Essential Personal Attributes, Skills and Abilities Needed by Aspiring Community College Presidents

Jeffery Steven Boyd
National-Louis University

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ESSENTIAL PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES, SKILLS AND ABILITIES
NEEDED BY ASPIRING COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENTS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
In
COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEADERSHIP

BY
JEFFERY STEVEN BOYD

Chicago, Illinois
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Community College Leadership Doctoral Program

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Doctoral Candidate: Jeffery Steven Boyd

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Dissertation Chair: Martin Parks, PhD

Dissertation Committee: Dennis Haynes, PhD

William Marzano, EdD

Final Approval Meeting: March 16, 2010

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

Signature

[Signature]

Date

[Date]
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ABSTRACT

The community college presidency is in critical state of evolution. Boggs (2003) stated that the rate of presidential retirements appears to be on the rise, with 79% of presidents planning to retire by 2012. Weisman and Vaughn (2007) in a 2006 survey found the number of presidents planning to retire within ten years is 84%. The most likely candidates to fill these presidential vacancies are the senior administrators. This presents a challenge because the senior administrators are at the same age as the retiring presidents and they too are preparing for retirement.

The previous generations of community college presidents, the pioneers, laid a solid foundation. The yet undefined and new generation of presidents is responsible for assuming the mantle of leadership in the future. The purpose of this study was to explore essential attributes and abilities needed by future community college presidents as defined by current community college board members and presidents. To generate data, semi-structured interviews were used to investigate the respondent’s views regarding the needed personal attributes and skills of future presidents. Through a qualitative data analysis, the community college presidents and board of trustee members identified personal attributes, skills and abilities, other factors, presidential leadership potential and challenges for aspiring presidents.

The primary recommendations stemming from this study include additional research to gain the perspectives of community college trustees in other states. The perspective of community college presidents in other states regarding the personal attributes, abilities, and professional experiences are vital for future community college
presidents. Additionally, it is recommended to define the best practices for identifying and nurturing educational administrators who possess the personal attributes and skills to become future presidents; and best practices for those who possess the personal attributes and skills to become future presidents.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background and Context

The community college presidency is in a critical state of evolution. Boggs (2003) stated that the rate of presidential retirements appears to be on the rise, with 79% of presidents planning to retire by 2012. Weisman and Vaughn (2007) found that the percentage of community college presidents planning to retire within ten years is 84%. The most likely candidates to fill these presidential vacancies are the senior administrators, who are already in place. However, the senior administrators are at the same age as the retiring presidents and are preparing also for retirement. Boggs (2003) concludes that these retirements are the “most significant transition in leadership in the history of America’s community colleges” (p. 15).

Where will the new community college presidents come from? Vaughan (2006) cited leadership as a critical factor for the future of community colleges, by asking questions such as: Who will the next leaders be? Will they be committed to the community colleges’ historic mission of ensuring access? How will they be prepared to meet current and future challenges?

Additionally, Patton (2004) noted that the number of degrees conferred in community-college administration decreased 78% between 1983 and 1997. As community college presidential search committees look for candidates from degree-granting programs in community college leadership or administration, they are finding
fewer programs to look to. Romero (2004) stated that “most universities long ago allowed their community college programs to languish or die” (p. 33). Romero (2004) concluded:

Universities became more and more ambivalent about the role of community colleges as transfer students wanting to get university credit for their first two years of college work and as debate continued about whether community colleges should be seen primarily as a sector of higher education or as an extension of the K-12 system. In universities, professors with research interest in community colleges were not replaced as they retired, and degree programs for community college presidents and faculty primarily interested in higher education teaching were dropped in favor of programs for training K-12 administrators and teachers. (p. 33)

Amey and VanDerlinden’s (2002) 2000 survey found that only 22% of presidents were promoted to the presidency from within their institution(s). Will the academic pipeline be able supply the individuals who will become the new community college presidents? Barwick (2002) suggested that the crisis caused by the retirements of community college presidents should not only be concerned with the number of vacancies, but rather “who is waiting in the pipeline to fill the vacancies” (p. 7).

Community college boards of trustees should be very concerned with these pending retirements as well as in finding the right person for their institutions. Boggs (2006) states that regardless of its structure, one of the most important roles of a community college board of trustees is to recruit, select, and hire a new president. Additionally, Sullivan (2001) explains that a “changing of the guard” is occurring in community colleges. He goes on to say that many institutions are making a transition to a new generation of presidents with different leadership styles, styles which are unlike their predecessor’s style.
As one looks into the future of the community college presidency, it appears that identifying individuals who possess the abilities to lead community colleges is crucial. The time to recognize those individuals who hold the desired attributes and abilities of leadership is now. It is the intention of this study to provide those institutions hiring new community college presidents with information to help identify these individuals successfully.

The current trend of community college presidents retiring will continue throughout the next several years. Wallin (2006) contends that “the leaders who were instrumental in the development of community colleges in the 70’s are leaving their colleges at an increasing rate” (p. 513). Weisman and Vaughn (2001) report that “the rate of anticipated presidential retirements appear to be accelerating, with more than 79% of the presidents planning to retire within 10 years” (p. 1). Fulton-Calkins and Milling (2005) report that:

The administrators and faculty employed in the 1960s and 1970s are now reaching retirement age. Research reported by the Community College Times gives the following statistics: 1) approximately 50% of the current community college presidents will retire over the next 3-7 years…and 2) in the next few years, 700 new community college presidents and campus heads, 1800 new upper-level administrators, and 30,000 new faculty members will be needed. Statistics also indicate that community colleges may have difficulty finding qualified leaders for the future. (pp. 234-235)

Cejda and Leist (2006) suggest that the need to identify faculty and staff with leadership potential is one of the major challenges facing community colleges in the future.

Schults (2001) warned that community colleges were in the midst of an “impending leadership crisis” (p. 1), and leaving with those retirements are an “…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). Bridges, Eckel, Cordova, and White (2008) note that the pathways to the presidency may be changing and believe community colleges should consider varying the traditional way of conducting presidential searches. Additionally Bridges et al. (2008), and Witt and Kieffer (2008), suggest that community colleges create programs (e.g., mentorships, “grow-your-own,” and succession planning) to develop personnel in order to prepare individuals to fill the predicted presidential openings.

Vaughn (2004) voiced concern over community colleges repeatedly hiring individuals solely from within the system as these individuals will often resemble the same characteristics as those already in place. He believed that in some cases, individuals from outside the system should be considered (i.e., business and/or political leaders). Vaughn (2004) suggested further that sitting presidents play a vital role in identifying faculty members and administrators who are ready to move into upper administrative positions. Fulton-Calkins and Milling (2005) believe that mentoring programs should be launched to assist in transitioning individuals into these new positions.

However, in a 2006 Career Lifestyle Survey, Weisman and Vaughan (2007) found that only 43% of presidents sponsored a “Grow Your Own” Leadership program. An article in The Presidency (ACE, 2006) related that even at sub-presidential levels, succession planning can work effectively and encouraged those concerned with the future of higher education to aid senior administrators in acquiring more skills and knowledge to fill future positions. King and Gomez (2008) found “succession planning can be an
important institutional strategy for enhancing the diversity of campus leadership” (p. 15). Bridges et al. (2008) noted that succession planning is popular within the corporate world, but community colleges are slow in implementing an ongoing succession plan. A community college president provided a good explanation for why community colleges are slow in adopting a succession process when he commented:

I am not sure that most boards are willing to step out there to change practices and identify individuals who can be publicly identified and groomed to assume specific positions at the college. Some are willing to do this but far too many fear that faculty will not support a selection process in which they may have little if any input. (Witt & Kieffer, 2008)

Due to the volume of predicted retirements of presidents during the next several years, community colleges should now consider varying the traditional way of conducting presidential searches (Bridges et al. 2008).

The context of this study is grounded in the pending leadership crisis facing community colleges. The traditional methods of how community college presidents are chosen are under review and revision. As noted by Sullivan (2001), these new community college presidents will have “trained more intentionally for top leadership positions than any previous group” (p. 570).

Significance of the Study

This study resulted in gaining additional insights into the critical personal attributes and abilities needed by future community college presidents. These insights have led to selection recommendations for community college boards of trustees when charged with hiring a new college president. Additionally, this research provided
valuable information for aspiring community college presidential hopefuls. Wallin (2004) confirms the significance of this type of study when she stated:

Most professions have a certain body of knowledge that is expected to be possessed by those who work within the profession. There are exams, licensure requirements, peer reviews, and other entry criteria that assure the public of at least minimum competency. Physicians have a particular body of knowledge and gate-keeping exams to assure that those who profess to be physicians have the requisite education, knowledge, and skills. Lawyers have a certain body of knowledge they are expected to master, and the bar exams assure minimal competency. Administrators [presidents], however, particularly administrators [first time presidents] in community colleges, do not have an identifiable, recognizable, and agreed-upon body of knowledge that all who enter the field must possess. (p. 514)

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to explore essential attributes and abilities needed by future community college presidents as perceived by current community college board members and presidents. Although a substantial amount of research has examined the perceptions held by community college presidents related to the skills needed by presidents, this research seeks to add to the existing research by exploring the perceptions of boards of trustees members as the entity responsible for hiring presidents.

With the growing concern regarding the impending community college leadership crisis due to the projected number of presidents retiring, identifying and recognizing future presidents is critical. However, little is known about the specific personal attributes and abilities most sought after by community college boards of trustees when selecting a new community college president. The following guiding questions were designed to add to the body of knowledge about this important exploration.
Guiding Questions

The overall purpose of this study was to explore essential personal attributes and abilities needed by future community college presidents, as perceived by current community college board members and presidents. More specifically, the guiding questions which provided the focus for this study are as follows:

1. Which personal attributes are critical for future community college presidents?
2. What specific skills and abilities are vital for future community college presidents?
3. What other factors contribute to the selection of the “final” candidate for a community college presidency?
4. What is presidential leadership potential and how is it classified and recognized?
5. What are the greatest challenges facing future community college presidents?

Assumptions

This study included two primary assumptions. The first assumption was that the participants selected for the study would honestly and candidly share their perceptions of the personal attributes and abilities needed by future community college presidents when responding to the guiding questions. The second assumption was that the responses received from the interview questions would be representative of community colleges in the US Midwest region.

Limitations

There are several limitations that might have affected either the reliability and/or the validity of the findings and conclusions of this research. Creswell (2008) states, “limitations identify potential weaknesses in the study” (p. 148). Because of time, cost and convenience, the scope of the study was limited to three community college
presidents and three boards of trustee members from three Midwest suburban community colleges. The semi-structured interview protocol results reflect individual bias and opinions of the participants interviewed and are not generalizable to a different population or location. This study relied on the willing participation of community college presidents and community college boards of trustees members to explore their perceptions regarding the personal attributes, skills and abilities new community college presidents need now and in the future.

**Delimitations**

The study involved only community colleges in only one Midwest state. The focus of the study was on the participating community college presidents and trustees’ perceptions of which personal attributes, skills and abilities new community college presidents will need to lead effectively. Delimitations, as defined by Creswell (2007) further narrows the study. Specifically, Creswell concludes “the scope may focus on specific variables or a central phenomenon delimited to specific participants or sites, or narrowed to one type of research design” (p. 148). Hence, the delimitations of this study included location, as the participants were located in one Midwest state; participants, in that only board members and presidents representing three community colleges were interviewed; and also, the study utilized the interview, and was not of a mixed design.

**Definition of Terms**

**Board of Trustees.** The Board of Trustees is the governing body of a community college, consisting of locally-elected, locally-appointed, state-elected, or state-appointed trustees (Plinske, 2009).
**Community College.** A community college is an accredited, publically-funded, 2-year, post-secondary institution that primarily offers an associate degree as the highest degree.

**Community College President.** A community college president is the chief executive officer of a community college that reports to a board of trustees (Plinske, 2009).

**Communications Style.** Communications style is the manner by which we communicate with others and interpret communication from others (Heffner, 2009).

**Leadership.** Leadership is “The process of persuasion or example by which an individual induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers” (Gardner, 1990, p. 1).

**Leadership Style.** Leadership style is the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people (Lewin, Llippit, & White, 1939).

**Personal Attributes.** Personal attributes are the character traits, aptitudes, skills, values and attitudes of an individual (Smith, 2009).

**Summary**

Chapter one provided the background and context of the study, which discussed the large number of predicted pending retirements of many community college presidents and the concern as to where the new presidents will come from. Next, the significance of the study was discussed, and how the significance could provide additional insights in the personal attributes and abilities needed by future presidents. Following the significance of the study, the purpose (the purpose of this study was to explore essential attributes and abilities needed by future community college presidents, as perceived by current community college board chairs and presidents) of the study was stated. Next, the guiding questions
were listed, and the assumptions, limitations, delimitations, and finally, the definition of terms were listed.

Chapter two, the literature review chapter, will provide the history of community colleges, a conceptual framework for the study, leadership paradigms, presidential skills, ethics and competencies, the changing roles of community college presidents, the role of the board of trustees in selecting new presidents, and challenges facing new community college presidents.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore essential personal attributes and abilities needed by future community college presidents, as perceived by community college board members and presidents. This chapter provides a review of related and research literature in the following areas: (a) the history of community colleges, (b) a conceptual framework for the study, (c) leadership paradigms, (d) presidential skills, ethics and competencies, (e) the changing roles of community college presidents, (f) the role of the board of trustees in selecting new presidents, and (g) challenges facing new community college presidents.

History of the Community College

Brint and Karabel (1989) contend that the creation of the two-year community college is the greatest innovation of twentieth-century American higher education. The Morrill Act in 1862 was passed by Congress just before the Civil War. This legislation was based on the assurance of equal access to higher education. The Morrill Act granted each state a certain amount of land to establish a university and was given the term land grant. “In some respects, the community college is the new land-grant institution; the people’s college in the truest sense” (Palinchak, 1973, p. 1). In 1890, the second Morrill Act (AACC, 2009), withheld funds from any state that refused admission to the land grant colleges based on race unless the states provided separate institutions for minorities. This act expanded public education to include many blacks who were unable to attend college previously.
Cohen and Brawer (2003) note that Community colleges in America date back to 1901 when Joliet Junior College (JJC) in Joliet, Illinois, was established. Phillippe and Sullivan (2005) contend also that JJC is the oldest continuously operating public two-year institution in the United States and that by 1910, at least 5% of 18 year old students nationwide were enrolling in the newly created junior colleges. In 1907, California passed legislation that authorized high schools to offer postgraduate courses, provided state and county support for junior college students, and provided for independent junior college districts that had their own boards, budgets and procedures (AACC, 2009). Phillippe and Sullivan (2005) reported that California alone had established 21 colleges by 1921 and had the largest system of public two-year colleges in the country. Other states followed suit, and by the 1930’s there were more than 500 public and private two-year colleges across the country.

After World War II, the conversion of military industries to consumer goods production created new skilled jobs (AACC, 2009). The government’s plan was to educate a large returning military force after World War II, and community colleges proved to be an integral part of that plan. The government’s GI Bill allowed students to take courses at many post-secondary institutions at a free or reduced rate of tuition. President Harry Truman’s Commission on Higher Education Report encouraged the development of two-year post-secondary institutions, noting “the time has come to make education through the 14th grade available in the same way that high school is now available” (President’s Commission on Higher Education, 1947, p. 37).
The Truman Commission concluded that 49% of high school graduates could benefit from two years of post-secondary education and recommended the formation of a network of publicly supported two-year institutions to ease students’ transitions to four-year colleges (AACC, 2002). The framework envisioned for the schools was the structure they follow today: they charge little for tuition, work closely with public schools and the community, offer continuing education for adults as well as technical and general education, and are locally controlled.

The precursor to AACC, the American Association of Junior Colleges was established in 1921. The organization was later renamed the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges. In 1992, the name again was changed to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), which encompassed junior, private, technical, and proprietary two-year colleges. This national organization was conceived originally as a place for two-year college presidents to build leadership skills, formulate policy and exchange ideas with one another. Today, the organization has grown to include all individuals who work or study at community colleges, as well as provide leadership, advocacy and services for its member institutions (Phillippe & Sullivan 2005).

Phillippe and Sullivan (2005) noted that in the 1960s, about 45% of all 18 year-olds, who were the children of returning WWII soldiers, enrolled in college. Many parents concluded that college was a necessity for their children. People also took advantage of draft deferments for full-time students in order to escape the countries call to enlist in the Vietnam War. These two factors caused enrollments to soar and more
than one million students attended the estimated 700 two-year colleges around the country.

As local sponsors called on a broad range of programs to be offered in the 1960s, the concept of the comprehensive community college was defined and redefined. The following three types of degrees were offered: associate in arts, associate in sciences, and associate in applied sciences. Associate in arts and associate in science degrees focused on preparation for transfer to four-year colleges and universities while the associate in applied science focused on preparation for entry-level employment. Certificate programs were also designed to address highly specific training needs (Phillippe & Sullivan, 2005).

A major component of national post-secondary education in succeeding decades continued the efficacy of community colleges. Woolley and Peters (2009) noted that while addressing Congress in 1970, President Richard Nixon said,

Two-year community colleges and technical institutes hold great promise for giving the kind of education that leads to good jobs and for filling national shortages in critical skill occupations. Costs for these schools are relatively low, especially since there are few residential construction needs. A dollar spent on community colleges is probably spent as effectively as anywhere in the educational world. These colleges, moreover, have helped many communities forge a new identity. They serve as a meeting ground for young and old, black and white, rich and poor, farmer and technician. They avoid the isolation, alienation and lack of reality that many young people find in multiversities or campuses far away from their own community. (p. 1)

One key aspect of the emerging community college was its open enrollment policy. The school assists students in attaining the needed prerequisites for post-secondary programs of study through developmental and remedial course offerings in key areas of reading, composition and mathematics. Despite the growing support at most all


levels, some critics (Goodwin, 1986) saw the community college as a system that perpetuated the middle class in America, a sort of designed social engineering.

Wellman (2002) noted that 62% of all community colleges in the United States in 2002 offered an open enrollment policy to students with a high school diploma. Additionally, he noted that 23% of community colleges students transferred to four-year institutions and the remaining 77% were either in certificate programs, professional-technical degree programs or taking courses for personal enrichment.

By 2005, the total of students attending community colleges was 11.6 million which accounted for 46% of all undergraduates in the United States (AACC, 2005). In a status report on community colleges, the American Association of Community Colleges (2009) noted that:

Today, community colleges are gaining the recognition and respect they deserve. In the booming economy of the past decade, our institutions were called upon to play a critical role in preparing new workers for highly skilled industries and in retraining older workers to learn new skills to keep them employed. For the most part, four-year colleges were not able to re-tool quickly enough to meet this challenge. Community colleges did, and in many ways, they have been recognized for their contribution and have earned the support from the business community. (p. 1)

However, Phillip and Sullivan (2005) write that although community colleges have continued to evolve, they must be ready to address significant challenges. These challenges include “limited funding, increasing demand for accountability, growing diversity in the student body, renewed emphasis on workforce and teacher preparation, constantly changing technologies and impending turnover in community college leadership” (p. 3).
The community college has fulfilled several needs of its students, as well as local and responsive educational units that can, depending on governance structure, respond to the needs of the communities the community college serves. Three aspects were identified by Cejda and Leist (2006) in their survey of the evolving nature of community colleges: (a) increased work-force development and partnerships with local agencies, e.g., nursing programs and hospitals, (b) the rapidly growing dual-credit process which partners community colleges with high schools; and, (c) partnering with four-year institutions to offer bachelor’s degrees at the community college site.

Mullin and Phillippe (2009) report that as unemployment increases sharply, community college enrollment increases as well. They conclude:

On average nationally, students enrolled in credit-bearing courses at U.S. community colleges in fall 2009 was 11.4% higher than it was fall 2008 and 16.9% higher than it was in fall 2007. The largest growth came in the full-time student population, which grew by 24.1% between fall 2007 and fall 2009. (p. 5)

Mullin and Phillippe (2009) summarize the major reasons for enrollment increases in 2009 as (a) unemployed workers realizing that a college certificate or degree was important for obtaining a job, and (b) retooling or enhancing a current skill set was important for career changes. Additionally, many families valued the cost savings community colleges offer as family resources became less secure. The community colleges are well positioned to remain a vital part of higher education in the United States.

Regarding the future leadership of community colleges, Weisman and Vaughn (2007) noted that many presidents plan on retiring within the next ten years. Vaughan (2006) asks who the next leaders will be, and wonders if the new leaders will be committed to the historic mission of community colleges. The numbers of degrees
conferred in community-college leadership administration are diminishing (NCES, 2007; Patton, 2004; Romero, 2004). Amey and VanDerlinden’s (2002) and Barwick (2000) voiced concern about if those who are within the academic pipeline will be able supply the individuals who will become the new community college presidents.

Conceptual Framework

Miles and Huberman (1994) define the conceptual framework as the system of concepts, suppositions, beliefs, expectations and theories that supports and/or informs the research. Furthermore, these researchers describe a conceptual framework as a visual or written creation that “explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied—the key factors, concepts, or variables—and the presumed relationship among them” (p. 18).

The conceptual framework for this study utilized Sullivan’s (2001) four generations model of community college leadership [presidents]. These generations are “the founding fathers, the good managers, the collaborators and the millennium generation” (p. 59). This study found that the personal attributes and abilities needed by aspiring community college presidents closely mirror the characteristics of the millennium generation of community college presidents, as defined by Sullivan (2001).

The “inner shell” in case study research is defined as the conceptual framework (Reichel & Ramey, 1987). The inner shell of this study sought to explore the essential personal attributes, skills and abilities needed by new community college presidents to be successful. In order to investigate these ideas from the research and literature, a conceptual framework has to be designed to “explain, either graphically or in narrative
form, the main things to be studied- the key factors, constructs, or variables – and the presumed relationship among them” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 18). Thus, Sullivan’s Four Generation Model related to community college leaders (see Table 1) provided an appropriate conceptual framework for this study.

Table 1

Sullivan’s Four Generations of Community College Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Generation</td>
<td>Founding Fathers</td>
<td>Presidents were in charge of starting college colleges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Generation</td>
<td>The Good Manager</td>
<td>Presidents carried on the role of the Founding Fathers and expanded the community college mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Generation</td>
<td>The Collaborators</td>
<td>Presidents inherited an increasingly more complex organization dealing with issues of institutional control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Generation</td>
<td>The Millennium</td>
<td>Presidents who have technological savvy; are skilled collaborators, intentionally trained for top leadership positions, workforce developers; focus on fundraising and in developing relationships</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Sullivan’s Four Generations Model of Community College Leaders

Generation One: Founding Fathers. The first two generations of community college presidents had much in common: “They were primarily White men who were married, in their 50s, and had risen through the academic ranks” (Sullivan, 2001, p. 560). These
Founding Fathers were known as “creative, daring, and unrestricted” (p. 561) and were the trailblazers, or the early settlers of the presidency. Sullivan noted that these leaders “exhibited a traditional leadership style within a hierarchical organizational structure, very much like their counterparts in American industry” (p. 562).

Vaughan (1989) noted that community college presidents, “during the early decades, were literally pioneers blazing the trails others were to follow; many of their decisions were neither right nor wrong, for they were groundbreaking decisions” (p. 7). The early presidents could not rely on past perspectives to guide them, but in many cases their word was policy. The early presidents’ perspectives about their job were not chronicled.

Vaughan and Weisman (1998) concluded that “Unfortunately for those who would like to know more about president life in the 1960s and early 1970s, much of the intimate history of the boom years of community college development is lost, for it was never recorded” (p. 7). Furthermore, Vaughan (1989) said that “A founding president moved into an area, constructed building, employed faculty, developed curricula, recruited students, placed the teaching and learning process in motion, and spread the mission of the community college to anyone that would listen” (p. 7).

Generation Two: The Good Managers. The Good Managers “led the colleges through a period (60s and 70s) of rapid growth and abundant resources,” (Sullivan, 2001, p. 560). The Good Managers and the Founding Fathers shared commonalities, such as they were typically both in their fifties, held doctorates, and had served in the military at some point in their careers. Good Managers were not responsible for starting institutions
like their predecessors, but were involved in building on the solid foundation created by the Founding Fathers. In contrast, presidents of the 80s used the perspective from the past to help lead them into the future (Vaughan, 1989).

Addy (1995) added that “The second generation...has been the one which has taken the original concept of the community college and helped it to expand...” (p. 128). This generation of presidents according to Vaughn (1989), “served as presidents during the period (1960s and early 70s) of rapid enrollment growth” (p. 3). In the later 1970s and 1980s, the Good Manager role of the president began to shift (Addy, 1995; Sullivan, 2001). Cohen and Brawer (2003) wrote that the president’s role shifted from an instigator of growth to a strategic planner. With this shift from growth to strategic planning came the retirement of the Good Managers. Sullivan (2001) stated that “by the 1990s, most of these [Good Managers] had retired” (p. 561).

**Generation Three: The Collaborators.** The third generation of community college presidents, the Collaborators, began taking the helm in the late 1980s, and this generation of presidents is expected to retire soon. Sullivan (2001) describes this group as ones that “built on the strong foundation laid by the two preceding generations; they endured recessions, were pressured to be more accountable, suffered public distrust, accepted increasing numbers of underprepared students, and oversaw the explosion of the internet” (p. 561). In an effort to explain further the Collaborator generation, Sullivan used Bolman and Deal’s (1991) four frames of leadership speculated that the leadership behavior of managers, including college administrators, fall into one or a combination of four frames: structural, human resource, political and symbolic. “Structural Leaders”
emphasize rationality, analysis, logic, facts and data; “Human Resource Leaders” emphasize the importance of people and people skills; “Political Leaders” believe that managers and leaders live in a world of conflict and scarce resources; and, “Symbolic Leaders” believe that the essential task of management is to provide vision and inspiration.

“Structural leaders” emphasize rationality, analysis, logic, facts and data. They are expected to believe strongly in the importance of clear structure and well-developed management systems. A good leader is someone who thinks clearly, makes good decisions, possesses good analytic skills, and can design structures and systems that get the job done (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

“Human resource leaders” emphasize the importance of people. They endorse the view that the central task of management is to develop a good fit between people and organizations. They believe in the importance of coaching, participation, motivation, teamwork and good interpersonal relations. A good leader is a facilitator and participative manager who supports and empowers others (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

“Political leaders” believe that managers and leaders live in a world of conflict and scarce resources. The central task of management is to mobilize the resources needed to advocate and fight for the unit’s or the organization’s goals and objectives. Political leaders emphasize the importance of building a power base, allies, networks, and coalitions. A good leader is an advocate and negotiator who understands politics and is comfortable with conflict (Bolman & Deal, 1991).
“Symbolic leaders” believe that the essential task of management is to provide vision and inspiration. They rely on personal charisma and a flair for drama to get people excited and committed to the organizational mission. A good leader is a prophet and visionary, who uses symbols, tells stories, and frames experience in ways that give people hope and meaning (Bolman & Deal, 1991).

**Generation Four: Millennium Generation.** In the late 1990s, the Collaborators began being replaced by the Millennium Generation of leaders (Sullivan, 2001). These new leaders are seen to have grown up with technology, the personal computer, portable digital devices, and the internet; all of which are necessary parts of their everyday business and personal lives. The Millennium Generation of presidents, concluded Sullivan, are skilled collaborators and, unlike their predecessors who focused substantially on social justice, these new leaders are focused more frequently on workforce development and in building and maintaining relationships (Sullivan, 2001).

Furthermore, Sullivan (2001) noted that these new leaders have trained intentionally for top leadership positions and contend that they are more sophisticated and knowledgeable than their predecessors. While the definition of the Millennium Generation is still evolving, Sullivan (2001 concludes:

It will take a few years for the emerging fourth generation of community college presidents to exhibit a collective personality that will allow researchers to label their leadership style and identify their preferred frame. Meanwhile, we do know that these leaders are very well prepared for what lies ahead. They will build on 100 years of excellent leadership by their predecessors, combining skills in motivating and managing people with political acumen and a strong business sense to transform community colleges into the institutions of choice for learning across the lifespan in the 21st century. (p. 571)
Leadership Paradigms

Gardner (1990) defines leadership as “the process of persuasion or example by which an individual induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader or shared by the leader and his or her followers” (p. 1). Leadership in educational settings remains different in many aspects from other entities regarding leadership. Due to the wave of expected retirements of community college presidents and senior administrators, what Birnbaum (1987) stated more than twenty years ago remains true:

Studying leadership in colleges and universities is even more difficult than in many other settings because of the dual control systems, conflicts between professional and administrative authority, unclear goals, and other properties unique to normative, professional organizations… But in higher education, there is a strong resistance to leadership as it is generally understood in more traditional and hierarchical organizations, and it is often more accurate to think of faculty as constituents rather than followers. (pp. 125-126)

Although numerous empirical examinations of leaders have been completed, Bennis and Nanus (1985) wrote that “no clear and unequivocal understanding exists as to what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders and effective leaders from ineffective leaders” (p. 4). Effective leaders have a leadership style that provides direction, implements plans and motivates people (Lewin, Llippit, & White, 1939). Are there tools in place to assist community college boards of trustees in securing the right candidate? To examine the tools provided in current leadership theory, the following bodies of literature are reviewed: trait, behavioral, transactional and transformational leadership theories.

Trait Theory

In the 1800s, and continuing into the early 20th century, the concept of leadership was studied in terms of leadership characteristics or “traits” (Creighton, 2005). The
presence of these traits presumably led individuals to leadership positions. However, by the mid 20th century, trait theory was disputed by researchers due to the lack of predictability and reliability (Amoroso, 2002). Similarly, Zaccaro (2007) notes that in the late 1940s and 1950s, “many researchers discarded trait-based leadership approaches as being insufficient to explain leadership and leader effectiveness” (p. 6).

Bass (1990) noted that in the 1930s and 40s, a number of studies were conducted that looked at behavior in group situations. The study by Bass, that looked at behavior in group situations, looked at choice of associates, ratings by qualified observers, and analysis of biographical and case history. Bass’s study on behavior in groups searched for correlations from characteristics such as age, height and weight, athletic prowess, fluency of speech, talkativeness, intelligence, scholarship, judgment and decision-making, insight, originality, adaptability, introversion-extroversion, dominance, initiative, persistence, ambition, responsibility, integrity and convictions, self-confidence, control of moods and optimism, emotional control, social activity and mobility, social skills, popularity and prestige, and cooperation.

Bass (1990) found that the average leader exceeded peers in intelligence, scholarship, dependability, activity, social participation, and socioeconomic status. The highest correlations from this early research were found in originality, popularity, sociability, judgment, aggressiveness, desire to excel, humor, cooperativeness, liveliness, and athletic ability. Not many argue that possessing these traits is an asset to leadership. However, according to Bass, these comparative studies failed to prove causation and this theory lost popularity decades ago as a stand-alone explanation for leadership ability.
The rejection of trait leadership was pervasive and lasted for the next 30-40 years (Zaccaro, 2007). Kenny and Zaccaro (1983) noted that in the 1980s, new research surfaced which openly challenged the alleged empirical basis for the rejection of leader trait models. House (1988) argues that as the models of charismatic and transformational leadership gained credibility in leadership literature, studies of traits of charismatic and transformational leaders began to surface (Kenny & Zaccaro, 1983; Lord, De Vader, & Alliger, 1986).

Much of the early literature in support of trait theory focused on personal qualities that were determined to be hereditary. However, Zaccaro (2007) contends that there may be “relatively coherent and integrated patterns of personal characteristics, reflecting a range of individual differences that foster consistent leadership effectiveness across a variety of and organizational situations” (p. 7). Additionally, Zaccaro adds three components to his definition of leader traits. First, leader traits are “not to be considered in isolation but rather as integrated constellations of attributes that influence leadership performance” (p. 8). Secondly, there is variety component two which “concerns the inclusiveness of personal qualities that promote stability in leader effectiveness. Finally, leader attributes produce a cross-situational component that “specifies leader attributes as relatively enduring, producing cross-situational stability in leadership performance” (p. 8).

Behavioral Theory

When trait theory was found unreliable, or unable to clearly identify leaders, researchers began to focus on the observable leadership behaviors captured in behavioral
leadership theory. Daft (1999) concluded leadership effectiveness was determined by observing the behavior of leaders in primarily two areas: nature of managerial work and managerial behavior. The Ohio State University compiled a list of 150 behaviors that appeared to be good examples of important leadership functions (Bass, 1990). The Ohio State studies resulted in a Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ), which was used widely for assessing leadership potential and ability.

Additional major research on observable leadership behaviors was conducted by the University of Michigan. Creighton (2005) states that both studies yielded similar results. The Ohio State studies asked employees to report how often their leader exhibited certain behaviors, of which two central leadership behaviors were identified: (a) behavior centered on structure, and (b) behavior based on consideration (caring for employees). Creighton (2005) stated The University of Michigan also identified two specific leadership behaviors that corresponded to the two behaviors identified in the Ohio State studies (i.e., production orientation and employee orientation). Production oriented behaviors, which matched to the structure behavior in the Ohio State studies, involved completion of tasks. The second behavior, employee orientation, corresponded to the consideration-based behavior in the Ohio State studies.

Creighton (2005) noted that these studies supported the notion that effective leaders had to be mindful of both task and relationship orientation. Additionally, these studies suggest that some organizations may need leaders who are more focused on tasks while others require a leadership perspective with strong human-relations skills.
Transactional Theory

In the mid 1970s, a new leadership paradigm began to emerge. Burns (1978), who is generally considered to be the founder of modern leadership theory, was first to conceptualize leadership as either transactional or transformational. In transactional leadership, leaders lead through social exchange (Bass & Riggo, 2006; Stacker, 2006). Burns (1978) states that leaders approach their followers with the intent of “exchanging one thing for another (for example, jobs for votes, or subsidies for campaign contributions)” (p. 4). In the business world, transactional business leaders most often offer rewards for productivity (Bass & Riggo, 2006).

The transactional leadership style identified by Bass (1998) is based on the hypothesis that leaders motivate followers through a system of rewards and punishment. If the followers do something good, they will be rewarded. If followers do something wrong, they are punished. Transactions, or social exchanges, comprise the bulk of the relationships among leaders and followers (Burns, 1978). Judge and Piccolo (2004) listed three essential dimensions of transactional leadership as follows: (a) contingent reward, (b) management by exception-active, and (c) management by exception-passive. Contingent reward occurs when the leader explains expectations and establishes the rewards for meeting these expectations. In general, management by exception is the degree to which the leader takes corrective action on the basis of results of leader-follower transactions (Judge & Piccolo, 2004). Judge and Piccolo continue that management by exception – active refers to the degree to which the leader takes corrective action on the basis of results of leader-follower transactions; whereas,
management by exception – passive refers to the degree to which the leader takes action after a behavior has created problems.

Transformational Theory

The term “transformational” leadership was first coined by J. V. Downton in his book, Rebel Leadership: Commitment and Charisma in a Revolutionary Process (1973). Transformational leadership is rooted in the works of Burns (1978) and was later expanded by Bass (1985), who distinguished the three components of transformational leadership as idealized influence, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration. Idealized influence was characterized by high moral and ethical standards. This influence of personality that builds trust built on the solid moral and ethical foundation between the leader and follower has profound and extraordinary impact.

Intellectual stimulation was seen as the leaders’ ability to stimulate followers to be innovative and creative when problem-solving, and individual consideration treats each follower as an individual and provides coaching, mentoring and growth opportunities. The model was broadened by Bass and Avolio (1997) when they added inspirational motivation, or the leader’s ability to inspire followers to demonstrate behaviors that inspire those around them by providing meaning and challenge to their followers’ work. Leaders arouse team spirit, enthusiasm and optimism. Transformational leaders involve their followers by clearly communicating stated expectations they want their followers to meet, and also, by demonstrating commitment to goals and a shared vision. These leaders articulate a compelling vision of the future (Bass & Riggo, 2006; Homrig, 2001).
Bass and Riggo (2006) contend that the transformational leadership paradigm has rapidly become the choice for current research and application of leadership theory. Transformational leadership is said to focus more on change and inspires followers to “commit to a shared vision and goal for an organization or unit, challenging them to be innovative problem solvers, and developing followers’ leadership capacity via coaching, mentoring, and provision of both challenge and support” (p. 4). See Table 2 for the four components of Transformational Leadership.

**Transformational Leadership in an Educational Context.** Leithwood (1992) writes that in the 1980s and early 1990s, the instructional leadership paradigm was thought to serve schools well and was the most popular model of educational leadership (Marzano, et al., 2005) during that time. Although, Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999) found the concept of instructional leadership to be one of the most frequently mentioned educational leadership models, they believed it lacked clear definition. These authors cite various models of instructional leadership in which leadership is defined along numerous dimensions, each of which integrate a variety of practices. Further, they found many educational leaders began to embrace and put into practice a school model of transformational leadership. This leadership model was adopted by school leaders because it “aspire, more generally, to increase members’ efforts on behalf of the organization, as well as to develop more skilled practice” (p. 20).

Leithwood (1994) introduced an eight dimensional paradigm of transformational leadership as a model for school leadership. It has been said that this model has been the most fully developed transformational leadership model for school leaders (Leithwood,
Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999). This paradigm integrates the following elements: (1) identifying and articulating a vision, (2) fostering the acceptance of group goals,

Table 2

*Four Components of Transformational Leadership*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charisma or Idealized Influence</td>
<td>The Leader behaves in admirable ways that cause followers to identify with the leader. Charismatic leaders display convictions, take stands and appeal to followers on an emotional level. This is about the leader having a clear set of values and demonstrating them in every action, providing a role model for their followers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspirational Motivation</td>
<td>The leader articulates a vision that is appealing and inspiring to followers. Leaders with inspirational motivation challenges followers with high standards, communicate optimism about future goals, and provide meaning to the task at hand. This person is also a visionary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Stimulation</td>
<td>The leader challenges assumptions, takes risks and solicits follower’s ideas. Leaders with this trait stimulate and encourage creativity in their followers. The leader’s vision provides the framework for followers to see how they connect to the leader, the organization, each other, and the goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized Attention or Consideration</td>
<td>The leader attends to each follower’s needs, acts as a mentor or coach to the follower and listens to the follower’s concerns and needs. This also encompasses the need to respect and celebrate the individual contribution that each follower can make to the team.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Table created from the Transformational Leadership Report (2007). Retrieved November, 26, 2009 from Transformationalleadership.net*

(3) providing individualized support, (4) stimulating the intellect, (5) providing an appropriate model, (6) setting high performance expectations, (7) strengthening school culture, and (8) building collaborative relationships.
Presidential Skills, Competencies and Ethics

What are the skills and competencies new presidents need? Smith (2009) defines personal attributes are the character traits, aptitudes, skills, values and attitudes of an individual. A study conducted by Pope and Miller (2005) researched the skills required for and roles assumed by community college presidents. Participants were first asked to identify skills or roles relevant to a president. Secondly, the participants were asked to identify the extent to which leadership in a faculty senate might provide the necessary experience with the skills and/or roles of a community college president.

More than 80% of the responding faculty leaders perceived three skills to be important for a community college president: education values, oral communication skills, and problem-analysis skills. Contrastingly, responding presidents perceived eight skills to be important: stress tolerance, problem analysis, personal motivation, organizational ability, written communication, educational values, oral communication, and judgment. The four skills which emerged from the responses in terms of relevance and importance were problem analysis, education values, oral communication, and personal motivation.

Also, in linking other less mentioned competencies (fit-nesses) for future presidents, a study by Fujita (1990) found that within the scope of how presidents were evaluated included their “appearance, image or impact” (p. 2). In a study by Bumpas (1998) titled Factors That Affect The Selection Of Community College Presidents, a candidates personal appearance and being a “good fit” (p. 129) were found as a
proficiency a would-be president needs to possess. With regarding to good fit, Bumpas (1998) noted:

A college presidency varies in complexity due to the conditions at the institution. One must remember that every board, college, and system irrespective of mission and similarities is different. Fit is hard to define. It is between the individual and the institution. (pp. 129-130)

Public speaking ability and communications skills were mentioned as a necessities for community college presidents in previous research literature (Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002; Gatto, 2009; Gregg, 2004; Heffner, 2009; Tubbs & Moss, 2003; Wallin, 2006). Previous research literature strongly suggest that community college presidents have good listening skills (ACC, 2005; Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002; Goldstein, 2006; Gregg, 2004; Plinske, 2009; Steil & Bommelje, 2004). Community college presidents of the future need unique behaviors and traits; due to the complexity of situations they will face (Goff, 2003).

When studying managerial traits that were admired by subordinates, Goff (2003) stated, “According to our research, the majority of us admire leaders who are honest, competent, forward-looking, and inspiring” (p. 16). Hockaday and Puyear (2000) identified nine traits of effective community college leaders to have vision, integrity, confidence, courage, technical knowledge, ability to collaborate, persistence, good judgment, and desire to lead.

The importance of integrity (honesty) for leaders was found in literature from several researchers (Bennis, 1999; Gregg, 2004; Hilderbrant, 1987; Hockaday & Puyear, 2000; Jensen et al., 2000; Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Vaughn, 1986). In the review of literature, one of the most frequently occurring recommendations for community college
presidents was that they be of good moral character (Bennis, 1999; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Plinske, 2009).

Warren Bennis (1999) identified the following essential attributes of leadership: technical competence, conceptual skill, a proven track record, people skills, taste, character, and good judgment. “Character is the key to exceptional leadership…research at Harvard University indicates that 85% of a leader’s performance depends on personal character” (p. 3). Character is described as drive, competence, and integrity. Most leaders will possess the first two, drive and competence, but lack the integrity that it takes to have a moral guiding compass. “Such leaders rarely last, for the simple reason that without all three ingredients – drive, competence, and moral compass – it is difficult to engage others and sustain meaningful results (p. 6).

Also, 95% of respondents to the National Leadership Index report felt that honesty and integrity were extremely important traits for leaders (National Leadership Index, 2005). The importance of values as an attribute for future presidents is discussed by Fulton-Calkins and Millings (2005), as they suggest the importance of values for leaders when they write:

Leadership is based on a solid foundation of values; if the foundation is taken away, there is no base for leadership. Thus, the leader must not only be aware of personal values, but also must clearly present those values to others within the organization. How? The obvious answer is living them daily. (p. 238)

Additionally, Quinn (2004) argues that values form the “fundamental state” of leader behavior (p. 87). Boggs (2003) noted that future community college leaders needed to be honest and have high ethical standards, and be fair and equitable.
Avolio (2004) finds “Leaders exhibit ethical behaviors when they are doing what is morally right, just, and good, and when they help to elevate followers' moral awareness and moral self-actualization. Indeed, ethical leadership encompasses more than the fostering of ethical behaviors” (p. 2). Integrity is also a very important attribute for new community college presidents. Vaughn (1986), found integrity was the topped ranked personal attribute for presidents to possess. The ability to listen and interpret data were also skills and abilities future presidents need. Goldstein (2006) notes that “Leaders have to be in touch, have good analytical skills, be good listeners, and have a sense of the impact they have on the people around them” (p. 17). The American Association of community Colleges (AACC, 2005) unanimously approved a document entitled Competencies for Community College Leaders. See Table 3.

As the AACC Competencies mentions, the success of students should be a concern or competency for presidents. Budig (2002) notes an important competency for presidents, and one that cannot be feigned, is that community college presidents genuinely like students. Wallin (2004) recognizes that there is no clear set of training competencies for future presidents to learn from. Also mentioned in the AACC Competencies for leaders, is that they understand the environment and future trends. One of those trends is that community college presidents understand, appreciate, and apply the appropriate business practices to the community college environment (Levin, 2002, 2005).
Table 3

*AACC Leadership Competencies*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Strategy</td>
<td>An effective community college leader strategically improves the quality of the institution, protects the long-term health of the organization, promotes the success of all students, and sustains the community college mission, based on knowledge of the organization, its environment, and future trends.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resource Management</td>
<td>An effective community college leader equitably and ethically sustains people, processes, and information as well as physical and financial assets to fulfill the mission, vision, and goals of the community college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>An effective community college leader uses clear listening, speaking, and writing skills to engage in honest, open dialogue at all levels of the college and its surrounding community, to promote the success of all students, and to sustain the community college mission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>An effective community college leader develops and maintains responsive, cooperative, beneficial, and ethical internal and external relationships that nurture diversity, promote the success of all students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community College Advocacy</td>
<td>An effective community college leader understands, commits to, and advocates for the mission, vision, and goals of the community college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>An effective community college leader works ethically to set high standards for self and others, continuously improves self and surroundings, demonstrates accountability to and for the institution.</td>
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The Changing Roles of Community College Presidents

Future community college presidents cannot be mirror images of their predecessors. Vaughn (1989) noted that traditionally, community college presidents’ duties were to ensure that institutions were managed efficiently and were responsible for creating a campus climate which allowed students and employees the opportunity to achieve their full potential as members of the college community. Additionally, these traditional leaders interpreted and communicated the college mission to the students, employees, trustees, legislators, and the community at-large.

The results from a recent survey of 120 community college presidents and chancellors (Green, 2008) elucidates the change in focus of community college presidents and found them addressing enrollments, campus employment, and budgets. With regard to enrollments and budgets, Mullin and Phillippe (2009) observed;

By fall 2009, the economic recession that started almost two years previously had a dramatic and unforeseen impact on community colleges. In particular, these changed economic circumstances had been broadly viewed as spurring major enrollment increase across the country. These enrollment increases were coupled with widespread funding reductions. (p. 4)

Hockaday and Puyear (2000) argue that “the issues that upcoming community college leaders will have to address will be different and more complex than those faced by community college leaders in the past” (p. 1). In fact, the role of the community college president has changed substantially in the first ten years of the current century. The American Council on Education (ACE) recommends that a college presidency combines at least two full-time jobs (ACE, 2007). One of jobs involves dealing with on-campus constituencies; and the other job is dealing with external challenges including legislative,
government, community groups, media, and potential donors (ACE, 2007). Clearly, “our nations community colleges are entering their second century with a rekindled sense of purpose, a renewed understanding of their core values, and a heightened resolve to preserve the open door to higher education,” (Thomas, 2002, p. 9).

In 2001, the American Association of Community Colleges administered a leadership survey to community college presidents. Christopher Shults (2001) provided an executive summary of the leadership survey done by the American Association of Community Colleges. He summarized the survey by stating, “Presidents believe that the skills they need in the future will remain constant but that there will be more emphasis on the ability to be flexible, to understand technology, and to seek business-and industry partnerships” (p. 1).

**President as Fundraiser**

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC, 2008) noted the rise of effective fundraising by community college presidents as pre-eminent commitment. The article stressed that “to be skilled in the art and science of fundraising is an imperative for the modern community college president” (p. 30). Clearly, this is in sharp contrast to the results from a 1986 Career and Lifestyle Survey (CLS), which included responses from 591 community college presidents where it was concluded that presidents spent “too much time with people outside of the college, such as politicians, community leaders, managers of businesses, in getting dollars, and in projecting the image of the college” (Vaughn, 1986, p. 57). Phelan (2005) concludes that “To be effective fundraisers, community college presidents must have a basic understanding of giving
options as well as familiarity with instruments for giving, such as charitable remainder trusts, charitable gift annuities, gifts insurance, stock, and/or real property” (p. 94).

**President as Lobbyist.** Phelan (2005) believes that “today’s community college presidents should be skilled in building significant relationships with legislators” (p. 89).

Phelan notes, that “because most community colleges cannot afford to hire a lobbyist, the president becomes the de facto lobbyist” (p. 89). Phelan states;

> the president should also have at command a telephone tree of selected community members to be called on at a moment’s notice to write letters, make telephone calls, and send e-mails to legislators about vital funding legislation. To be sure, this practice will require significant time and effort to orchestrate, but this is the price of admission to the legislative table. (p. 89)

Phelan concludes that Community college presidents can learn these lobbying, or political skills through prescribed training, and by working with former legislator and lobbyist.

**President as Communicator.** Schmitz (2008) in a study on leadership preparation and career pathways of community college presidents’ states:

> The importance placed on communication is consistent with the presidents’ rating of communication-related challenges such as faculty relations, board relations, and community involvement, which were rated as challenging or very challenging by more than 50% of the presidents. The high rating of the importance of a strong skill set in the communication domain is an excellent sign that community college presidents recognize its value not only for themselves but for future leaders as well. (p. 120)

A potential president without a communication style capable of reaching all constituents may not be as successful in that function of the office. The need for community college presidents to have an effective communications style and one that supports the mission of
the college appears to be supported in research literature (Desjardins & Huff, 2001; Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002; Roueche, Baker & Rose, 1989).

Whenever change takes place, it is the president’s job to communicate the change across the campus and to the community. Phelan (2005) states employees generally understand the volatile nature of higher education finances. What employees do not understand and clearly do not appreciate is being kept in the dark or left out of the situation. Presidents should be mindful of this and address college employees immediately. (p. 95)

As community college presidents are forced to make changes in fiscal policy and practices in response to the shifting budget streams, it is important that they are aware “some of these changes may cause negative fallout among campus constituents” (Phelan, 2005, p. 95). Eddy (2003) found that community college presidents are the directional navigators for their campuses. He noted that inherently, leadership on all campuses is nested via the organizational hierarchy. An implication of the findings of Eddy’s study is that leaders need to consider the filtering element of institutional culture when they frame issues for campus sense-making. Eddy asserts:

on a campus with high levels of faculty involvement, it is critical to communicate change in a more involved way and to obtain buy-in from faculty leaders. If presidents have a particular version of the messages regarding change that they wish to be the core of the shared campus meaning, care must be given as to how others interpret the message. (p. 51)

Role of the Board of Trustees in the Selection of Community College Presidents

Boggs (2006) states that regardless of its structure, one of the most important roles of a community college board of trustees is to recruit, select, and hire a new president. Campbell (2007) concurs when he writes:
Choosing the person with whom to entrust with the future of the college is a daunting task. The president is responsible for the success of students, the morale of the faculty, the fiscal stability of the college, and compliance with accreditation standards. Selecting a new president may be the most important job a board of trustees has. (p. 67)

Community colleges are governed by a board, and depending upon the state where the college is located, trustees are locally-elected, locally-appointed, state-elected, or state-appointed (Vaughn, 2006). The ultimate authority for hiring a community college president resides with the board of trustees (Hildebrant, 1987). In this role, trustees are responsible for appointing a search committee, determining the characteristics and qualifications of an ideal candidate, overseeing advertisement of the position and recruitment of candidates, reviewing applicants, interviewing finalists, and finally, appointing a new president (Plinske, 2009). Ingram (1997) found the boards of trustees were responsible for setting and clarifying the mission and purpose of the college, appointing the chief executive, supporting the chief executive, and monitoring the chief executive’s performance.

While the responsibilities of boards of trustees in the presidential search process are clearly outlined, the criteria that trustees use to make hiring decisions are not as apparent. Most presidential openings are advertised with a published position statement that includes the desired characteristics and minimum qualifications of applicants, with statements including generic descriptions that are vague and are subject to a number of different interpretations by the members of the board of trustees. While presidential searches often involve a selection committee with representations from various campus
and constituency groups, the authority for the final selection resides with the board of trustees.

Campbell (2007) stated that the selection of a good president can tell the institution’s story to a wide audience and will enhance the college’s reputation. But, he cautioned:

After finishing a search, board members should consider how they could do it better the next time. The board that has not conducted a search in the immediate past should plan contingency measures for the day when it will face this task. (p. 77)

The board and the president must get along and have a good relationship. Carver (1990) rightly said that “no single relationship is as important as that between the board and its chief executive officer” (p. 109). Donahue (2003) supports the contention as follows:

Friendship and social interaction moves the board-president relationship from the professional level to a personal level. A personal relationship has the potential for a positive impact on the institution by breaking down formal barriers to interaction. The importance of the development, character, and tone of the relationship that develops between the board and the president intensifies when applied to the chair and the president. (p. 42)

Weisman and Vaughn (1997) note that board and president’s relationship is “important to the progress and achievement of a community college under normal circumstances, an effective relationship is even more critical in times of crisis and change” (p. 1).

Levin (1991) reported that the board/president relationship is important and can have an effect on several areas. These areas include the environment external to the college, which includes the community and government officials; the internal constituencies of administration, faculty and staff; the consistency of the message of the
college; the process of governance; and the portrayal of the values of the college. Donahue (2003) stated that the interactions between the board and the president are critical to the image of the institution.

Although the relationship between the board and the president is important, most community college boards of trustees fail to use or consider succession planning in replacing a president. Smith (2007) states, “the literature acknowledges a theme that boards of trustees in higher education do not consider serious succession planning for their institutions and often do not take an active role in assimilating a new president in the different culture” (p. 53). Moore and Burrows (2001) believe that “a thoughtfully crafted policy framework offers the best opportunity for effectively managing presidential successions and transitions” (p. 43).

Additionally, Smith (2007) writes that “many corporations attempt to groom their future chief executive officers from within their individual organization, and many business leaders express surprise that leaders of colleges and universities are selected externally to the particular institution” (p. 52). Fulton-Calkins & Milling (2005) suggest that community colleges can prepare new leaders by developing broadly structure succession planning processes. Finally, Moore and Burrows (2001) concur and suggest that presidential succession planning should be organized, and follow the model used in the corporate world. Succession planning in higher education is a concept also supported by other research literature (Bridges et al., 2008; King & Gomez, 2008).
Challenges Facing New Community College Presidents

There are many challenges facing American community colleges and new community college presidents. In 2006, at the annual Community Colleges Futures Assembly, a delegation of more than 200 people voted for the top critical issues facing community colleges. Campbell and Basham (2006) found the top three critical issues were (a) to give people what they want, (b) adapt or die, and (c) hire the right people:

Ask customers what they want and give it to them—create for the future; the first rule of business is the same as the first rule of life: adapt or die; and hire the right people, get them on the right seat on the bus, and keep them there. (p. 541)

In a 9-state survey of community college chief academic officers, Cejda and Leist (2006) indicated that fiscal matters remain the dominate challenge, as community colleges strive to “be all things to all people.” Without additional funding and/or new strategies, institutional leaders may face even greater challenges; most notably, dismantling the comprehensive model or redefining open access. (p. 253)

On the one hand, giving the students what they want is important, but it is impossible to “be all things to all people.” Community colleges need to adapt to the rapid pace of change, and as Campbell and Basham (2006) noted, community colleges must hire the right people and keep them.

In a letter to its members from the American Council on Education, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, American Association of Community Colleges, Association of American Universities, National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (2006) listed several serious challenges facing American higher education. The following challenges were identified: (a) expanding college access to
low-income and minority students; (b) keeping college affordable; (c) improving learning by utilizing new knowledge and instructional techniques; (d) preparing secondary students for higher education; (e) increasing accountability for educational outcomes; (f) internationalizing the student experience and (h) increasing opportunities for lifelong education and workforce training. These challenges primarily affect undergraduate education. The lack of funding, as well as enrollment management problems have emerged across the board for all institutions of higher education.

An additional challenge finds the most common pathway to the presidency was through the academic pipeline, but less than half of the presidents identified as outstanding leaders held a full-time faculty position at a community college prior to the presidency (Amey & VanDerLinden, 2002; Kubala & Bailey 2001). McFarlin et al. (1999) concluded that requiring a previous full-time community college teaching job prior to a presidency, may not be important when recruiting a candidate for a vacancy. Amey, VanderLinden, and Brown (2002) note that the largest percentage of presidents surveyed indicated that their immediate past position was as a president at another community college. With the pending retirements of many of the current presidents, a challenge remains in finding a new pool of presidential talent, who may not have previous experience as a president.

Summary

The review of the literature began by reviewing the history and context of American community colleges which led to the identification of the problem under investigation: the presidents who have led community colleges through the period of
great growth [1970s and 1980s] will be retiring at an alarming rate (Shults, 2001). Boggs (2003) calls this retirement crisis the “most significant transition in leadership in the history of America’s community colleges” (p. 15).

The conceptual framework of the study employed Sullivan’s (2001) four generation model of community college leadership as a shell for the study. The application of Sullivan’s model suggests that a new generation of community college leaders is eminent.

The historical perspectives of leadership from trait theory to transformational leadership theory were reviewed. In addition, reviews of literature and research related to needed presidential skills, competencies and characteristics of community college presidents, and the roles and responsibilities of the boards of trustee members in the selection of community college presidents were presented. The literature review concluded with a summary of the challenges facing potential community college presidents.

Chapter 3 will present the components of the research methodology and procedures which include, the guiding questions, the research design, the research procedures, the case selection process employed, the selected research participants, data collection procedures, the trustworthiness and credibility role of the researcher in the validity and reliability of the data, the data analysis procedures, the transferability and reflexivity of the research, and a personal disclosure.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore essential personal attributes and abilities needed by future community college presidents, as perceived by current community college board members and presidents. A qualitative design was selected for this research because it facilitated the exploration of the essential attributes and abilities needed by future community college presidents. A qualitative design allowed for a detailed look into understanding the attitudes and perceptions of these attributes and abilities from the perspectives of presidents and board members.

Furthermore, Creswell (2007) expressed that a qualitative paradigm is appropriate when (a) a problem or issue needs to be explored; (b) we need a complex, detailed understanding of the issue; (c) we want to understand the contexts or settings in which participants in a study address a problem or issue; and (d) quantitative measures and the statistical analyses simply do not fit the problem (pp. 39-40). Creswell and Miller (1997) stated the use of a qualitative approach to research “places a substantial emphasis on how participants in a study make sense or meaning of a situation” (p. 5).

Maxwell (1996) finds qualitative research is well-suited in studies where the knowledge sought involves: (a) understanding the meaning for the participants in the study of the events, situations and actions with which they are involved; (b) understanding the particular context within which the participants act, and the influence that this context has on their actions; (c) understanding the process by which the events
and actions take place; (d) identifying unanticipated phenomena and influences, and generating new grounded theories about the latter; and (d) developing causal explanations.

This chapter addresses the following components of the research methodology and procedures: (a) the guiding questions or the scope of the project; (b) the research design; (c) the research procedures; (d) the case selection process employed; (e) the selected research participants; (f) data collection; (g) trustworthiness and credibility role of the researcher in the validity and reliability of the data; (h) the data analysis procedures; (i) transferability and reflexivity; (j) personal disclosure; and (k) a chapter summary.

Guiding Questions

Participants in this study were asked to explore and record their perceptions of the essential personal attributes and abilities needed by future community college presidents. Traver (1998) states “a guiding question is the fundamental query that directs the search for understanding” (p. 70). The guiding questions addressed by this research were as follows:

1. Which personal attributes are critical for future community college presidents?

2. What specific skills and abilities are vital for future community college presidents?

3. What other factors contribute to the selection of the “final” candidate for a community college presidency?

4. What is presidential leadership potential and how is it classified and recognized?

5. What are the greatest challenges facing future community college presidents?
Research Design

This study utilized qualitative case study methodology. The six cases selected for this study had a wealth of experience to draw from. Marshall and Rossman (2006) describe the case study as a strategy that captures “the deep meaning of experience in the participants’ own words” (p. 55). Merriam (2002) notes that “the key to understanding qualitative research lies with the idea that meaning is constructed socially by individuals in interaction with their world” (p. 3). Corcoran et al. (2004) argues that the case study is a mechanism that seeks to transform and improve practice. Additionally, Marshall and Rossman (2006) state “because thoughts, feelings, beliefs, values, and assumptive worlds are involved, the researcher needs to understand the deeper perspectives that can be captured through face-to-face interaction” (p. 53).

The purpose of this research was to identify the personal attributes, skills and abilities needed by future community college presidents. These purposes were served well by the multiple case study design. Yin (1994) identifies six sources of evidence for case studies: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant-observation and physical artifacts. Direct interviews of community college board chairs and presidents were employed along with field notes including observations and reflections.

The six participants in this study represented a multiple-case study approach, which according to Creswell (2008), provides comparison of themes and variables leading additional insight an issue. A multiple case study allowed the researcher to analyze within each setting and across settings. Other methods of qualitative research
simply would not have provided the same rich detailed description of multiple bounded systems as in the collective case study (Johnson & Christiansen, 2004).

Yin (2003) states that “the case study is but one of several ways of doing social science research; other research can include experiments, surveys, histories, and analysis of archival information” (p. 1). The case study method was the most appropriate method for this research. Creswell (2008) concludes that other methods of qualitative research do not provide the same rich detailed description of multiple bounded systems as in multiple case studies. The community college presidency is a multifaceted job. While attempting to discover what is needed by aspiring presidents in order to prepare for the position, the qualitative case study was the best choice for exploration of the need attributes and abilities. Padilla (2005) writes

Sometimes in scholarly work, the lives or broad leadership experiences of certain men and women are examined qualitatively in hopes of finding commonalities, some average tendencies, so that appropriate generalizations can be made and a better understanding of the entire process can be achieved. Quantitative approaches, on the other hand, which have dominated the journal literature in recent years, essentially tackle the leadership puzzle by inductively fitting together parts of a picture whose overall composition is presumably known. Qualitative studies, more comprehensive and holistic in their approach, focus instead on creating the picture or composition as new parts of the puzzle are collected and analyzed. (p. 41)

Research Procedures

The research procedures for this study were as follows: (a) development of a semi-structured interview protocol to address the guiding questions of the research study (see Appendix A); (b) a review of the interview protocol by a panel of experts to assist in the design and implementation of the protocol; (c) a pilot test of the semi-structured interview protocol was conducted to address potential process considerations including
appropriate prompts; (d) invitations to participate were extended by telephone and emails to representatives from three institutions (to include a board member and a president from each) to complete the semi-structured interview; (e) letters of appreciation and confirmation were sent to selected chairs and presidents confirming their participation in this study (see Appendix B); (f) transcription of the interviews were completed and copies were returned to participants for accuracy (member checks); and (g) the organization and analysis of the results were completed.

Semi-structured Interview Protocol

The research focused on the five guiding questions for this research which were as follows:

1. Which personal attributes are critical for future community college presidents?

2. What specific skills and abilities are vital for future community college presidents?

3. What other factors contribute to the selection of the “final” candidate for a community college presidency?

4. What is presidential leadership potential and how is it classified and recognized?

5. What are the greatest challenges facing future community college presidents?

The focused (semi-structured) interviews sought to investigate the respondent’s point of view regarding the needed attributes and skills of future presidents, rather than to make generalizations about them. Open-ended questions were employed and asked after each of the guiding questions, as the researcher built rapport with the participants and the interview was conducted like a focused conversation. All questions were reviewed by a panel of experts prior to the interviews.
Panel of Experts

A panel of experts which consisted of a former community college board chair and a former community college president reviewed the interview script and the research protocol. The purpose of their review was to assure that the appropriate wording and focus were incorporated into the interview questions as related to the guiding questions of the research study. Each reviewer provided suggestions or alterations to the interview questions as follows:

1. Use who, what, where, when, why and how interview questions (interrogative pronouns).
2. Try not to allow the participants to answer questions with “yes” or “no” answers (open ended questions).
3. Advised not to use the word “charisma” in an interview question (if it was important a participant would share it).
4. Advised not to ask whether a candidate’s physical appearance could be considered a factor in the selection of a final candidate.

All of the suggestions given by the panel of expert members were incorporated into the final interview schedule.

Pilot Test

The interview was pilot tested with a former member of a community college board of trustees. The pilot test was designed to help the researcher prepare for the interview process (timing and flow) with the actual participants selected for the study. No changes to the interview protocol were made as a result of the pilot test.
Invitation to Participate

The six participants in the project were selected purposefully by location, willingness to participate, and convenience. This researcher sent an email letter of invitation to each potential president participant of the study (see Appendix B). The email introduced the researcher and the purpose of the study. In addition, information was provided to the participant regarding the length of the interview and that the interview would occur at the participant’s convenience.

Semi-Structured Interviews

A semi-structured interview process was used to guide the interviews as it combined a structured format, yet allowed the researcher flexibility to ask subsequent questions. The semi-structured interview questions were forwarded to the participants for their review and reflection prior to the scheduled interview. It was noted that most of the participants had written notes in the columns of the interview document provided by the researcher. Patton (2002) indicates that semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to “explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject” (p. 343).

The interviews, each lasting approximately one hour, took place at times and locations which were convenient to the participants between May 2009 and June 2009. Prior to conducting the semi-structured interviews, the researcher and the participant(s) discussed the purpose of the study and secured the informed consent agreement (see Appendix D). Once the participants were ready, the interviews began and the tape
recorder was activated. All interviews were recorded and downloaded to a secure computer drive accessible only by the researcher.

**Transcription - Member Checks**

The interview data was transferred to a CD-ROM and given to a confidential transcriptionist for transcribing. The interviews were transcribed and upon completion, the transcriptionist returned the disk with the data to the researcher. To ensure that the transcripts are correct, each transcript was returned to the individual participants for their review and correction. This process known as “member checking,” provided the participant the opportunity to make any changes or corrections to the transcript to ensure accuracy. There were no significant changes or corrections to the transcripts resulting from the member checks.

**Data Analysis**

**Case and Participant Selection**

Initially, the researcher planned on sending out invitations to participate to a series of board chairs and presidents from rural, urban and suburban community colleges. The original plan was to take from the first six willing respondents from these institutional types. However, prior to sending letters of invitation to study participants, names of potentially interested community college presidents were solicited from community college leaders and colleagues. As a result, three Midwest community college presidents (the first three contacted) agreed to participate in the study. Each of these presidents held extensive experience as community college presidents.
Prior to establishing the interview schedule with the presidents, each was asked to provide access to interview the board of trustees’ chairpersons from their institutions. Each agreed and provided contact information for their board chairperson or vice-chairperson. The same letter of invitation (see Appendix B) was sent via email to the board participants and each accepted the invitation to participate in the study.

As noted previously, purposeful sampling was used to identify all interview participants. Furthermore, Patton (1990) states that “qualitative inquiry typically focuses in depth on relatively small samples, even single cases, selected purposefully” (p. 169). Further, Patton indicates that the “logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for the study in depth”.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

In this multiple-case study, the principal data-gathering strategy consisted of the personal interview (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Interviews were conducted to explore which personal attributes are considered most critical in selecting future community college presidents, as perceived by community college board members and presidents.

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) argue that interviews are “the dominate strategy for data collection” in case study research (p. 103). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) concur that “the interview is the favorite methodological tool of the qualitative researcher” (p. 353). In this study, each personal interview was conducted face-to-face. Each session lasted approximately one hour. The interviews were recorded with a tape recorder and the results were transcribed. A copy of the transcript was sent to the participants to review for accuracy and correctness (member checking). Upon return of materials, the transcripts
were analyzed by finding themes, clustering, and conducting a thematic analysis of the data.

**Trustworthiness and Credibility**

In qualitative research, reliability is defined as the trustworthiness of the procedures and data generated (Stiles, 1993). This project established trustworthiness by providing participants with the opportunity to review the researcher’s interpretation of the data (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) through member checking. During the interview process, member checking was augmented by the researcher by restating, summarizing, or paraphrasing the information received from a respondent. This augmentation was to ensure that what was heard or recorded was, in fact, accurate.

After the data collection, member checking was completed consisting of transcript review of the preliminary findings by the participants. Their review did not include requests for critical commentary on the findings. Input from the member checks was incorporated in the final critique of the study findings. Other than punctuation, tense and word clarifications [omitted words], there were no significant changes to the data. Both forms of member checking added richness to the final report (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

In terms of credibility, Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that ensuring credibility is an extremely important factor for establishing trustworthiness. Stake (1995) argues it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that information and data is not misrepresented or misunderstood. Triangulation, which is the use of multiple sources to reinforce emerging themes, as defined by Merriam (1998) was employed in this study to help ensure the internal validity or credibility of the research.
Data Analysis Techniques

The participant responses to the interview questions were analyzed first by establishing categories related to each question. The identifying commonalities among responses included the identification and interpretation of patterns. To analyze the interview responses, the “coding and themes method” as identified by Guba and Lincoln (1994) was employed. Guba and Lincoln suggest that “devising categories involves both convergent and divergent thinking” (p. 134). Convergence is identifying what data fit together in a single category or theme. Divergence involves sorting out the categories as they develop. The goal of this data analysis was “to come up with reasonable conclusions and generalizations based on a preponderance of the data” (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 139). Marshall and Rossman (1999) state:

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. It is a messy, ambiguous, time-consuming, creative, and fascinating process. It does not proceed in a linear fashion; it is not neat. Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data (p. 111).

Miles and Huberman (1994) define data analysis as containing “three linked subprocesses: data reduction, data display, and conclusion/verification” (p. 428). Following this approach, a format that illustrates commonalities among participant responses was created. Through the process of coding and theme identification, common threads that led to linkages to the research questions were identified.

The data was coded and commonalities and emerging themes were identified. Bogdan and Biklen (1982) state that qualitative data analysis is, “working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns,
discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others” (p. 145). Once this process was completed, the information was organized in a format that illustrated commonalities among participant responses.

In order to ensure that valid inferences are made from the data collected, the researcher employed the triangulation process. Triangulation is the integration of data from multiple sources in order to confirm or support the inferences drawn within a study (Stake, 1995). Results from the interview transcripts were triangulated with field notes, personal reflections and relevant documents to assist with the interpretations of the findings.

Transferability and Reflexivity

Transferability is the degree to which similarities exist between contexts that allow the research findings to be transferred from one situation to another (Plack, 2005). Transferability provides the opportunity for the findings of this research to be used in similar settings. Kincheloe (1991) argues that in traditional research, all that is needed to ensure transferability is to understand with a high degree of internal validity that certain generalizations can be applied to multiple contexts. Creswell (1994) discusses the importance of using “thick” descriptions of the data to provide a solid framework for comparison from which transferability may occur. To Creswell, “thick descriptions” means that the researcher shares clear descriptions of the culture, the context and the process of the research. Robson (1993) argues that the job of the researcher is to provide thick descriptions so the readers can make judgments regarding transferability of the data.
Reflexivity involves the direct acknowledgement by the researcher that he or she is an active participant throughout the research process and therefore has a significant influence on the engagement of the participants (Finlay, 2003). Qualitative research in the interpretive paradigm should not feign objectivity. Indeed, qualitative researchers should see subjectivity as a strength of the paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Willis, 2007). The researcher is the instrument through which the data was collected for this study and any bias as held by the researcher related to the purpose of the study is acknowledged directly in the study (see Personal Disclosure below).

**Personal Disclosure**

As an educator currently serving as an administrator in a Midwest community college, this exploratory research is important for community college administrators and, specifically, for presidential hopefuls. It is important that hiring boards and all those concerned with the pending leadership crisis facing community colleges are armed with tools to assist them in finding potential presidents one at a time.

All academic administrators are not leaders, nor does every vice president have the desire, personal attributes, skills or abilities to become a president simply because of their length of experience in the academic pipeline. The leadership crisis necessitates that those potential leaders, who not only desire the presidency but who bring the appropriate personal attributes, skills and abilities, are discovered and prepared in order to emerge as the next generation of community college presidents.
Ethical Considerations: Protection of Human Subjects

The participants in this study were ensured they would be unidentified as each are currently serving or has served as a president or board member of institutions at a Midwest community college. A consent form (see Appendix D) was approved by the university’s Research Review Board and was signed by each participant prior to their interview. Preceding the interview, the participants were given a list of guiding questions that related to the nature of the research. Participation in this study was voluntary and allowed the participant to withdraw from the interview, as stated in the consent form.

The identity of the participants was protected by using identifiers. This discretion allowed the audio tapes to be transcribed without disclosing individual or institutional names. The researcher assured the participants that audio tapes and transcriptions would not be used outside of this research and the materials would be stored in an undisclosed secure location.

Summary

Chapter three addressed the methodology used in this study. A qualitative design was selected for this research, a multiple case study was conducted, and the interview was the primary data gathering tool. This chapter discussed the research procedures; the guiding questions, the scope of the project; research design; case selection process; the selected research participants, data collection; trustworthiness and credibility role of the researcher in the validity and reliability of the data; the data analysis procedures; the transferability and reflexivity; a personal disclosure; and a chapter summary. Chapter 4 will present the background and context of the study, the guiding questions, the
information regarding the participants, and the findings related to each guiding question (emergent themes).
CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore essential personal attributes and abilities needed by future community college presidents as perceived by community college board chairs and/or vice-chairs and presidents. This chapter provides the background and context of the study, the guiding questions, the information regarding the participants, and the findings related to each guiding question (emergent themes).

Context of the Study

To address this purpose, a study was conducted by interviewing six participants representing a multiple-case study approach. The interviews took place between May and June of 2009. The participants selected were three community college presidents and three community college board members from three Midwest community colleges.

The research procedures for this study included the following steps: a semi-structured interview protocol was developed to address the guiding questions of the research study (see Appendix A), and a review of the interview protocol by a panel of experts to assist in the design and implementation of the protocol.

Next, a pilot test of the semi-structured interview protocol was conducted to address potential process considerations including appropriate prompts and invitations to participate were extended by telephone and emails to representatives from three institutions (to include a board chair/vice-chair and a president from each) to complete the semi-structured interview. Additionally, letters of appreciation and confirmation were
sent to selected chairs and presidents confirming their participation in the study (see Appendix B), and transcription of the interviews were completed and copies were returned to participants for accuracy (member checks). Finally, the organization and analysis of the results were completed.

**Guiding Questions**

The purpose of this study was to explore essential personal attributes and abilities needed by future community college presidents, as perceived by current community college board chairs and presidents. The guiding questions for the research were as follows:

1. Which personal attributes are critical for future community college presidents?
2. What specific skills and abilities are vital for future community college presidents?
3. What other factors contribute to the selection of the “final” candidate for a community college presidency?
4. What is presidential leadership potential and how is it classified and recognized?
5. What are the greatest challenges facing future community college presidents?

To answer these questions, semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants who were selected purposefully by location, willingness to participate and convenience. This chapter includes both participant profiles and findings by guiding question for each of the interviews.

**Background and Significance of the Study**

The presidents who have led community colleges through the period of great growth during the 1960s and 1970s are retiring at an alarming rate (Shults, 2001).
Weisman and Vaughn (2007) noted that within the next six years more than half (56%) of the community college presidents currently serving will retire. Boggs (2003) calls this retirement crisis the “most significant transition in leadership in the history of America’s community colleges” (p. 15).

The significance of this study is the compilation of vital personal attributes and skills needed by aspiring community college presidents as determined by board chairs, vice-chairs and current presidents. The identification of these desirable attributes and skills are important areas of exploration and consideration when selecting new presidents. These insights may contribute to the advancement of recommendations for hiring committees and community college board of trustees when choosing and hiring a new community college president.

**Participant Profiles**

Of the six participants interviewed for this study, two were community college board of trustee chairs. The third board participant was a vice chair and was selected because of recent experience as the chair of a presidential search committee. Currently (at the time of the interviews) active community college presidents comprised the other three participants interviewed. Each president selected had extensive experience as a community college president. The actual names of the Midwestern community colleges’ participating and suburban locations are not disclosed in this thesis. Interviews from the three community college presidents are presented first and these participants are referred to as Community College President One (CCP1), CCP2, and CCP3. Next, the interviews
from board members are listed and are referred to as Board Member One (BM1), BM2, and BM3.

**Community College President One (CCP1)**

**Education and professional background.** The first president interviewed holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Albion College, Albion, Michigan, a Master of Arts degree in Education from the University of Missouri and a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Educational Administration from the University of Texas at Austin. CCP1 has more than 10 years experience as a community college president and 16 years as the chancellor of a large community college system. Additionally, as a search consultant, this participant has been involved in the hiring of several community college presidents.

**Personal qualities.** CCP1 was dressed casually, wearing a polo shirt and slacks on a Friday afternoon. He had a very pleasant demeanor, with a warm, welcoming smile. CCP1 was prepared for the interview with a copy of the interview questions and handwritten notes in the margins in front of him on his desk. CCP1 proved to be a student success orientated president. CCP1 said, “At the end of every day, when you leave your office… ask yourself, what did I do to help students succeed?... if you can’t answer that question, you are in the wrong job.” CCP1 is also committed to community college leadership programs and currently serves as a faculty member serving one such program.

**Leadership style: Relationship building.** Personal leadership style, as described by CCP1, is one that stresses the importance of developing meaningful and trusting relationships with constituents. He described his own leadership style in the following manner:

> I don’t think anyone that accomplishes anything as a leader without someone else. They only achieve things with someone else when you have developed a
meaningful relationship, a trusting relationship. There has to be a common sense of a sharing of values, of goals and there might be different ways to get there, which is good. You don’t want people who will just abide by the chair you sit in.

He also stressed how important it is to constantly work on relationship building with internal and external stakeholders. These types of relationships, he stated, are most effective when they are built on credibility, trust and respect.

Community College President Two (CCP2)

Educational and professional background. A cum laude graduate of Illinois State University, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in economics, political science and history, CCP2 holds an M.A. in law and diplomacy and a Ph.D. in international economic and political relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Additionally, CCP2 holds an MBA in finance and marketing from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, and a J.D. degree from the University of Akron Law School. He has been a community college president for thirteen years; serving ten years at one institution and is currently in his third year at his current institution.

Personal qualities. CCP2 was dressed in business attire, wearing a dark suit and tie. CCP2 offered a firm handshake and a friendly smile. The office atmosphere was relaxing, enhanced by a beautiful lakeside view of the campus. There were architectural drawings of future building projects displayed throughout the office. He did not sit behind his desk during the interview but chose to participate in the interview at a conference table. CCP2 was most excited when students were the topic of conversation and is clearly a student success oriented president. It was apparent that CCP2 is
passionate not only about students but also about the college. On the weekends, he feels he is a walking billboard for the college. He stated:

About 75% of the time, if I’m not wearing a tie I’m in a college shirt. I’m marketing the college all the time and so I know I am on the stage all the time. I have seen and met people who will point to me in public because I have a college shirt on.

CCP2 loves the job of being president and it shows. CCP2 still holds a professor status and feels that it is a very important designation to possess. A phrase used by CCP2 during the interview, with regard to a teaching president was “being able to play the game.” The game is education. Specifically, “being able to play the game” means a president should be able to teach in a discipline at the institution as well as be an administrator there.

Leadership style: Inclusive, team oriented. Inclusivity is the leadership style CCP2 advances. His style attempts to make everyone in the organization sense they are a part of the team. He described his leadership style in the following manner:

I would like to think it [leadership style] is very inclusive. It is inclusive in the sense that I try to make sure that everyone feels that they are part of the organization...I see the organization as sort of a team. So my leadership style varies with people...I am what you can call a team manager [or] the general manager. In a team you have a manager, you have a coach, who will be able to coach as needed.

As a leader, CCP2 is sometimes a coach; other times a general manager, and, occasionally, a player or cheerleader. CCP2 said, “I empower people to do things, and I step back and cheer them on as they are going along.” Finally, CCP2 said, “How effective I am depends on my ability to keep all those balls [roles] going at the same time and lead the organization.”
The style of leadership CCP2 describes is consistent with *Individualized Consideration*, which is part of transformational leadership. This type of leader:

treats each follower as an individual and provides coaching, mentoring and growth opportunities.” This approach not only educates the next generation of leaders, but also fulfills the individuals need for self-actualization, self-fulfillment, and self-worth. It also naturally propels followers to further achievement and growth. (Homrig, 2001, p. 1)

Community College President Three (CCP3)

**Educational and professional background.** The last presidential interviewee, CCP3, holds a Bachelor of Arts degree summa cum laude in English literature and intellectual history from Regis College in Massachusetts, and a Master of Arts and Ph.D. degrees in English language and literature from the University of Chicago. This president has also earned certificates from Harvard University’s Institute for Educational Management in 1992 and the Seminar for New Presidents in 1996. She has been a community college president for fourteen years at the same institution.

**Personal qualities.** A life-sized cardboard figure of CCP3, dressed in Shakespearean garb, greets entrants to her office area. She explained that the figure was a gift to her for being a part of a production at the college. CCP3 was dressed professionally in a business suit. There were cookies and bottled water available, as we sat comfortably on a couch inside her office. The atmosphere and manner of CCP3 was welcoming.

CCP3 walks the walk. That is to say, she says what she means and means what she says. She follows through herself, not just via staff. As an example, prior to beginning each interview, each president was asked to provide their board member’s
contact information so that their board members could be potential interview candidates. Immediately following the conclusion of the interview, this president had already sent a board member an email encouraging them to participate in the interview. It was evident that this president clearly wants to and makes each person at the institution feel important and values each member of the organization.

**Leadership style: Non-hierarchical, collaborator.** Inside her office was a framed photograph which was taken after a graduation ceremony of CCP3 standing with a student. The student and CCP3 have a mentor/friend relationship that has extended past the student’s graduation from the community college. She described her own leadership style in the following manner.

I’m about the most non-hierarchical person I know of. I just believe that leadership is not a job that you do alone. You have to be collaborative. I believe I work with the board and work with my leadership…one person can’t do everything.

CCP3 is the type of president who has close relationships with custodial staff, faculty, support staff, students and others. CCP3’s leadership style is collaborative and one that respects all aspects of diversity, race, age, gender and ethnicity. CCP3 stated that “people see the world through different colored lenses” and felt effective leaders must recognize and work towards the best interest of all they see.

**Board Member One (BM1)**

**Educational and professional background.** This first board person (BM1) holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Northern Illinois University and a Master of Arts degree from Governor State University. BM1 is a retired high school administrator with service on the board since 1999. BM1 served initially as a board chairperson from 2003-2005
after having served as vice chairperson. Currently BM1 is serving once again as the board chairperson.

**Personal qualities.** The interview took place in an office located at the college. BM1 is a very upbeat and positive person. BM1 was enthusiastic about participating in this research, as leadership is a topic of interest to her. She is also a former school teacher and high school administrator. BM1 was professionally dressed as she was to attend the college’s monthly board meeting later in the evening.

**Leadership style: Engager.** BM1 demonstrates a leadership style that is engaging and enjoys interacting with people. She believes that people should be heard before decisions are made. She described her leadership style in the following way; “I like to be open to people and listen to people and make decisions based on having their input and my own research in my decision-making process; reflective, I am outgoing and engaging of people.” This leadership style combines people input with personal inquiries and information gathering on a matter before decisions are finalized. BM1 makes every effort to ensure people know that their views are always heard. The leadership style is consistent with Homrig (2001) who notes that:

> The Transformational leader strives to achieve a true consensus in aligning individual and organizational interests. In true consensus, the interests of all are fully considered, but the final decision reached may fail to please everyone completely. The decision is accepted as the best under the circumstances even if it means some individual members’ interests may have to be sacrificed. (p. 1)

**Board Member Two (BM2)**

**Educational and professional background.** With a Bachelors of Arts in Business (Finance) from The University of Miami, BM2 has been the president of a service
industry business since 1993. BM2 has been a board member at this Midwest community college for four years and recently was the board of trustee member who served as chair of a presidential search/selection committee.

**Personal qualities.** The interview with BM2 was in his office at his business. BM2 was dressed casually in slacks and a polo shirt. BM2 appeared to be a “bottom line” administrator who speaks with well thought-out responses and was straightforward in sharing his thoughts and perceptions.

**Leadership style: All business.** BM2’s leadership style, his personality and personal qualities are synonymous. He said of his own leadership style:

> I am described as fair but tough and I’m okay with that. I wish I had better empathy skills; I wish I had better listening skills. I know most of my faults. I not only drive myself but I drive people, but when push comes to shove, I am fair. So, I’m not a real hand holder. I expect people to perform.

The type of leadership style, BM2 acknowledged, would probably not work well in an educational setting. Regardless, BM2 expressed that people need to be held accountable. The leadership style of BM2 may be characterized as more transactional in nature, as defined by Straker (2006):

> When the Transactional Leader allocates work to a subordinate, they are considered to be fully responsible for it, whether or not they have the resources or capability to carry it out. When things go wrong, then the subordinate is considered to be personally at fault, and is punished for their failure just as they are rewarded for succeeding. (p. 1)

**Board Member Three (BM3)**

**Educational and professional background.** The final board member interviewed (BM3) is a retired executive vice president of a nonprofit health and human services organization. BM3 became a board of trustee member in 2001 and was re-elected in
2009. BM3 holds a Bachelors in Psychology from DePaul University and a Ph.D. in Social Work from the University of Chicago.

**Personal qualities.** The interview took place in the president’s conference room. BM3 was gracious and confident. BM3 responded quickly and positively at the request to be a participant in this study and her responses to the interview questions were well conceived and thorough.

**Leadership style: Servant leader.** BM3 described her leadership style as follows:

I’m a social worker. I lead from the middle of the pack; a servant leader. I won’t ask people to do a job that I’m not willing to do. If I think it is important, I will support them in it.

Leaders, according to BM3, should not have “all ‘yes’ men” on their team. In BM3’s estimation, “The most valuable people under you are the people who will take their own clear look at a situation and give you their perception of it.” BM3’s leadership style is consistent with servant leadership as depicted by Straker (2006). Straker notes, “the servant leader serves others, rather than others serving the leader; Serving others thus comes by helping them to achieve and improve” (p. 1). Table 4 provides a summary of the participant’s leadership styles.
Table 4

Participant Leadership Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCP1</td>
<td>Relationship Builder- CCP1 believes in the importance of developing meaningful and trusting relationships with constituents. This style believes in constantly working on relationship building with internal and external stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCP2</td>
<td>Inclusive, Team Oriented- CCP2s style attempts to make everyone in the organization sense they are a part of the team. This leadership style operates as a coach; other times a general manager, and, occasionally, a player or cheerleader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCP3</td>
<td>Non-hierarchical, Collaborator- CCP3s style of leadership believes that leadership is collaborative and not done alone. This style builds relationships with all constituencies regardless of race, age, gender, and ethnicity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BM1</td>
<td>Engager- BM1 has a leadership style that is engaging and enjoys people interaction and believes that the people should be heard before decisions are made. This leadership style combines people input with personal inquiries and information gathering on a matter before decisions are finalized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BM2</td>
<td>All Business- BM2s style is fair but tough, not a great listener, with few empathy skills. His leadership style has internal drive, which drives people, and is not a hand holder, but expects people to perform and be accountable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BM3</td>
<td>Servant Leader- BM3 leads from the middle of the pack. She will not ask people to do a job that she is not willing to do.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: A synopsis of the leadership style of each interview participant.
Findings Related to Guiding Questions

The following section addresses each participant’s responses to the five guiding questions and to the interview questions associated with each guiding question (see Appendix A).

Guiding Question One: Which personal attributes are critical for future community college presidents?

There was variation in how the participants expressed which personal attributes are critical for future community college presidents. Gregg (2004) concluded that personal attributes are character based: “these characteristics are qualities that permeate from the inner person that make up a person’s value system and dictate the way that the individual interacts with the outside world” (p. 342). The themes emerging from the interviews regarding personal attributes included attributes of integrity and morality. Additionally, the participants felt it was important for future presidents to embrace a leadership style that communicates the mission of the institution.

The attribute of integrity. Synonyms for integrity include honesty, truth or truthfulness, veracity, honor, uprightness, and reliability. In response to guiding question one (Which personal attributes are critical for future community college presidents?), CCP1 stated, “The most important attribute a person should have, in my opinion, is they need to be credible.” Once credibility (reliability) is lost, he felt it would diminish the president’s chances of being effective. CCP1 also felt that integrity was an attribute or a core value that a potential president must have. He expressed that a person who is not governed by integrity will quickly lose sight of why they are in the education business.
CCP1 felt that a person who is unable to be true internally and who has a low level of personal integrity will never be true with others.

CCP2 felt integrity was an essential attribute for potential community college presidents. Integrity was defined by CCP2 as a “moral compass” and the “moral gravitas” that should lead a person to be ethical at all times. Personal integrity and leadership integrity are one and the same according to CCP2. Integrity is an unchangeable garment to be worn at all times, in his opinion. To define integrity, CCP3 said it is a word, “which is rooted in the Latin word for ‘wholeness’ and probably is the quality without which you cannot do what you need to do” - which is to lead. This concept of wholeness means “you always say what you mean, and mean what you say and live in the truth and speak the truth.” In CCP3’s view, leading is cemented in the ability to build relationships. However, these relationships must be built on the solid rocks of integrity and honesty. CCP3 felt being truthful, honest and maintaining a high degree of integrity is challenging for many leaders in our current society. Nevertheless, community college leaders “should not slide in the face of” what others are doing.

BM1 defined integrity as “doing the right thing for the institution at a very difficult time…in other words, it’s taking the high road and doing what is right.” She felt the easy way out is not to deal with an issue [of integrity] when it becomes known to you, but further stated that integrity is when an issue becomes known, you deal with it appropriately.”

BM2 however, felt that integrity is an overused word because integrity should be “a given.” He felt that integrity should be built on trust: trust that mirrors the way
members of a good sports team trust one another. “When there is integrity and trust amongst the troops, good things happen,” he said. BM2 indicated that a leader should live his personal life in the same manner by which he leads his business life and should be known as a fair person who does the right things.

BM3 first addressed personal attributes by saying, “It’s a leadership position and for the personal attribute I mentioned integrity, absolutely, and that’s a given. If you are not honest with yourself and the board and the school, you’ll fail.” In that an institution is a public enterprise and “the eyes of the community and faculty are on you, there is no way you can pull off a scam for very long; people need to be able to trust you.” A potential president must have integrity and be trusted by the board and other constituents.

BM3 held that “from the board’s viewpoint, the board’s ability to trust your experience, your wisdom, your honesty and forthrightness is a must.” BM3 believes that if a person takes shortcuts personally, they will take shortcuts as a leader. She repeated that integrity as an attribute must be the “core principle” a leader operates by - with no “schizophrenic” tendencies associated with the candidate. She stated that a leader either has integrity or doesn’t. She mentioned the lack of integrity recently demonstrated by board members at a local university. This board was involved with allegedly illegal enrollment practices and was used as an example to show how easily a lack of integrity can happen and then be exposed.

**The attribute of morality.** Synonyms used to define morals or moralities are ethics, principles, soundness, decency, honorable, honesty, right and just. As the participants continued to elaborate about the critical personal attributes needed by future
community college presidents, CCP2 expressed that a moral compass should “guide you at all times; because as president, you are basically [president] 24/7 and you want to be sure that even if you are seen 200 miles [away], you are the same person of integrity in your decision-making.” In recalling CCP2s definition of integrity, he defined it as a “moral compass” and the “moral gravitas.” CCP3 stated that “leaders do the right things.”

Similarly, BM1 stated; “In my view, it’s moral, legal and ethical behavior” that translates into how a leader operates. When a good leader conducts business, he will have these (moral, legal and ethical behavior) guiding values leading them. BM1 felt strongly it was important that potential presidents are honest, moral, and act in a legal manner. As BM2 elaborated on the critical attributes, he expressed:

> We [his company] just thought that if you let ethics guide you . . . we always tell our people in the field we make money or we don’t make money based upon our labor. The materials are a fixed thing. We tell our guys don’t think when we do an estimate that we’re perfect by any means. There can be many job site conditions that can change that estimate but you have to do the job right and that’s where the ethics come in. Do it [things] right, do them safe…. if we do it in that scenario, we’ll always to a good job. That’s our guiding principle.

**Leadership style (communicator)**. Under guiding question one, one of the probing questions asked “how important is leadership style with respect to communicating the mission of the institution?” Each participant provided their perspective as they answered this question.

CCP1 replied, “I don’t know so much about leadership style, but you have to be able to demonstrate a level of communication that reaches different people… you have to be able to communicate with people in a very practical way.” He went on to say:

> “People have different styles and they can be very effective in their communication, and that’s [communication] what it is all about- being able to
articulate the mission of the institution; the best attributes of leaders are that they are good communicators.”

In terms of leadership style, CCP2 felt a leader’s ability to communicate the mission of the college is “very critical.” Ultimately he said, “Communication is what is important.” A leadership style that lacks ample communication skills could lead to failure for a potential president. He felt that a leadership or communications style which is built on people engagement is necessary for would-be presidents.

CCP3 stated it was necessary that potential presidents have an efficient communications style; one that effectively communicates the mission of the institution to others. Immediately after this question was asked, CCP3 added:

This is a really interesting question. I had a meeting this morning with the architects for the college. They have worked with a number of community colleges and they were discussing about how, and this is almost the exact words, ‘how the character and qualities of the leadership team affect the way the institution is perceived by people with whom they have to work. They were complaining about, and I won’t use any names, but they were complaining about the adversarial relationship that they had with a client whose leader is very adversarial. I was thinking about, God, that is really true; but I think the culture of the organization both shapes and is shaped by the leader.

Continuing, CCP3 expressed, “The president is the living logo of the institution. You are never not the president; so in a sense, for better or for worse, you stand for the institution and that is a real weight on your shoulders.” CCP3 acknowledged that even on weekends, a president must behave and recognize they are representing the institution.

When BM1 answered this question, she stated that “it is very important that the leadership style includes the ability to communicate, to support the mission” of the college. She voiced that this style must be enthusiastic in nature and capable of reaching internal and external audiences. Leadership or communications style is important
according to BM2. He recognized that everyone has a different style. He did not feel that one particular style works. When asked his thoughts on hiring a new president, he said, “I think you have to be conscious as to the type of style that maybe you are looking for or not looking for; it’s probably more what you’re not looking for instead of picking one style.” In the recent president search at his college, they knew the type of leadership style that was not desirable, and opted instead for a style that was opposite that of the preceding president. “As a president,” he said, “you have to decipher what you want to communicate and what you don’t want to communicate.”

BM3 indicated that leadership style should be reflective of the community. She said that “leadership style is important, but what’s important is there is consonance between your style and the style of the institution and the community fit.” This leadership style should also project a positive image of the institution.

**Guiding Question Two: What specific skills and abilities are vital for future community presidents?**

This guiding question prompted an assortment of responses from the interview participants. Emergent themes included relationship skills, people skills, public speaking ability, listening skills, understanding of business principles, and professional experiences in education.

**Relationship skills.** Most of the participants felt it is important that future presidents are able to build strong relationships with constituents. CCP1 stated that “the capacity to develop meaningful relationships is the most important attribute in leadership as far as I’m concerned. He also stated, “I don’t think anyone can accomplish anything as
a leader without someone else; they [leaders] only achieve things with someone else when you have developed meaningful relationships, a trusting relationship.” He went onto say that “someone who builds his community, builds trust, respects people, just builds those relationships with common values, sharing things and working together are most important.”

CCP2 also believed in the importance of building positive relationships. When asked what he felt were the vital skills and abilities a future president needs, he immediately responded that “first it is a human relations job. What we do, the bottom line, is human beings, its relationship building; the ability to develop relationships.” Relationship building leaders are those “who treat other people well,” a leader who does not “lord” the position over people but plays as part of the team. When asked this question, CCP3 said, “For me, leading is all about building relationships you create in the community.” Additionally, CCP3 said, “You have to be able to create, sustain, and be willing to invest the time in building the relationships.”

When speaking about the importance of relationships, BM1 shared, “You have to be able to positively influence people to give them a direction, engage them in where you are going, build consensus, and encourage them. BM3 felt relationship building is important because “people need to be able to trust you” because “the money comes from the community; you have to have the respect of the feeder school districts and respect of the communities,” which is all accomplished by building solid relationships.

People skills. People skills were important for future presidents according to the participants when they were asked, “What are the most important people skills a
president needs? CCP1 responded by saying, “I think they are very important; as I said, they are the very basis of leadership.” He believed that presidents have to genuinely like people to be successful. CCP2 addressed this question by saying, “Relationships: someone who is able to cultivate relationships, engage people, needs to be tactful and diplomatic.” He said that a future president has to “treat people well.”

CCP3 first addressed this question (what are the most important people skills a president needs?) by saying that “liking people is really important”, and caring about and believing that every person in the organization matters is important. In responding to this question, BM1 said;

A president has to be able to engage the people, because that is the sign of a leader. People have to be able to follow a leader because they want to; not because they are driven by some outside force that says they have to. That, to me, is what makes a really good leader and people want to follow a leader.

Additionally, BM1 expressed that presidents “have to be able to positively influence people to give them a direction, engage them in where you are going, build consensus, and encourage them.” She felt when presidents are upbeat and “make good decisions and people recognize it as the process is going along, that good decisions are being made,” They recognize this is a person of value. In answering this question (what are the most important people skills a president needs?) BM2 emphasized “one of the most important things is developing trust. People have to feel that they can trust you and you’ll be fair.”

Likewise, when BM3 was asked about the people skills a community college president requires, she believed they must have “the ability to interact with people on any level without thinking you’re better than they are; whether it’s the guy that cleans the
floors at night, or the head of the faculty, or the vice president for academic affairs.” She felt it was important to recognize that “everyone has something to offer.”

**Public speaking skills.** As one of the probing questions under guiding question 2 (What specific skills and abilities are vital for future community presidents?), the participants were asked, how important public speaking ability was for future presidents? CCP1 responded by saying,

public speaking ability, as I said earlier, you don’t have to be an orator to communicate. Boards and faculty and staff, everybody wants their leaders to be someone they’re proud of. So it certainly is an enhancement to have good public speaking skills.

CCP1 recognized that “there are a lot of great leaders out there who couldn’t speak their way out of a paper sack; but in their own way, they know how to communicate, and they know how to touch people.” But he did state that “public speaking is a definite bonus because it represents the institution well; somebody who is a very effective public speaker can get that across.”

CCP2 believed that public speaking is important for future presidents because they [the presidents] are part of the community. He said, “The community will not spend a lot of time reading about you, or doing research about you; but they want to hear you [speak].” Additionally CCP2 believed that public speaking is critical because community college presidents are seen as role models and in that role “you have to speak to people.” He stated, “What we do is really very public and you can’t shy away from it [public speaking]. For someone who doesn’t like public speaking, in many community colleges, you may not be successful, because it is needed.” Lastly, CCP2 shared that community college presidents are the “spokesman of the college.”
CCP3, when asked how important public speaking is for future presidents said, “it is part of the constellation of the communication skills.” CCP3 shared that when she first became president, public speaking was not her favorite task. When she became president,

I thought fundraising would be absolutely awful; well as it turns out; it wasn’t awful at all because basically, what I had to do is to tell the story of how the college changes people’s lives. I think when you can do that, when you believe in it and you know that it happens, and when you can tell people that story, they want to know, “how can I be a part of it?” The idea of being a public speaker is really the community storyteller thing.

And lastly CCP3 expressed, “The ability to articulate the vision, which is not a vision you make up yourself but you can build consensus on, and speak about that, is incredibly important.”

BM1 felt that public speaking ability “is critical” for future presidents. She related that having “the ability to publicly communicate your vision, your expectations; who the institution is, and all those kinds of things; because you represent the institution well in doing that.”

As BM2 was asked about importance of public speaking ability for presidents, he shared,

Very; you’re [presidents] the faces of the institution and you have to be able to get out and present yourself well. We all know that in this world, unfortunately first impressions means a lot. You have to be able to connect right off. I think most presidents do to various degrees but it [public speaking] is very important.

BM3 responded by saying, “Because you have to speak in public that can be learned… I can’t imagine anyone even getting into a pool of candidates [for president] who isn’t capable of speaking in public, not necessarily the world’s greatest orator.”

Listening skills. One of the probing questions asked how important it was for potential presidents to be “keen listeners,” and how does one determine if a person
[candidate] is a listening type of leader. CCP1 felt one can learn how well a candidate listens by the questions he asks. He stated if “a person who comes into a position, whether for presidents or any leadership position, if they’re not prepared to understand their audience… they’ll be in a world of hurt.” By a candidate following the line of questioning during an interview and when they hear people’s responses, this listening ability should trigger insightful questions from the candidate when “they are really good listeners” according to CCP1.

CCP2 has an open door policy. He listens to all constituents because he believes “people in organizations want to be heard, and if you’re able to take the time to listen, it is important.” Additionally, CCP2 shared, a president must “look, listen and learn, because people want to see what you are going to do, and that’s what makes listening very important.” CCP3 believes listening is part of what she described as “the constellation of the communication skills.” She believes it is important to have “public listening and private listening” skills. She shared, “My mother always said, “You know; you have two ears and one mouth, so use them in correct proportions.”

Listening skills was an important skill for presidents in BM1 opinion as well. Personally, she said “I like to be open to people and listen to people, and make decisions based on having their input.” She felt being a keen listener “is critical because a community college president has to be involved with politics, and the political community, and they have to listen very carefully to what they’re [political community] saying.”
While self reflecting, BM2 stated; “I wish I had better listening skills.” He recognized that “people need to feel that you are listening” to them. Also, BM3 believed being a keen listener is important for effective leadership when she stated, “If you can’t listen, you can’t lead. You can’t lead to your own agenda. You have to communicate it, and you have to be able to listen and people have to be free to express a different perspective.”

Understanding of business principles. A probing question under guiding question two asked if a person’s experiences in the business culture applied to the community college culture. In response to this question, CCP1 said:

We need to operate on sound business principles. You need to build adequate reserves. You need to be a well-run business in the sense you use business principles. You are not here to make a profit; you should ideally, if you can maintain the protection that a good reserve fund balance provides you, you should break even every year. What we take in we [should] give all back to students; quality faculty, quality environment, up-to-date equipment, so they [students] can learn from that. We are not a business that worries about a profit and loss.

In answering this question, CCP2 felt business principles “apply extensively because “we [in America] chose to be a free enterprise, a capitalist system as opposed to a socialistic, communist environment.” He recognized that a business mindset is what has driven this country.

Additionally, CCP2 believed “there are things that can be learned from the business sector and utilized in the academic environment.” He was quick to state, however,” academic environment has a different culture and one has to know how to bring those [business] aspects in.” CCP2 cautioned against one attempting to change the academic culture into a total business culture.
CCP3 found this probing question very interesting (how a person’s experiences in the business culture apply or not apply to the community college culture?). She conveyed, “I think that many business practices and models, the accountability, the Continuous Quality Improvement all of those things are important.” However she cautioned,

You can’t just import them [business models] wholesale and put them on the structure of the organization. But business models are really instructive and important. Just as we can learn from business, business can learn from us. The biggest mistakes that happen are to try to import a wholesale business model on the bottom line because our bottom line is people’s lives.

CCP3 shared a story about a board member who wanted to “guarantee our product.” She adamantly responded to his request by saying, “you know, we don’t make mattresses; we make people.”

BM1 acknowledged that understanding business principles is important for future presidents, but shared

I think there is a misunderstood issue about business and education being the same. There are so many differences and business people don’t always translate that into the educational world. It is a whole lot easier for education to look at business and figure it out, in my opinion, than business to look at education and want to take that business model into education.

BM1 felt there are places that a business model fits into the educational realm, but believed there “are a lot of places where it simply does not” fit. She said, “it is good that a candidate would have business experience, but I don’t think that would be the only experience that I would look for in a college president.”

BM2 felt it would be tough for a person to have all outside business experience and little academic experience to apply for a presidency but not impossible - depending
on the institution and the person. Ideally he felt it was good if a person had academic and business experiences. The two experiences are different, he felt, because private sector businesses are profit driven and education is student driven.

BM3 said it was important to recognize that “the goal is still education… our goals and mission…we have to be businesslike, and you have to have a good CFO and someone you can trust.” She said it was important “to understand business and you have to understand politics,” but one must understand education first and foremost.

Professional experiences in education. The participants’ responses about other vital professional experiences an aspiring community college presidents needs for leadership effectiveness was catalogued. CCP1 shared an interesting view regarding the notion that potential presidents must have previous full-time teaching experience. The president said:

The traditional view is if you haven’t been in the classroom teaching, there’s no way you can appreciate what goes on there. That’s a bunch of bunk. It’s like you’ve never been in a classroom. You wouldn’t know a good teacher unless you were one.

This president felt it was not necessary for potential presidents to undergo or have the experience of “the day and day out being of being a faculty member.” But it was important that would-be presidents have previous experience with students “either in a teaching capacity, a counseling capacity” or in some way to have worked with and among students. This deliberation was concluded by stating, “Unless you have an appreciation and are committed to students, I don’t think you’ll be nearly as effective or really help the institution achieve.”
An opposing view was expressed by CCP2 in that a potential president should have some previous teaching and, in fact, should be able to teach in an area of the college. CCP2 continued:

You are in the game and you need to be able to step in, meaning I could step into a classroom and teach. And in my case, thankfully, there are so many subjects that I could teach. So if you are there and you do not have the background, you do not meet the qualifications to be able to teach in the institution, you shouldn’t be there….you should be able to play the game itself.

CCP2 mentioned the importance of taking advantage of opportunities inside of the institution when opportunity knocks, even if no pay increase is offered. He said that one needed experiences where they are exposed to working with students either in a classroom or outside of the classroom with student clubs or organizations. Additionally, he mentioned that experience serving on a community board, or by providing service to the community in a fundraising activity with Kiwanis or Rotary is also important. Also, he stressed a potential candidate should “close the deal” by obtaining a doctoral degree. He shared, “the day after you; or even five minutes after the degree is given to you, you are no smarter than you were the week before; but people recognize that you’ve gone through something. You closed the deal.”

When asked about what vital professional experiences are needed by new presidents, CCP3 said, “You have to have the stuff, the kind of stuff (course work, etc.) that has prepared you to get a degree [doctorate]; the degree is the calling card.” Additionally, “involvement in professional organizations” was considered vital. It was important those potential presidents are willing to serve on committees that demonstrate commitment to the institution because “you always get back more than you give.”
committees served on should be chosen selectively, possibly by the impact they can have on the college. She mentioned serving on external accreditation committees was important because of the networking opportunities associated with meeting peers at other institutions. She felt that she rose in the organization because of her willingness to serve.

BM1 stated, “It is vital that they have some leadership experience; responsibility for leading people; opportunity to learn, to build consensus; opportunities to make decisions that are unpopular perhaps but are the right decisions.” She felt “it goes back to those people skills and building trust and building and valuing the contract that was signed by the institution and then following those rules and taking the high road.” BM2 felt a new community college president who had prior experience as a president was better suited to become a president

BM3 said, “The president that we hire after [name deleted] will have to be keenly aware and concerned of the fact that our mission statement says we are the community’s college.” She further added, “Anyone who wants to be president should read our mission statement and take it seriously. It’s not just pat. We take it seriously.”

Guiding Question Three: What other factors contribute to the selection of a final candidate for a community college presidency?

The participants were asked about the “other factors” that lead to the selection of the final candidate for a community college presidency. The participants mentioned such topics as personal chemistry/ intuition, presidential image (aura, or “air” about them), and confidence as contributors to the selection of the final candidate for a community college presidency.
**Personal chemistry/intuition.** CCP1 believed the “other factors” involved in the selection of the final candidate are based on “intuitive or gut feelings.” He felt there had to be a degree of chemistry between the candidate and the search committee members. He stated, “When it comes down to it, if there’s not that connection, an emotional connection, it won’t happen.” In adding to this thought he said, “It moves from rational and becomes a feeling; that rational stuff has already taken place during the preliminary part of the search. It doesn’t mean it becomes irrational at the end; but a lot of that is feeling.” CCP1 concluded that the person “has to be the right fit at this particular time and history of the institution.”

During a search, CCP2 said, “I am looking for something that will distinguish them, anything unique in their background… but ultimately, you look for the person, you think in your gut [intuition], that has integrity and who can get the job done, because ultimately that’s what matters.”

CCP3 believed the other factors are more “about fit” and “how this person is going to react and interact with colleagues and the organizational culture.” She acknowledged that selecting the right candidate is a “leap of faith” most of the time, and sometimes it is best to “hire the heart” because the skills can be acquired. Lastly, regarding the other factors CCP3 said,

If I have a sense [intuition/gut feeling] of the person, and it goes right back to the first question about integrity and wholeness; who is it I am hiring? Who is this person? Then, what can the person do? It is really a judgment [intuition] about the human being sitting across from you. Is this someone who is going to make me better; make my team better; make the college better?
BM1 provided some intriguing views in response to these “other factors.” She said,

This is really non-scientific. It is how do I feel when I meet the candidate? Do I get an aura feeling of this is really a positive right person, right place, right time for our institution? Does the person come on so strong that it throws me back? Does the person come on inviting? I don’t know what you want to call that but it is kind of non-scientific.

**Presidential image.** When CCP1 was asked about the “other factors” that set apart a final candidate, he said, “if there’s one factor, people will want to place this person, or perceive them in office” as president. Likewise, CCP2 said when a candidate walks into the room they “should have an air about them; that when they walk in, [you think to yourself] yep; this person is presidential material.” BM1 responded to this question by saying:

When the candidate comes into the room; how does that candidate present himself? Are they presidential in their appearance or their presence? Do they have a presence? Do they walk, talk, look and think presidential? I don’t know how you capture that.

BM2 shared that during a recent search for a president the committee was looking for “behavioral traits”, image, and that first impressions are important for the candidate when they selected their candidate.

**Confidence.** When the participants were asked “How does confidence factor into the choice of one candidate over another,” CCP2 believed that confidence is very important. He said is a person lacks confidence they will struggle to get the job done. He felt a potential president should possess a high level of self confidence, not self-cockiness.

In like manner, CCP3 shared an experience which demonstrated the type of confidence a candidate should not have. As her college was interviewing for a vice
president position, one candidate presumptuously walked into office suite the new vice president would occupy. The potential candidate said, “oh; this is where I’ll be; this is pretty good.” She felt the candidate projected confidence, but not the kind of confidence she wanted; “it was cockiness more that confidence”, and the candidate was not hired.

BM1 responded to this question by saying; “Confidence is very important and that is different from being arrogant, because I have seen that too and that is a turnoff to me. She felt confidence should emanate a presence that says, “I’m a leader, I’m open, I listen. I engage people. I’m happy to be here.” BM2 confirmed that a candidate’s confidence is “very important.” He explained that during open forums, which are often a part of the interview process, “you can see that they are able to handle the pressure and that how they speak with confidence.”

BM3 quickly noted that there is “there’s confidence and over-confidence; I would like someone who is confident in their own decisions, because the buck stops here [with them].” Additionally she desired that a good candidate would “be open to listening to other opinions and then confident in the ability to be a gracious winner.”

Guiding Question Four: What is presidential leadership potential and how is it classified and recognized?

This guiding question was looking for insight into how potential leaders are identified and classified. There was limited consistency among the participant responses regarding leadership potential. Although not truly emergent themes, potential presidents should be committed to maintaining both a student focus and a presidential image.
CCP1 shared that he recognizes potentially successful leaders [presidents] when they are student-focused individuals. He looks for individuals who have the capacity to develop meaningful relationships with others, which “is the most important attribute in leadership.” Additionally, he looks for individuals who have the capacity to “see the big picture” and for “someone who comes in, that goes beyond just doing something to accomplish a goal.” He likes someone who sees the ramifications of goals and who understands how a goal fits into the overall scheme of things. He said that one recognizes a leader because they are mission-driven, whereas managers are task-driven.

CCP2 said he looks past “first impressions” because he believes first impressions can be superficial. He mentioned that he looks for people who take advantage of open opportunities to serve within the colleges, who are people who can see the big picture. He felt people who pursue and complete a degree [doctorate] are potential presidents because of discipline involved in finishing such a venture. When a person completes a doctorate, this is sign of leadership potential because, he said:

The day after you, or even five minutes after the degree is given to you, you are no smarter than you were the week before, but people recognize that you’ve gone through something, you closed the deal. Because here [listen], how many professors did you have, 10-15-20 professors for all of your programs; and you are able to put up with all of that. If I told you there was a challenge, you would be able to put up with that…because of what [doctoral work] it entails.

CCP3 felt that potential leaders [presidents] are recognized by watching them work over a period of time. She looks for leaders who put people before paper and programs and who can compel a consensus about their vision. She looks at how a person deals with difficult problems, or how well they work with their colleagues, and in what ways they contribute to the administration team.
Presidential image. BM1 felt there are some people who “immediately stand out as, okay, here is someone that is presidential in their appearance, this is a leader.” She said that some people exemplify presidential attributes when they walk into room. BM1 believes that although a bad first impression can be overcome, “it is a whole lot easier to have a good first impression.” She went on to say, “First impressions are very important especially when you only have a small window of opportunity to get to know that person; that makes it more important.” She also looked for mission-driven potential leaders.

BM2 felt potential leaders must have the ability to communicate, demonstrate leadership skills and demonstrate effective listening skills. The “doers in life” have the potential and a person who “sets examples” and leads by example, BM2 stated. BM2 explained the difference between a leader and a manager as being:

A leader is more of a strategic person. They’re thinking further ahead. A manager is managing the day stuff, the week stuff, maybe the year stuff, but they’re not as strategic. They don’t think strategic. When their project is done it’s done versus always thinking ahead. I think that is the difference.

BM3 said a person has to want the job. She felt that many people are happy not being president. As for recognizing potential leaders she said, “I can smell it, literally you can smell it. You see how they interact with other people” as a clue. She also noted that a potential leader has intelligence, integrity and the background and credentials in place. She looks for people who think outside of the box and who are problem solvers and are mission driven.
Guiding Question Five: What are the greatest challenges facing future community college presidents?

The participants provided a variety of responses regarding the challenges facing future community college presidents. Almost all of the participants mentioned the issues surrounding the major themes of funding, lifelong learning (professional development) and technology.

Funding. The greatest challenge facing community college presidents is funding. This necessity was mentioned by all the participants as a challenge. CCP1 quickly noted that the greatest challenge is a lack of resources. CCP2 expressed,

you can start with the traditional finance. That is going to be a major, major problem. I just got a letter today from the state giving us the budget; the state has approved a 50% budget. They’re calling for a 50% budget cut, 51 million cut from that department and they say, whatever amount you got last year, it will be cut by that much, or eliminated altogether; so financial challenges will always be there.”

CCP3 also responded to this question (what are the greatest challenges facing future community college presidents) by mentioning “funding.”

BM1 recognized that the challenge of “funding is a constant; you know that’s [funding] the elephant on the table. That’s a constant and how to manage the resources and get the resources depending on the state.” In like manner, she felt it was important that future presidents have an “understanding of finance and understanding how an institution gets their money and allocating resources and working with the board to do that is very much a challenge.” BM2 concurred with the other participants regarding the challenge of funding. He was concerned that because of the lack of funds, presidents “are being driven to be more of fundraisers, and I hope the pendulum doesn’t swing to far that
way [fundraising] because it is the education we are trying to provide.” And BM3 immediately responded to this question by stating, “the biggest challenge is “money, money, money.”

Professional development/lifelong learning. A probing question under this guiding question (what are the greatest challenges facing community college presidents?) asked, “How important are community college leadership programs in helping to prepare future community college presidents?” CCP1 responded by saying;

That one, [question] I can relate to; I’m a product of UT, the University of Texas at Austin’s, Community College Leadership Program. Arguably, some would challenge it, but it is an outstanding program. Excluding me from the pack, some have really gotten distinguished careers in some really top places. It [the community college leadership program] helped me shape my perspective.

He stated that future leaders can prepare themselves by continuing in lifelong learning activities and by being active in professional development. The lifelong learning and/or professional development activities help future presidents remain current in for example, technology.

CCP2 said community college leadership programs, “they are very critical. I have found them to be very useful. I did not go through a formal degree for community college leadership, but I’ve done workshops and institutes and all of those things are very useful.” He believes community college leadership programs expose individuals to various challenges and issues they might not have experienced without attending one.

CCP3 promptly responded to this question by saying, “I would say two things: what I have observed as the greatest values in those programs is the networking, the connectedness of people who have been in the community college and the exposure to the
story and history.” She also felt it was important that would-be presidents are committed to personal lifelong learning and must be committed to making learning affordable and accessible to others. She stated that current students will possibly work 27 different jobs in the course of their lifetime, and many of those jobs don’t exist today. “But the community college [we] will have to train them in these new jobs.”

BM1 was an advocate for community college leadership programs. Her response to this question was

Yes, of course, and they’re important. You have to learn . . . you can be a natural leader at a certain level. To step into a leadership role that is this pervasive, this important, this big, take classes, get your credentials, take leadership classes, build a network with other leaders and that’s critical, and that is part of your professionalism, you belong to professional organizations too.

BM2 acknowledged that being outside of education as a businessman, his perspective was perhaps different from educators. He did state,

I don’t know if I can answer since I’m on the outside and haven’t been through that. But I’m sure that they are [important]; just related to my own business, we have associations and groups and I think you can learn it that way.

Technology. CCP1 felt it was a challenge and important for future presidents to “become adapted and becoming adept at what this wonderful technology can do for you.”

CCP1 also shared,

If you’re not technologically savvy, you’ll have some problems. You can’t be tied to it always. You have to have an understanding where people come from. . . . if a faculty member doesn’t embrace technology in the classroom, they will lose a lot of their students.

CCP2 believed it was critical that community colleges “remain innovative in our delivery of our educational enterprise.” He explained that many people desire to learn “online” and community colleges must have the technology to deliver quality online programs.
With regard to the need for potential presidents being forward thinking, he said, “The traditional technology, we need to respond to it; you read from time to time the jobs for the next ten years; four, five, six and seven of the top jobs don’t even exist today. We want to be sure that we can respond to that.”

With regards to technology, CCP3 shared about the concept of a president having the ability to adapt to change; the rate and pace of change; this was viewed as a big challenge. She mentioned these challenges such information literacy, knowledge literacy, digital literacy….one must have “the ability to have the adaptability to a changing environment that goes faster than we know.” BM1 found “the whole world of technology” was a challenge for future presidents and believed “they need to be technically literate.”

Summary

The findings of this study, which were gathered by interviews, observations and documents, were presented here in Chapter 4. Three community college presidents and three community college board of trustee members shared their perceptions on what personal attributes, skills and abilities are need by aspiring community college presidents. See Table 5 for a summary of the findings.
Table 5

*Summary of the Findings*

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<th>Guiding Questions</th>
<th>Findings</th>
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<td><strong>Question One:</strong> Personal Attributes</td>
<td>The participants believed that integrity; truthful and honest, and having a high standard of morals and ethics were important attributes for would be presidents. Additionally, the participants found the need to have a good leadership style, to be a relationship builder and to be a good listener.</td>
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<td><strong>Question Two:</strong> Skills and Abilities</td>
<td>The participants thought the skills necessary for future presidents are relationship and people skills; to have adequate public speaking ability; to have a good understanding of sound business principles as they relate to community colleges, and to be true educators were important.</td>
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<td><strong>Question Three:</strong> Other Factors</td>
<td>The participants felt the <em>other factors</em> that set apart the final candidate dealt with a candidate’s image, their air, confidence and fit. Some of these factors were explained and “non-scientific” and in some ways relied on chemistry and gut feelings.</td>
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<td><strong>Question Four:</strong> Leadership Potential</td>
<td>The participant’s responses found that individuals who are student-centered and who are skilled at dealing with students, and who are presidential in their appearance could be potential presidents.</td>
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<td><strong>Question Five:</strong> Challenges</td>
<td>A summary of responses from participants under this guiding question regarded the challenges of funding, and to understand the ongoing changes in technology and to have the appreciation of lifelong learning.</td>
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The analysis of their insights regarding the personal attributes and abilities needed by future presidents will help provide an understanding in the hiring of new community college presidents.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore essential personal attributes and abilities needed by future community college presidents, as perceived by community college board members and presidents. There is current research literature that predicts a mass exodus of community college presidents, with approximately 50% retiring over the next 3-7 years (Fulton-Calkins & Milling 2005). Six interviews were conducted following a multiple case study design. The intent of this study was to investigate the tools aspiring community college presidents require in order to lead community colleges into the future successfully. This chapter presents the discussion, conclusions, implications and recommendations related to the findings of this research.

This multiple case study explored the perceptions of three community college presidents and three community college board members regarding the personal attributes and abilities that will be needed by future community college presidents. Potentially, the study could help community college administrators and community college boards of trustees identify what to look for in candidates as they seek to fill pending vacancies caused by the growing number of retirements in the next decade. This study may be found valuable for those who are aspiring to become new community college presidents by identifying the essential personal attributes and abilities needed to lead into the future.
The Guiding Questions for this research were as follows:

1. Which personal attributes are critical for future community college presidents?

2. What specific skills and abilities are vital for future community college presidents?

3. What other factors contribute to the selection of the “final” candidate for a community college presidency?

4. What is presidential leadership potential and how is it classified and recognized?

5. What are the greatest challenges facing future community college presidents?

Discussion

The following analysis divulges each participant’s perceptions of the essential personal attributes and abilities needed by future community college presidents. The discussion for this study is organized under the following headings: Critical Personal Attributes, Specific Skills and Abilities, Selection Factors, Presidential Leadership Potential, and Challenges.

Critical Personal Attributes

The first guiding question (Which personal attributes are critical for future community college presidents?) was designed to determine which personal attributes are critical for future community college presidents. The participants felt future presidents should have integrity, credibility, truthfulness and honesty, hold a high standard of morals and ethics, and have an open communications leadership style.

Integrity, credibility, truthfulness and honesty were recognized as important attributes for future presidents according to the interviewed participants. One study participant expressed that integrity was an attribute, or a core value a potential president
must have. Leadership literature would appear to support these findings. In a study by Vaughan (1986), the personal attribute receiving top ranking by presidents was integrity. In Vaughan’s (1986) study, the presidents indicated that integrity is the basis for sound leadership of a college. Bennis (1999) describes character as drive, competence, and integrity. Hockaday and Puyers (2000) listed integrity as one of the nine traits of effective community college leaders. Gregg (2004) believed that “honesty and integrity is the bedrock” for community college presidents. She said,

A president must have honesty as the foundation for everything they do. Obviously, absolutely, and positively crucial. It is nowhere near as hard as people make it out to be…..once your integrity has been compromised it is extremely difficult to regain the trust of your constituents. (p. 125)

In Kouzes and Posner’s (2007) survey, honesty was rated as the highest attribute for leaders.

Closely related to integrity was the need for potential presidents to be honest, credible and truthful. One participant suggested that “the most important attribute a person should have, in my opinion, is they need to be credible.” Another participant believes that being truthful, honest and maintaining a high degree of integrity are challenging for many leaders in our society and that presidents must remain truthful.

Jensen, Giles, and Kirklin (2000) appear to confirm these findings when they suggest that honesty for leaders is critical to gain the trust of constituents and found it necessary to be honest in all situations, even when the responses are not what constituents want to hear. Transformational leadership theory would also appear to agree with the findings, as this theory suggests that leaders should be honest, truthful and do what is right.
Bass (1998) states:

The truly transformational leader who is seeking the greatest good for the greatest number and is concerned about doing what is right and honest is likely to avoid stretching the truth or going beyond the evidence; for he/she wants to set an example to followers about the value of valid and accurate communication in followers. (p. 174)

Morals. The need for leaders to have high standards of morals and ethics are themes supported in research literature. With regard to morals and ethics for leaders, one participant expressed, “in my view, it’s moral, legal and ethical behavior that translates into how a leader operates and a good leader will have these (moral, legal, ethical behavior) guiding values lead them when they conduct business.”

Research literature appears to support these findings. The American Association of Community Colleges (2005) competencies for leaders state that “an effective community college leader works ethically to set high standards for self and others” (p. 6). The AACC further supports the findings of this research when it states leaders should “promote and maintain high standards for personal and organizational integrity, honesty, and respect for people” (p. 6).

Plinske (2009) described good moral character as “when you can look them [presidents] straight in the eye and just feel that you are getting the pure, unvarnished truth, whatever the issues might be” (p. 117). Additionally, Bass and Steidlmeier (1998) state the ethics of leadership rest upon three pillars: (1) the moral character of the leader, (2) the ethical values embedded in the leader’s vision, articulation, and program which followers either embrace or reject, and (3) the morality of the processes of social ethical
choice and action that leaders and followers engage in and collectively pursue. Cohen and Brawer (2003) suggest that community college leaders be moral individuals.

**Leadership Style (Communicator).** It was important according to the interview participants that aspiring community college presidents have a leadership style that communicates well. One participant stated that potential presidents should have a style of communication that reaches different people, and believed “the best attributes of leaders are that they are good communicators.”

Some research literature could support these findings. Gregg (2004) suggested that “communication is a critical skill in most aspects of what a president does... communication is the key to everything. You can be involved in the community but if you’re not a good communicator, you’re a sunk duck” (p. 257). Tubbs and Moss (2003) suggest other effective communication competencies include demonstrating appropriate emotional intelligence, active listening, non-defensiveness, appropriate and skillful use of language, and body language, effective interviewing, effective negotiation, rumor control, techno-etiquette, and presentational skills.

Several other elements mentioned by the participants emphasized the importance of a leadership style or a communications’ style which effectively communicates the mission of the college; a style capable of reaching diverse groups of people; an engaging type of style, and one that is reflective of the community was described by some of the interview participants. Additionally, a potential president should be a perceptive and enthusiastic communicator who stands as the *living logo* of the institution.
Bumpas (1998) describes a leadership style that is necessary for community college presidents as an “articulating leadership style” (p. 89). Although no specific communication styles were mentioned by the participants, some type of communication style was deemed as important. Gatto (2009) identifies four types of communication styles which are the (a) blunt, aggressive, take charge communicator, (b) the influencing, persuading communicator; (c) the sincere, sensitive, kind hearted communicator, and (d) the detailed, logical and analytical communicator. Gatto suggests that “the most effective communication style is a balance of all four styles” (p. 4).

Specific Skills and Abilities

Emergent themes related to guiding question two (what specific skills and abilities are vital for future community college presidents?) encompassed the human relations aspect of a president’s job and the need for a potential president to be a “people person.” The other themes participants identified focused on the need for would be presidents to have adequate public speaking ability; a good understanding of sound business principles as they relate to community colleges and potential candidates should be educators.

People Skills. In response to this guiding question, several participants made statements regarding the people part of the job as it relates to abilities needed for future presidents. It was said that “it’s a human relations job, and that’s the bottom line; you can go down a list that relates to people… you have to be able to communicate that to people in a very practical way,” and that it boils down to “the ability to build relationships.” Research literature would appear to support these findings. Literature states that a
potential president could underestimate the amount of human relations and relationship building the position requires. Shults (2001) found that

Although many presidents receive leadership training before moving into a presidency, they are not prepared for all aspects of the job. The AACC survey asked presidents to identify aspects of the job for which they had not been prepared. The most frequent response was that they had not fully understood the overwhelming nature of the job. Presidents also reported being unprepared for the level of politics involved, fundraising, budgeting, and the amount of relationship building they were expected to accomplish. (pp. 8-9)

Shults (2001) goes on to say that potential presidents will deal with politics, fundraising and relationship building. It could be argued, that all of these relationships, minus budgeting, require certain human relations skills. These findings support the notion that a presidency is a human relations job.

Relationship builders. The participants felt a future community college president should be known as a relationship builder, and that relationship building was the essence of leadership. One participant believes a potential president should have “the capacity to develop meaningful relationships, [this] is the most important attribute in leadership as far as I’m concerned.” From one participant’s view, leading is cemented in the ability to build relationships. However, these relationships must be built on the solid rocks of integrity and honesty.

Research literature would appear to agree with these conclusions. Vaughan and Weisman (1998) state, “Successful presidents establish, maintain, and enhance relationships with selective constituencies of the college for the purpose of promoting the college’s well-being (p. 125). Additionally, Kouzes and Posner (2007) explained that “leadership is a relationship between those who aspire to lead and those who choose to
follow” (p. 24). As it pertains to the higher education setting, Kouzes and Posner stressed the importance of understanding and interacting with others by developing these relationships; and that successful leading depends on the ability of leaders to build and sustain those relationships. And Gregg (2004) argues that “developing relationships between leader and follower is critical to the success of any college president” (p. 32).

**Public Speaking.** Public speaking, which includes an effective communications style, was repeated as a necessary skill for would-be presidents according to the participants. With regards to public speaking ability, one participant stated, “Boards and faculty and staff, everybody wants their leaders to be someone they’re proud of; so it certainly is an enhancement to have good public speaking skills…and public speaking is a definite bonus because it represents the institution well. Somebody who is a very effective public speaker can get that across.”

Research literature would appear to agree with these findings. Public speaking ability was mentioned as a necessity for community college presidents in previous research literature (Brown, Martinez, & Daniel, 2002; Gregg, 2004; Wallin, 2006). The findings of this study suggest that “public speaking is a definite bonus” for community college presidents.

Gregg (2004) would appear to concur that would be community college presidents should have good public speaking skills, when she states “in determining competencies for effective college presidents, that those who were most successful exhibited outstanding communication and public speaking skills” (p. 26). It could be argued that public speaking ability and communications style are closely related
skills/abilities. Likewise, Wallin (2006) appears to concur with the research findings by stating “leaders must communicate their message in a convincing way to policy makers and constituents alike; those who aspire to senior level leadership understand the importance of public speaking skills” (p. 520).

Listeners. Many of the participants mentioned the need for potential presidents to be good listeners. One participant stated that “people in organizations want to be heard and if you are able to take the time to listen, it is important.” Likewise, another participant felt that is was important for potential presidents be known to be “good public and private listeners.”

There is support in literature stressing that being an effective listener is an important skill for leaders. In a survey conducted by Brown, Martinez and Daniel (2002) of 131 chief academic officers, effective listening and feedback skills were in the top ten of the most important skills identified in their survey. Steil and Bommelje (2004) suggest four key facts have emerged regarding listening leaders:

1. Effective listening and effective leadership are inseparable
2. Effective listening is imperative for anyone who desires to lead cohesive, productive, and significant teams and organizations
3. Productive listening and leadership require the development of productive attitudes and values, specific behavioral skill sets, and a deep understanding of established knowledge
4. Listening and leadership can be measurably enhanced (pp. 1-2).

The findings would support the view that potential presidents should be listening leaders.
**Business principles.** The interview participants felt future presidents should understand business principles and how they apply to the community college. This recommendation was expressed by one participant who supposed “we need to operate on sound business principles.” Likewise, another participant felt “there are business practices that one could learn and utilize in a business environment and be very successful.”

Literature would appear to support these findings regarding the community college and how it can relate to a business culture. Levin (2002) argues that

Globalization has altered the community college as an institution, refashioning local institutions—to be more responsive to its proximate communities and providing comprehensive education and training—to an institution that is more entrepreneurial and corporate on the one hand and more conscious of its connections to a global community on the other. Its practices are more business-like than in the past: responding to customers who are not just students, but include participants in the economic marketplace. (p. 3)

Levin (2005) finds with the need to increase enrollments and to secure government funding, these factors accentuates the entrepreneurial culture within community colleges. Most importantly, Levin says, “In turn, community colleges have adopted a number of institutional and organizational adaptations in pursuit of revenue, adaptations that challenge their institutional mission” (p. 1).

**Professional Experiences.** Some of the participants felt future presidents should be educators and understand or be able to “play the game” of education. One participant’s view on the education experience a potential president needs was different from the traditional view that a president must have been a faculty member.
Literature would appear to support that future presidents should have some faculty experience. Weisman and Vaughn (2007) reported that the most common career path to the presidency was through the “academic pipeline.” As reflected in their survey, 55% of the respondents who were in an academic position prior to their first presidency and 48% were full-time faculty members at a community college. Amey and VanDerLinden (2002) and Kubala and Bailey (2001) found that the most common pathway to the presidency was through the academic pipeline, but less than half of the presidents identified as outstanding leaders held a fulltime faculty position at a community college prior to the presidency.

However, McFarlin et al. (1999) concluded that “these data suggest that requiring previous full-time community college teaching experience for entry into a presidency may not be important to recruiting a candidate who will develop into an exemplary president” (p. 30). Amey, VanderLinden, and Brown (2002) note that the largest percentage (25%) of presidents surveyed indicated that their immediate past position was as a president at another community college. The literature would appear to suggest that coming through the academic pipeline is still the most common path to the presidency.

Selection Factors

The themes emerging under guiding question three (What other factors contribute to the selection of the “final” candidate for a community college presidency?) dealt with a candidate’s image, their air, confidence and fit. These themes could be viewed as non-tangible factors. The participants differed in how each one explained these other factors,
yet each felt the other factors exist in the selection of the final candidate for a community college presidency.

The first participant answered this question by saying it has to do with “chemistry; you have to remember that there is no perfect job and there’s no perfect candidate.” He also believed the choice of one candidate over another is when “it becomes visceral. It moves from rational and becomes a feeling.” Another participant felt a candidate “should have an air about you, that when you walk in [you think] yep; this person is presidential material.” One board member shared that these other factors are “non-scientific,” and thinks when the candidates walk in “are they presidential in their appearance or their presence? Do they have a presence? Do they walk, talk, look and think presidential? I don’t know how you capture that.”

Chemistry/Right Fit. There was no literature found to support or describe what chemistry, becoming a feeling, or having “an air about you” was with regards to picking out a final candidate. With regard to the candidate being the right fit, one participant mentioned that “it has to be the right fit at this particular time and history of the institution.” Likewise, another participant felt “the fit and how this person is going to react and interact with colleagues, organizational culture that’s the difficult and impossible thing to tell and a leap of faith judgment you have to make.”

Institutional fit was cited as a factor influencing the selection of community college presidents (Bumpas, 1998), but it is unclear what factors the term “fit” encompasses or how it is recognized or interpreted by board members. It could be argued that chemistry and fit are synonymous according to Vaughn (1990), when he stated;
The things that go into making an effective leader are many, elusive and varied. One of the intangible ingredients in the leadership formula is what people refer to as chemistry or “fit.” The fit may be right when a president first assumes a position.

**Presidential Image.** Literature (Bumpas, 1998; Fujita, 1990) supported the findings of this study where it was found that looking like “presidential material” or being presidential in appearance is important. In his study Bumpas sought to identify the factors that affected the selection of community college presidents and personal appearance was found to be one of factors. Fujita (1990) suggested that college presidents should “act like a president should,” and “have all the external, superficial trappings of a leader...look like a president” (p. 101).

**Confidence.** Confidence was also found to be important in the selection of the final candidate, as one participant shared that “if you’re not confident, you cannot get it [the job] done. Another participant felt confidence was important but warned, “If you have to prove that you are confident, it’s probably not the right kind of confidence.” And another participant felt that “confidence is very important,” but one “that is different from cocky.” The need for confidence was noted by Hockaday and Puyear (2000) as one of the nine traits of effective community college leaders. The projection of confidence would appear to be important during the interview process for presidential candidates, but the right kind of confidence, not cockiness.

**Presidential Leadership Potential**

There were no consistent or similar responses from the participants regarding guiding question four (What is presidential leadership potential, how is it classified and recognized?). One participant recognized potential presidents by noting whether they
liked students and/or were student focused. Likewise, another participant looked for a person who is skilled at handling and dealing with student issues. One of the other participants recognized future presidents as individuals who are “doers; they do things, they have the can do attitude.” One additional participant felt certain people are “presidential in their appearance” and “look like a leader.” The last participant recognized potential presidents as people who have “the ability to communicate, the ability to have leadership skills, [and] listening skills.”

Budig (2002) appears to agree with the findings which suggest that liking students for a president is important. He notes; “In order to survive and prosper, the president first must like students. No CEO, however skilled, can fake this basic necessity of life. Students are not easily fooled and especially by disingenuous bureaucrats” (p. 5). It is possible for a person who likes students to be skilled at dealing with student issues.

As previously mentioned under guiding question 3 of this study, the literature (Bumpas, 1998; Fujita, 1990) stated that it could be important for a potential president to look “presidential in their appearance,” and look like a leader. Additionally, communication and listening skills have been previously mentioned (Goldstein, 2006; Schmitz, 2008) as significant.

**Challenges**

In response to guiding question five (What are the greatest challenges facing community college presidents?), a consistent response from participants regarded the challenges of funding. Another consistent response was the challenge and need for future presidents to become fundraisers. Additionally, some of the participants felt it was
important for future presidents to understand the ongoing changes in technology and appreciate the importance of lifelong learning. When answering this question, one participant stated; “the greatest challenge they’re facing right now is the lack of resources,” while another participant shared; “you can start with the traditional finance; that is going to be a major, major, major problem,… so financial challenges will always be there.”

It would appear that the current and future funding concern for community colleges and future presidents is well documented in literature (Hockaday & Puyear, 2000; Wallin, 2006). In a survey conducted by Wallin (2006), the most frequently mentioned concern by 16 out of 30 respondents was related to budget and financial matters. Additionally, Hockaday and Puyear (2000) looked at 21st century challenges that community college presidents will face in the next decade. These challenges include “relevance in a global economy, new competition and the move toward privatization, distance education, competency-based programs, mission boundaries blurred, and new funding challenges” (p. 6).

Similarly, with regard to fundraising and the need for presidents to have an understanding of the challenges of fundraising, a 2008 article from the American Association of Community Colleges profiled effective fundraising by practices by community college presidents. The article stressed that “to be skilled in the art and the science of fundraising is an imperative for the modern community college president” (AACC, 2008 p. 30). The American College President survey (ACE, 2007) examined the primary challenges presidents face while serving in that capacity. The presidents
identified the three areas that occupied the most significant amount of their time. Fundraising was at the top of the list, followed by financial management and community relations.

In regard to technology, Shults (2001) observed that presidents believed more emphasis should be placed on the ability and flexibility of technology. Further, Sullivan (2001) found that the fourth and emerging generation of community college leaders have more technological savvy that their predecessors.

For future presidents, the participants felt that understanding and appreciating lifelong learning was important. One participant felt future presidents should commit “to lifelong learning [for] yourself and make it affordable and available to others.” As a form of lifelong learning, many of the participants felt that community college leadership programs are important in helping would be presidents in preparing for the future challenges. Fulton-Calkins and Milling (2005) support the view that community college presidents should remain lifelong learners, as they suggest

The true leader is able to constantly go deep within in liberating his or her heart; this power in turn allows the leader to help others liberate their hearts. Leadership is never a destination. It is a life-long journey—one of constantly seeking self-knowledge. Only through a leader’s taking that journey can she or he continue the journey of becoming the best self. Only through a leader’s taking that journey can she or he help other leaders to grow in their leadership skills.

Leadership programs. One participant proudly stated, “I’m a product of the University of Texas at Austin, Community College Leadership program.” He conveyed that he has never regretted, nor looked back since completing that program. Another participant felt that community college leadership programs are ‘very critical,” stating that he finds them very useful.
This finding could be significant as the number of advanced degrees conferred in general higher education administration increased by 13% from 1982-83 to 1996-97; whereas, there was a decrease of 78% in the number of advanced degrees conferred in community college administration over the same period (NCES, 2001). Romero (2004) suggests:

The new leaders we need for community colleges must be grounded in knowledge and research about leadership development that truly prepare them for the unique environments in which they operate. Training programs must set out new role models for them to emulate. The training must address the policy dynamics, research and practice skills, and values and behaviors that support and affirm the egalitarian climates in which community college leaders work.

Community college leadership programs could be an important lifelong learning tool and training ground for future presidents.

Conclusions

Potential community college presidents who bring the following attributes, skills and abilities are believed to be well suited for future community college vacancies: integrity, honesty, and morality. Further, candidates who bring an open communications style and are committed to relationship building should be well served.

According to the findings of this study, other attributes, skills and abilities deemed appropriate for future community college presidencies, include candidates who hold specific people skills (including but not limited to public speaking and listening skills) and who understand business principles.

It would appear from the data that a consistency exists between what community college boards of trustee members and presidents look for in the personal attributes (integrity, morals, honesty and open communication style) in selecting future community
college presidents. There was also consistency in the vital skills and abilities (relationship building and people skills, public speaking and listening skills, understanding of business principles and proper professional experiences) needed by future community college presidents.

When attempting to explore the “other factors” that contribute to the selection of one candidate over another in the president search process, there was some consistency in the findings, as the participants identified the need for the candidate in a president search to be the “right fit” for any given institution, and suggested the candidate projects a “presidential image” and is confident.

There was ambiguity in the findings while attempting to answer how presidential leadership potential is classified and recognized. The participants provided three minor indications one could use in identifying, classifying and recognizing presidential leadership potential; that an individual can look like a president, be one who is student focused, and genuinely likes students. In regards to the challenges facing a new community college presidents, the participants had some consistency in the findings and found funding, the need to appreciate the concept of lifelong learning, and to keep up with pace and change of technology as future challenges for community college presidents.

**Implications**

Studies on the critical personal attributes or characteristics for future community college presidents are important because of the role presidents’ play in leading community colleges. Boggs (2003) found the personal attributes of the president may
have influence on the organization, curriculum, and services to students and the community. Vaughan (2006) states that a presidents’ leadership style can affect the organizational culture of the institutions they serve, which, in turn, affects the outlook of students and society.

This study involved an exploration into the critical personal attributes and abilities needed by future community college presidents as perceived by community college board of trustee members and college presidents. The implications of the findings could provide valuable feedback for current leaders in attracting, developing, and retaining persons to meet the demand for potential presidents due to the projected retirements of current presidents. The implications could also help provide direction in developing curricula used in community college leadership programs and could assist community college boards of trustees and hiring committees in identifying the desirable personal attributes and abilities of would-be presidents.

**Critical Personal Attributes**

The major implications of these findings are that individuals who desire to become community college presidents must have the attributes of integrity, credibility, morality, ethics, and honesty, the ability to build relationships, and have a leadership style that can communicate the mission of the institution. These findings suggest that future presidents should be recognized as individuals possessing these attributes.

Another implication would call for the community college leaders and board members responsible for selecting candidates for future presidencies are to be careful to select individuals with these attributes. Also, most importantly, with the predicted
retirements of presidents, community college leaders and board members should be watchful and develop those leaders who have these attributes. Those aspiring community college presidents who have any blemishes with respect to integrity, credibility, morals, or ethical issues should be considered carefully.

Specific Skills and Abilities

One major implication under these findings is that potential presidents must like people and treat them well. As one study participant stated, “First, it is a human relations job; what we do [deal with], bottom line, is human beings, it’s relationship building and the ability to develop relationships.” This finding implies that individuals who lack people skills may not make good presidents. Another implication is that individuals without adequate public speaking skills could struggle as presidents. As one participant stated,

You’re [president] the face of the institution and you have to be able to get out and present yourself well. We all know that in this world, unfortunately, first impressions mean a lot; you have to be able to connect right off. I think most presidents do, to various degrees, but it is very important.

It is important for would-be presidents to polish, or work to improve their public speaking ability. As the face and living logo of the institution, presidents must have public speaking ability, as this is a vital skill to possess.

Another implication of these findings is that future presidents should understand sound business principles as they relate to the community college. Hockaday and Puyear (2000) state that presidents must understand the relevance of a global economy, understand the new competition from commercial providers of education, the importance of distance education, and new funding challenges. Like a business, new presidents must
focus on outputs and not inputs [enrollment] only. It is important that future presidents understand that community colleges are competing with the commercial providers of education for our students, and sound business principles should guide how presidents use distance education and alternative scheduling options.

Also, these findings imply that future presidents should have a history as educators. As educational enterprises, community colleges should be lead by individuals who understand the community college system. It is important for aspiring presidents to have a solid understanding of business, but one should understand the community college is about product, and the people are the product. It is important that aspiring presidents understand the difference.

Selection Factors

One major implication for these findings is that leaders who are already working within the community college pipeline who fit, who have a certain air about them, and have good *chemistry* within the leadership body be recognized. It is essential to note these individuals could add to the declining qualified pool of potential presidents. These individuals could be developed and considered to fill the future vacancies. Another major implication important for institutions with vacancies and who have individuals who match this criteria, is that institutions should make every effort and consider these individuals to fill the open positions.

Presidential Leadership Potential

A major implication of these findings is that no exact blueprint exists which clearly classifies and/or recognizes what presidential leadership potential looks like.
Although one interview participant believed that certain individuals were “presidential in their appearance” and who “look like a leader,” this view was not shared by all participants of the study. Another implication is that community colleges leaders could pay more attention to classifying or recognizing leaders with presidential leadership potential.

Challenges

Another major implication of these findings is that future community college presidents will be involved in fundraising. It will be important that future presidents use the skills of public speaking and relationship building to be successful at attracting and raising funds for their institutions. After all, funding issues will remain a consistent challenge for future presidents. Another implication is that future presidents must stay current in their knowledge of technology or at least understand the ongoing changes in technology. By understanding the challenges and changes with technology, future presidents can better position their institutions to compete with for-profit institutions for their students.

Recommendations

Recommendations for the Improvement of Practice

Presidents. Those who aspire to become community college presidents can utilize the findings of this study as a guide to address areas needing professional development. A potential president can evaluate their own personal attributes, abilities, and professional experiences, and compare them to the findings of this study as a self reflection tool. Future presidents can look for guidance from mentors to aid them in
making a proper assessment on any areas of weakness in their personal skill sets. Boggs (2003) correctly states “what we know about the problems that current leaders are facing should be a guide for developing the curriculum needed for institutes, mentorships, and doctoral programs” (p. 19).

Boards of Trustees. Boards of trustees are responsible for hiring presidents. The boards are usually involved in designing and identifying the desired qualifications of a candidate to be placed on the position announcements. The findings from this research could be utilized by boards of trustees as a medium for the discussions pertaining to the desired personal attributes, abilities and experiences of presidential hopefuls. While working with a current president, the board of trustees could also use these findings in identifying and developing those with presidential potential who are already employed at their institution.

Recommendations for the Dissemination of Findings

The findings of this research will be disseminated in research reports, academic journals, professional journals, and the findings could be presented at conferences, workshops and training seminars. In research reports the findings could serve as a single reference point for all aspects of the research. The research could have a wider impact, and serve as a source of knowledge by being printed in academic and professional journals. The findings could also be presented at community college leadership conferences, workshops and seminars.
Recommendations for Future Research

The results of this study point towards the need for additional research in a few areas, namely: (a) the perspectives of community college trustees in other states, regarding the personal attributes, abilities and professional experiences deemed vital for future community college presidents; (b) the perspective of community college presidents in other states regarding the personal attributes, abilities and professional experiences are vital for future community college presidents; (c) best practices for identifying and nurturing educational administrators who possess the personal attributes and skills to become future presidents; (d) best practices for who possess the personal attributes and skills to become future presidents. Specific recommendations for future research include the following:

1. In that the perspectives were taken from board of trustee members from only one Midwest state, replication of this study in other states, would allow for comparisons of the findings.

2. Presidents from other states or geographical locations may have different perspectives about the personal attributes and abilities needed by would-be presidents from the presidents interviewed from one Midwest state; replication of this study in other states would allow for comparisons of the findings to further the research on this important topic.

3. The majority of community college administrators are appointed from within the community college system; thus, it is recommended that “best practices” be
created to identify potential leaders currently employed within the community college system.

4. A future study could look at community college boards of trustees and presidents who have successful “grow your own” programs to lead to a greater understanding and possible replication of this practice.

5. A future study could explore whether attributes, skills and abilities differ due to regionalism (i.e., are certain attributes, skills and abilities unique to regional location nationally or internationally?).
REFERENCES


Gregg, K. A. (2004). *Men and women in community college leadership: A qualitative study.* Ph.D dissertation, Faculty Graduate School, University of Texas at Austin. Austin, TX.


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Jeffery Steven Boyd has been serving as the Interim Dean of Business and Career Technologies at Elgin Community College since April 2008. Prior to this assignment, he was the associate dean in the same division. Jeffery has a unique and diverse professional background. He was a police officer for 9 years, has 5 years of executive assets protection management experience, 2 years high school history teaching experience and 2 years community college teaching experience. He has a total of 8 years experience in higher education.

His career began within the community college system by helping students of color achieve their dream, as a Minority Student Retention Coordinator. He holds a masters degree in adult education, a bachelor’s degree in human services, and an associates degree in criminal justice.
## Research Questions/Interview Questions

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| 1. Which personal attributes are critical for future community college presidents? | a. How important is integrity for a community college president; and how would you define integrity?  
   How do you define integrity in leadership?  
   How do you assess the integrity of a candidate during the interview process?  
   What experiences have you had that exemplifies integrity?  
b. How important is leadership style with respect to communicating the mission of the institution?  
c. How would you describe your leadership style?  
d. How do you judge the “cognitive capacity” a future president has during the interview process?  
e. How important is mental toughness?; or the ability to handle pressure well?  
f. How important is emotional stability; and how is this assessed during the interview process? |
| 2. What specific skills and abilities are vital for future community college presidents? | a. How important is public speaking ability for future presidents?  
1. How does this ability enhance one’s effectiveness as a leader? |
2. How is the image of the institution affected by the president’s ability to project a positive image?

   b. In your opinion what are the most important people skills a president needs?

   c. How important is the need to be a keen listener for effective leadership? (how do you determine if a candidate is a listening leader?)

   d. How important is the ability to communicate effectively by being responsive to messages and signals from the internal and external environments?

   e. What professional experiences are vital for future community college presidents to possess?

   f. How do you assess successful leadership in a unionized environment?

   g. How does one's experiences in a business culture apply or not apply to the community college culture?

3. What other factors contribute to the selection of a “final” candidate for a community college presidency?

   a. What distinguishes, or sets apart the “final” candidate?

   b. How does confidence factor into the choice of one candidate over another?

   c. How important is attitude, confidence, personality and emotional stability in the final choice?
4. **What is presidential leadership potential and how is it classified and recognized?**

   a. How do you recognize a potential leader?
   
   b. How important are first impressions?
   
   c. What are the differences between a leader and a manager?
   
   d. How have you recognized future leaders in the past?

5. **What are the greatest challenges facing future community college presidents?**

   a. How do future leaders prepare themselves to face these challenges?
   
   b. How important are Community College Leadership programs in helping to prepare future community college presidents?
Appendix B

Letter of Invitation

(date)
(inside address)
Dear ______________:

As a doctoral student at National-Louis University in Chicago, Illinois, and as Dean of Business - and Career Technologies at Elgin Community college with 5 years experience working in community colleges, I recognize the importance of having strong administrative leadership. My reason for writing you is to request permission to interview you on campus for a research project that seeks to determine the essential personal attributes, skills and abilities needed by community college presidents to meet the demands of today’s increasingly important community college experience.

Community colleges are facing an imminent leadership crisis. Approximately 75% of community college presidents anticipate retiring within the next 7-10 years. Community colleges must better understand how to select candidates to fill the impending presidential openings. The purpose of my study is to explore essential personal attributes, skills and abilities needed by future community college presidents, as perceived by current community college board chairs and presidents. Your input may help decide who is best capable to lead higher education as it faces the many challenges of providing multifaceted educational experiences to an increasing diverse population.

The interview will be scheduled at your convenience. The interview will last approximately one to two hours, and will be held at your campus or chosen location. The focus of the interview will include general leadership responsibilities, the personal attributes and abilities you look for when selecting leadership candidates, and the essential types of opportunities necessary to help prepare future presidents.

Thank you for considering this request.

Jeffery S. Boyd, Dean
Business and Career Technologies
Elgin Community College  jboyd@elgin.edu
Appendix C

Letter of Appreciation and Confirmation

(date)
(inside address)

Dear__________: 

I am excited and appreciative that you will help me in my doctoral study, which explores essential personal attributes and abilities - needed by future community college presidents, as perceived by current community college board chairs and presidents.

For your convenience, the interview questions are enclosed for your perusal prior to the interview. I will email these questions to you as well.

To confirm our appointment, below is the date, time and location of our scheduled interview:

Date of Interview: May XX, 2009

Time of Interview: 2:00 P.M.

Location: Chosen Community College
1230 CCL Leadership Way
Soon Lake, IL 65222
Building W - Third Floor - Presidents Suite

Additionally, a consent form is enclosed with this correspondence. Please sign the attached consent form and I will collect it at the interview.

Thank you again for your willingness to participate in my study, and I look forward to meeting with you. Please contact me at the number or email below if necessary.

Respectfully,

Jeffery S. Boyd, Dean
Business and Career Technologies
Elgin Community College   jboyd@elgin.edu
Appendix D

Informed Consent

Date
Your Address

Salutation:

This form outlines the purpose of this study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

Your signature at the end of this form indicates your consent to participate and that your participation is voluntary and can be discontinued at any time without prejudice.

Your participation will involve an audio-taped interview lasting one to two hours. When completed, you will receive a copy of the transcribed interview so that you may provide clarification of the information if needed. Only the researcher, Jeffery S. Boyd, will have access to a secured file cabinet in which will be kept all transcripts, recordings and field notes from the interview(s) during the study.

The results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, but your identity will be kept confidential. There are no anticipated risks or benefits to you, no greater than those encountered in daily life. Further, the information garnered from the study will help in the selection of new community college presidents.

All names and identifiable characteristics will be kept strictly confidential and participants will be “fictionalized” in the final reports.

In the event you have questions or require additional information, you may contact me, the researcher: Jeffery S. Boyd, street address, telephone number, or email: jboyd@elgin.edu

If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel have not been addressed by me, you may contact my Dissertation Chair: Dr. Martin Parks National-Louis University, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, 60603, 312-261-3019; Email address: Martin.Parks@nl.edu

Participant’s Signature _______________________________ Date_____________

Researcher’s Signature _______________________________ Date_____________