SUCCESSION PLANNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE INFLUENCE
OF CULTURE ON THE SUCCESSION PROCESS IN
A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

by

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DEDICATION

Dedicated in memoriam of my uncle, George "Egbert" Joseph, and my sister, Ulyda Cordella Joseph, who departed this life in 2014 while I was in pursuit of my Ph.D. degree. I know that they would have been very proud of my accomplishment. I will forever love and cherish their memories.
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"It seems to me shallow and arrogant for any man in these times to claim he is completely self-made, that he owes all his success to his own unaided efforts. Many hands and hearts and minds generally contribute to anyone's notable achievements."

(Walt Disney)

This dissertation is the culmination of a program of study, and a major accomplishment that would not have been realized without the fervent support of many. I am honored to be able to recognize those who rallied around me and cheered me on, especially through the challenging times. I am beholden to each of them.

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ABSTRACT

RUTHLYN CHARMI0N RICHARDS  
SUCCESSION PLANNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE ON THE SUCCESSION PROCESS IN A COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
Under the direction of Dr. EDWARD L. BOUIE, JR., Ed.D.

There is a pending crisis in community colleges as a leadership gap is being created with the vast retirement of presidents. In addition, leaders in positions that traditionally feed into the presidency are also retiring, and in some cases there is a lack of interest in the CEO position. However, succession planning is not practiced in most higher education institutions, and as a result, there is not a robust pipeline to fill the vacated leadership positions. Among the factors listed for a lack of succession planning is the culture of higher education institutions; therefore, the purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine how the culture and traditions of a community college influenced succession planning.

The study was conducted through the lens of Schein's three-tiered model which focuses on organizational culture. Data were collected through the use of interviews and document reviews, and the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method was utilized to analyze the data. Four themes emerged from the analysis: change is constant at the institution, diversity along with professional and leadership development are valued, top leaders are recruited from outside the institution, and succession planning was viewed as important. Challenges to succession planning include the underlying
assumption that higher education should not be run like a business, and top leaders
should be selected via the traditional national search. Findings indicated that having a
written succession plan does not mean that succession planning is being practiced within
an institution.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There is an imminent crisis in higher education leadership as presidents and other top administrators reach the age of retirement (Betts, Urias, Chavez & Betts, 2009; Coons, 2012; Klein & Salk, 2013; McNair, Duree & Ebbers, 2011; Shults, 2001; Spendlove, 2007). However, the crisis appears to be more prevalent and critical in community colleges as they are experiencing a higher rate of leadership turnover. According to Tekle (2012), 75% of community college presidents will retire within the next ten years. Other researchers support this prediction and have posited that 84% of community college presidents will retire by 2016 (Bornstein, 2010; Ebbers, Conover & Samuels, 2010; Eddy, 2013; Shiffman, 2009; Weisman & Vaughn, 2006). The ensuing demographic shift in the workplace resulting from the retirement of these top administrators is further compounded by the lack of adequately prepared candidates in the pipeline to fill these positions (American Association of Community Colleges, Competencies for Community College Leaders, 2nd ed., 2013; Bornstein, 2010; Shults, 2001). The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) in a 2013 report pointed out that “the pool of potential applicants for the CEO positions being hired with the requisite skills required to ‘hit the ground running’ is shrinking” (AACC Competencies for Community College Leaders, 2nd ed., 2013, p. 3). Not only is the pipeline being depleted with the retirements of chief academic officers (CAO), which is the traditional pathway to the presidency, but in some cases there is a lack of interest on
the part of these CAOs to advance to the position of president (Eddy, 2013; Ekman, 2010). Effective succession planning is therefore necessary to rapidly increase the leadership pipeline and prepare colleges and universities for the future (Fulton-Calkins & Milling, 2005). However, most higher education institutions are not implementing succession management plans effectively to benefit their employees (Clunies, 2004; Long, Johnson, Faught & Street, 2013).

Colleges and universities are continually being thrust into a dynamic environment where they must adapt in order to compete and survive (Clunies, 2004), but success in such an environment requires leaders who are highly competent and effective (Bisbee, 2007). Additionally, the old assumptions regarding leadership can no longer be revered in today’s fast-paced, technological, and diverse society (Fulton-Calkins & Milling, 2005). As Barden (2009) states, the traditional preparation of the college president, which includes obtaining a doctorate and then becoming tenure-track faculty, full professor, chair, dean and chief academic officer, is no longer an adequate path to prepare leaders for higher education institutions. In support of this view, the American Association of Community Colleges in its 2013 report on Competencies for Community College Leaders, 2nd ed., states that:

New and emerging leaders must have the skills necessary to develop realistic, concrete, and actionable responses to the complex issues that their institutions need to address to provide employers with a skilled citizenry. If we are going to redesign student educational experiences, reinvent institutional roles, and reset the system, we must immediately develop solutions to the leadership crisis that 2-year colleges are facing. (p. 3)

If the success of higher education in an increasingly complex world is dependent on leadership that can function effectively and efficiently, then every effort must be made to provide the appropriate leadership which will aid in maintaining the integrity of higher
education for the future (Bisbee, 2007). This can be accomplished through succession planning (Long et al., 2013; Scott-Skillman as cited in McNair et al., 2011).

Various authors define succession planning consistently as a deliberate, systematic, ongoing process for identifying and developing individuals for future leadership roles (Atwood, 2007; Calareso, 2013; Rothwell, 2010). However, there are slight variations in definitions as succession planning is viewed by some as preparing leaders for the top two or three positions, while others perceive succession planning as being conjoined with succession management and focusing on key leadership and talent to include leadership at the supervisory level, and other positions that require specialized skills (Berchelman, 2005; Berke, 2005; Calareso, 2013; Rothwell, 2010). For example, Larcker and Saslow (2014) describe the best succession plans as ones that extend beyond the executive level and includes other levels of management within the organization. The overarching goal of succession planning is to outline strategies and processes to identify and develop talent to meet current and future leadership needs (Atwood, 2007; Calareso, 2013; Rothwell, 2010). For the purposes of this study the terms succession planning and succession management will be used interchangeably.

Succession planning is not a widespread concept in higher education, and has actually been described as almost unheard of by some within the academy (Hanover Research Council, 2010; Long et al., 2013). One reason cited for a lack of succession planning is the absence of a common language to describe the process (Barden, 2009; Klein & Salk, 2013). Other reasons frequently underscored include the culture of the academy along with the tradition of shared governance (Barden, 2009; Barden & Curry, 2013; Ginsberg, 2011; Klein & Salk, 2013; Richards, 2009). As a result, the pipeline of
potential leaders in academe is less than robust (Barden, 2009; Bornstein, 2010), but
proper implementation of a succession plan in institutions of higher education can
increase the number of adequately prepared candidates in the leadership pipeline, and
thrust academic and organizational excellence to a higher level (Long et al., 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Most colleges and universities have no systematic approach for identifying
leadership potential and developing leadership skills for their top administrative positions
(Bennett, 2015; Calareso, 2013; Grossman, 2014; Hanover Research Council, 2010;
Klein & Salk, 2013; Richards, 2009; Spendlove, 2007). The recruitment and selection
methods tend to lack uniformity and include word of mouth, emphasis on academic
prowess, and other ad hoc approaches (Bisbee, 2007; Klein & Salk, 2013; Spendlove,
2007; Wolverton, Ackerman & Holt, 2005; Yielder & Codling, 2004). These methods
for identifying and developing leaders are inconsistent and do not adequately facilitate
early identification and training before placing individuals into these crucial roles
(Bisbee, 2007). As Schloss and Cragg (2013) succinctly state:

Higher education administration traditionally draws from the ranks of the faculty
for many important positions, including president, provost, deans, and department
heads. One of the challenges for faculty assuming these roles is a lack of
preparation and administrative training when they are thrust into positions of
authority above their once and future colleagues. (p. 37)

Additionally, executives tend to be attracted to smart and aggressive individuals for their
leadership positions, but promoting employees by focusing on intellectual capability and
business acumen can undermine, and eventually derail their careers if emotional and
other competencies are lacking (Bunker, Kram & Ting, 2002). However, emotional
competencies are not achieved overnight, and cannot be attained just by reading relevant
information. Rather, they develop over time through experiences and interactions with people, and are critical for managerial success (Bunker et al., 2002).

Wallin (2010) points out that the enormous changes and challenges in today's society require leaders with specialized skills and abilities that exceed what was required forty years ago. Bornstein (2010) adds that today's presidents have a wider range of responsibilities than their predecessors, and that lack of preparation results in a steep learning curve for these neophyte presidents, and have the potential for serious mistakes to be made. She continues to note that higher education has an obligation to prepare presidents to meet the challenges of the future. This position is supported by other researchers who claim that if community colleges and other higher education institutions are to remain viable their success may be determined by their recruitment and development of leaders (Bennett, 2015; Wallin, 2010). Scott-Skillman (2007) sums it up best when she encouraged leaders of community colleges to engage in succession planning. She stated that without such planning the effectiveness of institutions will be at stake as the quality of their educational programs will be jeopardized and their integrity may be compromised (Scott-Skillman as cited in McNair et al., 2011).

Purpose

The purpose of this single site case study was to understand how the culture and traditions at a community college influenced the succession planning process, and to explore the perceptions of top administrators, faculty, and human resources personnel regarding succession planning. The researcher reviewed and described the succession plan that was implemented at a selected community college within a southeastern state with a view to understand the criteria used for identifying leadership potential and the
strategies used to develop leadership skills. Additionally, the researcher sought to understand how succession planning was integrated with the strategic planning process at the institution.

Theoretical Framework

One of the key barriers to succession planning in higher education institutions lies in the egalitarian culture of colleges and universities, in that hand-picking individuals for potential leadership positions while leaving others behind does not come naturally (Barden, 2009). The tradition of shared governance also makes succession planning intrinsically different for colleges and universities than for corporations. For example, it is not acceptable in higher education for any group of leaders to single out their future successors; hence, succession planning in academe must be a process that involves every key constituent (Barden, 2009; Richards, 2009). The open national search has also been the principal acceptable means of identifying and enfranchising leadership (Barden, 2009). These are all traditions that make up the culture of academic institutions.

Edgar Schein’s (2010) multi-level model of organizational culture theory explains this milieu. To begin with, Schein defines culture as a set of basic assumptions that a group shares and takes for granted, but uses to solve its problems. He further describes three levels of organizational culture: artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions (Dauber, Fink & Yolles, 2012; Schein, 2010). Artifacts are those visible, observable behaviors that are characteristic of the organization. An example within the realm of higher education is the commencement exercise where academic regalia and medallions are worn, and have specific meanings within the context of the academy that are not always easy to decipher by those outside.
Schein's second level of organizational culture addresses beliefs and values adopted by an organization that may not necessarily be congruent with exhibited behavior and other artifacts (Schein, 2010). Such corporate values are important and contribute to the development of standards for how the organization does business. At the third level, basic underlying assumptions, is where the essence of culture is defined (Kawalilak & Groen, 2010). These unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs, values, and core assumptions aid in determining the behavior, perception, and thoughts of individuals within an organization (Schein, 2010). They are treated as nonnegotiable by members of the organization, and present major challenges as organizations struggle with changes required of them to meet the demands of an ever-changing society (Lucas & Kline, 2008; Schein, 2010). The custom of conducting national searches to fill top administrative positions, and the tradition of shared governance where all constituents have a voice in the affairs of an institution, fall into this category of basic underlying assumptions that define the culture of higher education.

Research Questions

The purpose of this research study was to understand how the culture and traditions at a community college influenced succession planning, and to explore the perceptions of key leaders as they relate to the institution's succession plan. The study sought to understand the criteria used for identification of leadership potential and the strategies used to develop leadership skills. Additionally, the study examined how succession planning was integrated with strategic planning at the selected institution. The study answered the following research questions:
RQ 1. What evidences do the institutional artifacts provide to demonstrate succession planning?

RQ 2. How do faculty, administrators, and human resources personnel describe their espoused beliefs and values as they relate to the institution and succession planning?

RQ 3. How do the basic underlying assumptions of the institution influence succession planning?

RQ 4. What is the culture of a community college with a succession plan, as it pertains to leadership perceptions, criteria for potential leadership identification, strategies for leadership development, and integration with strategic planning?

Significance

This study provides significant and valuable information for leaders and human resources personnel in higher education institutions about the type of institutional culture that facilitates succession planning. The study also provides useful information regarding the process of succession planning in higher education and the early identification and development of leaders for top administrative positions. Further, the study shows how succession planning can be integrated with strategic planning.

There is a paucity of research in the area of succession planning in higher education institutions (Richards, 2009). This study adds to the research to gain a better understanding of the essential characteristics of a formal succession planning model and how these models can be effectively utilized in higher education institutions. In addition, this study contributes to the body of knowledge by filling the gap in the
literature where a need has been shown for a more defined process for identifying, training, and developing top administrators in institutions of higher education.

Definition of Terms

Succession Planning. Succession planning is an ongoing systematic and intentional process that boards can use to create an environment for chief executives to succeed from the very beginning of their terms until the cycle is repeated with their successors (Klein & Salk, 2013; Richards 2009). It facilitates the development and retention of intellectual and knowledge capital and promotes individual advancement (Helton & Jackson, 2007).

Top leadership positions. These key positions are identified as those of presidents, vice-presidents, provosts and deans (Calareso, 2013).

Limitations and Delimitations

This qualitative case study employed the use of face-to-face semi-structured interviews and document reviews as data collection methods. The researcher was aware of the potential bias in the data that were collected via both methods as executive leaders may not have been forthcoming with all the information regarding their culture and their views of succession planning, in an effort to protect the integrity of their institution. The researcher addressed this limitation by assuring participants of their anonymity, and the anonymity of the institution throughout the process and by utilizing the process of triangulation as a means of data validation. The researcher also discussed the potential benefits of the study with participants.

The researcher chose to delimit the study by collecting data from one community college within a southeastern state. Only top administrative positions were addressed in succession planning as discussed in this study. Consequently, the relevancy of the study
may be restricted to succession planning for individuals who hold such positions. The study was also geographically constrained to a southeastern state and therefore the results may be different if a similar study is conducted in a northeastern state or at community colleges otherwise geographically located nationally and internationally. In addition, this study focused on succession planning in community colleges and may not have the same level of relevancy for four-year or research institutions.

Summary

The extant literature shows that a possible crisis exists in community colleges with the increase in presidency turnover due to retirements (Betts et al., 2009; Klein & Salk, 2013; Spendlove, 2007). With some 35% of chief academic officers also reaching retirement age (Tekle, 2012), and others lacking interest in advancing to the position of president (Eddy, 2013), the leadership pipeline that feeds into the presidency is less than robust (Barden, 2009; Bornstein, 2010). This situation is requiring higher education institutions to examine their leadership recruitment and development strategies, since most of them do not have a systematic and intentional method in place for selecting and developing their top leaders. At the same time, there are barriers that prevent higher education and more specifically, community colleges from moving in the direction of adopting succession planning methods. These barriers include the culture of academic institutions and traditions which emphasize shared governance and the execution of national searches to fill presidential and other top leadership positions. However, consideration needs to be given to the dynamic environment in which current presidents lead their institutions, which require the development of a new skill-set to keep community colleges viable and successful. In addition, the learning curve for new
presidents is steep (Bornstein, 2010) and requires some sort of training and development system to prepare candidates to adjust and adapt to the presidential position.

The purpose of this single site case study was to understand how the culture and traditions at a community college influenced succession planning, and to explore the perceptions of top administrators, faculty and human resources personnel, at the same institution, regarding succession planning. The study is significant for top leadership and human resources personnel in community colleges in particular, and higher education in general, as institutions seek to find ways to recruit, train and develop their leaders. The study is limited due to the potential bias in the data collected from participants who may not have been forthcoming with information regarding their institution. Delimitations include the focus of the study on one selected site, and limiting the participants to top administrators such as presidents, vice-presidents, members of the president's cabinet, provosts, deans, department chairs, and also faculty and human resources personnel.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Higher education is unique in that it is within the walls of these institutions that new knowledge is produced, novel ideas are formed, and judgments are made regarding the quality of intellectual accomplishments (Ekman, 2010). However, higher education institutions are facing an imminent crisis in their leadership as the baby boomer generation is aging and retiring, and as individuals in positions that traditionally feed into the presidency lose interest in transitioning into the role (Ekman, 2010). Among the reasons that have been cited for the lack of interest in the position of the president are the external duties that consume much of a president's time, but are not duties that are at the original core or heart of the academy (Ekman, 2010). These external duties and activities are not viewed as being congruent with the true distinction of academia and have caused chief academic officers and other faculty members to lose interest in the presidency (Ekman, 2010).

Higher education is not alone, in that both public and private corporations are realizing the consequences of the graying baby boomers' exodus. In 2009, one study found that 73% of chief executives in public and private companies were baby boomers and of that number 55% were over age fifty (Shiffman, 2009). As a result of this demographic shift, there has been a heightened interest in succession planning in recent years (Berke, 2005; Shiffman, 2009).
Succession planning has been described generally as having the right people in place at the right time, and more specifically as a systematic, ongoing process for identifying and developing future leaders so that they can be ready to move into leadership roles at the appropriate time (Atwood, 2007; Rothwell, 2010). The process involves forecasting future trends, reviewing strategic plans, and developing employees following a structured plan to replace leaders as they leave the organization (Atwood, 2007). However, succession planning must be differentiated from replacement planning, which is a reactive process that focuses mainly on identifying successors for top leadership positions, and places little or no emphasis on leadership development (Atwood, 2007; Berke, 2005; Rothwell, 2010).

In this chapter the extant literature on succession planning is explored and discussed by first reviewing Edgar Schein's cultural model, which provides the theoretical lens for the study. An in-depth examination of higher education culture follows along with leadership literature beginning with how potential leaders are identified, the pros and cons of selecting internal versus external leaders, and strategies for leadership development. The role of community colleges in American society is discussed next followed by literature vis-à-vis the importance of succession planning, elements of a good succession plan, succession planning in business organizations, and finally the role that board of directors play in succession planning. The chapter culminates with a brief look at succession planning as a challenge or an opportunity.

Schein's Cultural Model

The theoretical foundation for this study and the lens through which the study was conducted exists in Schein's framework for culture within organizations. In his model
Schein (2010) describes three interrelated levels of culture namely, artifacts, norms and values, and underlying beliefs and assumptions. Artifacts aid in communicating core values, and are considered to be the visible manifestations or the accessible elements of the culture as evidenced in the form of day-to-day behaviors, language, traditions, organizational sagas, and physical expressions such as architecture (Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Manning, 2013). They can be difficult to decipher since the same or similar artifact can have different meanings for different organizations. In this study the artifacts were the strategic plan and succession planning documents. These documents were reviewed as a part of the data collection process and then evaluated during data analysis.

At the second level Schein (2010) describes the norms and values that an organization develops over time, which he states are not typically observable. These norms and values are present in all organizations and influence the actions and choices of individuals (Manning, 2013). Additionally, they are the norms and values that members of the organization talk about and use to shape the way the organization adapts externally and integrates new thoughts and ideas internally (Merton, Froyd, Clark & Richardson, 2009; Schein, 2010). Norms and values form the basis of what becomes the underlying beliefs and assumptions of a culture, which Schein describes in his third level as the taken for granted perceptions, thoughts, and feelings which are the essence of culture. In this study the norms, values and underlying assumptions were unearthed through the voiced experiences of participants as they provided rich, thick descriptions of the institution’s hiring procedures, leadership and professional development practices, and their personal views about succession planning strategies.
Higher Education Culture

The infrastructure to make succession planning effective lies deep in the culture of an organization (Lampton, 2011). Culture can be generally described as a phenomenon that influences people, but is also influenced and shaped by the behaviors and interactions of individuals. It is defined by numerous authors as a set of shared beliefs, values and assumptions that aid in providing meaning and context for individuals within an organization (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; Birnbaum, 1988; Kezar & Eckel, 2002; Manning, 2013; Schein, 2010;). Kuh & Whitt (1988) state, that, the culture within higher education is complex; and each institution’s culture is inextricably linked to its environment and its history. They liken culture to the layers of an onion, and posit that multiple layers of analyses are required when using culture as the lens to examine events and processes in a college or university. The external environment they designate as the first layer of analysis, which includes economic and political factors, societal expectations of higher education, expectations from other constituents including religious bodies and professional interest groups, along with institutional status, which are all external factors that play a role in influencing culture. The second layer of analysis is the institution itself, which is all encompassing of the interactions among the internal constituents as sub-cultures. Multiple sub-cultures exist within the same space in colleges and universities and are woven together to form the broader culture of the institution (Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Manning, 2013; Tierney, 1988). Examples of these sub-cultures include faculty, whose culture places emphasis on autonomy, administrators, whose culture values efficiency, and students, who embrace a culture of experimentation (Manning, 2013).
Ultimately, an institution's culture evolves from a confluence of the values of the broader society, in which it exists, and the beliefs and practices of its internal constituents (Birnbaum, 1988; Kuh & Whitt, 1988). Tierney (1988, 2008) concurs with Kuh and Whit (1988) that demographics, along with economic and political issues, are some of the external factors that influence higher education culture, particularly when combined with internal forces that are inherent in the institution's history. Tierney describes a framework of six essential concepts for identifying culture in colleges and universities. Through the use of a case study in a public institution, he was able to demonstrate how these six concepts: environment, mission, socialization, information, strategy, and leadership, play an integral role in the development of culture in higher education.

Tierney (2008) also highlights the influence that culture has on decision-making, and states that leaders need to understand the culture of their organizations before implementing decisions. Table 1 depicts Tierney's framework of organizational culture.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A Framework of Organizational Culture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environment:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>How does the organization define its environment?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the attitude toward the environment? (Hostility? Friendship?)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mission:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>How is it defined?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How is it articulated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it used as a basis for decisions?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How much agreement is there?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Socialization:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do new members become socialized?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is it articulated?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do we need to know to survive/excel in this organization?</td>
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</table>
### Table 1 – Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What constitutes information?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who has it?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How is it disseminated?</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strategy:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How are decisions arrived at?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Which strategy is used?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who makes decisions?</td>
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<td>What is the penalty for bad decisions?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Leadership:</th>
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<tr>
<td>What does the organization expect from its leaders?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who are the leaders?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there formal and informal leaders?</td>
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Prentiss (2011) determined that culture is influenced by external and internal factors, which is in concord with the views of Tierney (1998; 2008) and Kuh & Whitt (1988). In his descriptive case study of campus and administrative cultures at a multi-campus community college, he utilized interviews along with document and videograph reviews and discovered evidence of more than one cultural model present at the institution. Prentiss found Kuh’s (1989) rational, bureaucratic and collegial models, along with Bergquist and Pawlak’s (2008) collegial, managerial and developmental cultures to be an integral part of the institution’s culture.

Bergquist and Pawlak (2008), posit that culture provides meaning and context for an organization, and helps to define reality for individuals. They describe six cultures that exist in higher education institutions namely, collegiate, managerial, developmental, advocacy, virtual and tangible. The collegiate culture, they explain, places emphasis on research and scholarship, and values autonomy, which is usually expressed in the form of
academic freedom. Additionally, the collegiate culture focuses on diverse perspectives and independent research, and supports faculty governance. In this culture eccentricity is acceptable and admired as faculty exhibit scholarship in their individual disciplines. The collegiate culture tends to be more dominant in larger universities.

The managerial culture, as described by Bergquist and Pawlak (2008), emphasizes efficiency and competence as administrators in this culture are expected to be effective and efficient in fiscal and personnel management. Academic excellence and intellectual identity occur through teaching, and faculty are able to influence their institutions as they move through the traditional ranks to become department chairs, deans, academic vice presidents and presidents. The managerial culture is more prevalent in community colleges, where the leadership structure tends to be formal and hierarchical.

Rationality is of paramount importance in the developmental culture, and reasoning is used to facilitate inclusiveness and conflict resolution. In this culture meaning is derived through the creation of programs that further personal, professional, and academic growth, and where teaching and learning are viewed as the core of the academy (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008). Merton et al. (2009) found the developmental culture to be evident at the university where they conducted their study to explore how organizational culture influenced the process of making changes to existing curricula. Internal constituents at the institution they studied expressed that personal growth and development were encouraged and supported by all, which is characteristic of Bergquist and Pawlak’s developmental culture.

The other three cultures in Bergquist and Pawlak’s (2008) conceptual framework are advocacy, virtual and tangible cultures. The advocacy culture, as they describe it,
focuses on collective bargaining, equity and egalitarianism, especially as they pertain to the distribution of benefits and resources within institutions. This culture is also ubiquitous in community colleges. The virtual and tangible cultures describe higher education institutions in the 21st century, where technology is predominant and education is valued and broadened from a global perspective.

Kuh (1989) outlines a similar cultural typology where he defines four conventional organizational models: the collegial model, the rational model, the bureaucratic model and the political model (as cited in Prentiss, 2011). Kuh's collegial model focuses on democratic principles and is consistent with traditions within the academy (Komives & Woodard, 2003). This focus was further emphasized by Tierney (2008), who stated that the proponents of the collegial model support decision-making that results from professional competence rather than politics.

Kuh's (1989) bureaucratic model emphasizes productivity and efficiency, which is similar to Berquist and Pawlak's (2008) managerial model. In this type of organization decision-making occurs via standardized rules and a hierarchical chain of command (Tierney, 2008). Next is Kuh's rational model, which places emphasis on logic and reasoning, and does not give much credence to the complexities of higher education. In the rational model behaviors and actions are guided by anticipated outcomes. Finally, Kuh describes his political model as one in which the importance of power is acknowledged and the positive influence of conflict is recognized (Komives & Woodard, 2003). Unlike the collegial model, the political model places emphasis on the use of positions of power in decision-making and the allocation of resources (Komives & Woodard, 2003; Prentiss, 2011).
The subject of culture in higher education is broached further by other authors including Birnbaum (1988). In his seminal work articulated in his book, 'How Colleges Work: The Cybernetics of Academic Organization and Leadership', Birnbaum (1988) describes the characteristics of five academic institutional models: collegial, bureaucratic, political, anarchical, and cybernetic. The collegial institution, he states, is non-hierarchical, informal, and promotes a culture of mutual respect, where faculty and administrators are viewed as equals, and decisions are made via group consensus. The bureaucratic model on the other hand, is hierarchical in nature with boundaries defined by written job descriptions. There are clear lines of authority in the bureaucratic institution, and compliance with rules and regulations is viewed as essential for facilitating efficiency and effectiveness (Birnbaum, 1988).

The third model described by Birnbaum (1988) is the political institution, which is much like Kuh’s political model. According to Birnbaum, the political model facilitates the diverse interests of separate groups, and in this model power is used by individuals to achieve desired outcomes. Power is based on relationships rather than policies in this type of institution, and in addition, one’s power is dependent on one’s contribution to the organization.

The anarchical system is the fourth model in Birnbaum’s typology, and this model has no central authority and very few checks and balances. Individuals have a greater sense of autonomy within this type of structure, and participation in different facets of the organization is fluid at best. The anarchical model can result in overlap and duplication of effort, and inefficient use of resources (Birnbaum, 1988).
Whereas the first four models expounded by Birnbaum (1988) can exist alone or conjointly in the same organization, the cybernetic model, as described by Birnbaum, focuses on an integration of two or more models. The cybernetic organization is likened to a thermostat, and is a self-controlling system that is easily affected by factors in the environment. These institutions respond to inputs rather than outputs to make necessary adjustments to their operations.

Other studies that focus on higher education culture include one conducted by Kezar and Eckel (2002) where they concentrated on six different types of higher education institutions that were involved in a systematic change of teaching and learning strategies. They concluded that in order for change to be successful the change efforts must align with the culture of the organization. Merton et al. (2009) reached a similar conclusion in their single case study of an institution, where they compared curricular changes in a freshman and sophomore engineering education program. They found that the sophomore program was more successful because the change strategies were aligned with the institutional culture. Misalignment between the institutional culture and the change strategies initiated by the program leaders led to the failure of the freshman curricula changes. The authors concluded that change is unlikely to occur if the culture of an organization is misaligned and misunderstood.

Finally, Mateso (2010) conducted a mixed methods study, which disclosed that in order for succession planning to be effective, a culture suitable for its implementation must exist within the institution. Among the factors listed as affecting succession planning and management efforts at the university where the study was conducted, was an unsuitable organizational culture for the program’s implementation. Study
participants indicated that the institution needed a more systematic succession planning management program than what was in place. A recommendation was that the university’s internal constituents cultivate an institutional culture that promotes effective succession planning and management efforts. Mateso cited other prohibiting factors to succession planning including leadership challenges, hiring and promotion practices, and budget and financial limitations.

Leadership Identification

Research indicates that approximately 64% of college and university presidents are recruited from outside the institution (Will, 2010). Even though these individuals had previously served in leadership roles in other higher education institutions, there was still a need to adjust to the norms and culture of the institution in which they assumed the role of president (Will, 2010). Calareso (2013) posits that internal promotions allow for better organizational culture fit and continued leadership by an individual who has experience with, and understanding of, the organization. This view is supported by Collins (2009) who found that there was a negative correlation between building great companies and leadership from outside. The research that Collins conducted indicated that inside leaders were successful in leading companies from good to great.

Finding leaders who want to take on the role of CEO is not without its challenges. The long hours that are required by the position and in many cases, the compromised personal life are barriers that stand in the way of individuals who would otherwise consider the position as a viable option (Shiffman, 2009; Trachtenberg, Kauver & Bogue, 2013). Sometimes qualified internal leaders are also not interested in the CEO position because they are content with their current position that keeps them close to the core
mission of the organization. CEO positions tend to involve a great deal of fundraising and other duties that are more removed from the central tasks of the academy (Shiffman, 2009; Trachtenberg et al., 2013). However, higher education institutions must determine strategies to identify individuals for potential leadership positions. As Charan (2008) points out, potential leaders have to be first identified before they can be developed into great leaders.

According to Charan (2008), two essential characteristics that companies seek to identify in their potential leaders are people and business acumen. Leaders with people acumen are capable of selecting the right people and know how to motivate them to work in teams to get the job done. They are aware of their limits and are not afraid to delegate to others who may have sharper skills than themselves for a particular task (Charan, 2008). Business acumen allows a leader to manage the profit and loss of his/her company through the ability to conceptualize and anticipate multiple contributing factors that influence the same (Charan, 2008).

Potential leaders also exhibit learning agility or “the willingness and ability to learn new competencies in order to perform under first-time tough, or different conditions” (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2000, p. 323). The results of a study conducted by Lombardo & Eichinger (2000) suggested that learning agility is important in determining potential leaders independent of their age and gender. The researchers summarized the characteristics of the learning agile as follows: eager to learn; seeks to learn from experiences and feedback; enjoys complex problems and challenges; improves performance by constantly adding to their repertoire of skills; interested in helping people; is resilient and philosophical.
Additionally, Zenger (2014) outlines ten factors that are important for identifying high potentials in any organization: strategic perspective, direction, and clarity; ability to motivate and inspire high performance in others; ability to focus on, and produce excellent results; knows how to collaborate and work in teams; develops others; has high ethical standards and can act as a role model; champions change; innovative and willing to take risk; has excellent communication skills; and finally, possesses business acumen.

A more futuristic view regarding the requisite competencies for leaders is taken by Meister & Willyerd (2010), who describe five management behaviors that leaders need to model in 2020. According to these authors, the first criterion for leadership selection should be an individual who models a collaborative mind-set, which includes decision-making skills and the ability to work with others in the leadership network. Second, the 2020 leader will need to be a developer of people, that is, mentoring and coaching of subordinates should be a high priority, and career guidance along with varying learning opportunities should be provided as a part of professional growth. Third, in today’s technological environment it is of paramount importance that the 2020 leader exhibits digital confidence by being able to speak the digital language and use technology with confidence to stay connected with customers and employees. The fourth characteristic that a leader in 2020 should model, according to Meister & Willyerd (2010), is global citizenship, meaning that this individual should have a diverse mind-set and can successfully negotiate across cultures. Finally, the 2020 leader anticipates and builds for the future. These leaders will embrace and encourage innovation and accountability at all levels of the organization.
An additional strategy frequently utilized by companies to determine employees with the requisite competencies for leadership, is the nine-box matrix, which measures potential and performance. The grid depicts employees' growth potential on the "Y" axis and employees' current performance on the "X" axis. Employees with high leadership potential are those who meet all performance expectations and are ready and capable to take on leadership roles at any time. Employees who are underperforming should be replaced if they show no signs of improvement over a set period of time (Society for Human Resources Management, 2012).

Internal versus External Candidates

More than a third of Fortune 1000 companies recruit their CEOs from outside (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010b). This is the tendency when it is time to name a CEO successor, although there is strong evidence to support sustained positive company performance when the CEO successor is an internal candidate (Bower, 2007). One reason for recruiting from outside is that external CEOs are seen as having new and diverse perspectives and experiences, and they are not bound by any existing social contracts with other employees within the organization, and are therefore not hesitant to make major changes (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010b); hence the reason why outside successors are usually hired when there is a need for change due to a decline in organizational performance (Collins, 2009; Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010). On the other hand, however, outside CEOs usually lack an in-depth understanding of the organization's core mission (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010b) and as a result can cause disruption in an organization, which can further lead to turnover in top management.
positions thus thwarting the transition and progress of the new CEO (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010b).

Inside succession planning is less costly and ensures a smoother transition for all stakeholders (Shiffman, 2009) and has been likened to a relay race, as the baton of responsibility is passed on from one individual to his/her successor, after which, the process of identifying a new successor begins all over again (Berke, 2005; Rothwell, 2010). Relay, succession, as it is sometimes referred to, begins with the identification of an heir apparent who is acknowledged early in the process and developed over time (Berke, 2005). Research suggests that inside successors tend to produce better results than successors from outside the organization, and can reduce performance risk following succession (Berke, 2005; Collins, 2009; Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2004; Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010b). This is partially due to an internal successor possessing knowledge of the organization, and having familiarity with its mission, goals, and objectives, thus facilitating a seamless transition into leadership (Calareso, 2013). The inside successor would also have had time to learn the job and build important relationships (Berke, 2005; Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2004). This can also be a shortcoming since knowledge and familiarity can cause the inside successor to be resistant to radical change that may be needed (Bower, 2007). In addition, an inside successor would also have had the opportunity to develop and broaden job-specific skills by performing duties specific to the CEO position prior to actually taking on the role (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010b). Altman (2009) adds that inside successors tend to understand the dynamics and culture of the organization, and also possess a great degree of loyalty.
When an organization has identified a need for significant changes in its trajectory, then an outside successor may be a better choice. In such cases, an outsider who is unencumbered with the politics of the organization can bring a new and fresh perspective that may be more in line with current market trends (Berke, 2005). However, choosing an external successor does not necessarily guarantee better results, as in the case of Bank of America when Samuel Armacost was selected as CEO in 1980 (Berke, 2005; Collins, 2009; Zhang & Rajagopal, 2004). Despite the significant changes that were brought about by Armacost, Bank of America still experienced significant decline (Collins, 2009). Furthermore, external searches are costly and studies conducted by the Center for Creative Leadership indicate that 65% of leaders that are hired externally fail within the first two years of their leadership tenure (Berchelman, 2005; Succession Planning Facts and Fantasies, 2005). Whether the new CEO is from within or outside the organization, they tend to make changes during the first three years of their tenure to indicate a changing of the guard at the helm; however, the impact of those changes on the performance of the organization are not immediately observable (Zhang & Rajagopal, 2010b). According to Zhang & Rajagopal (2010b), significant changes made following the three-year tenure tend to have more detrimental effects for the outside CEO as opposed to the inside or relay CEO.

Bower (2007) coined a unique concept of the inside-outside CEO to describe individuals who are selected as inside successors, but are able to transcend the elements that would normally inhibit change, to bring about any needed evolution to advance the progress and the corporate health of their organization. This is basically an individual from the inside who thinks like an outsider. The advantage that this type of successor has
is institutional knowledge as a result of being on the inside of the organization. The CEOs of General Electric (GE) fit this model and have been cited numerous times as successful CEOs from the inside. Going back to 1972 when Reginald Jones took the helm as CEO of GE, he made colossal changes and further developed a strategic planning system that he inherited from his predecessors (Bower, 2007). Under Jones' tenure GE was very successful and often outperformed the U.S. GDP; however, when Jack Welch took over in 1981 he realized that there was a need for change and so he diverted from Jones' model and in approximately three years he dismantled much of Jones' organizational structure, and proceeded to build a major financial organization (Bower, 2007). GE's market shares continued to increase significantly under Welch's headship until he turned the company over into the hands of his successor, whom he selected and groomed six years prior to his departure as CEO, Jeff Immelt (Bower, 2007). Immelt has since made his own distinction at GE and has immersed the company into the global market, yet GE continues to grow its revenue and increase its profit margins (Bower, 2007).

Bower (2007) outlines four skills that a new CEO needs in order to move a company forward and produce positive results. First, the CEO should be able to frame a vision to reposition the company based on the future trajectory of the market. Second, he/she should be able to identify talent that can aid in transforming this vision into reality. Third, the CEO must have a clear understanding of the challenges that the company is faced with. Fourth, the CEO should know how the company works and should be fully aware of who the key players are. Most of the skills outlined above require institutional knowledge, which is acquired over time spent within the organization. What Bower
suggests is that in developing leaders from inside, increasingly complex tasks that would expose them to managing an entire business should be assigned as soon as possible. Ultimately, whether the successor is from the inside or outside, there is a need for a formal succession planning process. Going through a high caliber formal process will aid in maintaining the credibility of the internal successor (Shiffman, 2009).

Leadership Development

It is of paramount importance that leaders in higher education understand the core values of the academic enterprise, and the importance and relevance of ideas and the pursuit of knowledge and truth (Ekman, 2010). Therefore, chief academic officers, department deans and chairs, and faculty members in general, who aspire to the presidency position, need to engage in professional development. However, it appears that professional development is not being given a top priority for leaders in higher education. The American Association of Community Colleges found that, “between May 1, 2012 and April 15, 2013, approximately 146 first-time presidents were hired, with many not having had professional development in the essential areas of budgeting, academic management, and fundraising” (AACC Competencies for Community College Leaders, 2013, p. 3). Ekman recommends that chief academic officers engage in development activities that aid in gaining experience in non-academic areas. It is a lack of these competencies, such as interpersonal skills, that led to the derailment of several presidencies in academia (Trachtenberg et al., 2013). Ekman further suggests that faculty members with potential to fill the roles of department chair or dean view these roles as opportunities for professional growth.
A successful CEO needs to develop skills other than those that are manifested and measured by performance. These include strategic vision, long-term planning, and authenticity, which help the CEO to make effective connections with employees, customers and the broader communities that they serve (Ignatius, 2014; Trachtenberg, et al., 2013). Additionally, according to Bunker et al. (2002), leadership at the CEO level requires emotional maturity, which is critical for success. These authors posit that raw talent and ambition become less important at certain levels such as vice president and president, while emotional competencies become more relevant. Bunker and associates outline five strategies for boosting emotional competencies. First, they recommend the use of 360-Degree feedback as a means of gathering information from various constituents on their views of the leader. This strategy can aid in fostering self-awareness on the part of the leader once he/she takes the time to reflect on how others view him/her. Second, interrupting the ascent of young leaders can play a critical role in their emotional development. Bunker and associates recommend that rather than constantly promoting aspiring leaders, one should engage them in cross-functional assignments that aid in cultivating relationships with individuals outside their department. These cross-functional assignments can be positions of reduced power, which force the aspiring leader to rely more on negotiation and people skills to influence others, rather than the use of positional power. The third strategy outlined by Bunker et al. (2002) is, acting on your commitment, where supervisors of aspiring leaders are encouraged to hold these leaders accountable for the development of their emotional competencies once a deficiency has been pointed out. The fourth strategy is to institutionalize personal development by weaving interpersonal goals into the fabric of the organization and
measuring emotional competency as a part of performance. In addition, there should be a built-in process to teach leadership skills, and to show employees how to advance their careers. The fifth and final strategy discussed by Bunker et al. (2002) is, cultivating informal networks. This strategy focuses on the use of mentoring and peer relationships which can aid in unveiling one’s strengths and weaknesses. These informal networks can also help an aspiring leader to learn different leadership styles and perspectives. In summary, Bunker and associates emphasize the importance of emotional competencies for the success of leaders, and they make it clear that acquiring these competencies takes time and practice.

There are different skill requirements for leadership as described in a study conducted by Mumford, Campion & Morgeson (2007), and these skill requirements are evidenced in diverse proportions at different levels (junior, midlevel, and senior management levels) within an organization. In their quantitative study the authors examined four categories of leadership skill requirements for individuals at three different levels of management within an organization, with a view to develop an understanding of leadership skill requirements across organizational levels. These skill categories were cognitive, interpersonal, business, and strategic skills, and the authors proposed a skills hierarchy that demonstrated how these leadership skills emerge at different levels of management within an organization in relation to the degree of their importance at each level. Cognitive skills they view as being the foundation and are required at all levels of leadership, but particularly relied upon more at the junior level. These include written and verbal communication skills, reading and comprehension skills, and critical thinking skills, which are all essential competencies for leaders.
Interpersonal skills include negotiation and persuasion skills that are critical for successful leadership, and like Bunker et al. (2002), Mumford and associates view interpersonal skills as being very important for leadership. Business skills, which make up the third category of competencies proposed by Mumford et al. (2007), include the management of resources such as material, financial and personnel resources, and these skills are crucial for senior management. Similarly, the strategic skills category, which is more conceptual and visionary, and focuses on the ability to uncover, evaluate, and solve problems is critical for higher levels of management. Strategic skills are a vital part of the repertoire of skills needed by senior managers, although junior and mid-level managers rely less on these skills.

Mumford et al.'s (2007) study included a sample of approximately one thousand junior, mid-level, and senior managers who were employees of an international agency of the United States government. The employees were asked to rate the level of skills needed to perform their jobs on a seven-point Likert scale. Findings confirmed the relationship between leadership skill requirement and organizational level, meaning that there are greater skill requirements at the higher levels of the organization than at lower levels. Additionally, the findings showed that cognitive skills were needed to a greater degree across all levels of the organization followed by interpersonal skills, and business and strategic skills were required more at higher levels of the organization. Findings also suggested that leadership skills are cumulative; therefore, leadership development programs should focus on continuously refining existing skills, while at the same time developing new skills. Also, criteria for promotion to the next level should include
mastery of skills at the current job level plus a demonstration of the skills necessary for the next level.

Kalargyrou, Pescosolido, & Kalargiros. (2012) agree with the view that leaders in today’s higher education institutions face financial and other challenges that were not encountered by their predecessors, and therefore, require formal training in order to be successful in this turbulent environment. They conducted a study with faculty and administrators to investigate the skills required for effective leadership in managerial positions in higher education. To achieve this end, the authors examined the expectations of leadership in the hospitality management education setting using Mumford et al.'s (2007) taxonomy. As described earlier, the taxonomy defines leadership skills using four categories – cognitive, interpersonal, business and strategic skills. Kalargyrou and associates were interested in identifying the required skills for individuals in academic leadership positions. Their findings showed that leadership requires the development of a set of skills in the following ranked order of importance: business skills, cognitive skills, interpersonal skills/personal values, and strategic skills. These findings were different to the study conducted by Mumford et al. (2007), which concluded that cognitive skills were the most important at the leadership level, followed by interpersonal, business, and then strategic skills.

Similar to Mumford et al. (2007), the AACC determined that leadership competencies are cumulative, in that they progress, deepen, and finally evolve from emergent leaders to senior level leadership (AACC Competencies for Community College Leaders, 2nd ed., 2013). The association developed a set of six competencies, which they later reduced to five, and deduced that if institutional transformation is to take
place at community colleges, attention has to be given to the development and continual improvement of the leaders within these colleges, and this has to be a deliberate effort.

The first competency discussed by the AACC is organizational strategy. An emerging leader of an institution will exhibit this competency through a demonstrated understanding of the mission, vision and goals of the institution. He/she cognizes the need to learn the culture of the organization in order to maneuver and perform his/her job duties effectively. The emerging leader also understands the risks involved in making changes, but is willing to make decisions with the support of research and relevant data (AACC Competencies for Community College Leaders, 2nd ed., 2013). On the other hand, a new CEO of an institution, who is still within the first three years in the position, will exhibit a deeper level of the organizational strategy competency by embracing the values of the institution and depicting a heightened awareness of the institutional culture, which will influence the way decisions are made. A leader at this level is also very self-aware, and therefore able to empower faculty and staff to take risks in implementing strategies that enhance student learning. A more senior executive, who is beyond a three-year tenure as CEO of an institution is expected to be authentic and courageous, being willing to make transformational changes to institutional culture in an effort to support the mission and vision of the institution, and ultimately achieve student success. A CEO at this level can explain to internal and external constituents the rationale for calculated risks (AACC Competencies for Community College Leaders, 2nd ed., 2013).

The second competency developed by the AACC for community college leadership addresses resource management and institutional finance, research and fundraising. The emerging leader, in this situation, is expected to understand the unit’s
budget and be able to interpret data that shows how allocated expenditures relate to key performance indicators. In addition, the emergent leader should know the importance of planning and should learn the basic skills for effective fundraising (AACC Competencies for Community College Leaders, 2nd ed., 2013). A more seasoned leader who has been in the position for more than three years is expected to exhibit an in-depth knowledge of organizational finance and how fiscal resources are prioritized and allocated, and projections made to align funding with the mission and vision of the institution. A leader at the senior level also understands the importance of effective fundraising and has the skills necessary to approach and solicit from major donors on behalf of the institution (AACC Competencies for Community College Leaders, 2nd ed., 2013). Table 2 provides a descriptive summary of the AACC competencies for community college leaders.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Strategy</td>
<td>“An effective community college leader promotes the success of all students, strategically improves the quality of the institution, and sustains the community college mission, based on knowledge of the organization, its environment, and future trends” (AACC, 2013, p. 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Finance, Research, Fundraising, and 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” (AACC, 2013, p. 8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Communication | “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
Table 2 – Continued

| Collaboration | “An effective community college leader develops and maintains responsive, cooperative, mutually beneficial, and ethical internal and external relationships that nurture diversity, promotes the success of all students, and sustains the community college mission” (AACC, 2013, p. 10) |
| Community College Advocacy | “An effective community college leader understands, commits to, and advocates for the mission, vision, and goals of the community college” (AACC, 2013, p. 11) |

Source: AACC Competencies for Community College Leaders, 2nd ed., (2013)

In an article written by Brown (2011), the author acknowledges the need for succession planning in government entities due to the vast retirement of the baby boomer age group. He then focuses on six components that are required for effective succession planning and management namely: setting expectations so that managers are talent developers, giving managers the tools and knowledge needed to develop talent, holding managers accountable for developing talent, conducting regular talent reviews, defining success for target positions, and developing a pool of qualified successors by providing the necessary programs and resources. Brown posits further that managers need to have a clear understanding of the 70-20-10 rule, which basically states that 70% of development can be credited to one’s experience, 20% to learning from others such as managers and peers, and 10% of development takes place through formal avenues such as classroom learning. Brown also states that self-awareness is the most important characteristic in learning to be a leader.
A professional development program should be established on the current and future needs of community colleges (McMaster, 2012). It is also fundamental that the development program be linked to the succession plan. However, Larcker & Saslow (2014) found that there was a disconnect between the succession plans and the internal development programs in some organizations, as both were treated as distinct processes as opposed to one continuous process aimed at developing leadership skills for future succession. Metrics for assessing the effectiveness of development and succession planning programs can include determining the number of individuals within the pool who are currently ready to fill positions, and the number of positions that are actually filled from the internal pool of candidates (Brown 2011).

Community College Leadership and Succession Planning

A review of the extant literature shows that priority has not been given to succession planning in most higher education institutions (Bisbee, 2005; Mateso, 2010; Rothwell, 2010). Grossman (2014) found that all four institutions participating in her study on succession planning and knowledge transfer did not have a formal succession plan. Richards (2009) examined strategies for succession planning in higher education, and her findings revealed that out of the six institutions in her grounded theory study only one had a formal succession plan. A second institution noted that there was a formal plan that was not written. It turned out that these institutions for the most part had a development plan and not a succession plan. However, the concept of succession planning is gaining ground in community colleges and with the associations that govern them, as a leadership shortage is anticipated with the aging and retirement of current community college presidents. The American Association of Community Colleges
(AACC) and the Association of Community College Trustee (ACCT) are attentive and concerned about what some are calling an imminent leadership crisis, and are therefore fueling the discussions regarding leadership development in community colleges. These associations, along with the aging presidents themselves, are aware of the need to prepare and develop leaders for the sustainability of one of the fastest growing and historically important institutions in America – the community college.

Community colleges are a 20th century phenomenon in the United States, with the first one established in 1901 in Joliet, Illinois (Arnold, 2010; Jurgens, 2010). Initially, these colleges were a response to the developing societal need for skilled, trained laborers to work in the nation’s expanding industries, and to bridge the gap between the completion of high school and the pursuit of a baccalaureate education (Channell, 2013; Cohen & Brawer, 2008; Jurgens, 2010). Since then, community colleges have morphed and have experienced rapid growth going from 896 institutions in 1974 to 1,045 by 2007 (Arnold, 2010; Crawford & Jervis, 2011). Currently, there are 1,132 community colleges according to the American Association of Community Colleges 2014 fact sheet. Of this number, 986 are public institutions, 115 are independent and 31 are tribal (AACC, 2014).

Community colleges are ubiquitous, reaching deep into the heart of the American society. They are present in almost every state, having branches in the inner cities, prisons, on military bases, and also offering online instruction (Arnold, 2010; Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Their enrollment figures continue to grow at a faster rate than four-year institutions and represent almost 50% of all undergraduates in the United States (Cooper, 2010; Gilroy, 2006; Jurgens, 2010; Mullin & Phillippe, 2013). Community colleges offer over 800,000 associate degrees and certificates and engage in dual enrollment programs.
which allow high school students to take college courses, thus increasing their chances of being accepted into a four-year baccalaureate institution and completing a four-year degree (AACC, 2014; Jurgens, 2010; Mullin & Phillippe, 2013).

Community colleges are accessible, affordable, and flexible, and are an integral part of the socio-economic fiber of their local communities (Crawford & Jervis, 2011; DiMaria, 2012; Friedel, 2010; Gilroy, 2006; Mullin & Phillippe, 2013). Their open access policy and low cost afford individuals, who may not have otherwise furthered their education, an opportunity to enter into the middle and upper classes of society (Channell, 2013; Gilroy, 2006). These colleges serve as the economic machineries of the communities in which they are housed by developing their human capital and consequently, building and stimulating the local economies (Mullin & Phillippe, 2013).

The sustainability of community colleges is imperative as the importance of the role of these institutions continue to be illustrated by the attention they have been receiving both from politicians and the press, with President Obama promising billions of dollars in their support (Crawford & Jervis, 2011; Gilroy, 2006). President Obama has also challenged community colleges to move to the forefront and take a leadership role in keeping America competitive within the global economy by increasing the percentage of individuals who hold degrees and certificates (Coons, 2012; Reille & Kezar, 2010). Consequently, the leadership and future of these institutions cannot be left up to chance, but rather, a deliberate plan must be put in place to ensure proper leadership at the helm as they move forward into the future.

Cameron (2013), former president of a technical community college in North Carolina, highlights the fact that many higher education institutions have eliminated
courses that focus on community college leadership and have moved to a focus on more generic courses in higher education administration. So not only is there an imminent problem with the graying of community college presidents, but there are no leaders being developed in the pipeline via the avenue of higher education. As a result associations that govern community colleges are taking a vested interest in developing and grooming individuals to lead these institutions into the future. Cameron points out further, that succession planning provides a sequential process that allows institutions to assess not only skills that are needed now, but also skills that will be needed in the future for the viability of these institutions. He describes a process for succession planning that begins with a careful analysis of the existing talent within an institution and is followed by a gap analysis to identify additional skills that candidates might need for positions that become open in the future. Once the gap has been clearly identified an individual professional development plan can be put in place to prepare a candidate for future vacancies. This step is then followed by the development of a targeted leadership training program. Other community colleges in North Carolina and Tennessee have embraced succession planning (Cameron, 2013). Presidents of these community colleges view succession planning as essential, and also find the process to be cost effective, saving significant amounts of money that would have been otherwise spent in hiring and consulting fees.

Succession Planning

Calareso (2013) defines succession planning as an ongoing process that is utilized to identify future leaders and develop them such that they are ready to take on leadership roles. The process does not occur serendipitously, but is intentional and systematic (Calareso, 2013). Rothwell (2010) concurs with Calereso that succession planning
should be deliberate and systematic, but gives a more comprehensive definition and contends that succession planning should not only focus on key leadership positions, but should take into consideration the identification and development of critically important talent such as professional, technical, clerical and production positions. His definition focuses on the identification of critical management roles starting with supervisors and extending to the highest position in an organization. He further posits that succession planning should not be considered alone, but should be paired with succession management; hence, he discusses both simultaneously throughout his work. Rothwell states that succession planning is a "deliberate and systematic effort by an organization to ensure leadership in key positions, retain and develop intellectual and knowledge capital for the future, and encourage individual advancement" (Rothwell, 2010, p.6).

Like Rothwell and Calereso, Berke (2005) views succession planning as a deliberate and systematic process; however, Berke differentiates between succession planning and succession management. Succession planning, according to Berke (2005), is the identification and development of successors for the top two or three managerial levels of the organization, whereas, succession management is the identification and development of successors at all managerial levels of the organization, which is similar to Rothwell’s (2010) view of succession planning. As Rothwell posited, the two - succession planning and succession management - should not be considered separately, but are one of the same since managers at levels other than top executive positions should be identified and developed as possible successors for positions appropriate for their level of management.
Galbraith, Smith and Walker (2012) support Rothwell's definition in that they describe the term succession planning as a process for identifying and developing individuals who do not necessarily have direct managerial responsibilities, but are in positions that are highly specialized and require extensive training to acquire the necessary skills. Succession planning, they posit, aids in developing skills, knowledge and experience (Galbraith et al., 2012). Like Rothwell (2010) and Galbraith et al. (2012), Berchelman (2005) views succession planning as not only necessary for the top job of the CEO, but as an essential process for other managerial levels within the organization. Like Rothwell, he uses the terms succession planning and succession management interchangeably, and posits that good succession management creates a talent pool with experiences, skills and competencies to fill specific positions, which are usually of a high level (Berchelman, 2005). Coonan (2005) also defines succession planning as a deliberate, strategic process that should originate at the top of the organization. He perceives the process as important in that it provides a safety net for leaders as they aim at maintaining organizational success.

Importance of Succession Planning

The original focus of succession planning was CEO replacement, but this focus shifted in the 1980s to lower management levels (Berke, 2005). Rothwell (2010) identifies a goal of succession planning as matching the present talent of an organization with its future talent. He noted that a second goal is to aid an organization in meeting operational challenges “by having the right people at the right places at the right times to do the right things to get the right results” (Rothwell, 2010, p. 9).
Succession planning is a valuable process because it does not only identify the next leader of the organization, but it outlines specific strategies and processes for preparing and developing individuals for their future roles as leaders (Atwood, 2007; Calareso, 2013). Lack of a succession plan can lead to faulty hiring which can be both risky and costly (Shiffman, 2009). According to Berchelman (2005), the basic steps in succession planning include identification, assessment, and development. He points out that identifying high potentials is not an easy task, and requires open discussion among senior leaders and boards of directors as they pinpoint future business challenges along with the skills and competencies necessary to meet those challenges. Atwood (2007) supports Berchelman’s first step noting that succession planning allows an organization to create a standard for the qualifications and competencies needed by future leaders and managers to move an organization forward.

The second step in Berchelman’s process requires that those employees who are identified as high potentials go through formal assessments and performance feedback sessions to determine current and needed skills that match those identified as necessary for continued leadership and organizational success. Additionally, succession planning helps to avoid premature promotions since it is a guided developmental process that prepares employees for future leadership roles (Atwood, 2007). The third and final step that Berchelman (2005) mentions is the initiation of a development plan which includes training, coaching, and developmental activities to prepare the potential successor. Succession planning, in essence, allows top management to anticipate workforce needs and gives them the occasion to create specific developmental and training opportunities for leaders (Atwood, 2007). In addition, succession planning aids in fostering a sense of
security for employees, customers, shareholders and other major stakeholders in the event of an unplanned succession. Berchelman uses the example of the sudden and tragic death of former McDonald’s CEO, Jim Cantalupo, to hone in on the importance of succession planning. In the midst of what was considered to be a very difficult situation, company directors were able to immediately name a successor, Charlie Bell, thus providing reassurance and confidence in the minds of employees and investors for the company’s sustained leadership and continuous success. When Charlie Bell resigned a few months later due to health reasons, McDonald’s instantly appointed Jim Skinner as the company’s new CEO (Greer & Virick, 2008). As Rothwell (2010) states, the future success and survival of an organization is dependent on having the right people ready to do the right things to obtain the right results.

Succession planning is essential for communicating career paths to individual employees, for establishing training and development plans as mentioned earlier, and for creating a more comprehensive human resources planning system (Rothwell, 2010). In his phenomenological study that examined the key characteristics of a succession planning program at a government research center, Romejko’s (2008) findings indicated that 92% of participants viewed career planning and effective mentoring as essential to succession planning. Majority of participants (83%) also mentioned that a good training program should be integrated with succession planning. Employee loyalty and commitment are endorsed by succession planning as the process provides a defined path for professional growth and the associated benefits within an organization (Calareso, 2013). Atwood (2007) and Coonan (2005) concur and state that succession planning helps to boost morale and improve retention and commitment by providing clearly
defined career advancement paths within an organization. This is valuable for an employee since it provides attainable goals, and is vital for the employer since a written plan enables an organization to identify and address critical shortages and critical positions that are difficult to fill (Coonan, 2005). As a side benefit, succession planning also serves as a means of assessment, thus weeding out individuals who may have been erroneously identified as high potentials and selected for leadership (Calareso, 2013).

Succession planning and management is necessary to encourage diversity and multiculturalism in organizations (Rothwell, 2010). Rothwell adds further, that if succession planning is left informal and unplanned, leaders will tend to groom individuals who are just like themselves as their successors, thus perpetuating such problems as cloning and the glass ceiling and other employment discrimination issues. A succession plan provides an opportunity to maximize specialized skills and diverse intellectual abilities by focusing on individual knowledge and skills as well as individual interests and abilities (Atwood, 2007).

Succession planning develops bench strength and safeguards an organization against confusion and decline when a leader departs (Galbraith et al., 2012). In a dissertation study by Kim (2006), strengthening internal leadership bench strength was among the five objectives of succession planning that were identified by interviewees. Participants discussed the need to develop and manage the talent of those who are likely to be selected for leadership positions. Kim’s dissertation was a grounded theory study, which was conducted with seven foreign owned companies based in the U.S. The purpose was to offer a framework for placing value on succession planning and
management and to investigate the unique features of succession planning and management in these companies.

Another theme that emerged from Kim’s (2006) dissertation, and that supports an earlier claim, is that an objective of succession planning is to enhance diversity. Participants in this study discussed the need to increase the percentages of women and minority groups in leadership positions within their companies. There was also a focus on diversity in relation to nationality since the focus of Kim’s dissertation was on foreign owned companies.

Elements of a Good Succession Plan

Elements of a comprehensive succession plan include written guidelines for conducting routine searches, and searches that are conducted in emergency situations (Calareso, 2013). Other elements that should be a part of the plan include a list of desired leadership characteristics appropriate for the role being filled, an outline of the interview process, a budget to facilitate the process, and the onboarding process necessary to facilitate the transition (Calareso, 2013). Berchelman (2005) outlines seven elements common to many successful succession plans. First, he states that a successful succession plan has the visible support of the top management. This is crucial since the board of directors actually owns the process and the incumbent CEO plays a prominent role in the identification, selection and transition of the new CEO. Atwood (2007) agrees and points out that even members of the senior management team who are not on the planning team must own the process and must also be willing to continuously promote the succession planning program. He adds further that the plan must have the ongoing support of the top management of the organization.
Second, Berchelman states that the leadership criteria must be clearly identified. Larcker & Saslow (2014) support this view and state that a successful plan should consist of a profile of skills and experiences needed for the CEO and other critical and senior executive positions. This also aligns with one of Atwood’s (2007) basic steps for the succession planning process where he states that the competencies for key positions need to be identified.

The other elements on Berchelman’s list include having a defined plan to find, motivate and retain future leaders; having a plan that is simple and easy to follow, with measurable processes; using the succession planning process to reinforce the culture of the organization; having a process that focuses primarily on leadership development and provides opportunities for the board to mentor senior executives who are potential successors; and making the succession planning process an organizational priority. Zhang & Rajagopalan, (2010) state that the leadership development program for succession should include an in-depth annual assessment that identifies developmental needs of leaders, and assists in determining career paths and opportunities that prepare individuals for higher levels of responsibility. Additionally, the program should include some metrics for tracking and measuring success on assignments. Larcker & Saslow (2014) also outline a list of key elements of a succession plan which includes a shared vision of the future trajectory of the organization, along with a profile of skills and experience for the new CEO, and a profile of skills and experience for the critical senior executive positions.

Succession planning should be linked to an organization’s strategic plan and should align with the strategic goals (Atwood, 2007; Rothwell, 2010). Atwood (2007)
believes that a good succession plan should be developed by representatives from
different management levels and areas of the organization. Like Berchelman (2005), and
Zhang & Rajagopalan (2010) he posits that a good plan is simple and uses systematic
methods to identify and develop future leaders. Atwood adds that a good plan includes
accountability, evaluation and follow-up measures that aid in keeping the process focused
and up-to-date, and incorporates open communication mechanisms which also facilitate
employee input (Atwood, 2007).

Succession Planning in Business Organizations

Succession planning is more prevalent in business and industry than in higher
education, and is inextricably linked to career development and professional training
(Calareso, 2013). However, research indicates that similar to higher education
institutions, many companies still do not have a comprehensive plan for CEO succession
(Bower, 2007; Larcker & Miles, 2010; Larcker & Saslow, 2014; Shiffman, 2009; Zhang
& Rajagopalan, 2010b). A 2008 Price Waterhouse Coopers global survey stated that
60% of companies that were founded in the previous twenty-year period had no
succession plans (Lampton, 2011). Larcker and Miles in their 2010 survey of over a
hundred and forty CEOs and board directors from public and private North American
companies found that more than half the companies could not name an immediate
successor to the CEO position if it became necessary. Unfortunately, this situation
remained unchanged according to a similar study conducted by Larcker and Saslow in
2014, where the findings showed that companies did not know who was next in line to
fill senior executive positions. This lack of succession planning threatens the corporate
health of a company and poses serious risk (Larcker & Miles, 2010; Larcker & Saslow,
2014; Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010b) as was evident in the falling stock prices of Bank of America when former CEO, Ken Lewis resigned (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010b).

Further, although the succession planning process is viewed as essential for leadership stability in large corporations (Calareso, 2013), 39% of the respondents to a 2010 survey conducted by Larcker and Miles indicated that they had no viable candidates in the succession pipeline in the event that the CEO position was suddenly vacated.

Additionally, only 54% of the respondents in that same study stated that they were grooming an executive for the CEO position. These sentiments were again repeated in the 2014 report prepared by Larcker and Saslow.

Companies that manage the succession process well understand that it is a process and not an event; it is not episodic, and it is not an annual exercise, but rather, it is continuous (Bower, 2007; Lampton, 2011; Larcker & Saslow, 2014). As such, succession planning cannot be addressed only when there is a need to select a successor for an executive position, but should begin years prior to the event (Bower, 2007). Two examples of visionary companies that have been noted as mastering the concept of succession planning are Disney Corporation and General Electric. Lampton (2011) states that while Walt Disney may not have used the term succession planning, his practices of recognizing and valuing creative talent modeled the concept, and as a result his company lives on and continues to achieve its goal of creating happiness. The second company that Lampton references is General Electric (GE). Jack Welch, former CEO of GE and one of the most successful business leaders of his time, has been highlighted several times for stating that choosing his successor was one of the most important decisions he had to make, and that it occupied his thought on a daily basis (Greer & Virick, 2008;
Lampton, 2011; Rothwell, 2010). This was so important to Welch that he started the 
process of identifying his successor nine years prior to his retirement (Lampton, 2011).

The Role of the Board of Directors in Succession Planning

One of the principal responsibilities of the board of directors is succession 
planning for the CEO position (Shiffman, 2009; Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010b); however, 
Larcker & Miles (2010) found that boards did not spend enough time discussing the 
subject, with respondents to their survey indicating that board members spent 
approximately two hours out of an entire year on the subject of succession planning. Not 
having well defined roles for those involved in the process may account for this dilemma, 
and as Larcker & Saslow (2014) indicate, succession planning is a combined effort of the 
members of the board of directors, senior management and human resources staff. Boards 
should ensure that there is a succession plan in place several years prior to the retirement 
of the current CEO (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010b), and the incumbent CEO also has the 
responsibility to ensure that there is a plan in place that can be implemented in the event 
of his/her unplanned departure (Shiffman, 2009). Boards should also ensure that there is 
a developmental program in place for leaders that focuses not only on top management, 
but spans other levels of management within the organization (Zhang & Rajagopalan, 
2010b). The board of directors also approves and follows the policy; creates a search 
committee if necessary; recognizes internal candidates; and supports the new CEO 
(Shiffman, 2009). The incumbent CEO creates the transition policy and provides a 
detailed job description, and mentors internal candidates (Shiffman, 2009).

In order for succession planning to be successful it must be a priority for the top-
level management of the organization (Berchelman, 2005; Lampton, 2011; Romejko,
2008). Altman (2009), states that a savvy board plans ahead five to ten years out into the future. They take into consideration the skills and qualifications that will be needed, and also when grooming for succession should actually begin.

Challenge or Opportunity

Shults (2001) sees the current and pending retirements of community college leaders as both a challenge and an opportunity. On the one hand he sees the challenge with filling the leadership gap as those in positions on the traditional trajectory to feed into the position of president are also reaching retirement age. On the other hand, he sees it as an opportunity for new leadership with a new vision and ideas to propel community colleges forward into the future.

The leadership gap also provides an opportunity for females and other minorities to move into the presidency and be at the helm to lead higher education institutions into the future. June (2015) posits that the impending retirements of college presidents paves the way for women and minorities who are interested in the position. Also, Greer and Virick (2008) state that women and minorities constitute a critical part of the labor force and will be crucial in the future demand for talent. In addition, Keim & Murray (2008) found an increase in the percentage of females who serve as chief academic officers (CAO). With the CAO position being the traditional stepping stone to the presidency this presents an opportunity for women to fill the positions vacated by the retiring presidents.

Summary

The theoretical foundation for this study is rooted in Schein’s model of organizational culture, which describes three interrelated levels that form the framework. In addition, several authors have written about organizational culture including the
culture of higher education institutions (Bergquist & Pawlak, 2008; Birnbaum, 1988; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Tierney, 1988, 2008). Among the factors influencing culture as examined and discussed by these authors, are external factors such as economics, politics, and demographics, and factors internal to the institution. One important point highlighted is that change efforts must align with culture in order for change to be effective (Kezar & Eckel, 2002). Additionally, the culture of the organization must be suitable for the implementation and promotion of succession planning if the process is to be effective (Mateso, 2010).

An important part of the succession planning process is leadership identification, but this is not without its challenges. However, leaders must be identified before they can be developed (Charan, 2008). Essential characteristics for CEO positions include people and business acumen (Charan, 2008) and learning agility. A more futuristic view of leadership competencies includes digital confidence and global citizenry (Meister & Willyerd, 2010). The nine-box matrix is one of the tools used in many businesses to measure current performance and potential for future leadership (Society for Human Resources Management, 2012).

When recruiting leaders for top positions consideration is given to whether the selection should be internal or external. There are pros and cons for each method with internal being less costly, and producing better results due to organizational familiarity and an understanding of the culture and dynamics, but is not the best method if major change is required, because of the internal social contracts that may exist. External hires tend to be better when major changes are required; however, external hiring is costly, and does not guarantee future success for the organization. Whether the CEO is from the
outside or inside of the organization, formal succession planning is needed (Shiffman, 2009).

Professional development is important for new leaders, but it appears that it is not being given priority in higher education (AACC, 2013). At the same time, lack of essential competencies, especially skills outside of academic areas leads to the derailment of many presidents (Trachtenberg et al., 2013). Various skill requirements have been identified as fundamental to leadership development including cognitive, interpersonal, business and strategic skills (Mumford et al., 2007). Development programs should also focus on the current and future needs, and should be linked to the succession plan (McMaster, 2012).

Although succession planning is not commonly practiced in higher education, community colleges are beginning to pay attention to the concept since they are gravely affected by the retirements of aging presidents. Additionally, community colleges have been challenged to be at the forefront, and to take on a leadership role in keeping America competitive in the global economy by increasing the percentage of the citizenry who hold degrees and certificates. Therefore, the leadership of these institutions cannot be ignored or left up to chance.

Succession planning is described by various authors as a deliberate, intentional, systematic process that has been used by many in business organizations to develop individuals for future leadership positions. The process is important for ensuring the most effective alignment of people with positions for the future effectiveness and welfare of organizations (Rothwell, 2010). Succession planning is also important for communicating career paths to employees and is critical for the bench strength of an
organization. Elements of a good succession plan include guidelines for routine and emergency searches and a list of desired leadership characteristics. The process should also be a top priority for top management, and should include steps for leadership development. Additionally, a succession plan should reinforce the culture of the organization and should be linked to the strategic plan. Although more prevalent in business than in higher education, succession planning is still not being practiced by many companies. The leadership crisis in community colleges can be perceived as a challenge and as an opportunity. The crisis presents a challenge to fill the current leadership gap, but at the same time an opportunity exists to hire new leaders with futuristic visions, and also to increase the number of females and other minorities who aspire to the presidency position.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The literature is rife with articles predicting a pending leadership crisis in community colleges as a result of the aging baby boomers' retirement, which includes presidents and other top administrators at community colleges. Several authors have posited that 84% of community college presidents will retire by the year 2016, thus causing a shift in demographics within the workplace (Bornstein, 2010; Ebbers et al., 2010; Eddy, 2013; Shiffman, 2009; Weisman & Vaughn, 2006). The problem with this mass exodus of top leadership is that there are not enough adequately prepared leaders to fill the positions that are being vacated, which is why many have dubbed the situation as a pending crisis. With community colleges playing a significant role in the US economy and at the forefront of the US education system, this problem cannot be discounted. To minimize the effect of the problem it is essential that a process be implemented within community colleges to develop a leadership pipeline of qualified individuals who can potentially fill these vacated leadership positions. Effective succession planning is one of the processes that can be implemented to address the problem by identifying and preparing future leaders for colleges and universities (Fulton-Calkins & Milling, 2005).

The purpose of this single site case study was to understand how the culture and traditions at a community college influenced the succession planning process, and to explore the perceptions of top administrators, faculty and human resources personnel regarding succession planning at the selected institution. The researcher reviewed and
described the succession plan that was implemented with a view to understand the criteria used for identifying leadership potential and the strategies used to develop leadership skills. Additionally, the researcher wanted to understand how succession planning was integrated with the strategic planning process at the selected institution.

Rationale for Research Study

Qualitative research facilitates the detailed and in-depth study of issues (Patton, 2002) and is open and iterative (Corbetta, 2003). Qualitative research also aids with understanding and explaining phenomena as they appear in their natural environment (Merriam, 2001). In this research study a qualitative research approach was applied in an effort to gain an in-depth understanding of the succession-planning model that was implemented at a community college and how the succession process was influenced by the culture and traditions at the institution. According to Creswell (2013, 2014), qualitative research is appropriate for conducting studies where a problem or issue needs to be explored and understood. Additionally, the qualitative approach provided a more detailed, complex understanding of the problem that was addressed (Creswell, 2013). Corbetta (2003) adds that the data in qualitative research are soft, rich and deep, and it was this rich information that was necessary to describe the essence of the succession plan that was being utilized, along with the culture that exists at the selected community college for this study.

More specifically, this study employed a single case study to examine the succession planning process at a community college. The researcher developed a clear understanding of the culture and traditions at this institution and how they influence the succession planning process, and advanced a detailed and in-depth explanation of the
criteria used for identifying leadership potential and the strategies used to develop leadership skills. The use of a case study was appropriate for this particular research because it allowed for the examination of a contemporary phenomenon—succession planning—and permitted the researcher to “retain a holistic and real-world perspective” (Yin 2014, p. 4) of the phenomenon within a bounded system.

**Research Questions**

The focus of this study was to develop an understanding of how the culture and traditions at a community college influenced the succession planning process. The study also explored the perceptions of top administrators, faculty, and human resources personnel as they relate to succession planning at the institution, and examined the criteria used for identification of leadership potential and the strategies used to develop leadership skills. Additionally, the study examined how succession planning was integrated with strategic planning at the selected site. The study answered the following research questions:

**RQ 1.** What evidences do the institutional artifacts provide to demonstrate succession planning?

**RQ 2.** How do faculty, administrators, and human resources personnel describe their espoused beliefs and values as they relate to the institution and succession planning?

**RQ 3.** How do the basic underlying assumptions of the institution influence succession planning?

**RQ 4.** What is the culture of a community college with a succession plan, as it pertains to leadership perceptions, criteria for potential leadership
identification, strategies for leadership development, and integration with strategic planning?

Research Design

The research design for this study was a qualitative case study of succession planning in a community college, and the influence that the culture of the institution has on the succession process. Crotty (1998) posits that there are four elements that are important when developing a qualitative research proposal, namely epistemology, theoretical/philosophical perspective, methodology and method. These elements are the composite factors in the design of this study.

This study adopts constructionism as its epistemological perspective. Constructionism is a paradigm that posits that learning is an active, constructive process in which individuals actively construct or create their own subjective representations of objective reality (Crotty, 1998). The goal of the constructionist is to seek to explain how human beings interpret or construct a phenomenon in social and historical contexts (Schwandt, 2001). This perspective argues that humans generate or construct knowledge and meaning from an interaction between their ideas and their experiences (Crotty, 1998), which is consistent with the purpose of this study: to understand how the culture and traditions at a community college impact succession planning, and to explore and describe the succession planning process that was implemented at the same institution with a view to understand the criteria used for identifying leadership potential and the strategies used to develop leadership skills.

From a phenomenological theoretical perspective, this study sought to understand the experiences of top administrators, faculty, and human resources personnel with
succession planning by eliciting rich, thick descriptions of their experiences with the process (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). Phenomenology holds that attempts to understand an issue or phenomenon has to be grounded in the essence of people's experience of that particular issue or phenomenon (Gray, 2014; Grbich, 2013; Kafle, 2011). The researcher allowed meanings to emerge as a result of exploring the experiences of these individuals who impact succession planning at the selected site. More specifically, the study utilized the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) technique (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009) to analyze the data, where the focus was on making meaning through the interpretation of the interview transcripts. Six individual interviews and one focus group were conducted with top administrators, division chairs and department chairs, some of whom were engaged with succession planning. Additionally, a document review of the succession plan and the strategic plan for the institution was conducted.

Sample

This study utilized nonprobability purposeful sampling, an iterative process that seeks to maximize the depth and richness of the data, to address the research questions by selecting a homogenous group of individuals who have experienced the phenomenon being studied (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006). Patton (2002) states, that cases that are rich in information are great for purposeful sampling. Additionally, Yin (2014) suggests selecting a case that will illuminate the research questions and provide the necessary access to the data that are needed. For the purpose of this study the sample or case was a large community college located within a southeastern state, with approximately thirty thousand students and over a hundred technical diplomas and industry certificates. To
ensure anonymity and confidentiality, the researcher assigned a pseudonym to the institution and to each participant involved in the study.

Participants

A purposeful selection method was used as is often used in qualitative research, to select information rich cases for detailed study (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007; Hunt, 2011). Participants included two members of the President’s Council, four division chairs and three department chairs. There were five females and four male participants. The age, race, and ethnicity of the participants were not the focus of this study, since the emphasis was on the positions of power that make decisions regarding succession planning. Data were collected through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews and a focus group that encouraged participants to provide narratives of their experiences with succession planning, as well as through document review of the strategic and succession plans.

Subjectivity Statement

All research is influenced in some way by the researcher, but this is particularly true in qualitative research because the researcher is an integral part of the research process (Hunt, 2011; Merriam, 2001; Yin, 2014). As Creswell (2013) states, the researcher is the key instrument in qualitative research. As such, I am aware that as a human resources professional I have carved out a definition of succession planning, and I also have personal opinions about how the process of filling leadership positions should be navigated. Additionally, having served on a search committee to fill a leadership position in a higher education institution, I am privy to what faculty and top-level administrators tend to think are the essential characteristics for successful leadership in the academy. My opinion of what is required for successful leadership may be quite
different to those of faculty and other top-administrators in higher education, and therefore it was important for me, as the researcher, to bracket by personal biases. That is, I needed to make a conscientious attempt to systematically separate and suspend any past knowledge or experiences and presuppositions that were associated with succession planning (Lee, McNeil, Douglas, Koro-Ljungberg & Therriault, 2013). This was accomplished by creating a list of personal knowledge, experiences and values associated with succession planning, and returning to this list during the data analysis process in order to maintain a distinction between my preconceptions of succession planning and the data generated by the participants. I also maintained an ongoing record of ideas and impressions related to succession planning that emerged throughout the data analysis process (Lee et al., 2013).

Validation

Validity or trustworthiness allows the reader to assess the rigor and quality of the research study (Hunt, 2011; Morrow, 2005). Grbich (2013) defines validity as “getting to the truth of the matter” (p. 5). In addressing how to get to the truth of the matter in qualitative research, Creswell (2013) outlines eight steps or procedures used for verification. Additionally, Morrow (2005) highlights more specifically, some criteria for trustworthiness in constructionist research. For the purposes of this study the researcher focused on four verification procedures as outlined below.

First, the researcher clarified any personal biases on the subject matter of succession planning through the process of reflexivity or self-reflection on the researcher's own subjectivity and how this subjectivity was to be monitored during the research process. The researcher utilized a reflexive journal to write about experiences,
reactions, and emerging awareness of assumptions or biases that arose throughout the research process (Hunt, 2011; Morrow, 2005). Second, the researcher used member checking as another data trustworthiness technique, where participants were given an opportunity to review interview transcripts and analysis of summaries for accuracy. Participants were actively engaged in the review process by being given the opportunity to add any new thoughts and experiences that emerged after a careful review of the transcripts (Hunt, 2011). Third, *rich, thick descriptions* were used to allow the reader to enter the context of the research, and to also allow for decisions to be made regarding transferability (Glesne, 1999). Fourth, a systematic process for collecting and analyzing the data was outlined and followed, thus permitting the research to be repeated. This procedure Patton (2002) refers to as dependability. These verification steps parallel Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) four criteria as applied for data trustworthiness, which include: credibility (peer review, member checking), transferability (the extent to which data can be transferred to another setting/situation), dependability (methodological details that allow the research to be repeated), and confirmability (audit trail).

Data Collection

The data in qualitative research consist of words written in narrative form and direct quotes that describe people’s feelings, thoughts and experiences, and excerpts that have been extracted from documents that are reviewed (Merriam, 2001; Patton, 2002). Interviews serve as one of the main means through which qualitative data are collected (Merriam, 2001; Patton, 2002). They are also a vehicle, which facilitates the development of conversational relationships with participants about the meanings of specific experiences (Ajjawi & Higgs, 2007). This study utilized face-to-face, semi-
structured interviews as one of the methods of data collection, following the approach outlined by Creswell (2014). The interviews ranged from forty-five minutes to an hour and consisted of a series of questions constructed to better understand how succession planning was viewed and practiced at the selected site, and how the succession planning process was advanced or impeded by the culture and traditions at the institution. According to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) semi-structured in-depth interviews are the most widely used interviewing technique used for qualitative research, and they usually last thirty minutes to several hours. These authors also point out the usefulness of individual in-depth interviews in co-creating meaning of issues and events between the researcher and the interviewee. There were approximately ten questions that were asked, and each participant was asked the same questions in the same order. Members of the designated sample were selected from the directory on the institution’s website and were sent an initial invitation email contact describing the research study and inviting them to participate. A follow-up email was sent to those who did not respond to the initial email solicitation. Those who consented to participate were emailed the consent form and the confirmation of date, time and place for the interview. A follow-up reminder email was sent two days prior to the actual interview along with the attached interview questions. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher. In addition, a document review of the succession and strategic plans for the institution was conducted, and excerpts relevant to the study were extracted. As Bowen (2009) and Patton (2002) point out, document analysis is a systematic, evaluation process that is usually combined with other research methods for triangulation purposes, with a goal of mitigating researcher bias.
Institutional Review Board Approval

Approval to conduct the research was sought from the Institutional Review Boards at Mercer University and the site where the research was conducted, prior to recruiting participants and collecting data. In addition, participants were informed about the broad intentions of the research, and were told who will have access to the data. Informed consent forms were generated and sent to participants for them to review, sign and return, prior to the interview sessions. Pseudonyms were used to maintain anonymity of the institution and each participant.

Data Analysis

The main aim of data analysis in case studies is to demonstrate a thorough and in-depth understanding of the case (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2001; Yin, 2014) which can be garnered from the interviews conducted with participants, and the documents that are reviewed and analyzed. The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) technique was used to analyze the data collected from the interviews. This technique is often used with case studies in the field of psychology and is applicable to this study since its main goal of exploring how participants make sense and meaning of their experiences with a phenomenon aligns with the study’s purpose to explore the perceptions of top administrators, faculty and human resources personnel in regards to succession planning, and how such a process is impacted by an institution’s culture and traditions.

Meaning is the central theme in the IPA process, and is obtained through constant interaction with the transcribed interview data (Smith et al., 2009). The digitally recorded interviews were first transcribed verbatim, and then read multiple times for comprehension and familiarity. Following the IPA process as outlined by Smith et al.
(2009), annotations were made in the left margin of the transcript while emerging themes were notated and illustrated in the right margin. This is very similar to the process recommended by Merriam (2001) who suggests that each interview transcript be read more than once, and that the researcher writes comments in the margins of the transcripts, along with reflective memos to capture thoughts while reviewing the transcripts.

The next step in the IPA process is to connect the themes by clustering them. At this point the researcher returned to the primary source to ensure that the original meaning and intent were maintained. Once themes were clustered a table was created to delineate the themes and identifiers were used to link each theme back to its original source. It is at this step in the process that themes that no longer fit were eliminated.

Using the table of themes from each transcript the researcher examined the data for repeating patterns, and also identified any new themes that had emerged. A construction of a final table of superordinate themes from the combined transcripts was next, and this included themes that illuminated the phenomenon. The final step was the translation of the themes into a narrative account with use of verbatim extracts from the transcripts to illustrate and support each theme. Yin (2014), advocates that the researcher play with the data in a quest to find patterns and concepts that are repeated. According to Yin, analyzing the data for case studies involves "examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing, or otherwise recombining evidence to produce empirically based findings" (p. 132).

Reporting Results

In an effort to ensure trustworthiness and provide rich, thick descriptions, direct quotes were included in the findings to give the participants a 'voice' in the research
The data were summarized in tabular form with superordinate themes along with supporting quotations from participants. A descriptive case study report was also prepared with explanations of the succession plan for the selected institution. Pseudonyms were utilized to reference all participants in the results section.

Summary

This chapter provides a clear and comprehensive overview of how the study was developed and conducted, and outlines steps in the research process that allow for the study to be replicated. The qualitative approach was appropriate, since it aids in understanding and explaining a phenomenon in its natural environment. In addition, the case study approach allows for the examination of a phenomenon within a bounded system, while permitting the researcher to maintain a real-world perspective (Yin, 2014).

The chapter discusses a four-pronged design which consists of the researcher's epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods used for data collection. The epistemology is constructionism whereby meaning was constructed from the interaction between ideas and experiences. The theoretical perspective is phenomenology, therefore, the study sought to understand the experiences of the participants as they pertain to succession planning strategies. The interpretative phenomenological analysis was the methodology utilized for data analysis, and the methods employed for data collection included individual interviews, a focus group, and document analysis.

The research site and a homogenous group of participants were selected via non-probability purposeful sampling, and the site was a large community college with a succession plan. There were nine participants who were interviewed. Other content in
this chapter include information regarding the role and potential influence of the researcher in the study design and data analysis, that is, the researcher as instrument; steps to ensure data trustworthiness; and a broad description of the participants and what they were asked to do. The chapter concludes with an in-depth description of the IPA data analysis procedures and an explanation of how the results were reported using tables to highlight the themes.
CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The problem addressed centers around an imminent crisis in higher education leadership due to the anticipated retirements of presidents and other top administrators (Betts et al., 2009; Klein & Salk, 2013; McNair et al., 2011; Shults, 2001; Spendlove, 2007), which is a major concern because most colleges and universities have no systematic approach for identifying leadership potential and developing leadership skills for their top administrative positions (Calareso, 2013; Grossman, 2014; Hanover Research Council, 2010; Klein & Salk, 2013; Richards, 2009; Spendlove, 2007). The problem appears to be more critical in community colleges where the percentage of anticipated presidential retirements is expected to reach 84% by 2016 (Bornstein, 2010).

The purpose of the study was to develop an understanding of how the culture and traditions at a community college influence succession planning. Through the use of individual interviews and a focus group, the study explored the perceptions of top administrators and faculty who were division chairs and department chairs, as they relate to succession planning. The researcher also examined the criteria used for identifying leadership potential and the strategies used to develop leadership skills. Additionally, document reviews were conducted to examine how succession planning was integrated with strategic planning at the selected site. The study was guided by the following research questions:
RQ 1. What evidences do the institutional artifacts provide to demonstrate succession planning?

RQ 2. How do faculty, administrators, and human resources personnel describe their espoused beliefs and values as they relate to the institution and succession planning?

RQ 3. How do the basic underlying assumptions of the institution influence succession planning?

RQ 4. What is the culture of a community college with a succession plan, as it pertains to leadership perceptions, criteria for potential leadership identification, strategies for leadership development, and integration with strategic planning?

The design of the study utilized a four-pronged approach which included epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and method. The epistemological orientation was constructionism whereby meaning was constructed via constant interaction with the collected data. The theoretical perspective was phenomenology where an understanding of the participants’ views of succession planning and the culture of their institution were derived from expressions of their personal experiences and knowledge of the process and of their institution. Individual interviews and a focus group were used as data collection methods, along with document analysis of the succession plan and the strategic plan. The data were then analyzed utilizing the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) technique by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). This method of analysis emphasizes an iterative approach; therefore the transcribed data were read several times then coded and recoded using open coding.
Emerging themes were identified and then tabulated into major categories. A word or an idea was considered to be a theme if it was mentioned by at least fifty percent of the participants.

Invitations to participate in the study were sent via email to thirty-three individuals who were identified as members of the president's council, division chairs, department chairs, and human resources personnel. The email solicitation included chapter one of the research study to provide insight into the background of the research problem and an outline of the research questions. There were nineteen responses and of those, nine individuals agreed to participate in the study. Two of the participants were members of the president's council, four were division chairs and three were department chairs. An informed consent form and the interview protocol, which consisted of ten questions, were sent to each participant prior to the interview. The interviews were scheduled for a time and place convenient to the participants, and the signed consent forms were returned to the researcher prior to the interviews. Table 3 displays the demographics of the study participants with pseudonyms used to protect their identity.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (Pseudonym)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Highest Degree Earned</th>
<th>Years at Institution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rick Onan</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Dept. Chair</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>17 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harry Peters</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Dept. Chair</td>
<td>Master's</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eva Morris</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Dept. Chair</td>
<td>Master's</td>
<td>17 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regina Harris</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>10 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 – Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary Hoskins</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Division Chair</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony Isaac</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Scheller*</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Division Chair</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamika Scott*</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Division Chair</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Thomas*</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Division Chair</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>3 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Focus group participants

Six individual interviews were conducted along with a focus group session with three division chairs. Identical questions were asked of each participant in the same sequence, and subsequent questions were asked if a response did not adequately address the original question, and also in those instances where clarification was needed. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher, and each transcript was sent via email to the respective participant to be reviewed for accuracy. The transcripts were then analyzed using open-coding to identify themes which were then organized into broader categories by combining themes that were similar into superordinate themes. The researcher kept track of thoughts and ideas through the use of reflective and coding memos as the data were being analyzed.

This chapter will present the findings by first outlining participant’s responses when asked to tell about their institution. Next, the superordinate themes that emerged from the data are presented in the form of tables along with direct quotes from the participants. Finally, the findings are presented based on each research question. The chapter concludes with a summary of the findings.
The Institution

Creswell (2013) states that interview protocols should have questions at the beginning that encourage the interviewee to open up and share freely. Consequently, the protocol for this study consisted of two opening questions to accomplish this goal. The first question asked participants to tell about their background, which divulged demographic information that were not readily apparent, and the second question asked participants to tell about their institution, which enabled them to share their personal viewpoints of the institution in a general way.

Some participants described the institution in terms of its size. Rick Onan, a department chair, described the institution as "a large community college." Harry Peters, another department chair, explained that the college "had a lot of growth in the number of faculty, staff and also students." Regina Harris stated that the institution had "grown enormously" over the years. She added, "I was extremely impressed with how large the institution had grown" over time.

Other participants described the institution as innovative and supportive of autonomy. Tamika Scott, one of the division chairs who participated in the focus group, stated, "We are very innovative as a school. We are often involved in statewide and national grant opportunities that allow us to be innovative both in the classroom and with student services ...." She added further, "... we try new things; we try new things sooner than other folks. We are open to new adventures." Kim Scheller, another participant in the focus group agreed with Tamika and added, "... very innovative! There are opportunities and that was one of the things that drew me here." Additionally, in terms of autonomy Rick Onan stated:
We are really not micromanaged. We are allowed to, within boundaries and within the policies of the college, we are allowed to kind of develop our program the way we think it needs to be as long as we are having good results.

In a similar refrain Eva Morris pointed out, “I have had lots of opportunities to kind of spread my wings and expand my wings.” She later added, “I’ve always felt like if you had a desire to want to spread your wings … that was welcomed and encouraged.”

Another focus group participant, Joe Thomas, added that a part of the reason for him joining the institution was the “freedom of going and trying something new, something potentially challenging that may or may not work, but you are allowed to fail.” Joe continued, “I still see that freedom. I am pretty much given the rein to say… where we need to go and nobody is saying you can’t.”

Other participants described the institution in terms of its mission. Mary Hoskins noted, “The institution is here to serve the community. We work with businesses in the community to try to meet their workforce needs.” A supporting viewpoint was shared by Joe, who stated that the institution “integrates with industry to find out what they need and develops programs … to basically match what industry requires.”

The remaining interview questions focused on aspects of succession planning such as career development, hiring and promotion practices, and leadership preparation. The responses from participants were coded to identify themes which were then recoded and organized into categories. These categories or superordinate themes are discussed in the following section.
Superordinate Themes

There are four overarching themes that resulted from the data analysis of the interview transcripts: change is constant; diversity is valued; top leaders are recruited from outside; succession planning is important.

Change is Constant

The concept of change was echoed by participants throughout the interviews as illustrated in Table 4. Eighty-nine percent of participants commented on changes that occurred at the institution. Participants also commented on the institution’s reaction to change.

Table 4

Superordinate Theme: Change is Constant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Direct Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change is constant</td>
<td>Harry Peters: “I think we seem to be at a constant changing …” “So change seems to be a constant here. Actually it’s not all bad it’s just that you have to be up to change and adapt to things.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rick Onan: “I think this is another thing that the institution values – is changing and being willing to change. I think it’s good to adapt as we need to but I think sometimes there’s a willingness to change maybe a little bit too quickly …”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eva Morris: “We are very willing to take risks as far as change goes. We are early adopters of things if we feel it makes sense for us to go in that direction...we are very, very adaptable to change and willing to change.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regina Harris: “A lot of persons who work here have been long-term employees so it has been a pretty stable environment for a number of years. When our long-term president retired, along with a number of faculty and staff who had been here for...”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Change is constant

Tony Isaac: “Trends like the change in diversity of the campus and changing from being a predominantly white campus to a minority serving institution is a huge shift in terms of the student population and the campus culture.”

Joe Thomas: “There is a lot of change that this college has had in the last three or four years. I mean, consider a new president, three new vice presidents... there has been a drastic amount of change, and I think a lot of the things we are talking about now came with the change in our president about three or four years ago.”

Kim Scheller: “There has been a rapid rate of change over the last few years.”

Tamika Scott: “I think our school has experienced some of the ultimate changes where many of the veterans have felt that will never happen – you’ve mentioned that before but it never happened and this past year it did happen. And so I am excited to see the changes – so I am really excited to see how we move forward.”

Vice President, Tony Isaac, explained the need for community colleges to be flexible as they adapt to changes that are happening in the broader community. He stated: “Community colleges grow when the economy is bad and they drop in enrollment when the economy is good and unemployment is down. And so the flexibility is constant.” The change in the diversity of the student population is also another major shift in the campus culture as Tony explained:

It [the institution] became a minority serving institution in 2012. And at that time I think 54% of students were African-American and then you have Latinos and other populations. And so because of the demographic shift in race across the country is changing – racial demographics are changing and community colleges are grappling with how to serve those populations of students and are welcoming minority students.
Kim Scheller and Mary Hoskins both describe the institution’s response to change as more reactive rather than proactive. Kim stated:

I think like any institution there’s work to be done on how to be more proactive not reactive. Like, oh, look we’re changing tomorrow and how do we build things so that people can feel more prepared when change occurs, but I think we are getting there.

Mary echoed a similar thought when asked to describe how the institution adapts to change. She said:

I would say in some ways it’s reactive. Something comes along and now we have to deal with it so everybody scramble and make this happen. There are other times though when it is a lot more intentional and thoughtful and purposeful.

Kim expressed concern that the change is not about to slow down. She stated:

And there is also this sense that the change isn’t going to slow down anytime soon. Because we talked about that impending leadership crisis and then it didn’t happen and I think it is because the economy changed, and then all those people who were ready to retire held off and now we are starting to see it, and we are starting to hear, and this is speaking to my little piece of the world. I am starting to hear people who are leaders here, who have a great deal of influence here now they are ready to talk about retirement.

Finally, from Regina Harris’ perspective change is the new normal for the institution. Regina stated:

As I mentioned we’ve had declining enrollment for the past few years along with a number of organizational changes across the college and so we’re still evolving. Folks ask, ‘when are we going to return to normal’ but I think this is the new normal, and so we’ll just have to adapt to new leadership and new changes as we continue our quest of student success.

Diversity is Valued

In his description of the institution Tony explained that the college became a minority serving institution in 2012. He expounded further that the demographic shift in race across the country has caused community colleges to consider how they will serve
the different populations represented in their student body. He said, “that’s a change in the focus of the institution. So this institution is committed to diversity in a very real way and that is what makes it special.”

The importance of diversity is clearly conveyed in the way the institution constructs internal hiring committees. When there is a position to be filled at any level a hiring committee is formed to review the resumes and interview the candidates. This committee has to be diverse and has to be approved by the office of human resources. Table 5 contains excerpts from the interview transcripts that describe how diversity is valued and how the hiring committees are constructed. The terms hiring committee and search committee are used interchangeably but refer to the internal hiring committees that are organized within the college.

Table 5

*Superordinate Theme: Diversity is Valued*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Direct Quotes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity is valued</td>
<td>Eva Morris: “I think diversity is valued here and that includes all kinds of diversity… not just cultural, or not just ethnicity... all sorts of diversity - thoughts, ideas are welcomed here.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regina Harris: “There are guidelines and there are suggestions made when you are talking about forming a hiring committee. One would be to form a diverse group of members for this committee in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, position, department, etc. This is strongly encouraged so our committee members are composed of individuals from different departments, different levels, etc. It’s important to have different perspectives when engaging in the hiring process.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mary Hoskins: “I have seen some deliberate attempts to get more diversity into the pool and also the process has some checks and balances in it. Your interview panel has to have...”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Diversity is valued

Diversity of gender and race so you can’t just pick the three people in your department and say we are going to interview. You have to get somebody from outside and all that so that has been helpful to add other perspectives.”

Tamika Scott: “You know we need to have diversity of not only gender, ethnicity, departments across campus. So a diverse committee is formed and that committee has to be approved by HR …”

Tony Isaac: “They [hiring committees] are made up of support staff, administrators, faculty, women, diverse group, and have people of color, gender diversity, ethnic diversity, racial and ethnic diversity, someone who understands the role in terms of support staff.

The Human Resources department has to approve the hiring committees and in the process they ensure that the committees are indeed diverse. Regina Harris explains:

And so once you have your committee members selected you are to send that list to HR. HR examines that committee list and will offer suggestions if they think that the committee is not diverse enough; they will certainly offer some suggestions to be more inclusive in this process and offer input on interview questions that may elicit the best responses from your pool of candidates.

Top Leaders are Recruited from Outside the Institution

There were three interview questions that fed into this emerging theme. Participants were asked to describe the hiring practices at the institution and also to describe the process for filling vacancies for top administrative positions. In addition, they were asked to explain the collective mindset about leadership and preparation for leadership positions at the institution. Participants’ responses are illustrated in Table 6. In addition, when asked about the process for filling top administrative positions, Rick Onan responded, “as far as I know those are all from the outside …” Harry Peters’ response was that the top administrative positions are filled by appointments. He said,
"it just seems like a lot of folks in administration have just been appointed. If somebody leaves there is just an appointment from outside …"

Table 6

**Superordinate Theme: Top Leaders are Recruited from Outside**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Direct Quotes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Top leaders are recruited from outside</td>
<td>Rick Onan: “… at the levels of vice president and certainly president, it seems more common to bring people in from the outside.” “When I leave somebody from the outside more than likely will take my place.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Harry Peters: “… all those in upper administration come from outside.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kim Scheller: “When the new president came onboard, to my knowledge, all the changes that happened at the upper level have all been external.” “…there was just one VP over academic and student services so he [the president] reorganized and then hired both of those externally.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mary Hoskins: “I think they seek a broad candidate pool. They like to promote positions nationally…” “For our vice president positions we advertise nationwide.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regina Harris: “So at times we have used search firms that are external to the organization. We do broad postings across the country in the Chronicle and all of the educational journals …”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joe Thomas: “They are really good at posting on Highered.com and things like that …”</td>
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</table>

At least three participants commented positively about the institution providing opportunities for stakeholders, including faculty and staff, to share their input during the process of interviewing candidates for upper administrative positions. Eva Morris stated: “the college at large is able to provide input, ask questions, and I think that’s
considered as a part of the final selection for the top administrative positions so I feel very comfortable about that.” This view was also shared by Mary Hoskins who explained that stakeholders are allowed to give input regarding candidates for executive positions. She stated:

They [the candidates] have a whole day when they come to the campus and are scheduled with several things – a meeting with stakeholders, a presentation where they share about themselves and answer questions, and it’s kind of an all-day thing. And they do that from the division chair on up.

Rick Onan echoed a similar viewpoint about stakeholder input when he stated:

Now in terms of when we bring people from the outside to be vice president or president the college makes an effort to have opportunities for faculty and staff to be present at a meeting to ask questions and that sort of thing before someone is selected.

Succession Planning is Important

The fourth superordinate theme addresses the importance of succession planning. In response to the interview question that addressed personal views of succession planning and how the process has worked at the institution, sixty-seven percent of the participants stated that they viewed succession planning as important. Table 7 illustrates their perspectives in their own words.

Table 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Superordinate Theme: Succession Planning is Important</th>
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<td><strong>Theme</strong></td>
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<td>Succession planning is important</td>
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</table>
Table 7 – Continued

Succession planning is important

Eva Morris: “I think it [succession planning] is absolutely necessary … but I think it’s wise to have something formalized, written, identified.”

Regina Harris: “Well, I am a proponent of succession planning and have been for a number of years.” “So I think that succession planning is a value-add to any organization. It’s especially needed as organizations go through multiple layers of transitions with leadership and it has to be something that we are constantly thinking about because people don’t necessarily stay in jobs for twenty and thirty years anymore. There is a lot of transition and you always have to be prepared so that you can back-fill those positions as they become vacant through natural attrition or retirements or people just moving on to another role.”

Mary Hoskins: “Oh yes, I think it [succession planning] is important and I wish there were something more of the right way that it was done but I don’t think the right people get to sit at the table to talk about what would succession planning look like at our institution.”

Tony Isaac: “I believe succession planning is critical for two reasons. The transference of institutional knowledge and history – what we do in meeting the mission of the institution. Two, as you bring new blood into the organization and new ideas, strong organizations, or effective organizations are strong because they value intellectual capital, the human capital. And so developing the personnel within the organization to move up in the organization is a strength. It is an asset. So succession planning is critical to the success of the institution. If succession planning is not successful, and that’s at any level of the organization, then I think it is very difficult to move the organization forward.”

Kim Scheller: “I think succession planning is important and that we need to be building people so that regardless of who leaves when there is somebody there to fill that void with the skill-sets and the commitment to the college.”
The participants spoke openly about the importance of succession planning even though it is not currently being practiced at the institution. They also showed some degree of familiarity with terms and strategies associated with the succession planning process, but some were more familiar with the concept than others. In the following section a deeper understanding of participants’ views of succession planning will be revealed as the findings are presented in relation to the research questions.

Findings and Research Questions

Research Question 1
What evidences do the institutional artifacts provide to demonstrate succession planning?

The first document to be analyzed was the strategic plan, which covers a five-year period from 2015 thru 2020. The document outlines the vision and mission statements of the institution along with the values and goals. The goals mirror the values of the institution which are further echoed in the mission and vision statements. Two out of the six goal statements address professional development and one addresses the development of leaders, which are all essential strategies for effective succession planning. It is the goal of the institution to provide meaningful and best-in-class professional development to all its employees, and even more specifically, to develop leaders. Other strategic goals include improving the student experience at the institution, securing funding, and meeting the workforce needs of the broader community.

The institution also has a written succession plan which was developed to address the impending leadership crisis that was anticipated from the retirement of presidents and other leaders in community colleges including their own president at the time. The Board of Trustees in anticipation of the president’s retirement asked that he start planning for
his replacement, and consequently succession planning became "a mandate for the organization" as one participant explained. The decision to engage in succession planning then led to an assessment which determined that thirty percent of the college's seasoned administrators and faculty members were eligible for retirement. As a result, the office of organizational development was established with responsibilities for directing and coordinating a comprehensive professional development program, and this gave birth to a formal, written succession plan for the institution.

Like the strategic plan, the succession plan outlines the vision, mission and values of the institution. There is also an outline of a succession planning framework which consists of three phases. Phase one addresses defining the demand and determining the talent at the institution. Phase two identifies the gap, and phase three explicates a systematic succession plan along with individual development plans.

During phase one of the succession planning framework goals and objectives for each functional area of the organization are identified along with an analysis of current status and future opportunities for the functional units. Next, the objectives are translated into talent requirements to determine what talent is needed to achieve the goals. At this juncture the strengths and challenges of each are reviewed and translated into talent requirements needed to achieve the desired results. A list of the critical roles and positions for each functional area is compiled and projected vacancies due to anticipated retirements and attrition are identified. A talent assessment for each direct report in each unit is also conducted during phase one. This involves reviewing performance appraisals and listing significant accomplishments and key leadership strengths, along with potential areas of interest and opportunities for development, which are captured on an individual
career plan prepared by employees and their managers. Where applicable, employees were asked to work with their supervisors to identify potential successors for their positions inside and external to their department.

The succession planning document describes phase two of the succession planning framework and outlines steps for a systematic succession plan and steps for developing individual development plans. For the systematic succession plan pathway solutions such as seminars, conferences, job shadowing and degree programs are shared and individual employees are allowed to select a pathway that is most realistic and achievable. Guidance and insight about future goals of the organization are provided and the employee’s commitment to the selected pathway, along with the level of support to be expected from the supervisor, is discussed. The document provides examples of continuing education, formal education and action learning pathways. Steps to create an individual plan are presented with an example. The first step is to gather and analyze performance data and organizational needs and the final step involves evaluating progress made and updating the individual plan as needed.

The succession plan also includes an employee development plan, which is a partnership between the supervisor and the employee. The employee development plan takes into consideration the past and current performance of the employee and how these align with the future focus of the organization. This includes talent assessments and the examination of strategic plans for the institution, along with organizational job trends. Supervisors are expected to indicate how the employee development plan will benefit the individual and the institution.
The succession planning document also emphasizes the development of leaders through the President's Leadership Seminar and the Leadership Effectiveness and Development program. The purpose of the president's leadership seminar is to promote and strengthen the leadership potential within the college in order to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Generally, twenty to twenty-five individuals are selected from among all regular and full-time employees through an application process. Participants are selected based on their demonstrated leadership potential, which includes committee membership, involvement in community activities, and initiative taken to improve personal and career skills. The application to participate is distributed with the president's invitation letter. The president's leadership seminar is held every other spring for an entire week and covers topics related to community college leadership.

For those employees who successfully complete the president's seminar, there is an opportunity to participate in the Leadership Effectiveness and Development program. The goal of this program is to facilitate the development of leadership competencies and strategies and to build talented and diverse groups of individual leaders. The document makes it clear that this program is preparatory in nature and does not guarantee career progression. Eligible employees can submit a letter of interest along with their leadership philosophy and personal purpose statement. A leadership portfolio is submitted at the completion of the ten-month program as an assessment of the new learning that was garnered during the program.

The succession planning document also contains an in-depth guide for a mentoring program, which requires a formal application for participation. The guide defines mentoring and describes the mentoring relationship both from the mentor and
mentee perspectives. The guide also outlines the benefits of mentoring for the mentor, the mentee, and the organization. The mentoring guide includes diagrams which clearly depict the mentoring relationship. Finally, the succession planning document includes a brief description for a new manager’s orientation program and also procedures for educational assistance and educational leave with pay.

Overall, the succession planning document placed a heavy emphasis on professional and leadership development, which are directly aligned with the goals articulated in the strategic plan. The succession plan was very detailed with lots of examples of the forms to be completed. It was housed in the office of organizational development and is not available on the school’s website or intranet; hence, not many people are aware of its existence. Only one out of the nine study participants was aware that a formal, written succession planning document existed at the institution. The other participants were aware that the college had made attempts at a formal succession plan, but were not aware that there was a written document.

Research Question 2

How do faculty, administrators and human resources personnel describe their espoused beliefs and values as they relate to the institution and succession planning?

The espoused beliefs and values of the institution were unearthed through the participants’ responses to interview questions and a review of the strategic plan and the succession planning documents. The main values that are repeated throughout are diversity and professional and leadership development. One of the strategic goals of the institution is to cultivate a workplace culture of inclusion by increasing diversity among its employees through recruitment and retention. To ensure that this is taken seriously the
college has aligned its hiring and recruiting procedures with this goal. As a result, a very rigid hiring process has been implemented, which requires a diverse committee to review all application materials. As mentioned before, this diverse committee has to be approved by the office of human resources to ensure compliance. The participants' comments on diversity have already been captured and discussed earlier in this chapter as a superordinate theme. One important observation is that the hiring process was well communicated across the campus and it was not a part of the succession plan although the theme of diversity recruitment was well articulated in the strategic plan.

Professional and leadership development are also values that were expressed in various forms and the importance of both was evidenced by the establishment of an office responsible for organizational development that reports to the president. Tony stated:

One of the things that impressed me when I visited and interviewed was that there was an organizational development office that reported to the president ... And so it is the expectation in this culture that staff ... are involved and engaged and encouraged to be in professional development activities throughout the year.

He continued to explain, “as a division we do professional development days where the entire division gets together in the fall for a day and in spring for a day and we do professional development.” Rick, another participant stated:

The college is very generous in terms of professional development ... like I go to – and I know other departments do go to national conferences on a regular basis. If there’s some course we want to go to its very likely that we will be able to. There’s a lot of professional development within the college.

Regina Harris explained that professional development starts when employees are on-boarded. New employees are given an overview of opportunities that are available at the college and hiring managers are encouraged to have conversations about expectations and career development throughout the nine-month probationary period for the new
employee. Regina said, "we really encourage career development and employee
development from the very beginning."

Overall there were mixed reviews about what was being done currently by the
college to promote professional development. Some participants' viewpoints were
contrary to the ones expressed earlier. Harry expressed that the opportunities for
professional development are limited partly because of budgetary constraints. He stated:

With finances, as I mentioned, opportunities outside have greatly decreased but
they have various things you can go to where some internal type training that's
available from time to time. Then they pay at different levels so they have some
things you can get online but some of those things are offered. Of course there
are limitations. If it’s something you needed for a particular department then you
are probably not likely going to get it because of budgets. And so there is more
generic type training I guess would be the best way of saying it.

Eva had a similar viewpoint regarding the impact of the budget on professional
development opportunities. She said:

It has been sort of ad hoc kinds of things. I realize budgets terrifically impacts
your ability to do certain kinds of things but we have not ever had any formalized
programs here, like a center for teaching and learning for example, that really
invests in the development of faculty.

She went on to explain that the problem had been identified as a part of the re-
accreditation process for the institution and is being addressed.

Mary expressed that opportunities for professional development are minimal. She
stated that the college has some development workshops that are very basic in nature.

She continued: "so if you wanted to go to a real leadership development workshop
chances are you wouldn't get to go because it is not mission-critical to your current job."

From her perspective funds for professional development were only made available if the
training was mission-critical to one's current job. She stated, "if it is something broader
in terms of leadership, no, it is probably not going to get approved. You would have to
go on your own and pay on your own and take a vacation.” A very similar viewpoint was echoed by Kim, who stated:

During my year here the career development piece – and I am taking that to mean like professional development – seems to be on your own; on your own time, on your own dime. There’s not a lot that’s offered up by the institution whether that’s through a formal program or even trying to get funding to go do things for the most part. There are some opportunities for professional development here – some opportunities for funding but again not that comprehensive, intentional, well thought-out approach. But that I think is something we are trying to make progress on.

Specifically related to leadership development, all participants appeared to be fully aware of the president’s leadership seminar. Following are responses to the interview question regarding the mindset about leadership preparation at the institution. Eva explained:

I know every other year we have a president’s leadership opportunity and that’s designed I think for folks who are really interested in taking on more leadership or looking to expand what they are currently doing. It’s a weeklong opportunity and you learn a lot about the community college system. We learn a lot about leadership in our own college; you know you get big picture concepts presented like the way community colleges earn their money and how they are funded.

Mary stated: “As far as leadership development there is something called the President’s Leadership Seminar or something that maybe out of eight hundred employees at the college I think ten or twenty a year can go to it.” Kim added: “We have a President’s Leadership Seminar that was wonderful, that takes twenty people every two years.”

Amidst the mixed reviews from the participants in regards to professional and leadership development, both are mentioned in the strategic and succession planning documents. As a matter of fact, the main focus of the succession planning document is on professional and leadership development, which is an indication that these are priorities for the institution. However, although they are a part of the plan and
participants see value in these development practices, professional and leadership
development do not appear to be a part of the true culture of the institution.

Research Question 3

How do the basic underlying assumptions of the institution influence succession
planning?

One of the underlying assumptions that became evident in this study is the view
by those in the academy that higher education is not a business and should not be run like
one; hence, although succession planning is viewed as important for higher education it
should not be implemented in the same manner it is executed in business. Consequently,
succession planning was not fully embraced at the study site. Regina explained the
problems encountered with the implementation of the succession plan at the institution.
She stated:

I think there is reluctance for having a formalized plan. Some of the comments
that I've heard in the past include, 'we are not a corporation; we don't need to be
handled as such.' 'You can't use a corporate model in an educational
environment.'

A similar perspective was expressed by Kim during the focus group session. She said:

'There's a lot of literature about how people try to run higher education like a business
and it is a different beast. It cannot just be run strictly like a business model.' Kim
continued:

I think the way that I've typically seen it done in academia ... was going to each
department or each division and basically saying who do you think would be next
in line for your job. Whoa, that's immediately going to put people up in arms
because if you are declared the heir apparent everybody else immediately
disengages – what's the point.

Kim also admitted that academics are not comfortable with the concept of succession
planning. She stated:
...academic institutions are not comfortable with succession planning, and they don't want you talking about who is going to replace who because there is that sense of we should all have a shot at it. I also think when you come from industry there are certain tangible things, but when you come from those academic areas we are all just faculty and it is hard to get a shot at getting those extra skills that are needed to move into administration.

In one of the interview sessions a very unique perspective was shared by Eva Morris. Eva pointed out that vacant positions at top administrative levels do not keep higher education institutions from continuing to function. She explained:

You know, again I think businesses are working on the philosophy of making a profit and in order to do that these things have to be in place and succession planning is very much a part of that and the turnover is different probably I don't know. But I think they are looking at succession planning in a very different light because their goal is different than what ours is. I guess even though we have to be fiscally responsible our doors are not going to close if we don't have somebody to take that position at the time we know somebody is leaving. What we have done has worked to some degree. It may have been misguided; it may not have been going in the right direction but it has historically worked so there has not been a need particularly for us to change the way that we operate in that regard. You know, in a business the doors might close, but ours aren't.

Eva continued to expound on the fact that institutions of higher education keep functioning even when critical administrative positions have been vacated for one or two years. She said:

We've been without leadership for a year or two at a time in some of our critical administrative positions and we keep functioning. Somebody gets put in place for interim and you do the best you can ... here's all the information that was on their computer, here's all your files ... you know ... and we'll make do the best we can until we can find somebody to fill the position.

Ultimately, as Kim stated, academics continue to fight against succession planning. She said, “most academics that I have worked with throughout the years do not like to talk about succession planning and they will fight it and revolt against it.”

A second underlying assumption is that candidates for top leadership positions are recruited from outside through the national search process, which is the method of choice
to recruit candidates for top administrative positions. The vacant positions are usually advertised nationally. Mary stated: “They like to promote positions nationally ...” “For our vice president positions we advertise nationwide.” The institution sometimes utilizes the services of a search firm, and they also advertise their top leadership positions in educational journals such as the Chronicle and online at Highered.com. Regina stated: “So at times we have used search firms that are external to the organization. We do broad postings across the country in the Chronicle and all of the educational journals ...” Joe added: “They are really good at posting on Highered.com and things like that ...” The national search has been known to be the recruiting method of choice in higher education and Will (2010) indicates that 64% of college and university presidents are recruited from outside the institution.

Research Question 4

What is the culture of a community college with a succession plan, as it pertains to leadership perceptions, criteria for potential leadership identification, strategies for leadership development, and integration with strategic planning?

The institution under study has a written succession plan; however, succession planning is not currently practiced. Efforts to execute the plan were met with resistance, but the term succession planning remains a part of the vernacular, and continues to be recognized on the campus. All participants in the study were familiar with the term succession planning. In essence, the language was familiar and there were also other important elements of succession planning that were present at the institution.

Leadership development is perceived to be important to the campus constituents and it was integrated into the strategic plan as a strategic goal. Leadership development
is also interwoven into the succession planning document and is pivotal to the President’s Leadership Seminar and the Leadership Effectiveness and Development program which were instituted to promote and strengthen the leadership potential within the college. However, there was not a clearly defined process or strategy for identifying leadership skills and leadership potential at the institution. Selection for leadership development appeared to be achieved via ad hoc methods such as self-identification, relationships with managers, and participation in institute committees and finally, by involvement in community service. Eva stated: “They are willing if you have a desire to pursue leadership in some capacity, for finding a fit for you to be able to do that.” Regina pointed out:

I think in terms of leadership and moving up in the organization there haven’t been a great deal of opportunities for that, but I think people really – if you have a good manager then they will certainly advocate for you to become more visible by committee work or being a part of different initiatives across the college.

She continued:

We don’t give any type of false positives out there in terms of if you do ‘X’ then certainly that will lead to these things in the future, but we certainly encourage people to participate across the college, or obtain further education, or any kind of opportunities that would put them in a better position.

Mary had a similar view and stated that if an individual had the right connection with someone in a leadership position there would be a possibility for a mentoring relationship to ensue and for that individual to grow and develop as a result. She stated:

If there is someone at a lower or middle-management level who happens to connect with someone who is at a higher level and they bond and build a relationship and that person who is at the higher level says you know what I am going to pour something into this person and they do it on their own … and they make a commitment and an investment and they believe in that person then that person gets the benefit and they are going to gain those skills and move up.
The general culture at the institution is a combination of Kuh’s (1989) bureaucratic model and Berquist and Pawlak’s (2008) managerial culture in that, decisions are made via a hierarchical chain of command. Ultimately, the institution has a succession plan because it was mandated by the former president and members of the Board of Trustees, who were concerned about the pending retirement of the president. Regina Harris explained that having the formal process was a mandate from the former president. She said:

It came from the president. He said he wanted a succession plan and so it was pretty much a mandate for the organization. So when you have that belief espoused by the president it becomes the way we do business. And that actually came from his Board.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the research study. The chapter commenced with a restatement of the purpose of the study and the research questions that guided the process. The design of the study was then described along with data collection and data analysis methods. A detailed description of how the data were analyzed to identify themes and form categories of superordinate themes was also incorporated. Additionally, the demographics of the participants were outlined in the format of a table.

Among the findings presented are the views of the participants about the institution itself. Overall, participants described the institution as large and continuing to grow, innovative and supportive of autonomy, and finally as an institution that fulfills its mission through service to the community. The institution was further described as working closely with industry to meet the workforce needs of the community.
The superordinate themes derived from the coding and recoding of the data were then outlined. There were four overarching themes: change is constant, diversity is valued, top leaders are recruited from outside and succession planning is important. Each superordinate theme was supported with direct quotes from the participants and presented both in narrative and table format. Eighty-nine percent of the participants commented on the constant changes that were taking place at the institution and it was concluded by one participant that change has become the new normal at the institution. Fifty-six percent commented on the importance of diversity to the institution especially as it relates to the very rigid hiring process that is designed to ensure that hiring committees are diverse. These committees have to be approved by the office of human resources before they are functional. Diversity is essential to the recruiting and retention activities of the institution and is clearly articulated as a strategic goal in the strategic plan.

Another superordinate theme is that top leaders are recruited from outside the institution. This is supported by participants' comments that their top positions are usually posted nationally via educational journals, and their top administrative positions were recently filled with leaders from outside the institution. It also aligns with the research literature that state that college and university presidents are usually hired from outside the institution.

The final superordinate theme states that succession planning is important. Sixty-seven percent of the participants commented that succession planning is important and they showed familiarity with the language associated with the concept of succession planning. However, succession planning is not formally practiced at the institution and there was resistance to attempts to implement it.
The findings were then presented in relation to each of the four research questions. The first research question asked about evidences of succession planning in the institutional artifacts. A document review of the strategic plan and the succession planning document was utilized to answer this question. Both documents were described in detail and important elements of each document were highlighted as they pertain to succession planning. The documents revealed that diversity and professional and leadership development are important and valued by the institution.

The second and third research questions addressed espoused values and underlying assumptions as unearthed through the responses of the participants to the interview questions. Overall, the institution values diversity as evidenced by the direct expressions from participants, and professional and leadership development are also valued as outlined in the strategic and succession planning documents, and also in the interview data collected from participants. The underlying assumptions are that higher education is not a business and should not be treated as such, and top administrative positions are filled from outside through national searches.

Finally, the chapter concludes with the findings related to research question number four, which examines the culture of an institution with a succession plan as it pertains to leadership perceptions, the criteria for potential leadership identification, strategies for leadership development, and integration with the strategic plan. The culture at the institution is a combination of the bureaucratic and managerial models, and it was noted that the institution has a succession plan because it was mandated by the former president and Board of Trustees. It was also observed that the current succession plan for the institution has a major focus on professional and leadership development, but it does
not address strategies for identifying leadership potential. Individuals are identified for leadership development through ad hoc methods such as self-identification, supervisor selection, or committee membership and community involvement. However, the succession plan was very well aligned with the strategic plan in that it addressed the strategic goals of the institution.

Chapter five will discuss the findings of the study in the context of the extant literature on succession planning. The chapter will also present conclusions based on the findings along with recommendations for future research on succession planning in community colleges. The findings will be discussed in the same order as they are outlined in this chapter.
CHAPTER 5
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study investigated how the culture and traditions of a community college influenced the succession planning process and explored the perceptions of top administrators and faculty regarding succession planning. The research was conducted in a community college in a southeastern state and the researcher utilized individual interviews, a focus group and document reviews to collect data. The data were then analyzed following the steps outlined for the interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) technique by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). This chapter will present an overview of chapters one to four of the study followed by a discussion of each of the findings and finally, conclusions and recommendations for future research.

Study Overview

Chapter one of the study discussed the background for the research by referencing literature that predict a crisis in higher education institutions, particularly community colleges, as the leaders of these institutions reach retirement age in masses. The problem, as stated, is that most colleges and universities do not have a systematic approach for identifying leadership potential and developing leadership skills for their top administrative positions, and this poses a threat to the future of these institutions. The purpose of the study was to understand how the culture and traditions at a community college influenced succession planning and to explore the perceptions of top administrators and faculty regarding succession planning. Limitations include the
potential bias in the data collected from participants who may not be forthcoming with
information about their institution, and delimitations include the focus on one selected
site and delimiting participants to top administrators and faculty. The study is significant
for top leaders and human resources personnel in higher education, particularly
community colleges, as these institutions seek effective ways to recruit, train, and
develop leaders.

Chapter two reviewed existing literature on succession planning and related
concepts, along with literature on the various types of culture frequently found in higher
education institutions. The theoretical lens through which the study was conducted,
Schein’s model of organizational culture, was also discussed. Additionally, other
organizational culture theories were examined in the context of higher education culture.
The importance of succession planning was discussed from the perspectives of several
authors who have written on the subject, along with essential elements of a good
succession plan. Other components of succession planning such as leadership
identification, development and training were also presented in chapter two. The chapter
concluded with an exposition on community colleges and the important role they play in
society, and a brief analysis of whether the pending retirements of community college
leaders presents a challenge or an opportunity.

Chapter three commenced with a reiteration of the purpose of the research study
and outlined the steps in the methodology that allow for the study to be replicated.
Rationale for the use of the qualitative approach was explained and included Creswell’s
(2013, 2014) viewpoint that the qualitative approach is appropriate for conducting
research where an issue or problem needs to be explored and understood. More
specifically, the use of a case study was appropriate since it allowed for the examination of a contemporary phenomenon within a bounded system (Yin, 2014). The design of the study utilized a four-pronged approach described by Crotty (1998), which included constructionism as the epistemology, phenomenology as the theoretical perspective, interpretative phenomenological analysis as the methodology for data analysis and interviews, focus group and document reviews as methods to collect the data. Also, the study utilized nonprobability purposeful sampling in the selection of the research site and the study participants. A subjectivity statement addressed any researcher biases that may have been present regarding the subject of succession planning, and there were other validation procedures such as member checking, rich thick descriptions, and a systematic process for collecting and analyzing the data.

Chapter four presented the findings of the study in tabular and narrative formats with the superordinate themes which were derived from the coding and recoding of the data supported by descriptive statements from the participants. There were four superordinate themes: change is constant, diversity is valued, top leaders are recruited from outside and succession planning is important. The findings were then presented apropos of each of the research questions. Document reviews were used to answer the first research question, which investigated evidences of succession planning in the institution's artifacts. Both the succession planning and strategic planning documents revealed that diversity along with professional and leadership development are important and valued broadly by the institution. The underlying assumptions uncovered through the analysis of the data are: higher education is not a business and should not be treated as such and top administrators are recruited from outside via national searches.
Discussion of Findings

In this section each of the four superordinate themes will be discussed in light of the related literature followed by the implications for higher education leadership. A discussion of the findings as they relate to each research question will follow a similar format. Finally, conclusions will be drawn from the discussion of the findings and recommendations will be offered for future research.

Change is Constant

Change is a common occurrence in all organizations and community colleges are no exception (Burke, 2011; Coons, 2012). In this study eight out of the nine participants commented on changes at the institution, with the biggest change being the appointment of a new college president. This change in leadership was due to the retirement of the former president, and is in sync with the prediction made in the literature that community colleges will inevitably seek new leadership as positions are vacated by aging baby boomers that are expected to retire in masses. One participant commented that the environment at the institution had been pretty stable and the change in presidency was the biggest adjustment that they had experienced in a number of years. With a new CEO at the helm of the institution other modifications naturally ensued. Joe, another participant, pointed out that there had been some drastic changes at the institution including the appointment of three new vice presidents, which could be attributed to the new president coming onboard. Coons (2012) states that it is not unusual for newly appointed presidents to enact change at the beginning of their tenure. As a matter of fact, it is the expectation of the Board of Trustees that newly appointed presidents will reengineer their administrative structures to facilitate new visions for the current and future success of
their institutions (Coons, 2012). In addition, Clunies (2004) points out that colleges and universities exist in a dynamic environment and that they must adapt in order to remain viable and survive. This holds true for community colleges since they are very closely associated with the broader community that they serve, and a central mission is to meet the education and workforce needs of these communities. Participant, Tony Isaac, explained that community colleges are flexible and adapt to the changes that are occurring in the larger community. He stated that the flexibility in community colleges is constant and as the population in the broader society expands and becomes more diverse community colleges must shift to accommodate these changes. His view is supported by Wallin (2010) who states that colleges and universities change continuously as they respond to internal and external pressures. Burke (2011) also supports the view pointing out that current and future trends in the external environment in which organizations function necessitate change. Consequently, newly appointed presidents are expected to be savvy and to possess competencies necessary to execute and manage essential changes for the success of their institutions. Participant, Regina Harris, concluded that change is the new normal at the institution and individuals need to adapt with the least amount of angst as possible. Her view is supported by Barden and Curry (2013), who point out that higher education institutions are experiencing significant changes at a fast pace and faculty members need to accept that change is now the norm. In addition, Coons (2012) posits that change should be embraced as an ongoing phenomenon in today’s fast-paced environment.
Implications for Educational Leadership

There is a human element that is involved in change and this cannot be discounted. Change can be disruptive and stressful (Coons, 2012), and if not managed effectively there can be unintended adverse effects such as an institution losing its best employees. Prior to instituting change, it is important for new presidents to gain insight into the culture of the institution. It is also imperative that they understand that each institution is unique in its cultural climate, and time should be taken to understand the customs and beliefs of the institution before making modifications. In addition, there needs to be an effective mechanism in place to facilitate the communication of change while minimizing disruption throughout the organization. This mechanism should promote transparency and facilitate stakeholders’ understanding of why the change is needed and how it will benefit the organization as a whole. Finally, a formal assessment should be conducted to determine if the changes that have been instituted are successful (Coons, 2012). This effort will aid in reducing anxiety if individuals are aware that changes are being assessed for efficiency and success, and that adjustments will be made if recent modifications are not meeting the intended goals and are not enhancing the vision and mission of the institution.

Diversity is Valued

During the interview process, participant Tony Isaac, stated that the college was committed to diversity and had become a minority serving institution in 2012. He explained further that this change in the institution’s focus, from a predominantly white serving institution to a diversity serving institution, was precipitated by the demographic shift and changes in the cultural landscape of the broader community and across the
nation. Other participants echoed a similar refrain and commented on how diversity was incorporated into the college’s hiring procedures with hiring committees vetted by human resources for diverse composition. Turner (2002) supports having diverse hiring committees, stating that the composition of search committees is critical for bringing multiple perspectives and viewpoints to the forefront when evaluating candidates. Meister and Willyerd (2010) also support managing diversity in the workplace noting that shifting workforce demographics demand that employers learn to manage the increasingly diverse workforce. Additionally, Greer and Virick (2008) state, that diversity is important for the success of companies as a diversified workforce adds competitive advantage. Community colleges, being major providers of workforce development and training, are compelled to recognize the growing diversity in the immediate and extended environment, and are expected to embrace such diversity to improve retention rates and prepare graduates to be culturally competent global citizens.

Implications for Educational Leadership

Diversity is an important element for effective succession planning. Rothwell (2010) posits that succession planning and management is necessary to encourage diversity in organizations. He contends that if succession planning is left informal and unplanned leaders will tend to groom individuals who are like themselves which will lead to problems with cloning and other employment discrimination issues. Atwood (2007) agrees and points out that a succession plan provides opportunities to maximize skills and diverse intellectual abilities. Companies such as Allstate and Harley-Davidson have used succession planning to increase diversity in their executive and managerial positions thus increasing the percentage of women and minorities occupying these positions (Greer &
Community colleges and other higher education institutions can follow the examples of these establishments.

The future viability of organizations will be dependent on the mastery of diverse succession planning in an effort to build bench strength among women and other minority groups as these individuals continue to increase in their representation in the labor force (Greer & Virick, 2008). Succession planning teams, like hiring committees should have diverse representation to ensure that all groups are included in leadership development opportunities (Atwood, 2007). Overall, diversity promotes a wide range of intellectual and social perspectives for the benefit of all institutional stakeholders and leaders should bear this in mind.

Top Leaders are Recruited from Outside

Three research questions elicited responses that generated this theme. Participants were asked to describe the hiring practices at the college and to describe the process for filling top leadership positions. In addition, they were also asked to explain the collective mindset about leadership and preparation for leadership on the campus. Sixty-seven percent of participants responded that the top leaders were generally recruited from outside the institution through national searches, which is a traditional hiring practice in higher education. Leske (2014) comments on this tradition stating, that the open national search constitutes a part of higher education culture. He explains further that the open search presents an opportunity to attract diverse leaders since some institutions do not have a diverse enough workforce to accomplish this goal internally and therefore internal succession planning would result in the self-cloning of those institutions. Bisbee (2007) also addresses the practice of external hiring and states that it
appears to be more prevalent in academe as it is perceived to be easier to bring someone in from the outside with the competencies and experiences necessary to fill a position. In addition, internal candidates tend to be held to higher standards than external candidates (Bisbee, 2007). The tradition of conducting open national searches in higher education is also parsed by Barden (2009) who explains that such searches allow for diversity of ideas and approaches and provides a way to catalyze change.

Implications for Educational Leadership

Despite the tradition of hiring from outside and the presumption that national searches are necessary to find leaders in higher education, some academic institutions are questioning the cost of these searches and are moving towards hiring internal candidates (Barden, 2009; Gonzalez, 2011; Leske, 2014). Universities such as Stanford and the University of California have hired more presidents from inside their institution than other American universities. Additionally, Notre Dame has been quite successful at grooming administrators for the presidency, and those who do not achieve the goal of becoming president have become successful vice presidents (Gonzalez, 2011). The dearth of leaders resulting from the retirement of aging baby boomers will one day present a crisis situation for higher education institutions and alternatives to the independent use of the open national search will need to be considered.

Succession Planning is Important

In the current study sixty-seven percent of the participants agreed that succession planning is important for various reasons. Participant, Regina Harris, expressed that succession planning is important to backfill the leadership positions vacated by retiring college and university presidents and other top administrators. She stated:
"So I think that succession planning is a value added to any organization. It’s especially needed as organizations go through multiple layers of transitions with leadership and it just really has to be something that we are constantly thinking about because people don’t necessarily stay in jobs for twenty and thirty years anymore, so there is a lot of transition and you always have to be prepared so that you can back-fill those positions as they naturally become vacant through natural attrition or retirements or people just moving on to another role."

Most of the literature about succession planning in higher education addresses this need for leadership preparation as a potential crisis is predicted with the retirement of university and college presidents and other top administrators (Betts et al., 2009; Coons, 2012; Klein & Salk, 2013; McNair et al., 2011; Shults, 2001; Spendlove, 2007). It is even more important for community colleges to engage in succession planning since the crisis appears to be grave in these institutions and the current pipeline of leaders is less than robust (Bornstein, 2010; Ebbers et al., 2010; Eddy, 2013; Shiffman, 2009; Weisman & Vaughn, 2006). Atwood (2007) supports the need for succession planning stating that it allows top management to anticipate workforce needs and provides opportunities to create specific development and training for leaders. Additionally, Rothwell (2010) points out that through succession planning the right people will be available to fill the right position vacancies at the right time.

Succession planning is also important for knowledge transfer as explained by participant, Tony Isaac. This is supported by Rothwell (2010) who refers to this type of planning as technical succession planning. Rothwell acknowledges that there are specialized knowledge and skills possessed by technical workers that are critical for the advancement of an organization, and without some systematized strategy for harnessing that knowledge crucial information is lost when an employee walks out the door and leaves the organization. As employees retire employers run the risk of losing essential
institutional knowledge and important skills. This loss of corporate knowledge and skills can have detrimental effects on an organization; however, succession planning minimizes this risk (Dinkel, 2015). Knowledge transfer is therefore an essential part of the succession planning process since it facilitates the acquisition of relevant information and skills by employees who are stepping into leadership roles (Dinkel, 2015; Government of Alberta Human Resources, 2012).

Succession planning is a valuable process since it does not only identify future talent, but it outlines specific strategies and processes for preparing and developing individuals for future leadership roles (Atwood, 2007; Calareso, 2013). Participants, Tony Isaac and Kim Scheller, explained that succession planning is important for developing people and equipping them with the skill-sets to be promoted within the organization, a perspective supported by Rothwell (2010) and Calareso (2013) who state that succession planning is essential for communicating career paths to individual employees and for providing defined paths for professional growth. Additionally, Coonan (2005) and Atwood (2007) state that succession planning helps to boost morale and improve retention and commitment by providing clearly defined career advancement paths within an organization, and a written plan enables an organization to identify and address critical shortages and key positions that are difficult to fill (Coonan, 2005).

Implications for Educational Leadership

The importance and relevance of succession planning cannot continue to be ignored by higher education institutions since the retirement of baby boomers is inevitable. Succession planning that focuses on the current and future talent needs of higher education is essential, and these institutions can benefit from implementing
succession planning and having prepared leaders in the pipeline to fill key positions. Other benefits include helping employees to realize career goals and aspirations and improving employees' ability to respond positively to changes in the workplace. Higher education institutions should also consider providing opportunities for transferring institutional knowledge through succession planning strategies such as job shadowing, cross training, and mentoring.

The following section will discuss the findings based on each of the four research questions. Some of the findings will mirror those discussed earlier as superordinate themes, and in such cases the discussion will be brief. The dialogue will follow the format where findings are first discussed followed by implications for educational leadership.

Research Question 1
What evidences do the institutional artifacts provide to demonstrate succession planning?

Schein (2010) defines artifacts as the visible manifestation of culture as evidenced in the form of day-to-day behaviors, language and traditions. He points out that artifacts aid in communicating the core values of an organization. In this study the artifacts are the institution's strategic plan and the succession planning document. The findings from these two documents will be discussed. According to Bowen (2009), document analysis aids in uncovering meaning and developing understanding of a research problem. He posits that document analysis provides supplementary research data and produces rich descriptions of a phenomenon.

In the current study both the strategic plan and the written succession plan reflect the goals and values of the institution and the succession plan is in lockstep with the
strategic plan. This is essential for effective succession planning as described in the literature. Atwood (2007) and Rothwell (2010) both state that succession planning should be linked to an organization's strategic plan and should align with the strategic goals. The two documents emphasize professional and leadership development, which are strategic goals and appear to be of importance to the institution.

The succession planning document was initiated as a result of the Board of Trustees' concerns for continued leadership at the institution as the president, like other community college presidents, approached retirement age. An assessment was conducted to determine the current and future talent needs of the institution and the results disclosed that approximately thirty percent of seasoned administrators were eligible for retirement, which matches the literature's prediction of anticipated workforce reduction due to retirements. This first phase of the institution's succession planning framework aided in determining the demand and talent needs of the institution which is a process similar to what the Government of Alberta Human Resources (2012) refers to as making a demographic profile of an organization's workforce.

The institution's succession plan focuses mainly on professional and leadership development, which are key elements of good succession planning, and these are clearly outlined in the document. The document also provides examples of pathway solutions for growth such as seminars, conferences, degree programs and job shadowing. Different types of development plans are described with clear examples provided. An important element of succession planning that is not as visible in the written document is how potential leaders are identified. It appears that the talent assessment process might achieve this goal, but since the identification of potential leaders is such an important
component of succession planning the process to accomplish this objective should be
clearly spelled out in the written document. As Charan (2008) states potential leaders
must be identified before they can be developed. Other essential elements of succession
planning that are missing from the institution’s written document include a list of the
desired leadership characteristics or management behaviors for the key leadership
positions and a defined plan to find, motivate and retain future leaders. These are
considered fundamental for effective succession planning as proposed by Berchelman
(2005), Calareso (2013), and Larcker and Saslow (2014).

Interestingly, the institution has a written succession plan which was developed
prior to the retirement of the former president; however, succession planning is not
currently practiced broadly at the institution. One participant explained that there may be
“little pockets remaining” where the process is being followed but succession planning is
not mandated as it was under the leadership of the former college president. As a matter
of fact, most participants were unaware that there was a written succession plan but they
acknowledged that the institution had made previous attempts at implementing
succession planning. Berchelman (2005) notes that succession planning requires the
visible support of top management in order for the process to be successful a view which
is supported by Lampton (2011) and Romejko (2008). Furthermore, succession planning
should be a combined effort of the board, senior management and the human resources
staff (Larcker & Saslow, 2014).

Implications for Educational Leadership

Higher education institutions need to consider all the essential elements of good
succession planning when establishing a formal plan, and avoid the pitfall of creating a
development plan as opposed to a succession plan. Leadership and professional
development are fundamental to succession planning, but having a defined procedure for
identifying individuals with such leadership competencies as learning agility, and people
and business acumen is of equal importance for future success. Performance appraisals,
feedback from managers, and skill assessment exercises are some of the tools that can be
used to identify potential candidates for leadership development but this should be made
explicit in the written succession planning document.

Having a written succession plan is important; however, it is of no value if
individuals are not privy to its existence, and the plan is not being implemented.
Succession planning will also not become embedded in the institution’s culture if the
process is not visibly supported by top management. Communication is essential for
effective succession planning. It is important for the language used to communicate the
process be clearly understood by all involved. Barden (2009) and Klein and Salk (2013),
agree with this viewpoint and indicate that a reason for a lack of succession planning is
the absence of a common language to describe the process. In addition, adapting to
succession planning as a new process in higher education has its challenges; hence,
effective communication, which is spearheaded by top management, is one of the key
methods for achieving buy-in from faculty and other stakeholders who are already
skeptical about the process.

Research Question 2

How do faculty, administrators and human resources personnel describe their espoused
beliefs and values as they relate to the institution and succession planning?
Espoused beliefs and values are what an organization uses to shape the way it adapts externally and integrates new ideas internally (Merton et al., 2009; Schein, 2010). They are the norms and values the members of an organization talk about and use to determine how business is conducted currently and in the future (Schein, 2010). In this study the document review and interview data demonstrate that diversity along with professional and leadership development are valued by the participants and the institution. These are a part of the strategic goals described in the strategic plan and are congruent to the institutional value statements.

Diversity has already been expounded upon as a major theme that was discovered and its importance to the institution is reflected in the way hiring committees are comprised. However, having a diverse committee does not ensure that the goal of achieving a diverse workforce is being accomplished. Turner (2002) discusses the importance of diversity in forming search committees, but cautions that one should consider the dynamics that occur among the committee members. For example, junior faculty may tend to concede to the wishes of senior faculty who will eventually vote on their tenure and promotion cases, and this can bias the decisions that are made if the minority representatives on the committee are junior to the committee chair.

As for professional and leadership development, the participants had mixed reviews indicating that these development practices are valued, but they have not infiltrated the culture of the institution. The succession plan places heavy emphasis on professional and leadership development and some participants indicated that these were strongly encouraged and supported by the top leadership. Other participants differed and shared that the opportunities for professional and leadership development were minimal
which could possibly be due to budgetary constraints. Barden and Curry (2013) concur that limited budgets can influence decisions regarding professional and leadership development. They state further that institutions tend not to invest much money in training faculty for leadership. Another factor that stymies professional and leadership development is limited opportunities to participate in activities that promote both. The institution in this case study has an impressive president’s leadership seminar but it takes place every other year, and only twenty to twenty-five individuals out of approximately eight hundred employees have an opportunity to attend each time. This frequency is not enough to be impactful on the entire institution. The succession planning document also has an elaborate description of a mentoring program that could aid in professional and leadership development, but as one participant commented mentoring at the institution is not effective because mentors do not have time allotted to meet with their mentees.

It is clear from the documents reviewed that the institutional leaders see the value in professional and leadership development; however, the current methods utilized for achieving this goal are not effective. In addition, although on the one hand professional and leadership development are important it appears that the institution is not diverting enough funds to support these initiatives. Furthermore, professional and leadership development were the focus of the succession planning document; however, succession planning is not being practiced at the institution, which, to a large extent, nullifies the written document.

Implications for Educational Leadership

Diversity efforts in community colleges should focus on hiring more females and minorities for top leadership positions. Research indicates that the percentage of
educated women entering the workforce is on the increase (Greer & Virick, 2008) and the impending leadership crisis creates an opportunity for them to be hired into leadership positions as these are vacated. In addition, search committees should be educated on diversity issues so that they can become aware of implicit biases. Search committees should also be made aware that the charge to aid in building an institution’s workforce is a serious one that should be approached with utmost diligence.

Research Question 3

How do the basic underlying assumptions of the institution influence succession planning?

Norms and values form the basis of what becomes the underlying beliefs and assumptions of a culture, which Schein (2010) describes in his third level as the taken for granted perceptions, thoughts, and feelings which are the essence of culture. The underlying beliefs and assumptions found in this study are: higher education is not a business and should not be treated as such, and top leadership positions are filled with candidates from outside. These assumptions have been and continue to reflect the mindset of leaders in higher education.

In the business environment CEOs are expected to identify and train their successors. Jack Welch, former CEO of GE, has been quoted as saying that this was a thought that occupied him constantly, and Welch actually selected three possible successors before narrowing his choice down to one individual. The McDonald’s Corporation has also been credited for having trained leaders in the pipeline who, in the face of tragedy, were able to quickly step into the role of CEO and continue the operations of the company. In spite of these positive examples in business, there is
continued reluctance in academe to adapt to the business model of naming a successor. Kim Scheller, a participant in the study, stated that faculty will become disengaged if an "heir apparent" is declared, because from their perspective they are "all just faculty." Kim was careful to point out that academe is different to business and some faculty will continue to fight against any approach to treating it like a corporate entity, an observation also made by Denna (2014) who stated that academics struggle with the notion of a business model for higher education. As a matter of fact, some professors strongly oppose the business side of the institution because of the disconnection between academic and fiscal management. They do not view fundraising and other fiscal activities as central to the mission of the academy (Barden & Curry, 2013).

Eva, another participant, explained the difference between business and academe, pointing out that the goal of business is to make a profit; however, that is not the goal of most educational institutions. As she stated, businesses run the risk of closing if there is not a leader in place; however, the risk is not the same in academe. Eva added that institutions have gone without top leaders in place for a year or two at a time and an interim leader is put in place and the institution continues to function. Although this has worked in the past however, there is no guarantee that it will endure the changing education marketplace. Therefore, higher education leaders will need to become more business savvy and will need to pay more attention to the bottom line of their institutions (Leske & Metheny, 2015).

The second assumption that was unearthed during data analysis is that candidates for top leadership positions are recruited from outside through the national search process, which is also a well-known tradition that constitutes higher education culture.
The national search has its pros and cons. On the one hand, it contributes to the goal of diversifying the faculty and leadership of an institution. This diversity is not only reflected in racial, ethnic and gender differences, but also in the variation of ideas and leadership approaches. On the other hand, external searches can be time consuming and costly which is creating growing concerns among higher education institutions (Barden, 2009; Gonzalez, 2011; Leske, 2014).

Disbanding the national search as the norm to recruit leaders will require a paradigm shift for higher education, but the time has arrived for a compromise to be made in regards to how top leaders are recruited in academia. Rather than focusing exclusively on external hiring, community colleges and other higher education institutions may be better served by implementing hiring procedures that are a combination of external hiring and internal promotions to fill vacant leadership positions. According to Altman (2009) and Collins (2009), successors from inside an organization tend to understand the culture and dynamics of that organization. In addition, research suggests that better results are produced by inside successors because of the organizational knowledge that they possess and their familiarity with the organization's mission, goals, and objectives (Berke, 2005; Calareso, 2013; Collins, 2009; Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2004; Zhang & Rajagopalan, 2010b).

Implications for Educational Leadership

In a 2013 study conducted by Witt/Kieffer findings indicated that academic and corporate leaders have several similarities. Where they had major differences were in the areas of finance and investments. Academic leaders should take this into consideration and focus on strengthening their leadership skills that are similar to corporate leaders and
on developing new skills in the area of finance and fiscal management. This is one of the areas covered by the AACC’s development program for community college leaders. Leske and Metheny (2015) believe that education leaders are capable of becoming more businesslike if they make it a priority and tap into that side of themselves. They state that academic leaders are becoming more aware of the need to not only focus on the mission of their institutions but also to focus on the market in which they now operate. Faculty and top administrators in higher education institutions should also become more open to alternatives to the open national search and consider the pros and cons of both open searches and internal succession.

Research Question 4

What is the culture of a community college with a succession plan, as it pertains to leadership perceptions, criteria for potential leadership identification, strategies for leadership development, and integration with succession planning?

The general culture at the institution under study is a combination of Kuh’s (1989) bureaucratic model and Berquist and Pawlak’s (2008) managerial culture, which tend to be more prevalent in community colleges. In these cultural environments decisions are made via a hierarchical chain of command and changes are made in response to environmental threats. The institution has a written succession plan which was mandated by the former president upon the advice of the Board of Trustees, who encouraged him to begin thinking about a successor as he approached retirement. However, it was discovered that succession planning has not been practiced since the previous president retired from the institution. It appears that the process may not be a top priority for the current president, who is still fairly new in his position.
The succession plan reflects the values and strategic goals of the institution as they are described in the strategic plan, so both documents are very well aligned. There is a heavy focus on professional development, leadership development, and mentoring in the succession planning document; however, the document does not outline a clear process for leadership identification. In addition, it does not describe the qualifications and competencies that the college requires for its leadership positions.

The emphasis on professional and leadership development in both the succession plan and the strategic plan seem to suggest that these are a part of the culture of the institution, but the interviews revealed mixed reviews from participants, which indicate that it is not the case. This is likely due to the fact that the succession plan is not being implemented and therefore the contents of the succession planning document are not initiatives that are the current focus of the institution. Providing funds for professional and leadership development at a time when there are budgetary constraints does not appear to be a priority based on the feedback from participants. However, there is still some degree of attention given to professional and leadership development as evidenced in the importance and prestige of the President’s Leadership Seminar and the Leadership Effectiveness and Development program, which are described in the succession planning document. These two events continue to occur, but are not held frequently, and do not engage a high enough percentage of employees to significantly impact the culture of the college.

Implications for Educational Leadership

Succession planning is not owned solely by the department of human resources or the office of organizational development, but should be led by the board of trustees and
require the full support of the top leadership of the organization in order for it to be successful. However, considering the decision-making culture of higher education which embraces shared governance, mandating the process may not be the most effective way of integrating succession planning into the culture of community colleges. Shared governance relies on input from several constituents with varying roles and interests within the academy and continues to present challenges for succession planning.

Conclusions

The current study was conducted at an institution with a written succession plan, and the theoretical lens that formed the framework for the study is Schein’s three-tiered model of organizational culture. The research literature establishes that most higher education institutions are not engaging in succession planning. This poses a challenge particularly in community colleges, as their top leaders retire and there are no qualified individuals in the pipeline to fill their vacated positions.

The findings indicate that elements of succession planning exist at the study site. Succession planning involves change and constant change was a theme derived from the data. With the many modifications that are taking place in the internal and external environment change has become the norm in community colleges and the ability to adapt will determine the future viability of these institutions.

Diversity is also important for succession planning, and a second finding in this study is that diversity is valued at the research site. This particular community college practices diversity in the way it constructs its search committees; however, this method does not guarantee that the diversity goals of the institution are being achieved. Institutions should ensure that the dynamics of search committees facilitate the goal of
hiring individuals with diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, and who will bring fresh ideas and new approaches to the institution. Gender diversity should also be a major consideration.

A third finding is that top leaders are recruited from outside the institution. This practice is not unique to community colleges, but is widely utilized in higher education, with the acclaimed national search being the method of choice utilized for filling faculty and top administrative positions. However, with presidents and other leaders in academe needing to possess skills that cross over into the business sphere while sustaining the academic interest of their institutions, it may be wise to utilize a combination of external hiring and internal succession planning. This will aid in accomplishing the diversity goals of the institution while at the same time retaining important institutional knowledge and familiarity. The training and development of internal leaders can also ensure the acquisition of skills that are needed to manage both the business side and the academic side of the institution.

Succession planning was viewed as important by study participants and is a viable solution to the leadership pipeline problem in community colleges; however, the concept is new to the academy, and is slowly gaining traction in community colleges and other higher education institutions. Succession planning must be transparent and effectively communicated if it is to be fully embraced. The process must be intentional and requires new ways of thinking and a change in culture. Succession planning also requires visible support from boards and institutional leadership, and should not be the sole responsibility of human resources or organizational development personnel.
Leadership and professional development are fundamental to succession planning and should not be taken for granted. Having a written succession plan that focuses on these elements is a move in the right direction; however, no one benefits from having a written plan that is not implemented. Leadership and professional development will not become a part of the culture of an organization unless they are given priority, which means that funds are budgeted for these areas and ample opportunities are provided for individuals to engage in meaningful professional and leadership development.

Academic institutions vary from businesses and other corporate entities in terms of mission and goals and this has been voiced as a reason for not adopting succession planning practices in academe. However, academic leaders share many similarities with their business counterparts. Their major differences are in the areas of budgeting and finance which are stronger for business leaders, but academic leaders should focus on developing their fiscal skills. The current and future trajectory of higher education demands that they acquire these competencies and effectively communicate the importance of fiscal management to all constituents.

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher recommends conducting a follow-up study to the current research to explore the views of faculty and top administrators versus the views of the professional staff regarding succession planning. The researcher also recommends that a study be conducted at a higher education institution where a formal succession plan has been successfully implemented to determine what factors influence the effectiveness of succession planning. In addition, research can be conducted to answer the question: "Does succession planning need to be in the form of a written plan to be successfully
implemented, or can an institution effectively follow practices that conform to the succession process without a formal, written plan?"

Summary

Chapter five commenced with an overview of the previous four chapters of the study followed by a discussion of each of the findings and the implications for higher education leadership. The researcher found that change was a constant occurrence at the institution with the major change experienced being the appointment of a new president. The implication for higher education is that change needs to be managed and should be effectively communicated if it is to be embraced. Transparency and assessment are also fundamental for change to be successful.

A second finding was that diversity is valued at the institution. The focus on diversity was precipitated by the transformation of the cultural landscape in the broader environment. The institution practiced diversity in the way it constructed its hiring committees, which had to be vetted and approved by the human resources department. Implications for higher education leadership include the need for diversity to prevent cloning and other discrimination issues. Diversity is also important in community colleges as they prepare their graduates to be culturally competent, global citizens. Furthermore, diverse succession planning is important for increasing the bench strength among women and other minorities for leadership positions in community colleges and other higher education institutions.

A third finding is that top leaders are recruited from outside the institution via the national search process which is a common practice in higher education. The open search presents an opportunity to maximize on diversity of ideas and approaches and is
viewed as an easier method to recruit candidates with requisite skills and expertise for top leadership positions in academe. However, community colleges and other higher education institutions are beginning to question the cost of external searches and are giving more consideration to hiring from inside, especially in light of the leadership vacuum that will be created by the pending retirements of college presidents.

Succession planning was viewed as important for various reasons by most of the study participants. The process was considered important for back-filling key positions vacated by retiring presidents, and as essential for knowledge transfer or technical succession. Succession planning was also viewed as fundamental for identifying and developing future talent and for communicating defined career paths for professional growth.

In answering the research questions the findings were very similar to the superordinate themes that were unearthed. The first research question addressed how succession planning was evident in the institution's artifacts. The artifacts that were examined included the strategic plan and the written succession plan. Each was in lock-step with the other and they both emphasized professional and leadership development. Missing elements from the succession plan included a process for identifying potential leaders and a list of desired characteristics for those in leadership positions.

The second research question identified espoused beliefs and values of the institution, as expressed by faculty and administrators who participated in the study. Diversity along with professional and leadership development emerged as being valued, although participants' mixed reviews about professional and leadership development raised questions as to whether or not these were integrated into the institution's culture.
Specific funds should be allotted to support these initiatives and diversity efforts should focus on the hiring of more females and other minorities for leadership positions.

The basic underlying assumptions, which form the heart of the culture of the institution, were addressed in research question number three. These included: higher education is not a business and should not be treated as such, and candidates for top leadership positions are recruited from outside through national searches. There is still much reluctance in academe to adopt succession planning practices in spite of the positive examples that have been highlighted in business. However, academic leaders need to tap into their business side and focus on the market in which they now operate.

The overall culture of the institution was examined in the fourth and final research question. It was determined that a combination of the bureaucratic and managerial cultural models were present on the campus. Other conclusions drawn in this chapter highlight the similarities between academic and business leaders. Their main difference lies in their fiscal management abilities, and with the future trajectory of higher education focusing on new accountability measures and a more competitive, global market there are compelling reasons for academic leaders to become more astute and hone their skills in budgeting and finance. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research on succession planning in higher education.
REFERENCES


14-Apr-2015

Ms. Ruthlyn Charmion Richards
Merger University
Tift College of Education - Atlanta
3001 Mercer University Dr
Atlanta, GA 30341-4155

RE: Succession Planning in Higher Education: The Influence of Culture on the Succession Process in a Community College (H1504128)

Dear Ms. Richards:

Your application entitled: Succession Planning in Higher Education: The Influence of Culture on the Succession Process in a Community College (H1504128) was reviewed by this Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research in accordance with Federal Regulations 21 CFR 56.110(b) and 45 CFR 46.110(b) (for expedited review) and was approved under Category 6, 7 per 63 FR 60364.

Your application was approved for one year of study on 14-Apr-2015. The protocol expires 13-Apr-2016. If the study continues beyond one year, it must be re-evaluated by the IRB Committee.

Item(s) Approved:
New Application use of audio/videos, focus groups, and interviews

Please complete the survey for the IRB and the Office of Research Compliance. To access the survey, click on the following link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/K7CTT8R

Respectfully,

Ava Chambliss-Richardson, M.ED., CIP, CIM
Member
Institutional Review Board
Mercer University IRB & Office of Research Compliance
Phone (478) 301-4101
Fax (478) 301-2329
ORC_Mercer@Mercer.Edu
July 20, 2015

Dear Participant:

Thank you for participating in this research study. Your involvement is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from participation at any time during the process. The purpose of my study is to understand how the culture and traditions of a community college influence its succession planning process. I am including a copy of chapter one of my dissertation, which will provide you with further insight into my research, including the background of my research problem and the set of research questions.

As a participant, I will be asking you to join in an interview session that will last approximately forty-five minutes to an hour. The interview will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for your schedule. The interview protocol will consist of approximately ten questions, which will be given to you prior to the actual interview session.

In an effort to provide full disclosure, I would like to point out the following:

- There will be no compensation provided for your participation;
- Your identity and the identity of the institution will remain confidential. A pseudonym will be assigned to your transcription, and to the institution;
- Participation is completely voluntary, so you may withdraw at any time in the process;
- There are no known risks associated with this research process;
- The interview will be recorded and transcribed;
- The transcript will be sent to you for corroboration, and the summary of findings will be sent to you for verification of my interpretation of your responses;
- The information provided will be published in the dissertation.

Your participation in the interview session is an indication of your agreement to the above. Thank you again for your kind cooperation, and please feel free to contact me with any questions that may arise.

Sincerely,

Charmion Richards  
Doctoral Candidate  
Educational Leadership Program  
Mercer University

3001 Mercer University Drive • Atlanta, GA 30341-4155  
(678) 547-6550 • FAX (678)547-6639
Signature of Research Participant

I understand the information in the consent form regarding my participation in the research study. I hereby consent to participate in the research as described above.

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant   Date
Interview Protocol

Thank you for participating in my study. I believe that your input will be valuable to my research. This interview session is expected to last 45 minutes to an hour. As a reminder, the session will be audio recorded, and a pseudonym will be used in place of your real name to guarantee your anonymity.

Date: ____________________________________________

Time: ____________________________________________

Location: __________________________________________

Interviewer _______________________________________

Interviewee: _______________________________________

Consent form signed: ______________________________

Dissertation Title: Succession Planning in Higher Education: The Influence of Culture on the Succession Process in a Community College

Brief Description: There is a pending crisis in community college leadership due to lack of a robust pool of candidates to fill positions vacated by retiring presidents. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to examine how the culture of a community college influences succession planning.

1. Tell me about your background.
2. Tell me about your institution.
3. What are some of the things that are valued most at your institution?
4. How would you describe the way your institution adapts to change?
5. What seems to be the collective mindset about leadership and preparation on your campus?
6. How would you describe the career development practices at your institution?
7. How would you describe the promotion practices at your institution?
8. How would you describe the hiring practices at your institution?
9. How would you describe your process for filling vacancies for your top administrative positions?
10. What are your views of succession planning? How has succession planning worked at your institution?

Closing: Thank you again for your participation. I will send you a copy of the interview transcript for you to review for accuracy. I will also send you a summary of my findings for you to verify the correctness of my interpretation of your statements made during the interview.
Dear Ms. Richards,

I am happy to grant permission for you use the following article in your dissertation research: *Competencies for Community College Leaders (AACC, 2013)*.

Please note that the permission is granted for use of this material for educational and research purposes only.

I wish you the best of luck with your studies.

Sincerely,

Martha

Martha M. Parham, Ed.D.
Vice President, Marketing & Public Relations
American Association of Community Colleges
One Dupont Circle NW, Ste. 410
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 728-0200 x209

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Dear Tina:

My name is Ruthlyn Charmion Richards, and I am a Ph.D. student at Mercer University in Atlanta, Georgia, in their Educational Leadership Program. I am conducting research for my dissertation entitled, “Succession Planning in Higher Education: The Influence of Culture on the Succession Process in a Community College”, and would like to request permission to reproduce some information from an article for use in my dissertation.

The name of the article is, *Competencies for Community College Leaders (AACC, 2013)*. I am requesting permission to reproduce the information about the competencies in tabular form (please see attached).

Thanks in advance for your favorable reply!
September 15, 2015

The Ohio State University Press grants Charmion Richards permission to use Table 1 (p.8), A Framework of Organizational Culture, from the article titled "Organizational Culture in Higher Education: Defining the Essentials" published in the *Journal of Higher Education* 99.1, pages 2 – 21, in her dissertation, free of charge. Any future use in any other project would require separate permissions.