must be effective strategists if their organization are to fulfill their missions, meet their mandates, and satisfy their constituents in the years ahead. These leaders and managers will need to exercise as much discretion as possible in the areas under their control. They need to develop effective strategies to cope with changed and changing circumstances, as they need to develop a coherent and defensible basis for their decisions”(p. ix).

Can a planning process, which has deep roots in the military and corporate America, be effective in higher education, and can it serve as more than just a futile exercise? Notions about strategic planning in higher education continue to evolve and mature. Strategic planning, as a management tool for higher education has gained widespread
acceptance. Strategic planning surfaced in higher education in the late 1950s and early 1960s and its use as a planning tool has steadily grown. During the 1960s, higher education was a growth industry that enjoyed public confidence; therefore, most planning was centered on the expansion of new facilities (Dooris, 2003; Rieley; 1997). The Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) was established in 1966, with the primary focus being campus and facility planning. During the mid-1970s through the mid-1980s, there were several contributing factors that lead to the ideological changes regarding planning in higher education. The fact that “higher education costs consistently outpaced inflation”, coupled with demographic, economic, and technological changes, resulted in weakening of public support for higher education (Dooris, 2003, p. 27). Outdated academic programs, massive growth in technology, and decreases in financial support all were challenges faced by higher education during this period (Lerner, 1999; Keller, 1983). In addition, expanding enrollments, student unrest, and pressures for financial accountability were other factors that emerged in higher education. It was at this time higher education began to look at strategic planning a viable planning alternative.

Strategic planning in higher education was given a powerful boost in 1983 from George Keller’s publication of *Academic Strategy: The Management Revolution in American Higher Education*. According to Keller (1983), colleges and universities were engaged in a revolution, and forced to construct a new active management style. Keller (1983) argues the influence of external pressures was the primary attributing factor to the use of strategic planning in higher education during the 1980s. For example, Keller (1983, p. 23) cites “the fact is that state budget officials, the courts, federal legislation
and guidelines, new state commissioners of higher education… have in recent years become much more active in trying to manage college and universities.” Dooris (2003) adds, “higher education’s conception of strategic planning in the 1980s emphasized its use as a rational tool for orderly systematic management” (p. 27). Strategic niche, competitive position, shareholder value, SWOT analyses, and core competencies were all concepts of significant importance to the planning process in higher education during the 1980s.

During the 1990s, as strategic planning became more widely utilized by colleges and universities, skepticism regarding its effectiveness arose. Some of the cynicism of strategic planning was centered on it being too linear, creating elaborate paperwork, being too formalized and structured, relying greatly on hard information, and for it not taking into account organizational context and culture (Dooris, 2003). Despite the uncertainty about its effectiveness, by the late 1990s, strategic planning had become standard practice in higher education. Reduced resources, shrinking budgets, increased competition and the demand for accountability demanded a more proactive planning technique.

The 21st century has moved strategic planning into a new arena within higher education. “Strategic planning is one of the most pervasive and, arguably, most important management activities in higher education at the beginning of the 21st century” (Welsh 2005, p. 20). Rowley & Sherman (2001) maintain that strategic planning is evident in most colleges and universities in the United States and even around the world today. However, the most recent pressures for higher education to utilize strategic planning has not been from declining resources, but from regional
higher education accrediting bodies (Eaton, 2001; North Central Association of Colleges and Schools Higher Learning Commission; Western Association of Schools and Colleges Senior College Commission, 2001). Regional accrediting bodies require some formal planning process for higher education institutions to demonstrate Outcome Assessments (student learning outcomes and accountability) regarding how universities and colleges make decisions as well as the outcomes associated with those decisions. These accrediting bodies now view strategic planning as viable tool for good practice and answer to validate their decisions to all sorts of tough questions. It is even proposed in the literature by Thomas Barker & Howard Smith (1998) that accreditation be integrated into the strategic planning process. This integration, as stated by Barker, & Smith (1998), “serves to add unity to the institution’s efforts to effectively serve both internal and external forces”, and would further allow the institution to make better use of its resources as well as accomplish the self-study aspect of accreditation more efficiently.

Although there is a plethora of research on strategic planning in higher education in general, the literature on strategic planning in community colleges in specific is very sparse. Traditionally, community colleges had engaged in long-range planning. Long range planning involved an internal evaluation of an organization with the focus being on current trends and forecasting the expected future of those trends. Setting goals, implementing policies and action, and evaluating the effects of policies and action are central to defining the desired future of an institution in the long-range planning process. While long-range planned tried to use the trends of today to prepare for the future, strategic planning, instead strives to “exploit the new and different opportunities of
tomorrow” (Howell, 2000, p. 1). During the late 1970s, enrollments in community
colleges began to stabilize, and for the first time these institutions began to experience
extended periods of financial constraints” (Myran, 1983, p. 51). It was throughout this
period that community colleges had to establish priorities to manage their limited
resources. Strategic planning in community colleges flourished in the 1980s and early
1990s in community colleges. In a 1987, a national survey was conducted on the
management techniques used by community college presidents. Deegan (1988) found
that of the 100 community college presidents who were survey, 70 percent were
“currently using” strategic planning on institutional-wide basis. The study also revealed
that another 14 percent of the presidents would begin utilizing strategic planning by
1990. According to Howell (2000), community college administrators began to use
strategic planning “as a way to guide their institutions into the future and soften the
surprises that come with economic, technological, demographic, and political change”
(p. 1). Today, almost every community college in the United States engage in a
strategic planning process. Often the goal is to produce a cherished document that
usually sits on the shelf for five years until its time to start the process again. However,
it is the leader of the strategic planning process who ultimately guides the creation of
the living, breathing document the guides the organization.

Strategic Planning Definitions

There are a myriad of perspectives and definitions of strategic planning found in the
literature. In 1979, George Steiner, a early writer of strategic planning, and author of
Strategic planning: What every manger must know conceptualized strategic planning as
an attitude and process that concentrates on current decisions and future
G. Steiner (1979) argues strategic planning does not attempt to forecast future events; instead it provides insight into the barriers and biases inherent in the planning processes and failures. Clark Holloway, author of the 1986 book, *Strategic Planning*, argues that strategic planning is a process of strategy that answers the question of how something is going to be done within an organization, rather than the simple question of what is to be done? However, Holloway (1986) adds that strategic planning is not a stand-alone process that can answer all the questions within an organization, instead it draws upon the knowledge base of various other disciples, including business policy, organizational theory, as well as various other fields utilizing quantitative and qualitative research approaches.

Patrick Burkhart & Suzanne Reuss wrote a book to help guide non-profit organizations through success strategic planning. Burkhart & Reuss (1993) define strategic planning as a simple, rational method for building a consensus for participation, commitment urgency, and action, as well as a reciprocal feedback mode of communication between an organization and its constituencies. Burkhart & Reuss (1993) draw attention to the fact that strategic planning examines the organization’s values, current status, and environment. Strategic planning then relates those factors to the organization’s desired future state. Strategic planning places a particular emphasis on the organization’s mission, both its internal and external environments, and also the changing trends of the environment (Burkhart & Reuss 1993).

Joseph Steiner, Gerald Gross, and John Murray who were all professors at Syracuse University in the area of planning suggest that strategic planning is also a collective process to decide on choices and actions that guide and direct an organization.
Strategic planning is based on decisions about the future of an organization within the context of its environment (J. Steiner, et al, 1994). These authors summarize strategic planning as a course of action undertaken by an organization that “involves a series of engaging processes in which individuals and groups work collectively to define both the present and preferred future” of the organization (p. 89). J. Steiner, et al, 1994 strongly contend that strategic planning has an emphasis clarifying the mission or an organization through bringing a vision of future into focus, as well as developing plans to implement organizational goals.

Bryson (1995) provides a more comprehensive definition of strategic planning by describing it as “a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it” (p. 4-5). In an earlier writing with Robert Einsweiler, Bryson indicates that strategic planning has key components, which include effective and focused information gathering; extensive communication among and participation by decision makers; the accommodations of divergent interests and values; and the development and analysis of alternatives (Bryson & Einsweiler, 1988). Bryson’s (1995) definition of strategic planning is the most commonly referenced definition of strategic planning found in the public organization literature. Strategic planning is considered to be disciplined because it requires a particular order and pattern to keep it focused and productive. Bryson (1995) maintains strategic planning is also a set of concepts, procedures, and tools that aid in the development of a coherent basis for decision-making. In order to achieve the best possible results, Bryson (1995), further suggests strategic planning requires broad and
effective information gathering, development and exploration of strategic alternatives, and an emphasis on the future implications of present decisions.

Mulhare (1999) believes strategy and planning are the two authoritative concepts that form the ideological foundation of strategic planning. This ideological foundation, according to Mulhare (1999), is considered the central tenet of strategic planning and is essential for any type of strategic planning process. According to Mulhare (1999), strategy is an organized blueprint of actions that seeks to assist an organization in assembling and allocating its resources in a distinctive position based on not only the strengths and shortcomings of the organization, but also on expected environmental changes and action by opposition. Mulhare (1999 p. 324) further adds, “planning consists of formal, systematic, integrated methods of organizational decision-making, aimed at ensuring that the organization achieves its goals.” A clear understanding of both strategy and planning must be incorporated into any working definition of strategic planning. Concurring with the opinion of Holloway (1986), Mulhare (1999) states, “strategic planning is an umbrella term for a variety of formal approaches to the management of organizational decision making” (p. 324). Mulhare (1999) further contends strategic planning’s grounding principles hold firmly that planned strategic actions produce more satisfactory outcomes than actions chosen by other means.

In 1997, Daniel Rowley, Herman Lujan, & Michael Dolence wrote a book on strategic planning specifically for the purposes of higher education. Rowley, Lujan, & Dolence (1997) define strategic planning as a formal process designed to help a university identify and maintain an optimal alignment with the most important elements within which the university resides. Rowley et.al (19970 suggest that colleges and universities
use strategic planning to make effective decisions and implement advantageous strategic changes. In 2005, The Education Department of the General Council, commissioned Andrea Luxton, to write a series on strategic planning in higher education. Luxton (2005) defined effective strategic planning in higher education as a process that identifies the future direction of an institution and produces a plan that is characterized by the following:

- A clearly defined and articulated institutional direction;
- Institutional ability to choose priorities based on self-evaluation and Understanding;
- Knowledge and ownership of the institutional direction by all major institutional constituencies;
- Clearly identified placement of the institution within the local and church environments (including the educational environment);
- Institutional openness to growth and change;
- Institutional ability to respond thoughtfully, but quickly, to new challenges;
- Unified plans and actions, with clear lines of accountability;
- Strong financial and resourcing plans to back identified strategic Directions;
- Institutional leader’s constant focus on the plan with all constituent groups; and
- An efficient but effective assessment and reporting strategy (p. 7).

There is no one comprehensive definition that can capture what strategic planning is. For each organization, strategic planning looks, feels, and can be defined very
differently. However, Jo McClamroch, Jacqueline Byrd, and Steven Sowell, co-writers of the article, *Strategic Planning: Politics, Leadership, and Learning* provide a more recent definition of strategic planning that, because of its emphasis on mission, aligns with community colleges. In (2001), they wrote an article that examined John Bryson’s 1995 model of strategic planning for non-profit organizations. The authors state that strategic planning is a “natural and necessary activity for any organization to pursue” (p. 372). McClamroch, Byrd, and Sowell (1994) assert that strategic planning takes a long view of what particular activities an organization should undertake to align its mission, vision, and values with its environment. It is this integration of the mission and vision that makes this definition appropriate for community colleges and this research.

*Environmental Scanning*

Strategic planning models for institutions of higher education are not well represented in the literature. There is no one right model, as each institution must create its own model to fit its organization. Although there are various general models and concepts of strategic planning found in the literature, those relevant to this research are environmental scanning and SWOT, as these strategies are commonly used in strategic planning at community colleges. The environment in which institutions of higher education must operate within is characterized by rapid changes and uncertainty. Many colleges and universities include environmental scanning as an element in their strategic planning process. In a 1990 study, Meixell found that of the 134 public research institutions included in the research, over 50 percent of them included environmental scanning activities in their planning process. Specifically related to community colleges, Friedel, Coker, and Blong conducted a study in 1991 to determine
how many two-year colleges engaged in environmental scanning. The study surveyed 991 two-year colleges, and the researchers found that 40 percent of them conducted some form of environmental scanning (Friedel, Coker, & Blong, 1991). As we have entered the 21st Century, the number of institutions of higher education who incorporate environmental scanning into their strategic planning process has increased dramatically.

Francis Aguilar provides one of the earliest definitions of environmental scanning. In his field research on information-gathering practices for managers, Aguilar (1967) defines environmental scanning as a systematic collection of external information in order to: 1) lessen the randomness of information flowing into the organization, and 2) provide early warnings for managers of changing external conditions. This search for and acquisition of external information, according to Aguilar (1967), provides critical information about events, trends, and relationships in the external environment needed to assist managers in planning for their organization’s future course of action. Morrison (1986) adds that environmental scanning is a planning innovation whose use in colleges and universities is increasing. According to Morrison (1986), environmental scanning is of great use to colleges and universities. Environmental scanning:

- allows the institution to detect social, technological, economic, and political trends and potential events which define the context of the future. In turn, decision makers can anticipate what is happening in the state, region, nation, and world that will affect the nature and quality of the institution and its educational programs (p. 3-4)
Brown & Weiner (1985) suggest environmental scanning is “a kind of radar to scan the world systematically and signal the new, the unexpected, the major, and the minor” (p. ix). Jonsen (1986) describes colleges and universities as swimming in an “environmental sea of external circumstances” (p. 6). An institution’s ability to survive as well as its number resources, problems, and opportunities are created and conditioned by the environment. Therefore, it is extremely important for colleges and universities to monitor the relevant changes taking place in its environment and formulate strategies to adapt to these changes. This is especially true for community colleges that are charged with being flexible and adaptable to environmental changes. Jonsen (1986) contends higher education administrators need a method which enables them to integrate understanding about the various sectors of the external environment and its interrelatedness to the organization. An appropriate strategy will provide administrators the capacity to translate this understanding into the institutions’ planning. Environmental scanning, through the use of the SWOT analysis has become the prominent methodology for community colleges engaging in strategic planning.

**SWOT**

Because of its widespread use and acceptance, the SWOT analysis is a component of almost any strategic plan in higher education. Alexandra Lerner, a research associate in College of Business Administration and Economics at California State University wrote a primer on the strategic planning for higher education, with particular attention focused on the SWOT analysis. Lerner (1999) believes the SWOT analysis identifies issues that may have an affect on future outcomes of an organization. The SWOT analysis “is based on identifying the organization's internal strengths and
weaknesses, and threats and opportunities of the external environment, and consequently identifying the company's distinctive competencies and key success factors” (Lerner, 1999, p. 1).

In the early 1950s, SWOT was first used at Harvard Business School as a tool for case analysis. Professors George Albert and C. Roland Christensen, as class assignments, trained their students to question whether a company's marketing/management strategy matched its competitive environment using or utilizing case analysis. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, Kenneth Andrews, professor of business policy at Harvard Business School, expanded the case analysis to include the study of a company's strengths and weaknesses in relation to the opportunities and threats in its business environment, a framework that later came to be referred to by the acronym SWOT. SWOT analysis received its début in 1963 when Harvard held a business policy conference to help spread the concept of SWOT more broadly, to academia and the business management community (Ghemawat 2002; Panagiotou 2003).

Although SWOT analysis has its origins in academia, it was corporate America that began to widely apply SWOT. Danca (2003) asserts that although not considered a model in and of itself, SWOT analysis is a critical step in the strategic planning process. The SWOT analysis has dominated strategic planning since the 1950s, and is still a vital tool in the planning process (Lerner, 1999). Because of its widespread use and acceptance, SWOT analysis is a component of almost any strategic plan in higher education. Lerner (1999) states that the SWOT analysis identifies issues that may have an affect on future outcomes of an organization. In addition, it is the vehicle in strategic
planning that reveals who and what the organization is and how it relates to its external environment. It is also used to assist organizations in examining the current state of the organization. The SWOT analysis “is based on identifying the organization’s internal strengths and weaknesses, and threats and opportunities of the external environment, and consequentially identifying the company’s distinctive competencies and key success factors” (Lerner, 1999, p. 1).

According to the Academic Leader Journal (2003), the SWOT analysis is used as a method to gather information for strategic planning and other initiatives that an organization may undertake. The information gathered through the SWOT analysis is separated into internal and external issues. The internal issues of an organization are considered strengths and weaknesses, while those issues external to the organization are referred to as opportunities and threats. QuickMBA website (1999), which is operated by the Internet Center for Management and Business Administration, defines the strengths of an organization as the resources and capabilities of the organization that can be use for developing a competitive advantage. Strengths include internal positive characteristics of the organization, such as what the organization does well, what advantages the organization has, and relevant resources and skills within the organization (QuickMBA, 1999). Weaknesses, on the other hand, are those negative barriers internal to the organization, including areas in which organization lack in (i.e., resources, skills), need to improve in, or things that the organization cannot do (Danca, 2003). Opportunities, which are positive aspects external to the organization, involve uncovering areas where the strengths of the organization can be fully utilized. Danca (2003) contends opportunities are considered the potential favorable conditions for the
organization that present possible growth and profit. Threats are considered those negative influences from the external environment that could be injurious to the overall functioning of the organization.

Lee & Ko (2000) & QuickMBA website (1999) describes the SWOT matrix as a tool used in strategic planning to match specific internal and external factors. Figure 2 represents a SWOT analysis matrix. Strengths-Opportunities (S-O) combine the strengths of the organization with opportunities. According to QuickMBA (1999, p. 2), the S-O strategies pursue opportunities that are a good fit to the strengths of the organization. Strengths-Threats (S-T) is the combination of the strengths of the organization in consideration of threats. The underlying assumption of this combination is that the strengths of the organization can be used to reduce its vulnerability to external threats (Lee & Ko, 2000; QuickMBA, 1999). Weaknesses-Opportunities (W-O) reflect the weaknesses of the organization in tandem with opportunities. Lee & Ko (2000) & QuickMBA (1999) all concur that the weaknesses of an organization can be overcome by pursuing new opportunities. Lee & Ko (1999) define Weaknesses-Threats (W-T) as a defensive strategy used to minimize the internal weaknesses and to avoid the external threats of an organization. The SWOT matrix is an excellent tool used in the overall SWOT analysis. The matrix allows the organization to the develop strategies that will enable the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the organization to be utilized to set goals and implement action (Lee & Ko, 2000).
Environmental scanning and the SWOT analysis are the vehicles in strategic planning that reveals an organization’s internal strengths and weaknesses and how it relates to its external environment. The environmental scanning process, through the SWOT analysis strategic planning components are also used to assist organizations in examining the current state of the organization. The environmental scan and SWOT is relevant for this research because it has gained widespread acceptance by community colleges and is already an essential component of almost every strategic plan. But more importantly, because this study centers on the leader of the strategic planning process, it is vital to recognize that SWOT provides strategic planning leaders with the necessary information to address the ever-changing demands of the internal and external environment in which community college most operate.
During the last five decades, corporate America as well as institutions of higher education have demonstrated moderate success with strategic planning. Strategic planning ensures attention is given to the future of the organization, instead of a constant dwelling on current issues or crises the organization may be facing. It is strategic planning, facilitated by leader that aims to maintain, improve, and enhance institutional effectiveness. It is imperative that the person serving as the leader of strategic planning be able to guide the process effectively. The results of this study can foster a new sense of purpose and bring understanding to the factors needed for those involved in the leadership of the strategic planning process at community colleges.

Leadership

The community college president does not act in a vacuum, but with the support of other key people. However, in the review of literature, leadership in community colleges primarily focused on that of the president (Shults, 2001; Weisman and Vaughn 2002; Boggs 2003) and not on others within the college leading particular committees or tasks (i.e. strategic planning). What is the most effective type of leadership for leaders involved in strategic planning at community colleges? Undoubtedly, no one leadership theory is able to completely address the larger holistic context of the leader’s ability to facilitate and influence the strategic planning process in community colleges. Therefore, in order to fully explore the influence of the characteristics of effective leadership in relation to the strategic planning process, the four of leadership theory, trait, behavioral, contingency/situational, and transformational leadership theories are used. Separated by the time in which they were developed, the four generations of leadership theory, offer an overarching view of leadership appropriate for this research. Individually, these
four theories are too limiting in their breath and depth, but collectively, all possess concepts needed to explore the attributes and skills of the leader of the strategic planning process. In order to present a more comprehensive picture, a synthesis of concepts from these various leadership theories provide the conceptual framework for the study. Since there are various theories of leadership, this research is in no way exhaustive, but only attempts to provide snapshot of varying definitions of leadership and a basic understanding and overview of the four prominent theories that have shaped the research on leadership.

Leadership Definitions

There is a plethora of information of leaders and leadership found in the literature. It is above the scope of this review, to define or settle the debate of leadership definitions, therefore only a succinct overview is provided. The research of leadership has drawn great attention from scholars almost every field, including psychology, business, political science, etc. “Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (Burns, 1978, p). Yukl (1989) noted "the study of leadership has been an important and central part of the literature of management and organization behavior for several decades" (p.251). Later in 2001, Yukl added the research on defining leadership is “beset with confusion and ambiguity” (p. 440), Bernard Bass and Ralph Stogdill edited several editions of the Handbook of Leadership, which includes theories, concepts, research, as well as managerial applications of leadership. Stogdill (1974), who contributed greatly to the study of leadership claims that there are “almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept.” (p. 259). Nonetheless, leadership remains an elusive term. Bass (1990a)
states, “leadership is one of the world’s oldest preoccupations” and “the understanding of leadership has figured strongly in the quest for knowledge” (p. 3) There is no one right definition of leadership. Leadership is often defined by the context in which the leadership is being applied. Of particular interest in this study, is the leader’s ability to guide and lead others through the strategic planning process.

A leader is best when people barely know that he exists,
not so good when people obey and acclaim him, worst
when they despise him… But of a good leader, who talks
little, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled…

~Lao Tzu, 6th Century BC

Leadership is the ability to develop in people a willing, enduring, and dedicated commitment to the achievement of organizational goals. Tead (1935) defined leadership as “the activity of influencing people to cooperate toward some goal”, and he suggested that leadership is interested in how people can be brought to work together for a common end effectively and happily (p. 11-12). According to Burns (1978), “leadership is exercised when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilize, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological, and other resources so as to arouse, engage and satisfy the motives of followers” (p. 18). Leadership occurs through an individual’s ability to establish direction for a working group of individuals, gain commitment from the group, and then motivate the members to achieve the direction’s outcomes. (Conger, 1992, p. 18). Garner (1995) asserts leaders are “individuals who significantly influence the thoughts, behaviors, and/or feelings of others” (p. 6).
In his book, entitled, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, Peter Northouse, of Western Michigan University, provides an in-depth analysis of leadership theory. Northouse (2004) outlines four central components to the phenomenon of leadership, which include: (a) leadership as a process, (b) leadership involves influence, (c) leadership occurs within a group context, and (d) leadership involves goal attainment. Leadership is often viewed as a complex process with multiple dimensions. Northouse (2004) defines leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 3). It is this definition by Northouse’s (2004) which is most appropriate for this study. Since the purpose of this study is to identify the leader responsible for facilitating the strategic planning process, their roles and attributes, as well as how and in what ways they influence the process, Northouse’s (2004) conceptualization of leadership complements this research.

*Leadership Theories*

Theories seeking to define and understand the concept of leadership are numerous. Bernard Bass who was a distinguished professor emeritus at the State University of New York and a leading authority in the field of leadership, organizational behavior and human resource management, stated, “Theories of leadership attempt to explain the factors involved either in the emergence of leadership or in the nature of leadership and its consequences” (Bass, 1990a, p.37). What makes an effective leader is a topic of constant study and debate. In 1939, Kurt Lewin developed the most widely-used leadership theory. Since then, various theories have emerged and evolved to study the phenomenon of leadership, each adding to the larger body of research and literature on leadership. Lewin, who is considered the founder of social psychology, fundamentally
influenced our understanding of experimental learning, leadership, action research, and group dynamics.

In 1939, Kurt Lewin and his colleagues conducted leadership observations by assigning school-aged children three different types of leaders and observed their behavior in response to the leader. From the study of Lewin, Lippit, and White (1939), a basic model that included three classic leadership styles, authoritarian (autocratic), participative (democratic), and laissez-faire emerged. Autocratic leaders control order, dictate directions, and establish clear expectations. There is also a clear distinction between the leader and the followers and the leader does not actively participate with the group and decisions are generally made with any consultation. Democratic leaders make suggestions, give guidance, and encourage group participation and input in the decision-making process. Democratic leaders share responsibility with the group, not exert power over the group, yet is still able to maintain a leadership role. Laissez leaders provide little direction, avoid making decisions, rarely take a stand, and often refrain from intervening in the work of the followers.

Lewin, et al. (1939) maintained each style could be appropriate depending on the environment, group members, as well as the task and goal at hand. However, they also contended that the democratic style was superior to the other two. An understanding of these 3 styles seems to have possible relevance to the leadership style of a community college strategic planning process. Strategic planning in community colleges is a collaborative process that involves various people within the college. In order for the process to be successful, it must be a people-centered activity that allows for multiple viewpoints, inputs, and participation. The democratic leadership style would seemingly
be most appropriate for leading a strategic planning effort as it allows the leader to recognize each members’ strengths and abilities related to the work of the group. This leadership style also allows for optimal performance and commitment by group members. Lewin’s influential leadership styles have been far-reaching as they have dominated and shaped leadership research for almost six decades, and although the four generations of leadership theories have emerged, tenets of Lewin’s leadership styles can be found in each.

**Four Generations of Leadership Theories**

In order to explore the influence of effective leadership in relation to the strategic planning process, four generations of leadership theories, trait, behavioral, contingency/situational, and transformational theory are utilized. Although other approaches and theories related to leadership such as in Vroom’s normative model, House’s, path-goal theory, Weber’s leadership theory, Goleman’s theory of emotional intelligence, and the more recent attribution theory, and charismatic leadership could have been used to explore the research topic, these seem to all demonstrate some variations of the trait, behavioral, contingency/situational, or transformational theories of leadership. This review is by no means comprehensive, nor does it undertake to validate the relevance of each of the theories, yet it provides a basic overview of these prominent theories. These basic concepts will be used as a priori in this study to identify the characteristics of the leaders of strategic planning at community colleges.

Through a review of the literature, it was found that over the last 80 years, there have been four prominent generations of leadership theories (van Maurik, 2001; Doyle & Smith, 2001; Johns & Moser, 2001; Chemers, 2000). John van Maurik, an expert on
leadership has written several books on the topic, including: “Discovering the Leader in You” (1994), his prominent book, “The Portable Leader” - how genuine leadership and teamwork can produce outstanding results, “The Effective Strategist”, (1999) and “Writers on Leadership”, (2001). He has also published numerous articles in journals and the national press. He is a director of the PA Management Centre (formerly Sundridge Park), one of the United Kingdom’s foremost executive development centers. van Maurik (2001) argues that the four generations of leadership theories are neither mutually exclusive nor time-bound. van Maurik (2001) states “although it is true that the progression of thinking tends to follow a sequential path, it is quite possible for elements of one generation to crop up much later in the writings of someone who would not normally think of himself or herself from as being of that school. Consequently, it is fair to say that each generation has added something to the overall debate on leadership and that the debate continues” (p. 3). The four generations have played a major role in the history of leadership research and an overview of their findings is essential in defining the characteristics of an effective leader needed to guide a strategic planning process. Table 1 provides an overview of the four generations of leadership theories that has been derived from the works of various researchers in the field of leadership.
**Table 1. Four Generations of Leadership Theory**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theory</th>
<th>Prominent Contributors</th>
<th>Basic Characteristics</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trait</td>
<td>Tead (1935), Stogdill (1948, 1974)</td>
<td>Traits or qualities associated with leadership exist as inherent to the leader. Strong belief that leaders are born with certain traits that make them different from followers. Primarily concerned with identifying the attributes and characteristics of the leader.</td>
<td>1920s-1940s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>Stogdill (1947), Likert (1961), Blake &amp; Mouton (1964)</td>
<td>Concentrate on the behavior of the leader and what they do rather than on their traits or qualities. Believes that leaders can learn certain behaviors to make them effective. Different patterns of behavior are observed and categorized as leadership behaviors.</td>
<td>1950s-1960s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contingency/Situational</td>
<td>Fiedler (1964, 1697), Hersey &amp; Blanchard (1969, 1977)</td>
<td>There is no universal or one way to lead. Views leadership as specific to the situation in which it is being exercised. Focuses on identifying the situational variables which best predict the most appropriate or effective leadership style to fit the particular situation or circumstances at hand</td>
<td>1960s-1970s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Trait Theory

The trait theory of leadership is considered the earliest generation of leadership theory. It was the first attempt at a systematic approach of studying leadership. Trait theory surfaced in the early in the twentieth century and has its foundation in the writings of Aristotle and the nineteenth century historian, Thomas Carlyle. It is often argued that the Great Man Theory was the foundation of what would later become the trait theory of leadership (Northouse, 2004). The Great Man theory attempts to explain history through the impact of “great men”, or the notion of a heroic leader. The theory holds that the capacity for leadership is inherent and that leaders are born with certain qualities or traits that make them destined to lead; traits that set them apart from ordinary followers. Trait theory developed as researchers attempted to identify universally applicable characteristics or traits of great leaders. From the 1920's to the 1950's, leadership research focused on trying to identify the traits that differentiated leaders from non-leaders. Ordway Tead of Columbia University provided early research on trait theory. In his research, Tead (1935) identified various qualities that were necessary in leaders, some of which included physical and nervous energy, a sense of purpose and direction, friendliness, enthusiasm, intelligence, and faith.

Ralph Stogdill began to research trait leadership in 1946 when he was a professor of management science and psychology at Ohio State University. Stodgill, a leadership research scholar reviewed 130 studies conducted between 1904 and 1947 on leadership traits and summarized his findings into five categories of trait factors associated with leadership including:
• **Capacity:** (intelligence, alertness, verbal facility, originality, judgment).

• **Achievement:** (scholarship, knowledge, and athletic accomplishments).

• **Responsibility:** (dependability, initiative, persistence, aggressiveness, self-confidence, and the desire to excel).

• **Participation:** (activity, sociability, cooperation, adaptability, humor)

• **Status:** (socioeconomic position, popularity) (Stogdill, 1948)

Stogdill, again in 1974 reviewed another 163 studies related to the traits of leadership that were published between 1948 and 1970. Table 2 illustrates Stogdill’s (1974) identification of the traits and skills as critical to leaders.

**Table 2. Leadership Traits and Skills Identified by Stogdill**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits</th>
<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adaptable to situations</td>
<td>Clever (intelligent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alert to social environment</td>
<td>Conceptually skilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambitious and achievement-orientated</td>
<td>Creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertive</td>
<td>Diplomatic and tactful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>Fluent in speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisive</td>
<td>Knowledgeable about group task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependable</td>
<td>Organized (administrative ability)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant (desire to influence others)</td>
<td>Persuasive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energetic (high activity level)</td>
<td>Socially skilled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistent</td>
<td>(Stogdill, 1974)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confident</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolerant of stress</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to assume responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stogdill (1974) concluded that although individual differences were certainly important in identifying emergent or effective leaders, but because of a wide variety of situations in which leaders had to function, there was no one trait that could be a universal predictor of effective leadership. It was Stogdill (1948, 1974) that set the stage for the leadership research that focused on leadership behaviors and leadership situations. However, research on trait theory continues. Northouse (2004) argues that the trait theory is still alive and well. “It began with in emphasis on identifying qualities
of great persons, next it shifted to include the impact of situations on leadership; most recently, it shifted back to reemphasize the critical role of traits in effective leadership” (p. 16) For example, in 1990, John Gardner, one of the leading experts on leadership and former president of the Carnegie Foundation wrote a book entitled, “On Leadership”. The book examines the importance of leadership as well as how to exercise it. Gardner (1990) studied leaders and organizations throughout North America and found common leadership attributes or traits, including physical vitality and stamina, intelligence, self-confidence, and trustworthiness. Although Gardner (1990) believed leaders did possess certain traits, argues that these traits could be learned. Gardner (1990) contends:

The development of leaders is possible on a scale far beyond anything we have ever attempted…. Many dismiss the subject with the confident assertion that ‘leaders are born not made’. Nonsense! Most of what leaders have that enables them to lead is learned. Leadership is not a mysterious activity. It is possible to describe the tasks that leaders perform. And the capacity to perform those tasks is widely distributed in the population… We have barely scratched the surface in our efforts toward leadership development.

The trait theory of leadership primarily concerns itself with identifying the attributes or characteristics that an effective leader should have, not on how to effectively lead. An underlying premise of the trait theory is the assumption that certain physical, social, and personal characteristics are inherent in leaders and that leaders are born not made. Leader traits are generally classified in categories of personality, physical appearance, social background, intelligence, and ability. Sets of traits and characteristics are often
identified to assist in selecting the right people to become leaders. It was during this first 
generation of leadership theory that empirical psychologists began to develop and 
administer intelligent test to both leaders and followers to identify differences in selected 
trait measures (Chemers, 2000).

Through his research on the studies trait theory Northouse (2004, p. 19-20) provides 
a summary of the major concepts in trait theory that will serve as a priori themes for trait 
generation of leadership theory in this study. They include:

- **Intelligence**: Intellectual ability, strong verbal ability, perceptual ability, 
  reasoning.
- **Self-Confidence**: Ability to be certain about one’s competencies and skills, 
  self-esteem and self-assurance.
- **Determination**: Desire to get the job done, initiative, persistence, 
  dominance, and drive
- **Integrity**: Quality of honesty and trustworthiness, strong set of principles, 
  and take responsibility for actions
- **Sociability**: Friendly, out-going, courteous, tactful, and diplomatic.

Although there are other trait concepts associated with effective leadership, Northouse 
(2004) contend that intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, and sociability 
are the general traits and others can be subsumed within them. According to Northouse 
(2005), these five traits contribute substantially to someone being an effective leader. 
An addition, the trait theory focuses exclusively on the leader, which makes its concepts 
appropriate for this study as we explore the leader of strategic planning.
Behavioral Theory

The movement from the trait theory of leadership to the behavioral theory started in the 1950s and early 1960s. Disenchanted with the inability of the trait theory to identify a particular set of traits of an effective leader, researchers moved to study observable behavior. During this second generation of leadership theory, there was a shift from identifying leadership traits, to an approach that related the leader’s traits to success. The thrust of the behavioral theory was on the effectiveness of leadership instead of the characteristics and traits of the leader. The behavioral theorists identified determinants of leadership which in turn facilitated those wanting to be leaders. Leaders are made, not born was the guiding dogma of the behavioral theory of leadership, which was antithetical to the fundamental premise of the earlier trait theory.

The most prevalent research on the behavioral theory of leadership was conducted by the Ohio State University and the University of Michigan. Both studies were primarily concerned with the behavior of the leader as opposed to the antecedents of the leader. The set of studies conducted by Ohio State University between 1946 and 1956, surrounding the development of the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) had the most enduring impact on the field of leadership. LBDQ was a 150-item survey, derived from a series of almost 1,800 statements that was used rate nine dimensions to describe individual behaviors of leaders as they acted in groups or organizations. The LBDQ also sought to ascertain how frequently the leaders engaged in particular behaviors. Factor analysis was used to determine if common leadership behaviors emerged.
The University of Michigan studies, lead by Rensis Likert, were also taking place during this time (Likert, 1961). In both the Ohio State and Michigan studies, two dimensions of leadership behavior consistently emerged. The Ohio State studies referred to the dimensions as consideration and initiation of structure, while the Michigan studies coined the terms employee orientation and job orientation. These two dimensions were identified through a series of investigations by the researchers that strived to appropriately describe the behavior of the leader, as perceived by the leaders themselves as well as by their subordinates.

In relation to the Ohio State studies, consideration can best be defined as the extent to which a leader exhibits concern for the welfare of the members if the group. The considerate leader expresses appreciation for good work, stresses the importance of job satisfaction, maintains and strengthens self-esteem of subordinate and is supportive (Stodgill, 1974). This leader has interpersonal relationships with group members that are characterized by mutual trust, respect for followers as well as their ideas and concerns, and consideration for their thoughts, feelings, and overall well-being. The considerate leader also has the aptitude to build communication, establish rapport, and elicit and maintain group participation. According to Stodgill (1974) initiation of structures is the extent to which the leader is defines and structures their role as well as that of group members in relation attaining the goals of the group. This leader is often engaged in planning and organizing the work of group and the tasks to be completed. The initiating leader is more concerned with maintaining standards and procedures, establishing work schedules, meeting deadlines, and making detailed decisions, instead of the their relationship with group members. Although there is clear communication
and guidelines, the initiating leader rarely solicits group participation or input (Stodgill, 1974; Likert, 1961).

The University of Michigan studies similarly identified two types of leadership behaviors, employee orientation and production orientation, which correspond closely to the consideration and initiation structures identified in the Ohio State Studies. However, the University of Michigan studies did differ from the Ohio State studies in one important area. The researchers in the Michigan studies postulated a dichotomy existed between the two dimensions located at two extremes of a single continuum, suggesting that a leader being high on one dimension would be low on the other dimension, and vice versa. Blake & Mouton (1964), conversely, argued that there was a continuum, where a leader could possibly to be either high in both dimensions, low in both or somewhere in the middle at the same time. This assertion of a sorted combination between the two dimensions was the basis for the Managerial Grid illustrated in Figure 3, which Blake & Mouton (1964) developed to better understand the various intermingling of the dimensions. Bass (1990) contends, “Blake & Mouton (1964) are the best-known model builders who prescribe the integration of both task-and relations orientations as the one best way to achieve effective leadership” (p. 483). Johns & Moser (2001) concur “one of the most noteworthy adaptive leadership models is the Managerial Grid developed by Blake and Mouton” (p. 118). Consisting of four quadrants similar to those found in the Ohio State and University of Michigan studies, the grid plots five different types of leadership behaviors. The managerial grid is based on the assumption that leaders range from a scale of one to nine in their concern for people, which is represented on the vertical axis (Y-axis) and also from one to nine
regarding their concern for production, represented on the horizontal axis (X-axis), resulting in five possible leadership behaviors. Blake & Mouton (1964) believes that the Y-axis, which corresponds to equally a high concern for people and production, is the optimal and most effective type of leadership behavior.

**Figure 3. Managerial Grid**

The Managerial Grid provides a framework for assessing effective leadership for the behavioral leadership theory. The grid allows the leader to assess their style and makes them conscious of their actions toward others. The five leadership behaviors identified by Blake and Mouton (1964) are reflective of the two dominant concepts of the behavioral leadership theory; concern for people and concern for production, which will serve as *a priori* themes in this study for this generation of leadership theory.

**Contingency/Situational Theory**

Contingency/situational theory is the third generation of leadership theory. Earlier in his studies of the trait theory, Stogdill (1948) concluded, “it becomes clear that an
adequate analysis of leadership involves not only a study of the leader, but also situations" (p. 64-65). In spite of this conclusive argument, it was not until 1964, almost two decades later, that Fred Fielder put forward the first complementary approach that considered both the leader traits and the contingent/situational variables. “The first and perhaps most popular, situational theory to be advanced was the Contingency Theory of Leadership Effectiveness' developed by Fred E. Fiedler” (Bedeian, & Glueck, 1983, p. 504). Bass (1990) states, “Fiedler’s contingency theory dominated much of the research on leadership during the 1970s” (p. 46). Chemers (2000) adds, “the study of leadership took a dramatic change of direction with the publication of Fiedler’s first article in (1964) and subsequent book (1967), which presented a new approach to understanding leadership effectiveness” (p. 29).

Fiedler, an Australian-born psychologist, was one of the leading scientists of industrial and organizational psychology of the twentieth century. Fiedler believed that there was no universal or best way for leaders to lead and that effective leadership is contingent upon various internal and external situational factors. In 1967, during his tenure at the University of Illinois, Fiedler introduced the contingency theory. Fielder (1967) identified leadership style and “situational favorableness” to explain group performance. Leadership orientation is shaped by rather the leader is either relationship-motivated or task-motivated. Situational favorableness is determined in terms of three factors, leader-members relations, task structure, and the leader’s power position. Leader-members relations are associated with the degree in which the leader is accepted by the group as well as by the level of group support and cooperation. Task structures refer to the extent of which the tasks of the group are structured, defined, and
clearly communicated to group members. The leader’s power position is affected by how much authority and control the leader has over the group, in addition to their ability to reward or punish group members. Fielder (1967) concluded that leadership effectiveness is the result of interaction between the style of the leader and the characteristics of the environment in which the leader works. While high levels of all three factors of situational favorableness yield the most favorable situation for leaders to be effective, Fielder (1967) contends that it is easier change the contingent factors or situational context of the group than it is the alter the leadership orientation. This line of reasoning is based on the premise that that the leader’s orientation to a particular style is more stable and enduring, and the only other alternative would be to change the leader. Many have criticized this position that Fielder holds. Since Fielder first introduced his theory, more than 400 studies have investigated its validity.

During the same time period that Fiedler (1967) was conducting his research on contingency theory, Hersey & Blanchard (1969), developed the life-cycle theory of leadership, and later renamed it the situational leadership theory. Dr. Hersey is internationally-recognized researcher and author, however, he is best known for developing the situational leadership theory with Kenneth Blanchard. Dr. Kenneth Blanchard is a renowned speaker and coach on leadership and is the author of the popular book, *One Minute Manager*, and is considered a “management guru”. Hersey & Blanchard (1977) developed situational leadership theory (*SLT*). SLT, in its original form, was based on the amount of direction and support a leader had to provide for followers and suggested that there is “a curvilinear relationship between task and relationship behaviors and maturity” (Hersey & Blanchard, 1977, p. 160). Maturity
refers to the capacity to set high, but attainable goals, education and experience, and willingness to take responsibility.

Situational leadership theory (SLT) was refined in 1979, with the basic concept modified reflective of an understanding that as the level of maturity of the group continues to increase in terms of accomplished specific tasks, the leader should begin to reduce his/her task behavior and increase relationship behavior until the group reaches a moderate level of maturity. Hersey and Blanchard later extended SLT to include the development level of the follower, as they felt it was important to also take into account the people being led. This later version of SLT suggested that a leader's chosen style should be based on the level of competence and commitment of the followers. They categorized the possible development of followers into four levels, which they named D1 to D4. In SLT, the key situational determinants of effective leadership behavior are based on the flexibility of the leader and the attributes of the followers. Figure 4 depicts the curvilinear relationship between the styles of situational leadership theory leadership, represented in four quadrants and the developmental level of the followers, while taking into consideration the task or goals to be accomplished. Both the leadership style of the leader and the development level of the followers are situational and should correspond to each other. The leader must be able to adapt and use a different style based on the situation. The idea that it is the leader that must change their style to accommodate the different types of followers marks a clear distinction between the work of Hersey & Blanchard and that of Fielder. Effective leaders demonstrate versatility through their ability to maneuver through the matrix based on any given situation. SLT continues to evolve as a way to approach effective leadership,
Hersey & Blanchard’s theory is characterized by four leadership styles. The basic concepts of contingency/situational leadership theory that will serve as a priori themes for data analysis in the study include:

- **Directing**: The leader provides clear instructions and specific direction (high directive-low supportive behavior, S1).

- **Coaching**: The leader encourages two-way communication and helps build confidence and motivation on the part of the employee, although the leader
still has responsibility and controls decision making (high directive-high supportive behavior, S2).

- **Supporting:** With this style, the leader and followers share decision making and no longer need or expect the relationship to be directive. (low directive-high supportive behavior, S3).

- **Delegating:** This style is appropriate for leaders whose followers are ready to accomplish a particular task and are both competent and motivated to take full responsibility (low directive-low supportive behavior, S4).

**Transformational Theory**

Transformational leadership represents the fourth generation of leadership theory. This new wave of leadership theory attempts to bring understanding to how leaders can foster performance with followers by developing a unique connection with them. The development of the transformational theory of leadership began with the seminal work of James MacGregor Burns. Burns (1978) in his Pulitzer Prize winning book, *Leadership*, set the stage for the evolution of transformational leadership during his work with transactional leadership concerning political leaders. Burns (1978) makes a clear distinction between transactional and transformational leadership. While transactional leadership centers on the specific task requirements and offers rewards that are contingent upon performance, transformational leadership focuses on building a mutual relationship, fostered by trust that extends beyond the short-term needs of both the leader and the follower. Burns (1978) posits that both the leader and the followers are transformed by transformational relationships, and states, “the result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers
into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents”. Burns (1978) asserts, “the transforming leader looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower” (p. 4). In addition, Burn (1978) states that transformational leadership “occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (p. 20). In essence, undergoing a uniquely personal transformation.

Bernard Bass espoused the theory of transformational leadership that furthered the earlier work of Burns. Bass was a distinguished professor emeritus the State University of New York and a leading authority in the field of leadership, organizational behavior and human resource management. Bass, drawing upon the research of Burns (1978), begin in depth study of transformational leadership in the early 1980s. However, while Burns (1978) postulated a two-way process where both the leader and the followers are transformed, Bass (1985) suggested that the direction of influence was one way, with only the leader transforming the followers. Unlike Burns (1978), Bass (1985) held that transactional and transformational leaders were not polar opposites. Bass argued that transformational leadership is the augmentation and extension of transactional leadership and to some extent, all leaders are transactional, exchanging rewards for performance. Bass (1990) suggests that in transactional leadership, leaders exchange promises of rewards and benefits to subordinates for the subordinates’ fulfillment of agreements with the leader (p. 53). However, the distinguishing feature of transformational leaders is that they move beyond simple leader-subordinate exchange relationships.
Bass (1985) believed that the extent to which leaders are transformational is measured in terms of leader’s effect on followers. In his study of managers, Bass’ (1985) conceptualized transactional and transformational leadership using seven leadership factors, charisma, inspirational, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, contingent reward, management-by exception, and laissez-faire leadership. Since laissez-faire referred to the absence of leadership, it was later removed. Based on the findings of a series of surveys and on clinical and case evidence, Bass (1990) later categorized the seven factors transformational and transactional leadership, assigning four of the factors to the transformational leader and the other three to the transactional leader. Table 3 identifies the characteristics of the transformational and transactional leader assigned Bass & Avolio (1994). The transformational theory of leadership has gained widespread acceptance in the fields of organizational management and education. Bass (1990) concludes:

Table 3. Characteristics of Transformational & Transactional Leader

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER</th>
<th>TRANSACTIONAL LEADER</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Charisma:</strong> Provides vision and sense of mission, instills pride, gains respect and trust.</td>
<td><strong>Contingent Reward:</strong> Contracts exchange of rewards for effort, promises rewards for good performance, recognizes accomplishments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspiration:</strong> Communicates high expectations, uses symbols to focus efforts, expresses important purposes in simple ways.</td>
<td><strong>Management by Exception</strong> (active): Watches and searches for deviations from rules and standards, takes corrective action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intellectual Stimulation:</strong> Promotes intelligence, rationality, and careful problem solving.</td>
<td><strong>Management by Exception</strong> (passive): Intervenes only if standards are not met.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individualized Consideration:</strong> Gives personal attention, treats each employee individually, coaches, advises</td>
<td><strong>Laissez-Faire:</strong> Abdicates responsibilities, avoids making decisions.</td>
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</table>

(Bass & Avolio, 1994)
superior leadership performance — transformational leadership — occurs when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when they stir their employees to look beyond their own self-interest for the good of the group. Transformational leaders achieve this result” (Bass 1990, p.21).

Bass & Avolio (1994) adds, “transformational leadership is closer to the prototype of leadership that people have in mind when they describe their ideal leader, and it is more likely to provide a role model with which subordinates want to identify”. Transformational leaders strive to engage followers and encourage “buy in” from all participates so that goals can be achieved. These leaders are able to motivate followers, allow them to achieve their full potential, and accomplish the tasks at hand. While much research has been done on transformational leadership, the fundamental theoretical characteristics of transformational leadership promoted Bass, described in Table 3, endure and will also serve as the a priori themes of the generation of transformational leadership theory for this study.

Conclusion

Leadership theories have evolved over the last eighty years. Each of the four theoretical perspectives of leadership represented offer insight into the characteristics of effective leadership. However, the literature reveals a shift in focus from the general traits and behaviors of the leader to the acknowledgement of the importance of the different contingent factors, situations and contexts and the leaders’ role in relation to followers. The four generations of leadership theories are not mutually exclusive.
Somewhat, each one augments or complements others. If taken together, these four theories of leadership identify the fundamental characteristics of an effective leader. The deep-seated premise of trait theory is a leader must possess certain traits in order to be effective. Although behavioral theorists disagree that these traits are innate, nonetheless, certain traits are needed for effective leadership. As the behavioral theory of leadership suggests, these traits can be learned. Effective leaders must be both task-oriented and relationship-oriented, depending on the particular situation. There are times during the strategic planning process when those leading the process can support and delegate, and other situations when it is clear they must direct and coach, which is the underlying basis of contingency/situational leadership theory. Transformational leadership promotes vision, enhances performance, and allows for group “buy in”.

Strategic planning is a very dynamic process and the leader must have a broad range of attributes and skills if they are going to be successful. Which of these four generations of leadership theory best represent the type of leadership needed for strategic planning? An understanding of and even the convergence of concepts from all four leadership theories provide the conceptual underpinning of the study.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the research design, methodology, participant selection, and the ethical considerations for the study. The purpose of this study is to explore the dimensions of leadership to define and compare strategic planning leadership practices in Illinois community colleges. The study seeks to identify the leader responsible for facilitating the strategic planning process, the impact of their role, and how they influence the process. In addition, the study examines the similarities, commonalties, and differences in the strategic planning process among Illinois community colleges. The purpose of the study, with the driving questions guide the impetus for the research design and methodology selected for this study. This empirical study, seeking to draw from the experiences of the practitioners themselves instead of relying solely on theory for the application to practice, is of utmost importance to the community college field. A sequential mixed-model design was employed, which makes use of both quantitative and qualitative techniques for data collection. However, according to Gaskell (2000), empirical research is inherently qualitative, and therefore this study is situated in an overarching qualitative interpretive paradigm.

Research Design

This study used a mixed-model research design for data collection with a case study methodology to address the driving research questions of this study. The mixed-model allows for use of a qualitative paradigm, but allows the researcher to use both
quantitative and qualitative methods within a stage or across various stages of the research process. The mixed method will be applied only to the data collection stage of this study. An interpretive perspective was the overriding theoretical paradigm in which this study was situated. A mixed-model design was employed to collect and analyze the data for the study. This type of design made use of specific characteristics of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches to research. The use of both survey and interviews served as complementary strategies to help understand the significance of strategic planning leadership as well as identify the commonalities and differences in community colleges in Illinois. The integration of quantitative and qualitative research serves three purposes. According to Creswell, Goodchild, & Turner (1996), this integration balances the strengths and weaknesses that are inherent in each of the methodologies, provides triangulation of the results, and creates a level of flexibility that allows for the adaptation of diverse methods to investigate a particular issue. The epistemological underpinning of educational research underscores the fundamental difference between quantitative and qualitative research methods. While one suggests that the basis of knowledge is formed by discovery of facts, the other concerns itself with the discovery of meaning through perceptions. Both these research methods reflect different perspectives on “how one understands a person’s ability to know about the world” (Creswell et al., p.94).

From a philosophical perspective, mixed research takes an eclectic, pragmatic, and commonsense approach, and suggests that the researcher mix quantitative and qualitative research in a way that works best for the given research question being studied in a particular context. Mixed research uses both deductive and inductive
methods, obtains both quantitative and qualitative data, attempts to corroborate and complement findings, and takes a balanced approach to research. Table 4, adapted from Johnson and Christensen ((2004), outlines the key characteristics of quantitative and qualitative research, with mixed research providing the significant balance for this study. This study applied descriptive quantitative methods to find commonalities and differences, as well as make generalizations about strategic planning practices in Illinois, while qualitative methods were use to examine the breath and depth of the phenomenon from the participants’ lens.
### Table 4. Quantitative, Mixed, and Qualitative Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Quantitative Research</th>
<th>Mixed Research</th>
<th>Qualitative Research</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scientific Method</strong></td>
<td>Deductive or “top down”. The researchers tests hypotheses and theory with data</td>
<td>Deductive and Inductive</td>
<td>Inductive or “bottom up”. The researcher generates new hypotheses and grounded theory from data collected during fieldwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>View of human behavior</strong></td>
<td>Behavior is regular and predictable</td>
<td>Behavior is somewhat predictable</td>
<td>Behavior is fluid, dynamic, situational, social contextual, and personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common research objectives</strong></td>
<td>Description, explanation, and prediction</td>
<td>Multiple objectives</td>
<td>Description, explanation, and discovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus</strong></td>
<td>Narrow-angle lens, testing specific hypotheses</td>
<td>Multilens focus</td>
<td>Wide-angle and “deep-angle” lens, examining the breath and depth of phenomena to learn more about them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form of data collected</strong></td>
<td>Collect quantitative data based on precise measurement using structured and validated data collection instruments (e.g. closed-ended items, rating scales, behavioral responses)</td>
<td>Multiple forms</td>
<td>Collect qualitative data (e.g. in-depth interviews, participant observation, field notes, and open-ended questions) The researcher is the primary data collection instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data analysis</strong></td>
<td>Identify statistical relationship</td>
<td>Quantitative and qualitative</td>
<td>Search for patterns, themes, and holistic features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Results</strong></td>
<td>Generalizable findings</td>
<td>Corroborated findings may generalize</td>
<td>Particularistic findings Representation of insider (i.e. &quot;emic&quot;) viewpoint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form of final report</strong></td>
<td>Statistical report (e.g. with correlations comparison of means, and reporting of statistical significance of findings)</td>
<td>Eclectic and pragmatic</td>
<td>Narrative report with contextual descriptions and direct quotations from research participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from Johnson and Christensen, 2004)
The mixed model design is a subtype of mixed research and is appropriate for this research study for several reasons. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) define mixed-method research as “the class of research where the researcher mixes or combines both quantitative and qualitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts or language into a single study” (p. 17). The authors refer to the mixed-method design as the intrinsic complement to traditional research methods that represent the “third wave or third research movement, a movement that moves past the paradigm wars by offering a logical and practical alternative” (p. 17). This selection of research design brings legitimacy to the use of multiple approaches in addressing the research question. Both quantitative and qualitative designs have important components that were useful for this research study and the juxtaposition of these two designs was of significant importance to the study. According to Leedy & Ormrod (2001), “quantitative research is used to answer questions about the relationships among variables with the purpose of explaining, predicting, and controlling phenomena”, while qualitative research “is typically used to answer questions about the complex nature of phenomena” (p. 101). Simply, quantitative designs seek to explain, predict, confirm, and validate, while qualitative designs strive to describe, explain, explore, and interpret. The application of quantitative methods through the utilization of a survey is tailored for a more objective approach for data collection. According to Babbie (1995), the advantage of survey research is that it allows you to capture data from a larger group and provides a snapshot of the real world. The most significant aspect of a qualitative design that is
useful for this study is it allows the phenomena to be described and understood from the participants’ point of view.

Combining aspects of both quantitative and qualitative methods allows for triangulation of data sources and data analysis, which is another important benefit of a mixed method model. Triangulation is not only used to provide validity to the study, it is the strategy of triangulation that adds breadth, rigor, richness and depth to the study.

Grounded in theoretical literature, Green, Caracelli, & Graham (1989) identified triangulation as one of the five characteristic purposes of mixed methods. Table 5 illustrates these five purposes

**Table 5. Five Purposes of Mixed Model Research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Triangulation</td>
<td>Seeks convergence, corroboration, correspondence of results from different methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementarity</td>
<td>Seeks elaboration, enhancement, illustration, clarification of results from one method with the results from the other method.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>Seeks to use the results from one method to help develop or inform the other method, where development is broadly constructed to include sampling and implementation, as well as measurement decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiation</td>
<td>Seeks the discovery of paradox and contradictions, new perspectives of frameworks, the recasting of questions or results from one method with questions or results from the other method.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expansion</td>
<td>Seeks to extend the breadth and range of inquiry by using different methods for different inquiry components.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from Green, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989).
of mixed methods designs by Green, Caracelli, & Graham (1989). Triangulation, can refer to the substantiation, convergence, or correspondence of results found through utilizing different research methods. “The core premise of triangulation as a design strategy is that all methods have inherent biases and limitations, so use of only one method to assess a given phenomenon will inevitably yield biased and limited results” (Green et al, 1989, p. 256). Since quantitative and qualitative designs have offsetting biases, the corroboration and convergence of the two methods enhance the depth of the research findings. Johnson and Turner (2003) concur and further cite that the fundamental principle of mixed method is:

- methods should be mixed in a way that has complementary strengths and nonoverlapping weaknesses. … It involves the recognition that all methods have their limitations as well as their strengths. The fundamental principle is followed for at least three reasons: (a) to obtain convergence or corroboration of findings, (b) to eliminate or minimize key plausible alternative explanations for conclusions drawn from the research data, and © to elucidate the divergent aspects of a phenomenon (p. 299).

Johnson & Turner (2003) contend that fundamental principle of mixed-method designs can be applied to all aspects of the research process. Taking advantage of a mixed-method design can also augments the overall scope and breadth of a study.

In addition, there is also a current shift to move away from the argument of quantitative versus qualitative methods in educational research (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick 2006; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie 2004; Tashakkori & Teddie 2003; Johnson & Turner 2003; Green, Caracelli, & Graham 1989). There has traditionally been a chasm
or an “either/or” that clearly separates quantitative and qualitative research. This false dichotomy puts quantitative and qualitative designs at opposite ends of the research continuum. While quantitative research yields “hard” generalizable data usually in statistical number form, qualitative research produces rich, thick and in depth data garnered from many diverse ways from the study participants, through the coding of themes. Yet both are extremely beneficial for this research study. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) contend “the goal of mixed method research is not to replace either of these approaches but rather to draw from the strengths and minimize the weakness of both in single research studies” (p. 14-15). Using both quantitative and qualitative designs in two specific sections of this study also allows for the often overlooked and disregarded commonalties of the approaches to be brought to the forefront of the research study. Together for this study, they enhance the attempt to understand and develop plausible arguments about certain phenomenon, human beings and organizations, and the contextual environments in which they live and work. Used in tandem for this study, both quantitative and qualitative research were beneficial to understanding strategic planning leadership at Illinois community colleges.

**Qualitative Interpretive Paradigm**

Given the purpose of this study, qualitative research was best suited to answer most of the driving research questions. The essential purpose of qualitative research is to discover how social experience is created and to give meaning to those experiences. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative research seeks to study phenomena in its natural environment in order to understand or interpret the phenomena in terms of the meaning people ascribe to them. Qualitative research is:
A field of inquiry in its own right. It cuts across disciplines, subfields, and subject matter. A complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts, and assumptions surrounds the qualitative research orientation. These include the traditions associated with positivism, poststructuralism, and the many qualitative research perspectives or methods connected to cultural and interpretive studies.

Qualitative research gears toward descriptive explanation, exploration, and interpretation. Consequently, the fundamental purpose of qualitative research is to discover how social experience is created and given meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative research allows the researcher to delve into the experiences of the participants in an effort to uncover the implicit meanings behind their experiences. It also generates rich, detailed data that contributes to the in-depth understanding of the phenomena. Qualitative research has five defining features identified by Bogdan & Biklen (2007); naturalistic; descriptive data; concern with process; inductive reasoning; and meaning. The authors would argue that all qualitative research has varying degrees of these five characteristics, all of which are applicable to this research study.

There are a number of definitions and perspectives relevant to qualitative research. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue, “qualitative research is difficult to define clearly. It has no theory or paradigm that is distinctly its own” (p. 6). According to Merriam (2001), “qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena” (p. 5). Creswell (1998, p. 15) defines qualitative research as “an inquiry process of understanding based on
distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.” Johnson and Turner (2003) add that qualitative research is “exploratory, deductive, unstructured, open-ended, naturalistic, and free-flowing research that result in qualitative data” (p.297). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 3).

Patton (1985) believes qualitative research does not attempt to predict what will happen in the future, but rather seeks an in-depth understanding as in end itself. He feels qualitative research is:

an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there. This understanding is an end in itself, so that it is not attempting to predict what may happen in the future necessarily, but to understand the nature of that setting—what it means for participants to be in that setting,…what their meanings
are, what the world looks like in that particular setting—and in the analysis to be able to communicate that faithfully to others who are interested in that setting…The analysis strives for depth of understanding (Patton, 1985, p.1). According to Leedy & Ormrod (2001), qualitative research “is typically used to answer questions about the complex nature of phenomena” (p. 101). Simply, qualitative designs strive to describe, explain, explore, and interpret. One characteristic of qualitative valuable for this study was it allowed the phenomena to be described or understood from the *emic* or participants’ point of view (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative research illuminates the perspective and voice of the participants. Three other characteristics of qualitative research which Merriam (2001) describes include the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection, the involvement of fieldwork, and the employment of inductive research strategy were of value in this study. Although definitions and perspectives of what is qualitative research vary, Hoepfl (1997) cites eight characteristics of qualitative research as summarized by several prominent writers of qualitative research. These eight characteristics which assist to describe-qualitative research include:

1. Qualitative research uses the natural setting as the source of data. The researcher attempts to observe, describe and interpret settings as they are, maintaining what Patton calls an “empathic neutrality” (1990, p. 55).

2. The researcher acts as the “human instrument” of data collection.

3. Qualitative researchers predominantly use inductive data analysis.

4. Qualitative research reports are descriptive, incorporating expressive...
language and the “presence of voice in the text” (Eisner, 1991, p. 36).

5. Qualitative research has an interpretive character, aimed at discovering the meaning events have for the individuals who experience them, and the interpretations of those meanings by the researcher.

6. Qualitative researchers pay attention to the idiosyncratic as well as the pervasive, seeking the uniqueness of each case.

7. Qualitative research has an emergent (as opposed to predetermined) design, and researchers focus on this emerging process as well as the outcomes or product of the research.

8. Qualitative research is judged using special criteria for trustworthiness (Hoepfl, 1997, p.49).

This study is concerned with strategic planning leadership, the influence of the leaders, and the importance of their role in the strategic planning process. These eight features form a solid foundation, providing the significant rigor needed for this study. Qualitative research lends itself well to help to bring understanding to how the leaders make meaning of the strategic planning process. Therefore, given to the nature and scope of this study, a qualitative research approach was deemed necessary and most appropriate.

Focusing on holistic descriptions and explanations, the researcher aimed to uncover the interaction of significant factors and characteristic of the phenomenon. Any research method or approach to the systematic investigation of phenomena rests upon some epistemological and ontological assumptions. These assumptions pertain to the nature of reality and the ways of knowing that exist in the world. Qualitative inquiry is
grounded in one of four major epistemological systems: (a) reality-oriented, (b) constructionist-interpretive, (c) critical theory, or (d) feminist-poststructural (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Guba (1990) defines these epistemological systems as a “basic set of beliefs that guides action” (p. 17). Given the nature of the research questions posed by this qualitative study, the interpretive paradigm was the dominant framework in which this study was situated. The interpretive paradigm developed out of the philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey’s and other German philosophers’ study of interpretive understanding, which is often referred to as hermeneutics. Research employing an interpretive paradigm seeks to understand and interpret the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those being studied. The researcher and participant are involved in a dynamic exchange; each with the ability to influence the other. This exchange produces value laden research that not only reflects the values and beliefs of the participants.

Obtaining knowledge through understanding the meaning of a phenomenon or experience, Merriam (2001) would argue, is best gained from an inductive mode of inquiry. Merriam (2002) later suggests that the goal of basic interpretive qualitative research is to examine “(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences.” (p. 38). These criteria put forth by Merriam (2002) were compatible in supporting the purpose of this study exploring the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those involved in strategic planning leadership at community colleges. According to Willis (2007), the fundamental tenet of interpretivism is that reality is socially constructed. Klein & Myers (1999) contend that social constructions include “language,
consciousness, shared meaning, documents, tool, etc… (p. 69). One of the underlining principles of interpretive research is that it seeks to understand the world of human experience. An interpretive paradigm is concerned with the way people make sense of and bring meaning to their world. Strategic planning leadership as a phenomenon is best understood through the meaning that people assign to their role, how they function in this role as well as the process. Since the interpretive paradigm concerns itself with the participants’ views of the situation being studied and acknowledges their background and experiences, the perspective was appropriate for this research.

**Case Study Method**

As a research methodology, case study method was become widely used by qualitative researchers (Merriam, 2001; Stake, 1995; Yin 1989, 1994). The University of Chicago, Department of Sociology is noted as being preeminent in field of the early use of case study methodology in the United States. Case study is well recognized and is most utilized in the qualitative research tradition. Although primarily used in the disciplines of anthropology, sociology and medicine, in recent years, case study has gained broad recognition and acceptance in education. Merriam (2001) suggests that case studies are used in education “so that specific issues and problems of practice can be identified and explained” (p. 34). Case study method was most appropriate for this study and is consistent with an interpretive paradigm as it strives to explain real-life, complex relationships and interrelationships. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) argue that while other qualitative research traditions such as ethnography, phenomenology, hermeneutics, semiotics, biographical research, and historical research are limited to a specific category or phenomena, any phenomenon can be studied by case study.
methods. In a case study, the unit of analysis characterizes the study. Case study design allows the researcher to concentrate on a single phenomenon or entity. Being able to analyze a single unit or *bounded system* is what primarily differentiates case studies from other types of qualitative research (Merriam, 2001). A case study also fits well with this study because it allows for triangulation, which is one of the primary purposes of the mixed model design being employed.

A case study optimizes understanding of a phenomenon by asking scholarly research questions and concentrating on the experimental knowledge of the case itself. The quintessential characteristic of a case study is that it strives towards a holistic understanding. Case studies use induction to derive meaning and understanding. Merriam (1988) defines a case study as “an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a program, an event a person, a process, an institution, or a social group” (p. 9). Yin (1989) later expands this definition by adding that a case study is “an empirical inquiry that: 1) investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when 2) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which three multiple sources of evidence are used” (p. 23). Yin (1994) states that case studies are the preferred research strategy when “‘how’ or ‘why’ questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real life context” (p1). Willis (2007, p. 239) , drawing from the previous work of Merriam (1998) cites, case studies are:

- *Particularistic:* They focus on a particular context such as one person, a family, an office, a company, a classroom, or an apartment building.
• **Naturalistic**: Case studies are about real people and situation, and much of the data collection occurs in real environments.

• **Thick descriptive data**: Sources of case studies include participants and nonparticipant observations, interviews, historical and narrative sources, writings such as journals and dairies, a variety of quantitative data sources including tests, and almost anything else you can imagine.

• **Inductive**: “For the most part, case studies rely on inductive reasoning. Generalizations, concepts, or hypotheses emerge from the examination of data—data grounded in the context itself. Occasionally one may have tentative working hypotheses at the outset of a case study, but these expectations are subject to reformulation as the study proceeds” (Merriam, 1988, p. 13).

• **Heuristic**: “Case studies illuminate the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study. They can bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader’s experience, or confirm what is known” (Merriam, 1988, p. 13).

Bogdan & Biklen (2007) argues that great diversity exists within a case study method to research and it allows the researcher the flexibility of approaches. In case studies, the purpose of exploratory and descriptive design is to study a phenomenon in which little is known. Exploratory design begins with a preliminary notion of your object of study, and of its context with the intent to gain more insight and knowledge. Exploratory design usually leads to a more in-depth study of phenomena. Descriptive research reaches further and “provide rich, detailed descriptions of the case” (Willis 2007. p. 243).

According to Merriam (2001), “a descriptive case study in education is one that presents
a detailed account of the phenomenon under study” (p. 38). The purpose of descriptive research is to provide the interpretation of an accurate profile of persons, events, or situations. Yin (1994) cautions that descriptive case studies should not be used simply to describe everything. The focus must be on answering the purpose of the study. Merriam (2001) adds that descriptive case studies are useful for providing information about areas in education where little research has been conducted. It also allows for real-life experiences to be described through the voice of the participants involved. Although there was a plethora of information on both strategic planning and leadership found in the literature, none was found to address the importance of strategic planning leadership in community colleges as the vehicle to move community colleges forward in uncertain times. This gap in the literature supported the use of exploratory and descriptive case study methodology for this study.

**Participant Selection**

The research purpose guided the selection of the mixed-model model and the two research participant groups; the institutional participant selection and the individual participant selection. The institutional participants were included in the quantitative phase of the study, while individuals selected from the institutional groups were included in the qualitative phase of the study. Much thought was given regarding selection criteria for Illinois community colleges. (For the quantitative data collection phase of this study, all of the single district community colleges in Illinois were selected to participate in the study (See Appendix B). The two multi-community college districts in the metropolitan area of the state (Chicago and Eastern Illinois) were not included in this study. The structure of large multi-college/campus community college districts is very
different from single community colleges. It was important for the findings to be of particular benefit to the majority of the 1,195 community colleges which are single campus institutions. Jensen & Giles (2006) contend that single campus colleges and multi-college/campus districts are different in various ways, including “how the CEO works, how the board operates and even the jobs of middle managers” (p. 13). Most multi-college/campus districts also have a chancellor, which often provides the visionary guidance and not the presidents at the associated institutions, whereas in single campus colleges, it is the responsibility of the president. Although the two multi-college/campus districts are not represented in this research, the findings from the study of multiple single community colleges are also transferable to large multi-college/campus community colleges.

For the institutional participants, there were no inclusion criteria, other than the criteria of being a single campus institution. The size, student population, location, and other demographic characteristics were not taken into consideration for this phase of the study, as these factors were of no consequence for the study. Therefore, of the 49 state of Illinois community colleges, all of the remaining 38 single campuses had the opportunity to complete the survey.

For the qualitative data collection phase of the study, four individuals from the institutions that responded to the survey volunteered to participate in interviews. The age, gender, and ethnicity were not taken into consideration when selecting the individual participants. The only inclusion criterion applied to the qualitative phase of the study was the size of the institution. Participant representation was important to the process and a concerted effort was made to include leaders of the strategic planning
process from community college of varying sizes. It was felt that leaders from large to small institutions with share insights should strengthen the study. The Carnegie Foundation, an independent educational policy and research center, established size classifications for two-year institutions. Table 6 represents the size classifications for 2 year post secondary institutions. The foundation believes that the size of an institution is a very influential variable, as it relates to the institution’s structure, complexity, culture, finances, and other factors. The size classifications established by the Carnegie Foundation were used to select one small, medium, large, and very large community college for the qualitative phase. There are no community colleges in Illinois that fit in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size Classification</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VS2: Very small two-year</td>
<td>Fall enrollment data show FTE* enrollment of fewer than 500 students at these associate’s degree granting institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2: Small two-year</td>
<td>Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 500–1,999 students at these associate’s degree granting institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2: Medium two-year</td>
<td>Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 2,000–4,999 students at these associate’s degree granting institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2: Large two-year</td>
<td>Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of 5,000–9,999 students at these associate’s degree granting institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VL2: Very large two-year</td>
<td>Fall enrollment data show FTE enrollment of at least 10,000 students at these associate’s degree granting institutions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Carnegie Foundation, 2007)
the very small two-year category. Since the purpose of this research study was to explore the significance of strategic planning leadership in Illinois community college and to identify their roles as well as how and in what ways they influence the process, it was important to use a sampling strategies that would allow the researcher to answer the driving questions of the study.

**Phase One: Purposive Sampling**

Purposive sampling of the institutional and individual participants was used for this study. McBurney (1994) defines a purposive sample as “a nonrandom sample that is chosen for some characteristics that it possesses” (p. 203). Merriam (2001) suggests that purposive sampling is the method of choice for most qualitative research and is “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 61). Bogdan and Bilken (2007) add that the purposeful sampling is used when the researcher believes that the chosen participants can facilitate the expansion of a developing theory. Patton (1990) argues that “the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth” (p. 196). Patton (2002) later adds ‘information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research…” (p. 46). In purposive sampling, the researcher determines the specific characteristics of the population and then locates individuals with those particular characteristics (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). The institutional participants who were purposefully selected included the 38 single campus community colleges in the state of Illinois. Illinois was selected for the study because it is the third largest community college system in the
United States (ICCB, 2007; Krebs, Katsinas, & Johnson, 1999). Illinois is significantly recognized in the history of community colleges, as the first public junior college established in the nation was Joliet Junior College in Illinois (ICCB, 2007; Krebs et al., 1999). In addition, Krebs et al. (1999) contend that Illinois community colleges are set apart from other community colleges and “Illinois has emerged as a nationwide leader” (p.20). Patton (2002) describes a critical case as one that “would yield the most information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge: (p. 236). Therefore, the use of Illinois for this case study can be seen as “critical case sampling”. Critical-case sampling, a strategy used in purposeful sampling, “permits logical generalizations and maximum application of information to other cases” (p. 243).

Employing a critical-case sampling strategy allows the researcher to select cases that are believed to be important. Using a well-recognized system of this size with significant historical importance will yield information that other community colleges around the country can use at their respective colleges.

**Phase Two: Maximum Variation Sampling**

Maximum variation sampling was used for the four individual community colleges to for the individual participants in the second phase. Another sampling strategy used in qualitative research, maximum variation sampling allows for a broad range of cases to be selected “so that all types of cases along one or more dimensions are included in the research” (Johnson & Christensen, 2002, p. 220). A significant benefit of maximum variation sampling in that it negates the claim of the exclusion of certain types of cases. In addition, Johnson & Christensen (2002) assert that maximum variation sampling can be particularly useful during data analysis because it allows the researcher to search for
themes and patterns that occur across all the cases. Size of the community colleges was the factor used to distinguish the individual participants. One small, medium, large, and very large Illinois community college participated in semi-structured interviews. Maximum variation sampling was employed to ensure representation and diversity of different type of community colleges in Illinois as well as in the country. It was important to distinguish the size of the community colleges, as the strategic planning process may be contingent on the size of the institution. Obtaining the perspective of individuals from four different sizes of institutions will increase the understanding of leadership characteristics needed as it relates to the strategic planning process and allow for a differentiation based on the size of the community college. Hoepfl (1997) contends, maximum variation can yield detailed descriptions of each case that can help identify uniqueness, diversity and shared patterns that cut across cases. The underlying logic of maximum variation, according to Patton (2002) is “any common pattern that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared dimensions of the setting or phenomenon” (p. 234).

Ethical Considerations

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) maintain that there are two guidelines that dominate ethical research with human subjects; informed consent of the study participants and their protection from harm. Merriam (1998) adds the right to privacy and the avoidance of deception as other primary ethical issues for the researcher to be conscientious of. The guidelines ensure that the participants: “enter research projects voluntarily, understanding the nature of the study and the dangers and obligations that are involved”, and “are not exposed to risks that are greater than the gains they might
derive” (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007, p. 48). There were no anticipated risks to the study participants. All of the participants were professionals in the field of community college education and well acquainted with the topic of strategic planning. Nevertheless, the researcher took the following actions in furtherance of ethical considerations:

1. The researcher received approval from the university’s Institutional Research Review Board and adhered to all of its guidelines.

2. Each participant signed an informed consent form, which described the scope of the study and their participation (See Appendix C).

3. The researcher made certain that the anonymity of participants was maintained throughout the entire research, using only the Carnegie classifications to identify the participants throughout the study.
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA COLLECTION & STRATEGIES FOR DATA ANALYSIS

The purpose of this study is to explore the dimensions of leadership to define and compare strategic planning leadership practices in Illinois community colleges. The study seeks to identify the leader responsible for facilitating the strategic planning process, the impact of their role, and how they influence the process. In addition, the study examines the similarities, commonalties, and differences in the strategic planning process among Illinois community colleges. This chapter provides a discussion of the data collection procedures and strategies for data analysis employed in the study.

Data Collection

“Understanding the case in its totality, as well as the intensive, holistic descriptions and analysis characteristic of a case study, mandates both breadth and depth of data collection” (Merriam 2001, p. 134). Data collection is “the vehicle through which the researcher collects information to answer research questions and defend conclusions and recommendations based upon research findings” (Mertens, 1998, p. 285). Yin (1994) suggests that there are six data sources for case study research: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts. Hoepfl (1997) states that the two prevailing forms of data collection associated with qualitative inquiry are interviews and observation. However, since a mixed method model was used for data collection and analysis, the researcher also made use of surveys to collect data. Babbie (1995), the advantage of survey research is that it allows you to capture data from a larger group and provides a snapshot of the real world. Surveys, interviews and field notes were the data collection methods used for this study.
Sequential Mixed Method

A sequential mixed method is a part of the mixed model design and was used for the data collection in this study. A mixed method is a way of collecting, analyzing, and integrating both quantitative and qualitative data within a single study for the purpose of gaining a better understanding of the research question or problem (Tashakkori and Teddie 2003; Creswell et al. 1996). In this type of data collection, two phases exist, a quantitative and a qualitative phase. Figure 5 illustrates the combining of these two paradigms. SenGupta (1993) asserts, “the order in which the different methods are implemented have a direct bearing on the purpose of mixed-methods designs” (p. 4). In a sequential mixed-method design, first, the researcher uses a quantitative method to collect and analyze numeric data. The survey was used for the first phase of this research study, while interviews were used for the second phase of the study. Ivankova, Creswell, and Stick (2006) explain “The second, qualitative, phase builds on the first, quantitative, phase”, and is used to help
explain, understand or elaborate on the results obtained from the quantitative phase (p. 5). Miles and Huberman (1994) adds that employing this type a data collection method can be useful as the qualitative data can be used to supplement, validate, explain, illuminate, or reinterpret quantitative data collected from the same participants or site. SenGupta (1993) concurs that a typical example of a mixed-method designs “would be the combination of a questionnaire or a scale and interviews representing the quantitative and qualitative components respectively” (p. 4). This study employed two complementary data collection strategies; a survey and interviews. In addition, the researcher also made use of field notes.

Phase One: Surveys

According to Babbie (1995), survey is the best method available in collecting data to describe a large population. Often referred to as questionnaires, mail surveys were used in this study to examine all of the single-campus community colleges in the state of Illinois. Salant and Dillman (1994) suggest that mail surveys are best suited to survey people for whom reliable addresses are available and who are likely to respond accurately and completely in writing. Because the researcher was able to obtain all of the correct addresses for the institutional participants from the ICCB mail listing mailing the surveys were considered the most appropriate strategy. In addition, surveys are also quick way to provide information about “the characteristics, behavior, or opinions of a particular population” (Salant and Dillman, 1994, p. 10)

Phase Two: Interviews

Face-to-face interviews provide a distinct advantage by providing the researcher an opportunity to establish rapport with participants and gain their cooperation (Leedy and
Leedy and Ormrod (2001) further maintain that these types of interviews yield the highest response rates in research. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) purport, “the interview is used to gather descriptive data in the subjects’ own words so that the researcher can develop insights on how subjects interpret some piece of the world” (p. 103). The authors further indicate that interviews provide an opportunity for the interviewer to have a significant amount of autonomy to pursue or probe various topics. In addition, interviews also allow participants to offer explanations and give the interviewer a chance to seek clarifications and seek follow-up information (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001).

There are various types of interviews, which can range from highly structured, semi-structured, to unstructured. Patton (1990) describes three types of qualitative interviewing: 1) informal, conversational interviews; 2) semi-structured interviews; and 3) standardized, open-ended interviews. A semi-structured interview was used for this study (See Appendix D for interview questions). A semi-structured interview “contains a mix of more and less structured questions. Usually, specific information in desired from all the participants, this forms the highly structured section of the interview” (Merriam, 2002, p. 13). However, in semi-structured interviews, the majority of the interview is guided by questions or issues that the researcher wants to further explore. A semi-structured interview guide or schedule was used by the researcher with each participant. Patton (2002) cites several advantages of using semi-structured interview. A semi-structured interview guide (a) gathers information efficiently, (b) ensures a modicum of consistency and flexibility, (c) provides direction for the actual interview,
and (d) allows for easier data analysis, and (f) provides an instrument capable of
inspection (Patton, 2002).

Field Notes

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) define field notes as “the written account of what the
researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and
reflecting on the data in a qualitative study” (p. 118-119). Field notes can be either
descriptive or reflective, and both types of field notes were utilized for this study.
According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), descriptive field notes are used to objectively
record the setting, people, actions, and conversations, while reflective field notes are
reverberations of the researcher’s personal account of the observation, including their
frame of mind, ideas, thoughts, and concerns. Descriptive field notes include (1)
portraits of the subjects; (2) reconstruction of dialogue; (3) description of physical
setting; (4) accounts of particular events; (5) depiction of activities; and (6) the
observer’s behavior (Bogdan and Biklen 2007). According to Patton (2002) reflective
field notes are used to reflect and elaborate on the interview and “is a time of quality
control to guarantee that the data obtained will be useful, reliable and authentic (p. 384).

Research Process

The research process was characterized by two phases, which are outlined in
in Table 7. A survey was used in the first phase to represent the quantitative aspect of
this of study. The intent of the quantitative phase of data collection in this study was to
compare the similarities and differences of how Illinois community colleges engage in
the strategic planning process, and to gain initial insight into the leadership role of
strategic planning at these community colleges.
Table 7. Research Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Phase One</th>
<th>Phase Two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timeline</strong></td>
<td>March-May 2008</td>
<td>June-July 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sampling</strong></td>
<td>Purposeful</td>
<td>Multiple Variation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants</strong></td>
<td><strong>Institutional</strong>-All Illinois community colleges N=25</td>
<td>Individual- One small, one medium, one large, one very large community college that returned the survey (postmark dates) N=4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Collection</strong></td>
<td>Mail survey, follow-up e-mail survey</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews, field notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Descriptive statistics</td>
<td><em>A priori</em> themes and coding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A survey was developed by an institutional researcher who is in charge of strategic planning at a large community college in Illinois (See Appendix E). Having an expert in the field to develop the survey brought reliability to the instrument. The survey was used for the institutional participants because it was convenient and people completing the survey tend to more truthful than with face-to-face or telephone interviews. A letter accompanying the survey was mailed to all 38 community colleges in the state (See Appendix F). The letter introduced the scope of the study, and included the brief survey and a self-addressed stamped envelop to return the survey. The letter also invited any of the participants to be included in the second phase of the study. The address and contact information for each institution was found on the ICCB website. Fortunately, the institutional researcher at the community college where the researcher is employed sent out the letters to each community college institutional research person on the college’s letterhead. The researcher believed leaders of strategic planning from other community
colleges around the state would more likely respond to a request for information from a colleague on behalf of graduate student. Greer, Chuchinprakarn, and Seshadri (2000) suggest that the response rates for mail surveys tend to be low. Because of the extremely low response rate for mail surveys, follow-up reminders e-mails were sent to participants, with an option to complete the survey on-line. The use of electronic mail to conduct survey research is reflective of the unparalleled growth in advanced technology as well as increased accessibility of the Internet. Closed-ended questions were used for the survey, with the exception of the title of the person leading the strategic planning process. Close-ended questions were used in the survey because they are easy to code and analyze (McBurney, 1994).

Descriptive analysis of the survey provided insight and direction for the qualitative phase of the study, which encompassed semi-structured interviews with four of the community colleges from the larger pool. The purpose of this phase was to delve more into the lived experiences of strategic planning leaders at community colleges. The criterion to participate in the second phase of the study was size of the institution. The Carnegie classification was used to select one small, medium, large, and very large community college that returned the survey to participate the second phase. Because the Carnegie classification uses an institution’s Fall FTE to determine its size category, Fall 2007 data was used to classify the colleges (See Appendix G). Once the colleges were classified by size, the postmark date of those that returned the initial survey was used to select the participants. Interviews were used for the individual participants. The interview questions were pre-screened by strategic planners employed at community colleges in the district where the researcher is employed. The questions were revised
based on their feedback before being used with the study’s individual participants. The researcher phoned each of the representatives from the colleges selected to establish a convenient time and place the interviews. Each telephone call was followed up with an e-mail requesting an interview and providing more details about the study (See Appendix H). Interestingly, each of the first participants in each size classification agreed to participate in the study.

The researcher traveled to each of the colleges for the interviews. Interviews were scheduled by appointment and ranged in time from 30 to 45 minutes. Each participant signed two informed consent forms, kept a copy and the researcher placed a copy on file (See Appendix C). To ensure that no information was lost, all of the interviews were audio tape-recorded. The researcher informed each participant at the beginning of the interview that it would be taped. As soon as possible, after each interview, the researcher wrote the corresponding field notes. The interviews were then transcribed. To ensure accuracy of the transcription, they were reviewed by the researcher and were then e-mailed to each participant for clarification and/or further elaboration (See Appendix I). Three of the four participants had no corrections to the transcripts. Corrections and clarifications were provided by one of the participants and that transcript was revised. Although follow-up interviews were included as an additional component of the data collection process, no follow-up interviews were necessary.

**Strategies for Data Analysis**

The way in which data is analyzed is critical in any research study. Yin (1994) suggests that every case study should begin with a general analytical strategy. With regards to case studies, it is the analytical strategy that provides the researcher with a
system for setting priorities for data analysis. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggest that
data analysis is a systematic way of arranging the data in a study. The strategies used
to analyze data rest upon the methods used for data collection. Figure 6 illustrates a
modified version of Ivankova, Creswell, and Stick’s (2006) model for mixed method data
collection and analysis that was implemented for this study. The authors argue that a
“graphical representation of the mixed-methods procedures helps a researcher visualize
the sequence of the data collection, the priority of either method, and the connecting
and mixing points of the two approaches within a study” (p.14-15). Although qualitative
data collection was the priority for this study, quantitative methods were also used. Polit
and Hungler (1995) argue:

The purpose of data analysis, regardless of the type of data one has
and regardless of the tradition that has driven its collection, is to
impose some order on a large body of information so that some
general conclusions can be reached and communicated in a research
report.
Figure 6. Visual Model for Mixed Data Collection and Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Product</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Data Collection</td>
<td>• Survey mailed to all CC in Illinois (n=38)</td>
<td>• Numeric data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Follow-up email survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Remark Software</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Data Analysis</td>
<td>• Mean, variance, percentages, and frequency counts</td>
<td>• Summary statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connecting Quantitative and</td>
<td>• Use of Carnegie to select one participant from each group using multiple</td>
<td>• Descriptive statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Phases</td>
<td>variation (n=4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Data Collection</td>
<td>• Development of interview questions</td>
<td>• Individual participants (n=4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative Data Analysis</td>
<td>• Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>• Interview protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Field notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Documents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration of the Quantitative</td>
<td>• Coding &amp; \textit{a prior} theme analysis</td>
<td>• Text data (transcripts and image documents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Qualitative Results</td>
<td>• Cross thematic analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Interpretation and explanation of the quantitative and qualitative</td>
<td>• Codes and themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>results</td>
<td>• Similar &amp; different themes and categories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recommendations for future research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from Ivankova, Creswell, and Stick’s 2006)
Step One: Data Reduction

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) define data analysis as a process of "working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, coding them, synthesizing them, and searching for patterns" (p. 159). According Patton (2002) noted that while there is an inherent practice of separating the stages of data collection and analysis, the emergent design of naturalistic or qualitative inquiry makes that distinction “far less absolute” (p. 436). In Figure 7, Miles and Huberman (1994) propose a model for data analysis that is comprised of three concurrent flows of activity; data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The authors describe this flow of activity as three interwoven streams that form an iterative process that occur before, during, and after data collection. “Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data…” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 10). The process of data reduction, often referred to as data condensation, afforded the
researcher the opportunity dissect, sharpen, discard, and sort the data in an organized way.

**Phase One: Survey**

In phase one of the study, the quantitative data obtained from the surveys was reduced using several descriptive statistical analyses. The use of descriptive statistics allowed the data from the survey to be clearly interpreted to help better understand phenomena being studied. In descriptive statistics, the researcher uses statistics that describe, summarize, or explain the data. According to Johnson and Christensen (2002), descriptive statistics are used by researchers in an attempt to “convey the essential characteristics of the data by arranging the data into a more interpretable…and by calculating numerical indexes” (p, 434). The data analysis strategies that were used to analyze the survey included both summary and descriptive statistics. Basic summary statistics included were mean, variance, percentages, and frequency counts. One of the driving questions of this study was to identify the similarities, commonalties, and differences of the strategic planning process at Illinois community colleges. These selected strategies were most beneficial in addressing this particular driving question.

**Phase Two: Interviews**

While qualitative research tends to favor the use inductive analysis of data, both inductive and deductive analyses were used for data reduction in the second phase of the study. Deductive analysis was used to analyze the data according to an existing framework, whereas inductive analysis “involves discovering patterns, themes, and categories” that emerges out of the data (Patton 2002, p. 453). Deductive analysis was
used with *a priori* themes obtained through the review of literature related to leadership theories. Dominant concepts from trait, behavioral, contingency/situational, and transformational leadership theories served as *a priori* themes for data analysis. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), “the qualitative researcher uses inductive analysis, which means that categories, themes, and patterns come from the data” (p. 215). These categories are not imposed prior to data analysis. Inductive analysis was used through open coding. “Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 56). Open coding was used to reduce the initial data obtained from the interviews to ensure all the emergent themes were captured. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), open coding is a strategy used in data analysis to name and categorize the phenomenon through a close examination of the data. Miles and Huberman (1994) caution that while it is important to dissect the data meaningfully, the relations of the parts should remain intact. “Coding allowed the researcher to transform chucks of data by identifying code words, and then grouping them around a particular concept in the data. During the process of data reduction, the researcher, although employed a priori themes, through the use of open coding was able to allowed any additional themes to emerge from the data. This process allowed for a more robust investigation and analysis of the data.

**Trustworthiness of the Study**

In any research process, it is incumbent upon a researcher to ensure that the research is both reliable and valid. When employing a qualitative interpretive paradigm, reliability addresses the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the data while validity
refers to the creditability, trustworthiness, as well as overall plausibility of the research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) developed a set of naturalistic criteria for determining trustworthiness in research: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability. This nomenclature is considered more appropriate for qualitative research and replaces standard terms associated with traditional research, such as internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity found quantitative methodologies. Credibility replaces internal validity, transferability replaces external validity, while reliability and objectivity are analogous to dependability and confirmability.

Patton (1990) argues that credibility is dependent on richness of the information gathered and on the analytical abilities of the researcher. According to Merriam (1998) credibility refers to the congruence of the findings with reality. The researcher assumes that multiple realities exist and tries to effectively represent them. Credibility is the degree to which the interpretations of the findings in the study are accurate and truthful. Credibility can be also understood as one dimension of methodological rigor (Lincoln and Guba, 1986, Patton, 2002). Credibility helps to ensure accuracy of the evidence and is connected the trustworthiness of the individual who collects and analyze the data.

Transferability is the degree to which the research findings can be transferred to other contexts or settings. It is important for the researcher to describe the context and the assumptions that are central to the research. However, the literature notes that is the researcher cannot identify the transferability of their own findings; it becomes responsibility of the researcher who wishes to transfer the results to a different context to make the decision of the transferability. Other authors use different idioms for
transferability. Stake (19950 refers to transferability as “naturalistic generalizations”, while Eisner (1991) coins transferability is a form of “retrospective generalization” (p. 205).

Lincoln & Guba (1985) contends that is the credibility of the study that also makes it dependable. “Since there can be no validity without reliability (and thus no credibility without dependability), a demonstration of the former is sufficient to establish the latter” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). Even so, the authors propose the use of an inquiry audit to enhance dependability. According to Miles and Huberman (1994) dependability concerns itself with whether the research process was conducted in a consistent and stable manner. In addition, “dependability emphasizes the need of the researcher to account for the ever-changing context within which the research occurs” (Lichtman, 2006, p. 195).

"Confirmability", a term coined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), refers to the degree to which the researcher can demonstrate the neutrality of the research interpretations. Mertens (1998) adds, “confirmability means that the data and their interpretation are not figments of the researcher imagination” (p. 185). Patton (1990) suggests that the researcher should strive for "empathic neutrality" (p. 55), maintaining that empathy "is a stance toward the people one encounters, while neutrality is a stance toward the findings" (p. 58). The legitimacy of the data analyzed from the study is important in order to reduce researcher bias. Yin (1994) recommends a “chain of evidence” to minimize the researcher’s biases. Earlier Lincoln & Guba (1985), referred to this chain of evidence as a “confirmability audit”, that includes 1) raw data; 2) analysis notes; 3)
reconstruction and synthesis products; 4) process notes; 5) personal notes; and 6) preliminary developmental information (pp. 320-321).

The researcher employed several strategies to meet the four criteria in this study; 1) credibility, 2) transferability, 3) dependability, and 4) confirmability. Multiple variation sampling was employed to ensure that the participants represented the diversity of the larger population. Both the survey and the interview questions were developed by a practitioner in the field of strategic planning in community colleges. In addition, the interview questions were reviewed by other strategic planners, not included in the study, and adjusted based on their feedback. Member checks “an important criterion in establishing credibility” were also used during data collection and analysis (Mertens, 1998, p. 182). The researcher reviewed the interview transcript several times and checked for possible pitfalls in the interview transcriptions, including grammar and spellings error and missing or mistyped words. The transcripts were also sent to the participants for further review and accuracy, and adjustments were made based on their responses (See Appendix L). The researcher also attempted to reduce any potential of biases by allowing the phenomenon under study to present itself through the lived experiences of the participants, this was evident through the use of rich, thick quotes from the participants. This was another reason that participants were asked to review and confirm the accuracy of interview transcripts. The use of memos was also incorporated in the data analysis. Miles and Huberman note that memos “tie together different pieces of data into a recognizable cluster often to show that those data are instances of a general concept” (p. 72). Memo writing was used throughout the data collection and analysis process to capture the researcher’s reflections and insights.
regarding the study, the interviews, the opinions of the participants, and to highlight key concepts. An audit trail consisting of the each original survey with returned envelopes, auto-tapes and transcribed interviews, field notes and personal notes, and all e-mail correspondences were compiled and are being kept by the researcher in a locked file cabinet.

Triangulation is also a method used to strengthen the rigor of the study. Triangulation is inherent to mixed-method designs, as it is the most commonly used purpose of mixed methods. Through triangulation, the researcher seeks to enhance validity by finding convergence of corroboration of results from different methods (Green et.al, 1989). Specifically, triangulation strengthen the robustness of the findings in the study. The rationale for triangulation, as noted by Green et. al (1989, p. 259) is:

To increase the validity of constructs and inquiry results by counteracting or maximizing the heterogeneity of irrelevant sources of variance attributable especially to inherent method bias but also to inquirer bias, bias of substantive theory, biases of inquiry context.

Triangulation was achieved through the use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods. The convergence of multiple sources of data including the results of the survey, the transcribed interviews, field notes, and the personal thoughts and reflections of the researcher provided a triangulated inquiry that builds accuracy and validity in the research findings.

**Researcher as the Instrument**

Consideration of the role of the researcher is important in empirical inquiry. The researcher is the conduit through which all information flows and is the primary research
instrument in qualitative research. The researcher serves as the vehicle in which the
data will be collected and interpreted. Qualitative research requires a mutual standpoint,
researcher to participant, human being to human being. Miles and Huberman (1994)
cite several characteristics of a good qualitative researcher-as-instrument, which
include:

- Some familiarity with the phenomenon and the setting under study
- Strong conceptual interests
- A multidisciplinary approach, as opposed to a narrow grounding or focus in a
  single discipline
- Good "investigative" skills, including doggedness, the ability to draw people out,
  and the ability to ward off premature closure (p. 38)

While some would argue that the impact of the researcher’s subjectivity should be
minimized (Strauss and Corbin, 1990), a constructivist/interpretivist approach advocates
the importance of researcher reflexivity. The researcher mutually shapes and is shaped
by the research. Reflexivity refers to the identification of both the biases and
assumptions of the researcher and the positive affects they can pose of the
researcher’s decisions and interpretations. In addition, “reflexivity reminds the
qualitative inquirer to be attentive and conscious of the origins of one’s own
of the self in qualitative research, the researcher is able to sort through the biases and
think about how they affect various aspects of the research, especially interpretation of
meaning” (p. 206-207).
Background of Researcher

Strauss and Corbin (1990) assert that the researcher must have "theoretical sensitivity", which "refers to the attribute of having insight, the ability to give meaning to data, the capacity to understand, and capability to separate the pertinent from that which isn't" (p. 42). The authors argue that this theoretical sensitivity can be obtained through professional literature, as well as through both professional and personal experiences. Lichtman (2006) adds the researcher’s own history influences the research. Consequently, researcher’s background and knowledge of community colleges were central to each step of the research process from the design, data collection and analysis to the interpretation and conclusion. It was also important in collecting and analyzing the data. The researcher has been involved in community college education for over fourteen years, in the City Colleges of Chicago. Her professional career has focused on social work, public administration, and community college education (See Appendix J for her resume). She attended the community college and received and Associate in Arts degree in 1996. Her first employment with community colleges was in 1995 as a part-time English tutor. She holds a Bachelors of Arts degree in Psychology, a Masters of Social Work and a Masters in Public Administration. She has interacted with the community college in various capacities; as a student, a part-time employee, a full-time unionized academic advisor, an adjunct faculty member, a Director of Transfer Center, an Assistant Dean of Student Development, and now as an Associate Dean of Enrollment Management and Services. Her progression to higher administration in the community college has been shaped by her dedication and commitment to community college education. The researcher
strongly believes that the community college laid the foundation for her educational success.

The researcher’s perspective on strategic planning in community college has developed, not only through research, but in part by her experiences. She has been involved in the study of strategic planning since 1999. This interest was sparked through her first master’s capstone/thesis which addressed strategic planning in human service organizations. This topic was expanded in her second master’s capstone/thesis which researched strategic planning in public and non-profit organizations, which also included higher education. Since 2002, she has been actively involved in strategic planning at the community college level, serving on the strategic planning committee at her community college. Both this theoretical and practical understanding of strategic planning and community colleges served the researcher well for this study.

Since the researcher, as Mertens (1998) asserts is responsible for the critical decisions regarding questions regarding data collection and analysis, significant attention is focused on researcher’s identity as well as the values, assumptions, beliefs, or biases that the researcher brings to the study. The researcher was fully cognizant of the particular biases that are brought to the study. Because of her personal and professional experiences in the field of community college education and strategic planning, the researcher exercised sensitivity to her positionality and how it may have influenced the study design and findings.
CHAPTER FIVE
DATA PRESENTATION

Twenty-five community colleges from across the state of Illinois participated the study. These community colleges ranged in size from small to very large, and included the rural, suburban, and urban areas of the state. Individual from these community college who are responsible for leading strategic planning took time out of their busy schedules to answer a 12-question survey about their strategic planning process and strategic planning leadership at their colleges. All of those participating in the survey had an opportunity to take part in a follow-up in-depth interview. Using the Carnegie classification to ensure diversity in the colleges, four participants agreed to engage in in-depth interviews with the researcher. This chapter presents the data and provides a discussion of the data obtained from both the survey and the interviews.

Step Two: Data Display

The second component of data analysis purported in Miles and Huberman’s (1994) model of data analysis is data display. Data display is a visual format of organized and compressed information. The usefulness of a display, according to Miles and Huberman (1994), “presents information systematically, so the user can draw valid conclusions and take needed action” (p. 91). All data displays “are designed to assemble organized information into immediately accessible, compact forms so that the analyst can see what is happening and either draw justified conclusions or move on to the next step of analysis” (Miles and Huberman, p. 11). The authors contend that if the data sets are methodically and logically arranged, they will be able to answer the research questions of the study. Generally, data obtained through quantitative methods
are displayed through the use of graphs and figures, whereas qualitative data is displayed through extended text, including rich quotes and phrases. In any case, a data display should represent a descriptive and explanatory exposition of both the written and the visual data obtained in the study. The data collection for this study occurred in two phases. The survey provided preliminary insight into the study, while the second phase, through the use the interviews, allowed the researcher to delve more into the experiences of the participants.

Phase One: Survey Results

The survey was designed to capture basic information regarding Illinois community college’s strategic planning process in order to ascertain the similarities and differences across the state. The survey was distributed to all 38 single-campus community colleges in Illinois. A total of 25 (67.5%) community colleges surveyed responded and provided information about the strategic planning process at their institutions. A sample size of this percentage will allow for generalizations to be made relative to the responses about strategic planning leadership at community colleges in Illinois.

For the purposes of data display, only the condensed item analysis display for the survey results for each survey question with a brief summary preceding each chart is provided. An item statistics and a detailed analysis report of the entire survey can be found in Appendices K and L.

As shown in Figure 9, the majority of the respondents (92%) indicated that their college does a strategic plan, while 1 respondent (4%) revealed that their college does not have a strategic plan. One participant did not respond to the question.
Figure 9. Results of Survey Question 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Mean: 1.04</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>92.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10 represents the cycle of the strategic plan, number of years that the strategic plan covers, for each college. Twenty-two participants (88%) responded, with 1 participant indicating that their plan covers a single year, 3 indicated that it covers 2 years, 6 indicated that it covers 3 years, while over half (54.5%) indicated that their plan covers 5 years. Three participants (12%) did not respond to the question.

Figure 10. Results of Survey Question 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Mean: 3.32</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a single year plan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 year plan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 year plan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 year plan</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 11 displays the responses of the participants regarding how often the college undertakes in-depth strategic planning process culminating with a plan. Almost half, (48%) of those who answered the question noted that they undertake a complete their strategic planning process every 5 years.

Figure 11. Results of survey Question 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Mean: 2.96</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>every year</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>every 2 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>every 3 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>every 5 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to elicit information regarding the amount of time the community colleges commit to both the strategic planning process and the resultant plan in an effort to meet declared goals, the participants were asked how often they review their plan to evaluate their progress. Figure 12 illustrates that 14 community colleges (over 63%), review their plans once or twice a year, 5 indicated every 3-6 months, 1 reviews the plan every 1-2 months, and 2 participants indicated that they review their plan at least once a month.
Developing a strategic plan can encompass a great deal of work, including conducting an environmental scan and a SWOT (**Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats**) analysis as well developing goals and objectives for programs, departments, and the institution as a whole. This is often a daunting process.

Participants were asked if their colleges had a designated strategic planning committee tasked with this responsibility. As Figure 13 illustrates, almost three-quarters (73.9%) of the respondents indicated that their college does have a strategic planning committee, while one-quarter responded that they did not. Two participants did not respond to the question.
Strategic planning committees are charged with the work of creating the strategic plan. Since this responsibility takes a substantiate amount of time from each participant’s job obligations, how many people are involved in the process in community colleges. Of the 18 participants that responded to this question, Figure 14 reveals that 44% of respondents indicated that their committees were comprised of 11 or more people.
Having a large committee in itself, does not translate into a team capable of working well together to complete the task. Having the key people, with the right skill set is vital to the work of strategic planning in a community college. In order to gauge the make-up and thus, the general skills of the committee membership, participants were asked to list the participants serving on their committees. As shown in Figure 15, 56% of the respondents indicated the Vice President of Academic Affairs and professional staff on the committee, 52% had the Vice President of Business &Finance and faculty, while 48% had both the Vice President of Student Affairs and deans on the committee. Unsurprisingly, 60% of the respondents indicated that the college’s institutional researcher/planner serve on the strategic planning committee. Six participants did not answer this question.
Since strategic planning leadership was the primary focus of this research, the survey was designed to provide initial probing into the leadership of strategic planning committee. Participants were asked if there was a single person responsible for leading their strategic planning activities. Of the 23 respondents, over three-fourths (80%)
pointed out that one person was responsible for leading the strategic planning process at their college.

*Figure 16. Results of survey Question 8*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants were asked to provide the title of the person in charge of leading strategic planning. This question also provided insight into who might be a candidate to be interviewed for the second phase of the study. Table 8 represents the list of specific titles identified by the respondents. Not surprising, of the colleges surveyed, 90% have administrators leading strategic planning. Fifty-seven percent of these administrator have planning or research in their title, 28% are at the Associate or Vice President level, 14% are the actual President of the college, while only 1 person was tenured faculty and 1 an appointed community member. One respondent identified two people for being in charge of leading their strategic planning activities.
Table 8. Title of Person Leading Strategic Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenured Faculty</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Planning</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Vice President of Academic Planning &amp; Assessment</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Director of Planning &amp; Institutional Effectiveness</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Institutional Research &amp; Planning</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appointed Community Member</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President of Planning &amp; Organizational Effectiveness</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist. to the President for Planning and Institutional Improvement</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President of Academic Services</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President of Community &amp; Economic Development</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist. to the Vice President of Student &amp; Academic Affairs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President of Institutional Advancement &amp; Research</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director of Institutional Research</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Dean of Institutional Effectiveness</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Director of Research &amp; Planning AND Vice President of Institutional Advancement</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 17 represents the participants’ responses to how the person identified in Table 8 was selected to lead the strategic planning process. Of the respondents, the majority (60%) pointed out that the person was appointed by the President and another 35% identified that the task was found in the person’s job description.
Because the amount of time devoted to facilitating strategic planning leads to competency and expertise, it was important to discover how long the person spearheading the process has lead the specific institution's strategic planning process. Figure 18 illustrates the length of time the person identified has been leading the process.
Stability in the leadership role is vital to the success of the process and the plan itself.

Figure 19 shows that the leadership role of strategic planning at 90% of the colleges does not rotate.

The survey was designed to provide insight into the significance of strategic planning leadership in Illinois single-campus community colleges, as well as summary statistics.
and descriptive statistics about strategic planning. A cursory examination of the summary and descriptive statistics suggests that all the strategic planning processes were similar across the Illinois community colleges participating in the study.

Phase Two: Interview Results

In a sequential mixed-method design the researcher uses a quantitative method to collect and analyze numeric data. While the results of the survey were used to garner initial insight into how the community colleges engage in strategic planning, the researcher also used the survey as a means to select those participates for the second phase of the study. Ivankova, Creswell, and Stick (2006) explain “The second, qualitative, phase builds on the first, quantitative, phase”, and is used to help explain, understand or elaborate on the results obtained from the quantitative phase (p. 5).

Using the Carnegie classification to ensure multiple variation and diversity among the community college participants, individuals from four of the colleges that participated in the initial survey, agreed to engage in subsequent interviews with the researcher. Face to face interviews with individuals who lead strategic planning activities at their community colleges allowed for a breadth and depth of dialogue, which could not have been achieved through the survey alone. All four of the participants were administrators and their titles and corresponding college size can be found in Table 10.
Table 9. Interview Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>College Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number 1</td>
<td>Assist. to the Vice President of Student &amp; Academic Affairs</td>
<td>Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FTE: 500–1,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 2</td>
<td>Director of Institutional Research &amp; Planning</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FTE: 2,000–4,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 3</td>
<td>Executive Director of Planning &amp; Institutional Effectiveness</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FTE: 5,000–9,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number 4</td>
<td>Associate Vice President of Academic Planning &amp; Assessment</td>
<td>Very Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FTE: 10,000+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conceptually ordered displays were used for the analysis of the four leadership theories used in the study. Conceptually ordered displays are one of the four major types of descriptive displays described by Miles and Huberman (1994). They are appropriate to use when “the analyst may have some a priori ideas about items that derive from the same theory or relate to the same overarching theme” (Miles and Huberman, 1994, p. 127). Using a priori concepts drawn from the four leadership theories used as the theoretical framework for the study, the goal was to develop analysis charts in order to better understand the interviewees’ responses. The use of charting provided a way to organize and categorize the data, keep consistent with the established audit trail and allow the researcher to interpret the data and draw conclusions.

Amazingly, no responses contained concepts related to the theories of trait, contingency/situational, or transformational leadership were found. However, it was the
two *a priori* concepts from behavioral leadership that were evident in the responses of all of the interview participants.

Two seemingly contradictory concepts related to leadership style of the person spearheading the strategic planning process from the study participants emerged from the findings. Concern for people/considerate leader was the first behavioral leadership *a priori* theme found in the interviews. This concept reflects a leadership style, in which the leader expresses appreciation for good work, stresses the importance of job satisfaction, maintains and strengthens self-esteem of subordinate and is supportive. This leader has interpersonal relationships with group members that are characterized by mutual trust, respect for followers as well as their ideas and concerns, and consideration for their thoughts, feelings, and overall well-being. The considerate leader also has the aptitude to build communication, establish rapport, and elicit and maintain group participation.

Concern for a task/initiating leader was the other concept from behavioral leadership theory evident as an *a priori* theme found in the interviews. Contrary to the first theme, aspects of this concept are related to undertaking an action illustrated by planning and organizing the work of group and the tasks to be completed. The initiating leader is more concerned with maintaining standards and procedures, establishing work schedules, meeting deadlines, and making detailed decisions, instead of their relationship with group members.

**Participant 1: Small Illinois Community College**

The following responses were obtained from the individual interviewed at a small community college (FTE: 500–1,999). All responses show a high degree of commonality
corresponding with the concept of *concern for people/considerate leader* found in behavioral leadership theory. The following responses were obtained from the individual interviewed from the small community college.

1. I try to roll together ideas and present them in such a way that we can discuss them openly.

2. Trying to facilitate a respectful, professional environment for people to have conversations.

3. Listen to input, not to discount people, but to really look at it from a consensus building perspective.

4. I think I have the trust of people at the institution and so we really were able to work well together as a team and create what I think is a great strategic plan.

5. I felt good that people were going to me and saying why is it here? Because that shows a level of trust.

6. I am a good listener. I am a good summarizer. I am respectful of the people I work with. I attempt to make sure that everyone at the table is heard. I really support the whole consensus model of approval.

7. So its actually communication both ways. Being flexible….one of the other strengths was being able to communicate with other people.

8. Being able to listen to people and have those conversations and understand the connection.

9. It’s my responsibility and challenge to make sure that everybody gets equal play in reporting and in my work with the Board and helping them to understand.
The following responses were obtained from the individual interviewed from the small community college. All responses show a high degree of commonality corresponding with the concept of concern for task/initiating leader found in behavioral leadership theory.

1. I am a teacher by trade and so I have some of those skills, those facilitating skills that were necessary to be able to move into the position, the activity forward.

2. My role was and continues to be keeping people on track.

3. So my role, then, is to say ok, hey lets pull all these pieces together.

4. I am a teacher and that really how a capture the work that I do is with that ability to multi-task and handle all aspects of project.

5. So I have the ability to summarize and to analyze what’s been done to lead us logically through the process.

6. Part of that is because we are a small institution and I really had a sense of where we were going. We had 100 faculty and more divisions and departments then I could care to count that I can still pull it all together and I pulled it all together with…and with the team.

7. I am use to working with a class calendar and a syllabus that is very restrictive…so working with that timetable, keeping people on task, having an end product in mind… So again, just keeping people going. Making sure people stuck with it.
8. So it became tedious at times and I said look, here’s what we are going to do today, here’s what we are going to do today and it became manageable to people. It is an exhausting experience.

9. I have to make sure that people will report to me their progress because again I have to go to the Board.

10. Keeping people on track, really is the bigger picture which is still the same as creating the document itself and that’s making sure it continues to go forward.

Participant 2: Medium Illinois Community College

The following responses were obtained from the individual interviewed from the medium community college (FTE: 2000 – 4,999). All responses show a high degree of commonality with the concept of concern for people/considerate leader found in behavioral leadership theory. The following responses were obtained from the individual interviewed from the medium community college.

1. I’ve developed a fair amount of credibility within the organization in the short time that I have been here; I think that it makes it easy to lead the process, in a way.

2. But I would consider myself a person who tries to lead by developing consensus and collegiality, and by persuasion rather than coercion.

3. You just need to develop the personal relationships. It’s mostly in the personal/professional relationships that you’ve developed and in how clearly you can explain what you are trying to accomplish.

4. I think that the role right now is in conversation, in talking to people.
The following responses were obtained from the individual interviewed from the medium community college. All responses show high degree of commonality corresponding with the concept of concern for task/initiating leader found in behavioral leadership theory.

1. I coordinate all of our state reporting and most of the federal reporting. I also do institutional research in support of institutional decision-making, planning, institutional effectiveness, answer everybody’s questions, of course.

2. Keeping people on track, keeping myself on track (is my primary role as leader). Keeping us all on track and trying to follow the timeline.

3. I manage most of the nuts of bolts of it (strategic planning) myself.

4. I’m organized. I have to work with people and then get everybody’s schedule and time.

Participant 3: Large Illinois Community College

The following responses were obtained from the individual interviewed from the large community college (FTE: 5000 – 9,999). All responses show a high degree of commonality corresponding with the concept of concern for people/considerate leader found in behavioral leadership theory. The following responses were obtained from the individual interviewed from the medium community college.

1. I try to make sure that people understand.

2. It really isn’t about me. It’s about all of us collectively.

3. I think…very easy to get along with, very easy to get to know So I try to take a laid back approach in that sense. So I think people would consider me to me fair…
4. I came from academia, so I was a faculty member. I know what it's like to be a faculty member. I worked with students. I know what it's like to be a student. I was a graduate student myself, so a lot of the struggles that undergrads and grads go through, I can relate to and it's really helpful to have a leader who has had that experience. So I would say, caring…

5. So communication and buy-in is absolutely essential to making this work. People hear from me all the time and maybe they're getting sick of me.

6. I personally go, like I said, not only to economic development meeting, but to our faculty senate meetings, our support staff union, we have unionized support staff here. I go to their union president, I meet with her. I go to the student government meeting. I attend the President's cabinet. I attend every board meeting. So having a planning person that's out there is really important.

The following responses were obtained from the individual interviewed from the large community college. All responses show a high degree of commonality corresponding with the concept of concern for task/initiating leader found in behavioral leadership theory.

1. Most of what I do is planning, making sure that the objectives that we have set, which are measurable are evaluated periodically.

2. My job as the planner is to make sure that when they say that they are doing things, that we have a plan in place and to hold them to it.

3. So I don't see myself as the creator of the plan. I see myself as kind of a coach. I kind of facilitate it once they've come up with what they want to do.
4. Once we all decide that. My job is to make sure that we do it.

5. I think to be a planner, you have to be kind of anal retentive, in a way and make sure that everything is documented in tables and graphs and that’s what I do.

6. I’m disciplined and very organized. Being organized and being not afraid to bug people to get stuff done that you need is another important quality.

7. Organizing your thinking and making sure everything is thorough and complete is something that is a passion that I think people have that natural inclination if they want to be planners.

8. My role is to educate the group. Make sure that I communicate well and that they understand exactly what we need to do at each step of the way.

9. So I think my primary role with them is to educate them and to keep them on point. To make sure that they understand what our schedule is, what our timeline is, what products we need to have done by a certain time.

**Participant 4: Very Large Illinois Community College**

The following responses were obtained from the individual interviewed from the very large community college (FTE: 10,000 +). All responses show a high degree of commonality corresponding with the concept of concern for people/considerate leader found in behavioral leadership theory. The following responses were obtained from the individual interviewed from the medium community college.

1. My primary role is to ensure that all the stakeholders are involved and have some voice in the process.
2. My leadership style, I would say is collaborative. I also try to lead by example. I also rely on and try to bring the best out of people. So rather than be coercive manipulative, I try and represent all of the positive reasons why it would be good for us to engage in a healthy strategic planning activity and then I try…. I also try to find the people that are really interested and good hard workers and work with them.

3. Being a good listener, appreciating other peoples’ talents, not trying to go too fast. Trying to make sure everybody has a say of what is.

4. Before we make decision, letting everybody see what we are doing and those people that want to be involved, we invite them to get involved.

5. Try to include as many people as we possibly can and let everybody see that its an open and inclusive process.

6. You also definitely need to know how to work with people. So if you don’t have good people skills you need to learn those people skills. It’s very important.

7. You are going to have all kinds of issues and all kinds of people that don’t understand what’s going on. Raising objections, causing problems, hallway conversations, back door visits to the President, whatever… And you just have to be patient and you just have to stay with it.

The following responses were obtained from the individual interviewed from the very large community college. All responses show a high degree of commonality corresponding with the concept of concern for task/initiating leader found in behavioral leadership theory.
1. Getting them all on the same page.

2. Trying to get them to understand what strategic planning is and why we need to do it, Trying to get them to understand what a good outcome would be for us in terms of strategic planning.

3. I see strategic planning as more of a top down activity that you do at the highest level to try and determine what your decisions will be on the front lines…. more directive

4. People can’t make those decisions for themselves. They need to have (someone) sit down and say, this is who we are and this is what’s important to us and this is what we’re going to do… They really want direction.

**Step Three: Conclusion Drawing/Verification**

A discussion of the research findings allows the researcher to interpret the data, draw conclusion and make verifications. The researcher used Miles and Huberman’s (1994) third component of data analysis to draw conclusions from the data obtained in the study. Mile and Huberman (1994) outlines 13 tactics used for making meaning of the research findings. The authors note, the type of data displays used will invite the use of certain tactic. Since the research made use of *a priori* themes, the strategy noting patterns and themes was an integral part to drawing relevant and valid conclusions. Even though *a priori* theming was used, to make sure nothing was lost, any and all themes that emerged from the data were included.

Paramount to a useful and thus successful community college strategic planning process is the person in the leadership position. The leader is primarily charged with focusing the attention and energies of the people on the committee to complete the
assigned task. This person is ultimately responsible for the final document. However, production of a final document, is not the finality of the undertaking; the leader must also be able to turn the strategic plan into a living, breathing document that will guide the organization in meeting its objectives and accomplishing its goals. It is imperative for those leading the strategic planning committee understand this more encompassing dual role; a) guiding and directing the process, and b) facilitating the institution’s use of the plan. The study found that each of the four administrators interviewed perceived their role as involving coordinating facilitating the process, as well as building and fostering relationships of those serving on the committee. All of these traits and characteristics are consistent with behavioral leadership theory. Because each person in charge of strategic planning was an administrator, it was felt their position in the college role aided in their ability to influence the process. One administrator stated:

I think if a classified person was leading it or a faculty was leading it, I don’t get you'll get the same kind of buy-in. I think there is something about a higher level administrator that people say, oh this must be important or we must have to do this if someone at this level is leading this. So, yeah I would definitely say the leader of strategic planning, most effectively in a school like ours, needs to be a high level administrator.

The administrators interviewed recognized in order to successfully deliver an accurate and useful strategic involvement of other key players is critical. In order for strategic planning to be successful, it requires active participation and buy-in from all stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, administration, board of trustees, and
community members. The study found strategic planning is an inclusive process. Three of administrators indicated that they had formal strategic planning committees comprised of individuals from all stakeholders in the college. The other administrator stressed the importance of a team, but acknowledged that the college did not have a formal committee, but used ad hoc committees to do the work of strategic planning.

**Leader Versus Manager**

The age old debate regarding the difference between a leader and a manager is resurrected by the study’s use of the two concepts, concern for people and concern for task of behavioral leadership theory. While one concept is concerned with people, building and developing mutual trust in order to motivate people towards a vision, the other is devoted to planning and accomplishing tasks. Bennis (1989) argues:

> There is a profound difference between management and leadership, and both are important. To manage means to bring about, to accomplish, to have charge of or responsibility for, to conduct. Leading is influencing, guiding in a direction, course, action, opinion. The distinction is crucial" (p. 9).

While Kotter (1990) agrees and strongly contends that there are clear distinctions between leaders and managers. However, others including Yukl (1989), Gordon and Yukl (2004) along with Zaccaro and Horn (2003) describe the distinction as less apparent and describe the two as complementarily.

Yukl (1989) advocates for a balance between management and leadership and uses the term “managerial leadership” to describe the relationship. Interestingly, Hoff (1999) poses the following questions:
What is a leader? What is a manager? Are both needed for America’s institutions of higher education to remain viable entities as we approach the beginning of the twenty-first century? What attributes are characteristic of leaders, and of managers? Can individuals possess characteristics of both, therefore demonstrating both leadership and management capabilities? (p. 311).

The argument of which is most effective, the leader or the manager, serves as the fundamental criticism of behavioral leadership theory. Northouse (2004) argues that the behavioral leadership approach “has been unable to identify the universal behaviors that are associated with effective leadership” (p. 75). However, the theory of behavioral leadership clearly identifies the most effective leader as one who exhibits a high concern for people and relationships as well as accomplishing tasks and initiating the work that needs to be done. “Whenever leadership occurs, the leader is acting out on both task and relationship behaviors; the key to being an effective leader often rests on how the leader balances these two behaviors” *Northouse, 2004, p. 75). The study’s findings directly corroborates Northhouse’s premise.

This confluence of leadership and management skills is needed to successfully lead a strategic planning process at a community college. It is not often that one person will have all of the necessary skills to be both an inspiring leader and organized manager. Yet the study’s findings point to the required of both leadership and management skills for the leader of the strategic planning process. While the administrators interviewed tended to favor their role as managers, an understanding of the need to build trust and relationships were also identified as being important, providing the balance to effectively
lead strategic planning at their colleges. This acknowledged need for a balance in leadership can be found in Hersey & Blanchard (1978) managerial grid for behavioral leadership theory. The optimal strategy for managers, according to the writers, is to maximize attitudes and actions that reinforce both concern people and concern for tasks.

**Emerging Theme: Accreditation**

While the research focused on strategic planning leadership, somewhat surprising was the emergence of the theme of accreditation. The quality of the U. S. higher education system is recognized throughout world because of its unique reliance on accreditation to ensure quality and to foster a culture of continued improvement. It is apparent the leaders involved in strategic planning for Illinois community colleges are acutely aware of the importance of the strategic plan plays in institutional accreditation.

The practice of educational accreditation has existed in the United States for well over one hundred years. Accreditation is a voluntary process whose purpose is to ensure quality, accountability and improvement of educational institutions and programs of study. This is achieved through a peer review conducted by external evaluators from the larger higher education community. Institutions of higher education voluntarily engage in accreditation to demonstrate a level of quality in their institution and programs for a variety of purposes such as certifying eligibility to receive federal funds. The federal government itself does not accredit institutions. The recognition by the United States Department of Education of accrediting agencies applies only to post-secondary education.
Nongovernmental bodies are responsible for accreditation and the federal government recognizes national associations and six regional accrediting bodies, (Middle States, New England, North Central, Northwest, Southern, Western), named for the region in which they operate (Higher Learning Commission (HLC), 2007). There are two types of accreditation, institutional and specialized. HLC (2007) notes the difference:

An institutional accrediting agency evaluates an entire educational organization in terms of its mission and the agency’s standards or criteria. It accredits the organization as a whole. Besides assessing formal educational activities, it evaluates such things as governance and administration, financial stability, admissions and student services, institutional resources, student learning, institutional effectiveness, and relationships with internal and external constituencies.

On the other hand, a specialized accrediting body:

evaluates particular units, schools, or programs within an organization.

Specialized accreditation, also called program accreditation, is often associated with national professional associations, such as those for engineering, medicine, and law, or with specific disciplines, such as business, teacher education, psychology, or social work (HLC, 2007, p.1).

HLC is an independent corporation and one of two Commission members of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (NCA). NCA is one of six regional institutional accreditation agencies in the United States. Illinois is one of nineteen states for which the commission is responsible for accrediting its degree-granting educational
institutions (HLC, 2007). HLC provides two evaluative programs for institutions to use to maintain their accredited status; Program to Evaluate and Advance Quality (PEAQ) and the Academic Quality Improvement Program (AQIP). Table 11 distinguishes the two processes.

*Table 81. PEAQ & AQIP Process*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PEAQ</th>
<th>AQIP</th>
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<tr>
<td>The organization engages in a self-study process for approximately two years and prepares a report of its findings in accordance with Commission expectations.</td>
<td>The organization during a seven year period engages in all AQIP processes, including Strategy Forums, Annual Updates, Systems Portfolio Appraisals, visit to review U.S. Department of Education compliance issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Commission sends an evaluation team of Consultant-Evaluators to conduct a comprehensive visit for continued accreditation and to write a report containing the team’s recommendations.</td>
<td>No visit conducted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The documents relating to the comprehensive visit are reviewed by a Readers Panel or, in some situations, a Review Committee.</td>
<td>An AQIP Review Panel examines the collective history of the organization’s interaction with AQIP and the Commission (i.e., reports of the various processes and activities, organizational indicators, current Systems Portfolio) to determine whether this evidence demonstrates compliance with the Commission’s Criteria for Accreditation. The Panel may seek and obtain additional information before making its recommendation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Institutional Actions Council (IAC) takes action on the Readers Panel’s recommendation. (If a Review Committee reviewed the visit, the Review Committee takes action.)</td>
<td>The IAC takes action on the Panel’s recommendation regarding both reaffirmation of accreditation and continuing AQIP participation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Board of Trustees validates the work of IAC or a Review Committee, finalizing the action.</td>
<td>The Board of Trustees validates the action.</td>
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The relevance of this study to the accreditation process is undeniable. Accrediting bodies are requiring institutions to either submit their strategic plan as a part of their self study documents or to show evidence of their strategic planning activities. HLC operates under five criterions for accreditation and a community college must meet each criterion to merit accreditation. The first two criterion are specific to the college’s strategic plan and the strategic planning process. Criterion One is entitled Mission and Integrity. According to the HLC (2007) the statement for this criterion is, “The organization operates with integrity to ensure the fulfillment of its mission through structures and processes that involve the board, administration, faculty, staff, and students” (p. 5). Criterion Two is entitled Preparing for the Future, and states, “The organization’s allocation of resources and its processes for evaluation and planning demonstrate its capacity to fulfill its mission, improve the quality of its education, and respond to future challenges and opportunities” (HLC, 2007, p. 6).

While it is the goal of the accrediting body to review and certify the viability and quality of an it is the strategic plan that provides evidence of an institution's articulation of and aptitude to fulfill its mission, its managerial adeptness, its viability to operate, as well as its potential future growth. Barker, Smith, and Howard (1998) contend that while strategic planning and accreditation have traditionally been dichotomized, the two share common elements. The study’s findings seem to concur with the authors belief that accreditation and strategic planning are inexplicably connected.

All four of the community colleges that participated in the interviews were AQIP institutions. Three participants identified the need and importance of linking
accreditation process to strategic planning. While the fourth study participant stressed the integration of accreditation and strategic planning as the following:

“We are an AQIP school and AQIP is on a 7 year accreditation cycle, but they have a 4 year cycle for a systems portfolio. So every 4 years we get feedback on our systems portfolio, so we decided to link up the strategic planning process with that 4 year cycle. So we’re putting the college on a 4 year strategic planning cycle.” One of my primary responsibilities as the leader of strategic planning is to ensure that “we satisfy the standards set forth by AQIP for accreditation purpose.” It’s critical to integrate accreditation into strategic planning, “especially for AQIP schools. I suppose if you’re not an AQIP school, you wouldn’t have to care about linking strategic planning to accreditation. I’m not sure. But I do know with AQUIP, it’s critical that you link up your strategic planning activity with the AQIP cycle” (personal communication, administrator from very large community college, 2008).

The amalgamation of accreditation and strategic planning presents community colleges an opportunity to create a systematic approach to the accreditation process. This can provide greater structure to college-wide strategic planning. Illustrating this point, one participant stated their college has created a strategic planning model that aligns with AQIP as well as ICCB program review.
CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This research was a descriptive, exploratory study encompassing all of the single community colleges in the State of Illinois to garner information about their strategic planning process and strategic planning leadership. Twenty-five community colleges provided significant information about their strategic planning process. Four community college administrators from across the state also took time out of their busy schedules to discuss strategic planning and strategic planning leadership at their respective colleges in great detail. This final chapter of the research answers the research questions, discusses the implications for community colleges, and presents the limitations of the study as well as offers recommendations for future research.

Chapter one included a general synopsis of the purpose of the study, the driving questions that arose from the purpose, an overview of the study design as well as the significance of this study to the field of community colleges. The recent economic downturn places community colleges in dire need of strategic planning leadership, not only to achieve its enrollment goals, but also to help sustain the health and viability of its institutions. Undoubtedly, effective strategic planning can be of great use to community colleges in addressing these challenges. However, simply undertaking strategic planning is not enough.

Chapter two charted the historical development of community colleges in the United States. Since this research used Illinois as its case study, the history of the Illinois community college system provided context for the study. The challenges and changing
role and responsibilities of community college were explored. The evolution of strategic planning, from the military to business, to higher education and finally reaching community colleges was reviewed, along with common definitions of strategic planning. Environmental scanning and SWOT analysis were discussed to bring perspective to strategic planning, contextually situating the most commonly used aspects of strategic planning employed by community colleges. This was followed by a summary overview of the general definitions and characteristics of leadership. The review of literature concluded with a more extensive review of the four prominent generations of leadership theories, trait, behavioral, contingency/situational, and transformational, which formed the conceptual framework for the study.

Chapter three described the research design, methodology, participant selection criteria and procedures, and the ethical considerations for the study. This empirical study was grounded in a qualitative interpretive paradigm and made use of a sequential mixed-method technique for data collection. A case study design was employed for the study because of its ability to examine a phenomenon of which little is known and explain real-life, complex relationships and interrelationships. Because the study utilized a sequential mixed-method research design for the data collection, the participant selection occurred in two phases. Purposive sampling was used to select all of the single community colleges in Illinois for the first phase of the study, while multiple variation sampling was an appropriate sampling strategy to select the four participants from the larger group to participate in the second phase of the study.

Chapter four addressed the data collection procedures and strategies for data analysis. A sequential mixed method design was integrated into the data collection
process of this study. Surveys, interviews, and field notes were the instruments used to collect the data. Chapter four also outlined the course of the research and included a description of the entire process. Miles and Huberman’s (1994) model for data analysis, which include data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification served as the data analysis framework for the study. Since the strategies used to analyze data rest upon the methods used for data collection, descriptive statistics were used to analyze the surveys, whereas a priori themes and open coding were the strategies used to analyze the interviews. Credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, as well as triangulation, the measures taken to ensure the rigor and trustworthiness of the study, were discussed in this chapter. Also found in this chapter was the background and role of the researcher in the study.

Chapter five presented data displays and a discussion of the data obtained. Visual formats such as graphs and figures assisted with the synthesizing of data allowing for easy reading and the drawing of conclusions. However, to ensure the anonymity of both the participants and their institutions, the full transcripts are not included in the study.

**Research Questions**

**Research Question 1**

Among Illinois community colleges, what are the similarities, commonalties, and differences of the strategic planning process?

The study found that community colleges in Illinois show a great similarity in their strategic planning process. Ninety-two percent of the colleges indicated that they have a strategic plan. Over half of the colleges indicated that their plan covers a period of five or more years, which corresponds to 48% noting that they complete their strategic
planning process every 5 years. Fifty-six percent of the colleges indicated that they
review their plan once or twice a year to evaluate their progress toward meeting their
declared goals. Eighteen of the twenty-five colleges stated their college had a strategic
planning committee. Strategic planning committees across the state tended to be fairly
large with 18 respondents pointing out that their committees included 6 or more people.
Not surprisingly, 62% of this group indicating that their strategic planning committees
were comprised of a diverse cross section representation of departments and
individuals. The study found the vast majority of the colleges understood the importance
of having someone designated to lead the strategic planning activities for their college.
An overwhelming 80% identified one person as being responsible for leading their
college’s strategic planning efforts, and 90% of these individuals were confirmed as
being an administrator. Community colleges acknowledged they did not rotate this
leadership position but felt a person in the position over time brought experience and
stability to the process. Yet, the findings show that only seven individual had been
leading the strategic planning activities for their college for more than five years.
Therefore, the person spearheading this process in the majority of Illinois community
colleges is actually learning their craft essential for strategic planning.

Research Question 2

What is the perceived role and responsibilities of the leader in the strategic planning
process?

The leaders who were interviewed acknowledged their role and responsibility as that
of facilitating the strategic planning process. Responsibilities inherent to the process
itself that were identified included spearheading the strategic planning committee,
facilitating meetings, organizing and assigning tasks, and keeping people on track. Interestingly, responsibilities tangential to the actual planning process were stressed and included meeting with stakeholders, explaining the importance of strategic planning, and being accountable to executive administration were all major responsibilities of the leaders of strategic planning. Each leader perceived their primary role as a coordinator and facilitator. While these tasks were identified as extremely important, the study revealed the leaders also embraced their responsibility of building relationships among committee members as well as with other internal and external stakeholders, including the Board of Trustees, the president, faculty, staff, students, as well as the community.

Research Question 3

What is the leadership style and skills of the person leading the strategic planning process?

Each of the four participants interviewed was asked what they thought was their leadership style. While none of them identified a specific leadership theory or style, each described how they led their strategic planning activities. Of the four leadership theories examined in the literature review chapter as part of study’s theoretical framework, all of the participants aligned their leadership style with the behavioral leadership style in both concern for people and concern for task. This leadership theory reflects how each leader perceives their role and responsibility in the strategic planning process. In the behavioral leadership style, the leader can demonstrate both concern for people and concern for task. Illustrating the components the leaders feel they emulate behavioral leadership style, Blake and Mouton (1964) developed the Managerial Grid to help identify leadership style. These authors prescribe the integration of both relations
and task orientations as the one best way to achieve effective leadership through the use of a matrix. Many of the skills associated with concern for people were also described by the study participants. Those identified include effective communication, listening, coaching, building relationships, and developing mutual trust. The skills associated with concern for task they listed included organization, sense for detail, ability to delegate and to get people to complete tasks, and the aptitude to make decisions and to follow through.

Research Question 4

How does the strategic planning leader facilitate the process of strategic planning from selecting a committee to gaining buy-in from stakeholders?

Sixty-eight percent of the colleges indicated that they have a formal strategic planning committee comprised of a diverse group of individuals who are representative of the college. Various ways were identified as to how committee members were selected. Individuals either volunteered, were selected because of the position they held, or were appointed by their supervisor or the President. It was found that the composition of the strategic planning committee directly influences the leader’s ability to gain buy-in related to the process and the outcome (the finished plan). Two key factors emerged as to the composition of a successful committee; one was the diversity of members representing all departments and groups found at the college, and the second factor revolved around how well respected the selected members were by their respective peers. With this type of committee membership, the leaders felt it was easier for those employed by the college to embrace strategic planning because they felt their voice was heard through their representatives. Even the one college that did not have a
formal strategic planning committee identified various ad hoc groups selected to work on the strategic plan. In addition, having the support of the President was identified as being crucial to obtaining stakeholder buy-in. It was felt the President needed to be seen as the biggest cheerleader of the planning process and the resultant plan.

All four participants recognized the importance of creating a transparent process that was inclusive. Community colleges should strive for transparency and visibility in the context, process and outcomes of strategic planning. The study found that including as many people as possible, communicating what was happening and sharing information was important to facilitating the process. The use of technology enhanced the ability of the leader to facilitate strategic planning activities as well. Using e-mails, blackboard, newsletters, and web pages provided a quick, easily accessible avenue for communication which cut down on unnecessary meetings. It also allowed others in the college who were not directly involved with strategic planning the opportunity to stay abreast of strategic planning activities.

**Implications for Community Colleges**

The environment in which community colleges must now operate in is both unstable and unpredictable. Community colleges are confronted with enumerable complexities and turbulence in their external environments; consequently, their internal organizations are under pressure to effectively respond. With the recent downturn in the United States economy, enrollments in community colleges are expected to soar, yet funding continues to decline. Severe resource constraints and increased expectations for accountability from external and internal constituents has intensified the need for quality and timely strategic planning.
It is strategic planning that will guide community colleges through uncertain economic times. To face the challenges of the dismal economic era as well as its accompanying social demands placed on community colleges, leaders must look to their strategic plan for guidance. Strategic planning is not a new management fad or a paradigm shift. Every community college administrator is aware of the importance of strategic planning, yet often they are unable to transform the plan into a vital, living document able to direct the attainment of expected goals and outcomes. Strategic planning during these uncertain times must be intentional; it must be used to guide the organization in a purposeful manner. It is not enough to create a strategic plan; the plan must be a living document that guides the organization.

Having the right person leading a community college’s strategic planning process is critical. It should not be a job given to the institutional researcher simply because the word “planning” is in their title. The person facilitating the strategic planning process should provide an inclusive environment which encourages the sharing of ideas, thoughts, questions and insights among the committee members. This inclusive practice will lead to a more complete and accurate strategic planning document. When people feel they are included in a collaborative planning process and their voices are heard, they tend to be more supportive of the process and the outcomes. The study revealed that buy-in of the strategic plan is gained through participation, communication, and transparency.

The person leading strategic planning is not only charged with creating a strategic plan, but also facilitating the plan’s implementation. They are the catalyst for communicating the plan throughout the entire organization. The lack of communication
can contribute to distrust among individuals within the college who did not have the opportunity to directly participate in the strategic planning process, or feel they did not receive adequate information regarding the strategic plan. Without widespread support, community college strategic planning activities may be distrusted, disrupted and discarded and considered just another futile mandate by administration. Collaboration promotes a sense of ownership for the strategic plan and garners a commitment to its implementation and execution throughout the institution.

The study findings also revealed how important the leader’s perspective about the strategic plan is to its resultant overall worth and value to the institution. Leaders holding the more encompassing perspective that the plan should complement and guide the work of the college, facilitate activities pertinent to accreditation, and assist with other external accountability reporting are of great benefit to the institution. The study found the integration of strategic planning and accreditation was extremely beneficial, as those involved with both processes were able to understand the connection between the two, which resulted in a seamless process for both these important activities.

Limitations of the Study

No research study is without limitations. According to Patton (1990), “There are no perfect research designs. There are always trade-offs” (p. 162). Therefore, it is important to critically evaluate the study in its entirety. The entire research, from the design and methodology to the participant selection and strategies for data analysis were chosen based upon the unique purpose of the study as well as its driving questions.
For the purposes of this study, limitations are those things which were beyond the control of the researcher that could have had an affect on the research findings. One limitation of the study was because a survey instrument was used, the findings cannot account for the non-respondents. Thirteen community colleges in the state of Illinois did not return the survey; consequently their voices about strategic planning are not reflected in the findings. While the survey results revealed administrators and other individuals, such as faculty or appointed community members may also be charged with leading strategic planning, administrators were the participants interviewed due to the study’s design. Only having the perspective of administrators may have had an impact on the research findings. Another limitation was the fact that only 28% of those who responded to the survey revealed that they had been leading strategic planning at the college for five or more years and two of the interview participants revealed that they had been at the college for less than five years. Because of the length of time in their positions, these individuals may not have been fully vetted into the college in order to have the full perspective of strategic planning leadership which could have also impacted their answers and the research findings.

Recommendations for Future Research

The conclusions as well as the limitations of this study also bring forth several possible avenues for future research. The recent economic and environmental factors mounting the need for strategic planning in community colleges will not dissipate. In the current climate of diminishing resources and increasing educational needs particularly related to workforce retraining, support for quality strategic planning is indisputable. Community colleges are quickly emerging as institutions driven by and responding
quickly to market-led forces. If community colleges are going to survive and thrive, they must look to strategic planning to guide and chart their path. While the study revealed those currently leading strategic planning take a behavioral approach, other leadership styles have characteristics that could be employed for successful strategic planning. Whereas employing a behavioral approach to strategic planning leadership is important to facilitating the development and implementation of a strategic plan, perhaps a different type of leadership style may be better suited to move the scope of strategic planning to a different plane involved with continuous environmental (local, federal and global) assessment and a corresponding relational response by specific community college programs. Additional research on the other leadership theories and the value they can add to strategic planning in these turbulent times would be of great benefit to community colleges.

Another area for future research relates to the quality of the strategic plan and the process. A prevailing atmosphere demanding the assessment and documentation of “quality” found in higher education, in general, and community colleges, in particular. Community colleges across the United States are now required to be more attentive to the quality of teaching and learning as well as to the overall quality of course and programs. Quality issues must now become a central part of strategic planning. Integrating the multi-faceted concept of quality into the strategic planning process and the plan warrants future research.
References


In R.M. Stogdill & A.E. Coons (Eds.). Leaders behavior: Its descriptions and
measurements. Columbus: Ohio State University, Bureau of Business Research.


Klein, H. K., & Myers, M. D. (1999). A set of principles for conducting and evaluating
interpretive field studies in information systems. *MIS Quarterly, 23*(1), 67-94.


Bibliography


## Table 1
FY2009 GOVERNOR'S ACTION
HIGHER EDUCATION OPERATIONS AND GRANTS
GENERAL FUNDS

(In thousands of dollars)

|----------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|----------------|
ILLINOIS COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Black Hawk College, Moline
City Colleges of Chicago, Chicago

Richard J. Daley College
Kennedy-King College
Malcolm X College
Olive-Harvey College
Harry S. Truman College
Harold Washington College
Wilbur Wright College

Danville Area Community College, Danville

College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn

East St. Louis Community College Center, East St. Louis

Elgin Community College, Elgin

Harper College, Palatine

Heartland Community College, Normal

Highland Community College, Freeport

Illinois Central College, East Peoria

IL Eastern Community Colleges, Olney

Frontier Community College, Fairfield
Lincoln Trail College, Robinson
Olney Central College, Olney
Wabash Valley College, Mt. Carmel

IL Valley Community College, Oglesby

Joliet Junior College, Joliet

Kankakee Community College, Kankakee

Kaskaskia College, Centralia

Kishwaukee College, Malta

College of Lake County, Grayslake

Lake Land College, Mattoon
Lewis & Clark Community College, Godfrey
Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield
John A. Logan College, Carterville
McHenry County College, Crystal Lake
Moraine Valley Community College, Palos Hills
Morton College, Cicero
Oakton Community College, Des Plaines
Parkland College, Champaign
Prairie State College, Chicago Heights
Rend Lake College, Ina
Richland Community College, Decatur
Rock Valley College, Rockford
Carl Sandburg College, Galesburg
Sauk Valley Community College, Dixon
Shawnee Community College, Ullin
South Suburban College, South Holland
Southeastern Illinois College, Harrisburg
Southwestern Illinois College, Belleville
(formerly Belleville Area College)
Spoon River College, Canton
Triton College, River Grove
Waubonsee Community College, Sugar Grove
John Wood Community College, Quincy
Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study that will take place from November 2007 to June 2009. This form outlines the purposes of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

I consent to participate in a research project conducted by Tasha S. Williams, a doctoral student at National-Louis University located in Chicago, Illinois.

I understand that this study is entitled *Whose Leading the Strategic Planning Process at Your Community College: Does it Matter?* The purpose of this study is to explore the dimensions of leadership in an attempt to define and compare strategic planning leadership practices in Illinois community colleges. The study seeks to identify the leader responsible for facilitating the strategic planning process, the impact of their role, and how they influence the process. The study will identify key players employed in the strategic planning process and examine the significance of their roles. In addition, the study will examine the similarities, commonalties, and differences in the leadership of the strategic planning process among Illinois community colleges.

I understand that my participation will consist of one interview lasting 1 – 2 hours in length with a possible second, follow-up interview lasting 1 - 2 hours 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 without prejudice until the completion of the dissertation.

I understand that only the researcher, Tasha W. Williams, 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 or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, but my identity will in no way be revealed.

I understand there are no anticipated risks or benefits to me, no greater than that encountered in daily life. Further, the information garnered from the study will be of benefit to those in community colleges that are leaders of the Strategic Planning process.

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel have not been addressed by me, you may contact my Primary Advisor and Dissertation Chair: Dr. Rebecca Lake, National Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60603, 312-261-3534, Email address: rebecca.lake@nl.edu or rslake1@comcast.net

Participant’s Signature ____________________________ Date_____________

Researcher’s Signature ____________________________ Date_____________
APPENDIX D

Interview Questions for Participants

1. What is your title and what department of the college are you housed in?

2. How were you selected to lead the strategic planning process at your college? (i.e. appointed, volunteered)

3. How long have you been in charge of facilitating the strategic planning process?

4. Does the way in which you were selected affect how you approach leading the strategic planning process?

5. What do you feel is your primary role or responsibilities as the leader of the process?

6. What is your leadership style?

7. What are the attributes and characteristics of your leadership style that makes you a good leader of the strategic planning process at your college?

8. What other leadership characteristics do you think are needed to be a good leader of a strategic planning process?

9. How do you think you, in your role, has influenced the strategic planning process?

10. Do you think that your role has changed over time? If so, how?

11. Do you think you college has a good strategic plan? Please elaborate on your answer.

12. What recommendations can you provide for leaders of strategic planning process at community colleges?
APPENDIX E

Survey

Harold Washington College

Please fill in marks like this: ● not like this: ○ ○

1. Does your community college have a Strategic Plan? ○ Yes ○ No

2. How many year(s) does the Strategic Plan cover?
   ○ A single year plan ○ 3 year plan
   ○ 2 year plan ○ 5 year plan

3. How often does your community college go through the entire process to complete its' Strategic Plan?
   ○ Every year ○ Every 3 years
   ○ Every 2 years ○ Every 5 years

4. How often each year is the Strategic Plan reviewed in order to evaluate progress toward meeting the goals outlined?
   ○ Once a month ○ Every 3-6 months
   ○ Every 1-2 months ○ Once or twice a year

5. Does your community college have a Strategic Planning Committee? ○ Yes ○ No

6. If your college does have a Strategic Planning Committee, what is its average size?
   ○ 1-5 people ○ 6-10 people ○ 11 people or more

7. Who serves on the committee? (Mark all that apply)
   ○ Vice President, Academic Affairs ○ Vice President, Business/Finance
   ○ Vice President, Student Affairs ○ Deans
   ○ Faculty ○ Institutional Researcher/Planner
   ○ Professional Staff (Advisor, Coordinators) ○ Student Representative
   ○ Other ________________________________________

8. Is there a single person responsible for leading or spearheading the Strategic Planning process? ○ Yes ○ No

9. If yes, what is the person's Title? ______________________________________

10. How was this person selected to lead or spearhead the Strategic Planning Process?
    ○ Appointed by President ○ Appointed by Vice President of Academic Affairs
    ○ Volunteered ○ Task is found in their job description

11. How long has the person currently holding the position been leading or spearheading the Strategic Planning Process?
    ○ 0-1 year ○ 3-4 years
    ○ 1-2 years ○ 5+ years
    ○ 2-3 years

12. Does the leadership role of the Strategic Planning process rotate? ○ Yes ○ No
APPENDIX F
Letter of Introduction to Study Participants

March 6, 2008

Ms. XXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXX, IL 00000-0000

Dear Sir or Madam,

This letter is to ask for your participation in an important survey to explore the dimensions of leadership practices in the strategic planning process at Illinois community colleges. Harold Washington College (HWC) is administering this survey in partnership with a doctoral student at National Louis University.

This study seeks to identify the individual responsible for facilitating the strategic planning process, the impact of his/her role, and how he/she influences the process. In addition, the study will examine the similarities, commonalities, and differences in the leadership of the strategic planning process among Illinois community colleges.

The Office of Research and Planning at HWC is contacting all of the single, accredited community colleges in the state. Your assistance is needed in providing basic information about your campus’s strategic planning process. Please complete the enclosed survey and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope by March 31, 2008.

When complete, the report and data will be made available to the public. There will also be an opportunity for your college to be involved in an in-depth follow-up interview at your discretion.

HWC values your participation and thanks you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dr. Keenan L. Andrews
Assistant Dean, Research and Planning
### Illinois Community College Board

Table 5

**SUMMARY COMPARISON OF CORRECTIONAL AND NONCORRECTIONAL OPENING FTE ENROLLMENT**

**FINAL FALL 2006 - PRELIMINARY FALL 2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dist. No.</th>
<th>District/College</th>
<th>Noncorrectional FTE</th>
<th>Correctional FTE</th>
<th>Total FTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Fall 2007</td>
<td>% Change</td>
<td>Fall 2006</td>
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<td>Black Hawk</td>
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<td>(34,132)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Lake Land</td>
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<td>536</td>
<td>Lewis &amp; Clark</td>
<td>3,803</td>
<td>4,004</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5

**SUMMARY COMPARISON OF CORRECTIONAL AND NONCORRECTIONAL OPENING FTE ENROLLMENT**

**FINAL FALL 2006 - PRELIMINARY FALL 2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dist. No.</th>
<th>District/College</th>
<th>Noncorrectional FTE</th>
<th>Correctional FTE</th>
<th>Total FTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fall 2006</td>
<td>Fall 2007</td>
<td>% Change</td>
<td>Fall 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>526</td>
<td>Lincoln Land</td>
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<td>Logan</td>
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<tr>
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<td>McHenry</td>
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<td>Moraine Valley</td>
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**TOTALS/ AVERAGES**

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<th>Correctional</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.3 %</td>
<td>7.3 %</td>
<td>0.3 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE OF DATA:** Fall Enrollment (E1) Data Submission and Fall Enrollment Survey
To: 123@edu
From: Tasha S. Williams
Re: Strategic Planning Interview

Dear XXX,

My name is Tasha Williams and I am a graduate student at National-Louis University in Chicago. I am completing my doctorate, with an emphasis in Community College Leadership. My dissertation is focused on strategic planning leadership in community colleges. I am following up with you as a result of a survey that was sent out to all Illinois community colleges. I was hoping that Elgin would participate in a follow-up interview. I will be interviewing four community colleges, one small, medium, large, and very large (Carnegie classifications). Since Elgin was the first community college in Illinois classified as large that returned the survey, I would like the opportunity to interview you. I know that you are very busy and your time is valuable, so the interview should only take approximately 45 minutes.

If you are willing to participate in the interview, I am hoping that I can meet with you on **July 15, 2008 at 11:30am**, if possible. If this date and time is not convenient for you, please let me know your availability.

Thank you in advance for your support of my research efforts and I hope to hear from you soon.
To: 123@edu

From: Tasha S. Williams

Re: Strategic Planning Interview

Dear XXX,

I want to take this opportunity to thank you again for allowing me to interview you for my dissertation. You have such a beautiful campus and it was very exciting to learn about strategic planning at your community college.

I have attached a copy of the transcript of our interview that was conducted on July 15, 2008. I apologize for the delay in getting the transcript to you, but immediately after our interview, I started a new administrative position. I am just getting a moment to breathe from registration and from the mini session that we offered.

Please look over the interview and provide clarity or corrections as you deem necessary. I have deleted the name of your institution as well as any names mentioned during the interview. If you have an electronic signature, you are more than welcomed to sign it electronically and e-mail it to me. If you do not have any corrections or additions to the transcript, please send me an e-mail to that affect.

Again, that you for contributing to my educational journey.

Best regard, Tasha
EDUCATION:

**Doctor of Education- Community College Leadership**  
National-Louis University, Chicago, IL  
Expected June 2009

**Master of Public Administration**  
Governors State University, University Park, IL  
April 2004, *Summa Cum Laude*

**Master of Social Work - Planning & Administration Track**  
Chicago State University, Chicago, IL  
May 2002, *Summa Cum Laude*

**Bachelor of Arts in Psychology/Minor in Social Work**  
Chicago State University, Chicago, IL  
May 1998, *Summa Cum Laude*

**Associate in Arts**  
Olive-Harvey College, Chicago, IL  
May 1996, *Magna Cum Laude*

EXPERIENCE:

**City Colleges of Chicago, Malcolm X College**  
**Associate Dean, Division of Enrollment Management & Student Services (EMSS)**  
1900 West Van Buren, Chicago, IL  
July 2008-Present

Provide administrative leadership, direction and management for Academic Advising, Placement Testing, Disability Access Center, Academic Support Center-Tutoring, and TRIO-Student Support Services. Co-chair and coordinate all college-wide retention efforts. Manage $500K retention initiative budget in addition to all departmental budgets. Directly supervise staff and conduct performance evaluations. Work with faculty and staff across the college to develop and coordinate new programs and services which promote student success and development, and enhance learning opportunities. Serve as the Chief Disciplinary Officer for the college, hear all student complaints, and chair all student disciplinary hearings. Analyze and use data to conduct cost-analyses and to make administrative decisions. Work closely with the Dean of EMSS to create vision for the Division and serve in the capacity of the dean in their absence.

**City Colleges of Chicago, Harold Washington College**  
**Assistant Dean, Student Development, Office of Instruction**  
30 East Lake Street, Chicago, IL  
August 2007-July 2008

Provide administrative leadership, direction, and management for the student support functional areas of the college, specifically academic support programs, including pre-credit, tutoring, English as a Second Language (ESL), and developmental education. Coordinate all college-wide retention efforts. Manage
$500K retention initiative budget. Serve as point contact to the District Office for all student academic support related matters. Directly supervise all Pre-credit, Tutoring, ESL placement and registration, and retention staff persons. Work with departments to develop pre-credit and ESL curriculum, courses, and class scheduling. Work with faculty and staff to develop and coordinate new programs. Serve as a liaison for the Office of Instruction and Office of Student Services. Work across college departments to develop activities and programs that promote and support student success. Submit reports to the Office of Research and Planning and District Office.

**City Colleges of Chicago, Harold Washington College**

**Director, Transfer Services, Office of Student Services**

30 East Lake Street, Chicago, IL
May 2005-August 2007

Managed the Transfer Center and all of its daily operations. Oversaw budget for department and was responsible for all fiscal matters. Developed articulation agreements and fostered partnerships with 4-year colleges and universities. Provided direct supervision all staff persons in the Transfer Center. Tracked the transfer population for enrollment and transfer trends. Coordinated all transfer activities including college tours, 4-year college representative visits, and workshops. Advised transfer students and created academic plans for graduation. Assisted with the coordination of recruitment activities for transfer students. Received training to assist the Dean of Students to make decisions regarding the status of students with academic and financial aid holds. Worked closely with Advising Office on collaborative projects, including assisting in registration. Submitted reports to the Office of Research and Planning.

**City Colleges of Chicago, Harold Washington College**

**Adjunct Instructor, Applied Science Department**

30 East Lake Street, Chicago, IL
Jan 2005-May 2005

Adjunct instructor in the Applied Science Department. Taught credit course in Social Services. Facilitated group work and presentations.

**City Colleges of Chicago, Harold Washington College**

**College Advisor, Office of Student Services**

30 East Lake Street, Chicago, IL
May 2002-May 2005

Provided comprehensive registration services to current and prospective students. Advised students in credit, ESL, and non-credit programs, in addition to the requirements to obtain a degree or certificate. Coordinated various functions associated with student matriculation including program and career development, financial aid, academic support, testing, registration, and recruitment. Coordinated and conducted pre-graduation workshops for prospective graduates. Assisted students in the petition process for re-admission, withdrawal, and other academic transactions. Evaluated both credit and military transcripts for degree-seeking students. Discussed registration and other problems with students and provided suggestions for problem-solving, made outside referrals as needed. Developed student referral procedures and manual for faculty and all staff. Trained new advisors and new faculty for registration.

**Consulting Professional**

**Counselor/Mentor**

593 Burnham Avenue, Calumet City, IL
October 2001-Dec. 2003

Provided therapy, mentoring, and/or tutoring services as well as life skills groups to children/families in the care of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and private agencies. Completed all case documentation including clinical assessments, progress and closing reports, as well as monthly billing.
City of Chicago/Department of Human Services
Student Intern
1615 West Chicago Avenue, Chicago, IL
August 2001-May 2002

Assisted in the coordination supervision, monitoring, planning, and evaluation of youth programs for the City of Chicago. Conducted site visits of each YouthNet in 24 police districts within the city. Completed all documentation including write-ups, assessments, and evaluations. Reviewed evaluated, and recommended proposals submitted to CDHS for funding. Completed other administrative related duties.

Metropolitan Family Services
Student Intern
235 East 103rd Street, Chicago, IL
Sept. 2000 – April 2001

Provided individual, family, group therapy, and teen awareness sessions. Completed case documentation including clinical assessments, progress notes, and process recordings. As an intake team member, received all in-coming calls and walk-ins, completed proper intake information and referred to appropriate programs within the agency, made outside referrals for services as needed.

Sullivan House Child Welfare Agency
Counselor
7305 South Clyde, Chicago, IL
May 1998-May 2002

Provided therapeutic play and in-home individual, family, and group counseling to wards of DCFS, their foster parents, adoptive families, and/or natural parents. Completed all case documentation including clinical assessments, progress and closing reports, case notes, monthly billing, and quarterly reports. Attended court as needed.

City Colleges of Chicago, Olive-Harvey College
Tutor/Office Assistant
10001 South Woodlawn, Chicago IL
Feb. 1995-August 2000

As an English tutor, assisted college level and GED students in English, reading, and writing skills. Aided instructors with grading papers and monitored exit exams. As an office assistant, completed SPAS data entry, monitored tutors and schedules. Completed reports, flyers, all duplication, worked as a registration assistant.

ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:

- Outstanding Women of the Year, Harold Washington College, AAWCC 2008
- Diversifying Higher Education Faculty in Illinois (DFI) Fellowship Recipient (2007-Present)
- National-Louis University Doctoral Faculty Search Committee (2006-Present)
- National Association of Social Workers-Illinois Chapter (NASW)
- American Association of Women in Community Colleges (AAWCC)
- National Academic Advising Association (NACADA)
- Illinois Academic Advisors’ Association
- Loyola University Transfer Advisory Board (2003-Present)
## Item Statistics Report

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APPENDIX L

Detailed Item Analysis Report

Does your community college have a Strategic Plan?

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Total Valid: 24
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How many years(s) does the Strategic Plan cover?

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Total Valid: 22
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Total: 25

How often does your community college go through the entire process to complete its Strategic Plan?

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<td>every year</td>
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<td>20.00</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>every 3 years</td>
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<td>21.74</td>
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<tr>
<td>every 5 years</td>
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Total Valid: 23
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Total: 25

Mean: 1.04
Mean: 3.32
Mean: 2.96

7/18/2008

Detailed Item Analysis Report
### How often each year is the Strategic Plan reviewed in order to evaluate progress toward meeting the goals outlined?

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**Total**  25  100.00

### Does your community college have a Strategic Planning Committee?

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**Total**  25  100.00

### If your college does have a Strategic Planning Committee, what is its average size?

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**Total**  25  100.00

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7/18/2008  
Detailed Item Analysis Report  
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### Who serves on the committee?

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### Is there a single person selected to lead or spearhead the Strategic Planning process?

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<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### How was this person selected to lead or spearhead the Strategic Planning Process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>appointed by President</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48.00</td>
<td>48.00</td>
<td>60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volunteered</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>48.00</td>
<td>60.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appointed by Vice President of Academic Affairs</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>52.00</td>
<td>65.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>task found in job description</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mean:** 2.15  
**Total Valid:** 20  
**Missing:** 5  
**Total:** 25

### How long has the person currently holding the position been leading or spearheading the Strategic Planning Process?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-1 years</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>16.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>16.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>32.00</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 years</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>16.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5+ years</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>72.00</td>
<td>38.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mean:** 3.44  
**Total Valid:** 18  
**Missing:** 7  
**Total:** 25

### Does the leadership role of the Strategic Planning process rotate?

<table>
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<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yes</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72.00</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>90.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mean:** 1.90  
**Total Valid:** 20  
**Missing:** 5  
**Total:** 25