

SERVANT FIRST: A MULTICASE STUDY EXPLORING SERVANT LEADERSHIP
IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE INSTRUCTIONAL ADMINISTRATORS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	7
List of Figures	8
Abstract	9
Chapter One: Introduction	11
Problem Statement	12
Statement of Purpose	15
Research Questions	15
Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions	16
Definitions of Key Terms	17
Conceptual Framework	18
Greenleaf's Life Influences	19
Roots of Servant Leadership	22
Religion and Servant Leadership	24
Servant Leadership Defined	25
Summary	38
Chapter Two: Review of the Literature	39
Servant Leadership in Occupations	39
Servant Leadership in Education	44
Servant Leadership Principles in Education	44
K-12 Education	46
Higher Education	51
Focus on Community Colleges	56
Servant Leadership and Other Leadership Theories	61
Summary	64
Chapter Three: Methods	65
Rationale for Qualitative Research Design	65
Rationale for Multicase Study Methodology	67
Proposal and IRB Approval	68
Selection of Research Participants	69
Data Collection Methods	72
Data Analysis and Synthesis	79
Ethical Considerations	82
Issues of Trustworthiness	83
Limitations of the Study	84
Summary	85
Chapter Four: Findings	86
Chief Academic Officer A: Scott	86
Findings	88
Characteristics and Experiences	90
Chief Academic Officer B: Amanda	109
Findings	111
Characteristics and Experiences	111
Chief Academic Officer C: Glenn	134

Findings.....	135
Characteristics and Experiences	136
Chief Academic Officers A, B, and C: Cross-Case Analysis	157
Merged Findings	157
Characteristics and Experiences	158
Summary.....	170
Chapter Five: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	172
Discussion.....	172
Chief Academic Officer A: Scott.....	173
Chief Academic Officer B: Amanda.....	175
Chief Academic Officer C: Glenn	176
Merged Finding #1.....	177
Merged Finding #2.....	181
Conclusions.....	183
Conclusions Based on Merged Finding #1	183
Conclusions Based on Merged Finding #2	185
Recommendations.....	186
Recommendations for Community College Administrators.....	186
Recommendations for Servant Leaders	187
Recommendations for Future Researchers	187
Summary.....	189
References.....	190
Appendices.....	210
Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter	210
Appendix B: Email to CEOs: Initial Contact from Dr. Hinshaw	211
Appendix C: Email to CEOs: Invitation to Nominate	212
Appendix D: Email to CEOs: Thank You for Nomination	214
Appendix E: Email to CAOs: Initial Contact from Dr. Mackie	215
Appendix F: Email to CAOs: Invitation to Nominate	216
Appendix G: Email to CAOs: Thank You for Nomination	218
Appendix H: Interview Guide for Chief Academic Officer	219
Appendix I: Interview Guide for Chief Academic Officers:	
Follow-Up or Second Interview Questions.....	220
Appendix J: Interview Guide for Direct Reports.....	222
Appendix K: Interview Guide for Direct Reports: Follow-Up Questions.....	223
Appendix L: Observation Guide for Chief Academic Officers.....	225
Appendix M: Informed Consent Document: CAOs	226
Appendix N: Informed Consent Document: Direct Reports.....	228
Appendix O: Sample CAO Interview	230
Appendix P: Sample Direct Report Interview	241

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1. Characteristics of Servant Leaders	26
2. Chief Academic Officer (CAO) Nominations Received	71
3. Interviews and Observations with Chief Academic Officer A Scott) and Direct Reports.....	75
4. Interviews and Observations with Chief Academic Officer B (Amanda) and Direct Reports	76
5. Interviews and Observations with Chief Academic Officer C (Glenn) and Direct Reports.....	78
6. Servant Leadership Characteristics Attributed to Chief Academic Officer A (Scott).....	89
7. Servant Leadership Characteristics Attributed to Chief Academic Officer B (Amanda).....	112
8. Servant Leadership Characteristics Attributed to Chief Academic Officer C (Glenn).....	137
9. Servant Leadership Characteristics Attributed to Three Chief Academic Officers.....	159

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

1. Ten Characteristics of Servant Leaders30
2. Ten Characteristics of Servant Leaders with Descriptors.....31
3. Ten Characteristics of Servant Leaders in Three Community College CAOs158

ABSTRACT

SERVANT FIRST: A MULTICASE STUDY EXPLORING SERVANT LEADERSHIP
IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE INSTRUCTIONAL ADMINISTRATORS

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The purpose of this study was to explore the application of servant leadership principles to community college instructional administration. The study conducted was a multicase research design. The conceptual framework for the study was based on Greenleaf's work in servant leadership as expressed in 10 characteristics of servant leaders defined by Spears: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community.

Three community college chief academic officers were selected through a nomination process. Chief academic officer participants were selected because they were identified by their presidents and peers as displaying characteristics that appeared to be consistent with servant leadership. The three chief academic officers participated in semi-structured, one-on-one interviews, observation, and document analysis. In addition, five or six direct reports of each chief academic officer participated in semi-structured, one-on-one interviews regarding their supervisor's leadership.

The major findings of the study affirmed that all three chief academic officers displayed all 10 characteristics of a servant leader identified by Spears, with three of

those characteristics being identified more frequently than the others and one characteristic being identified less frequently than the others. The varied strengths were reflective of the chief academic officers' diverse backgrounds, interests, and passions. Characteristics displayed by the three chief academic officers in addition to the 10 characteristics identified by Spears included honesty, courage, commitment to family, dedication, flexibility, and informality. The study also revealed that the direct reports attributed many positive experiences to their supervisor's leadership philosophy and behaviors. One criticism was the amount of time consumed by the collaborative effort that is a hallmark of the three CAOs' leadership.

The study concluded that there are servant leaders who occupy positions as community college chief academic officers. It was further concluded that those who report to servant leaders who occupy positions as community college chief academic officers have very positive and satisfying work experiences that largely stem from their supervisor's leadership style.

The study concluded with recommendations for community college administrators, servant leaders, and future researchers.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

I first encountered the servant leadership work of Robert Kiefer Greenleaf (1904-1990) while teaching my first college course in 2004. I had been introduced to the ideas of servant leadership prior to that time, though. Growing up in a Christian church and then attending church-related colleges and universities in preparation for my first career as a Christian minister, I knew the ideas through the teachings of Jesus Christ in the New Testament:

Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:42-45, New International Version).

But through Greenleaf’s writings, I became acquainted with this management consultant who, while influenced by religious ideas, developed the modern-day concept of servant leadership primarily for business settings.

A few years later, while working on an Education Specialist degree at Appalachian State University, I objected in a leadership class to the exclusion of servant leadership as one of the leadership styles in Northouse’s (2007) classic text on leadership. My objection was summarily dismissed as servant leadership was, in the professor’s opinion, just a “religious concept.”

As I read independently of my graduate studies, though, I found a rich body of work related to servant leadership that was *not* strictly religious in nature. Greenleaf's writing revealed a way of leading that resonated with me.

When I moved from my initial faculty position into the role of associate dean and then dean of the School of Academics, Education, and Fine Arts at Catawba Valley Community College, I set my sights on a doctoral program in Educational Leadership at Western Carolina University. There, in the very first class, I found an openness to the principles of the leadership philosophy that still intrigued me and, increasingly, were becoming ingrained in my own leadership journey. Interestingly, Northouse (2013) has included a substantial chapter on servant leadership in his latest edition of the text that I first encountered in that leadership class at Appalachian.

The focus of my dissertation on Greenleaf's servant leadership work and the application of those principles to community college instructional administration has grown out of my own leadership journey and a growing professional interest in the scholarship of servant leadership.

Problem Statement

Community colleges, like virtually all organizations, require effective leadership. Yet even the brightest scholars struggle to define leadership, let alone prescribe a clear path to such leadership.

Roueche, Baker, and Rose (1989) offered a definition of leadership for the community college:

Leadership is the ability to influence, shape, and embed values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors consistent with increased staff and faculty commitment to the unique mission of the community college. (p. 18)

Numerous community college leaders and researchers have noted an impending shortage of senior-level leaders in America's community college system. Nearly a decade ago, the American Association of Community Colleges cited an approaching wave of retiring college presidents (Ashford, 2011). According to Roueche (2011), though, widespread economic woes caused many presidents to postpone their retirements. Of late, other observers of the community college landscape are repeating similar predictions, including Riggs (2009), Reille and Kezar (2010), and, once again, the American Association of Community Colleges (2011). Roueche also pointed out that many of those poised to become presidents, traditionally community college chief academic officers (CAOs), are also approaching retirement age. The same observation was made by Reille and Kezar, who went on to note specifically that there are not enough qualified candidates for the number of positions that will need to be filled.

Yet, just filling the president's seat—or even all the seats around the table of the president's cabinet or executive council—is not the extent of the problem. Numerous researchers have voiced the opinion that a *different type of leader* is needed in community college administration (Roueche, Richardson, Neal, & Roueche, 2008). Walker and McPhail (2009) argued that “the challenging culture and proliferation of forces against the 21st century community college will require a different kind of leadership” (p. 322). The root of this need, Walker and McPhail maintained, is that “educational leaders often bear the brunt of all of society's dilemmas and problems, and communities often demand

that leaders fix everything” (p. 322). In the wake an inability to meet the “irresolvable challenges” (Walker & McPhail, 2009, p. 322), traditional, hierarchical leadership is largely in the past as many community colleges and other higher education institutions have moved toward leadership approaches that are more collaborative (Kezar, 2001). The “great person” (Roueche, Baker, & Rose, 1989, p. 20) approach is no longer as effective—or as widely accepted by faculty, staff, and students—as it was during the early years of the American community college movement.

Instead, the leadership gap identified by Robison, Sugar, and Miller (2010) demands a new approach. Malm (2008) cited collaborative leadership that involves “visibility, praising, empowering, and inclusion” (p. 623) as valuable in a study of modern community college presidents. After quoting Robert Frost, Haire and Dodson-Pennington (2002) pointed to their institution’s “less-traveled road of collaboration” (p. 61) as one that had made a great impact on both the institution and the people it served. Reviewing new leadership concepts in the literature, Eddy and VanDerLinden (2006) mentioned team leadership, servant leadership, transformative leadership, and inclusive leadership as possible replacements for the “traditional discussions of the ‘great man’ or ‘hero’ leader” (p. 6).

As early as 1997, Shugart (1997, 1999) suggested servant leadership as a model for community college leadership: “If community colleges are to sustain the servant ethic that inspires our best work, servant leaders who consistently articulate an authentic, mission-driven vision for the college must lead them” (1999, p. 2). Shugart (1999) went on to state that “much in the traditional mission” (p. 2) of the community college

“remains valid and true to the spirit of servanthood” (p. 2). Emphasizing the role of trust, Shugart stated:

Trust is one of those paradoxical qualities that only grows when it is given away. For a community college leader, this means fashioning organizations that are open, leadership teams that are non-defensive, decision making processes that genuinely share responsibility, and habits of listening and serving at every level of the organization. (p. 3)

Shugart (1997, 1999) pointed community college leaders to the servant leadership work of Greenleaf. Little research exists that explores servant leadership as a model for community college leaders, and especially instructional administrators.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this multicase study was to explore the application of servant leadership principles to community college instructional administration. I sought to understand how community college instructional administrators model Greenleaf’s servant leadership principles. While numerous researchers have explored the servant leadership model in business and education, including the community college presidency, there is a gap in the literature on the use of servant leadership as a model for community college chief academic officers and other community college instructional administrators. This multicase study sought to identify, investigate, describe, and analyze servant leadership in such community college leadership positions.

Research Questions

To fulfill the purpose of this study, the following research questions were addressed:

(1) How do community college instructional administrators exhibit the characteristics of servant leadership?

(2) What are the experiences of those who report to community college instructional administrators who display the characteristics of servant leadership?

Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions

According to Cunningham (J. D. Cunningham, personal communication, September 1, 2010), limitations are factors that future researchers would encounter when attempting to replicate a study, while delimitations are factors that prevent a claim that findings are generalizable.

Limitations of this study were related to the data collection methods used. Data collected were limited to that which was gathered through interviews, observations, and document analysis. In addition, the restriction of participants to those holding positions in the spring 2012 semester was a limitation of the study.

Delimitations of this study included the geographic constraints of the area under consideration. In order to be able to conduct interviews in person and to include observations, the selection of participants was restricted to those holding positions in community colleges in the western region of North Carolina. Also, data collection was limited to that which could be collected by a single researcher.

Assumptions of this study included the following:

(1) Those surveyed in the nomination process described in chapter 3 were familiar enough with the leadership behaviors of their peers and subordinates that they identified those who displayed the characteristics of servant leaders.

(2) The nomination process identified those leaders eligible for the study who were most likely to be servant leaders.

(3) Those interviewed in the data collection process gave truthful answers and shared observations freely.

(4) The behavior exemplified by participants and observed by the researcher was typical of their normal behavior.

Definitions of Key Terms

Case study research. Case study research is a form of qualitative study that “is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (e.g., an activity, event, process, or individuals) based on extensive data collection” (Creswell, 2008, p. 476). Primarily, the cases of case study research in education are people and programs (Stake, 1995).

Chief Academic Officer (CAO). The CAO is the senior instructional administrator at an institution of higher education. In community colleges, common titles for the CAO include Vice President of Instruction and Dean of Instruction.

Community colleges. Community colleges are publicly-funded institutions of higher education that primarily award the associate degree as their highest degree (American Association of Community Colleges, 2006).

Direct report. A direct report is an employee who receives direction and supervision from an employee who is more senior in position.

Instructional administrator. An instructional administrator is an employee who provides direction and supervision for the educational programs of an institution of higher education.

President/Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The president or CEO is the highest-ranking official of an organization. In the context of this study, the president or CEO of a community college is the person selected by a governing body to provide direction and supervision for the institution.

Leader. A leader is an individual who “influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2007, p. 3).

Leadership. Leadership is “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2007, p. 3).

Multicase study. A multicase study is case study research that involves the examination of two or more cases that are similar.

Servant leader. Servant leaders are leaders who place the needs of others above their own interests (Greenleaf, 1970).

Servant leadership. Servant leadership is a way of leading that places the needs of others above the leader’s own interests. For this study, the form of servant leadership that was considered was the model developed in the work of Greenleaf (1970). A more detailed description of servant leadership and its characteristics is provided in the next section.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study was based on the work of Greenleaf, whose 1970 seminal work in servant leadership set the foundation for understanding the importance of leader as servant. Seeking to answer, “Who is the servant leader?” (p. 15) Greenleaf stated:

The servant-leader *is* servant first. . . . It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is *leader* first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such it will be a later choice to serve—after leadership is established. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadows and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature. (p. 15)

Greenleaf continued with an emphasis on followers:

The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least, not be further deprived? (p. 15)

An understanding of servant leadership requires consideration of not only its principles, but also the background and influences of its founder.

Greenleaf's Life Influences

Robert Kiefer Greenleaf was born July 14, 1904, in Terre Haute, Indiana. He was the son of George Washington Greenleaf and Burchie Mae Greenleaf. George Greenleaf worked at various times as a grocer, machinist, and mechanic while Burchie Greenleaf cared for their two children at home (Frick, 2004).

An early influence in the young Greenleaf's life was his father's brother-in-law, John Parkhurst, a professor of astronomy at the University of Chicago's observatory in

Williams Bay, Wisconsin. Not long after Robert's birth, George Greenleaf accepted a position as a machinist at Rose Polytechnic Institute, and Robert grew up both watching his father at work and admiring from a distance the more academic pursuits of his uncle who visited the Greenleaf family in Terre Haute occasionally (Frick, 2004).

George Greenleaf became involved in local politics, first with the machinists' union, and then later winning a seat on the Terre Haute City Council when his son was six years old. Young Robert Greenleaf often accompanied his father to the evening City Council meetings during the four years the elder Greenleaf served in that capacity (Frick, 2004). Frick (2004) noted that the arrival of Halley's Comet in 1910 made quite an impact on Robert Greenleaf, leading him to later consider following his uncle into a career in astronomy.

Frick (2004) detailed, as well, the difficult childhood Greenleaf endured. His mother was an alcoholic and had a "volatile, unpredictable" (p. 25) temperament. Greenleaf often referred to the impact of his father on his development, but had little to say about his mother (Frick, 2004; Greenleaf, 2003a).

Older sister June provided a good example for Robert. She placed great emphasis on her studies, and attended both the Indiana State Normal School in Terre Haute and later the Teachers College of Columbia University in New York, where she earned a master's degree. June was a high school Latin and French teacher in her hometown until illness forced her early retirement at age 50 (Frick, 2004).

Frick (2004) called Robert Greenleaf's father a "remarkable man" (p. 27) and stated that he was Greenleaf's "original template for a servant-leader" (p. 27). He was, in Frick's estimation, a "community trustee" (p. 30) who "took responsibility for the wider

affairs of his city” (p. 30). The time the elder Greenleaf spent with his son conveyed lessons in servant leadership that Robert Greenleaf incorporated into his writings. George Greenleaf died at age 80. The last essay that Robert Greenleaf wrote before his own death was the unpublished “My Life with Father,” a tribute to the man who taught him so much about serving family and community (Frick, 2004).

Greenleaf’s high school years provided education as well as work experiences. He worked for a time as a clerk in a shoe store but, with his father’s assistance, landed a summer job as an apprentice at a machine company. It provided him exposure to the world of work, including the operation of a company with about 100 employees (Frick, 2004).

Following high school graduation, Greenleaf enrolled in Rose Polytechnic Institute. There was no money to go away to college, so he decided to enroll in the electrical engineering program at his father’s employer. Greenleaf excelled academically, but realized that engineering was not his desired career field (Frick, 2004). Frick (2004) pointed out that although engineering was ruled out as a career, there was nothing to replace it, since the young Greenleaf “had no clear direction” (p. 60). Greenleaf (1977) stated, “As late as the last half of my senior year in college I was without a clear vocational aim. I knew that, on graduation, I would work at something, but I was not much concerned about what it would be” (p. 1).

One of the few areas to pique Greenleaf’s attention was the subject of leadership. He became fascinated by organizations, and proclaimed himself a student of human interaction and corporate organizational structures. He found himself drawn to the humanities more than business or engineering (Frick, 2004). Greenleaf (1998a) later

referred to himself as a “student of organization” (p. 19) and “how things get done” (p. 19), and noted that he was particularly interested in large organizations.

Greenleaf landed a job with AT&T—a corporation that interested him because it was, at that time, the largest company in the world. Greenleaf was first assigned to a line crew in Youngstown, Ohio, where he primarily dug post holes and carried tools (Greenleaf, 1977, 1996b).

Soon after, though, Greenleaf was transferred to the engineering department in Akron, Ohio. After about a year of employment, Greenleaf was chosen to take a training course at the company headquarters in Cleveland—the first step of a long career in management training (Greenleaf, 1977, 1996b).

Greenleaf spent most of his career at AT&T, continuing to study organizational culture and serving as a corporate educator with the large employer. Although his career at AT&T lasted 40 years, it was only the beginning of his life’s work, as after his 1964 retirement, Greenleaf embarked upon a second 25-year career as a management and leadership consultant (Frick, 2004; Greenleaf, 2003a; Spears, 2004; Spears & Lawrence, 2002).

Roots of Servant Leadership

Frick (2004) wrote that Greenleaf’s flash of leadership insight occurred in October 1968 as Greenleaf and his wife drove through Arizona on their way to an upcoming speaking engagement on leadership. The subject of his reflection was German author Hermann Hesse’s short 1956 novel *The Journey to the East*. Greenleaf (1970, 2003a) attributed the idea for his original essay, “The Servant as Leader,” to reading the mythical story of a group of men who had engaged on a spiritual journey that was likely

reflective of Hesse's own journey, as the narrator of the story was referred to as "H.H."—Hesse's own initials.

As Greenleaf (1970, 2002) summarized the story, the central character of the novel is Leo, who was a part of the traveling band, but in the role of their servant, attended to their needs. Leo entertained them with song, though, and was said by Greenleaf to be a "person of extraordinary presence" (1970, p. 9). The journey progressed well until Leo disappeared one day, after which the group was unable to remain unified and ultimately abandoned its quest, being unable to make it without Leo.

After many years of life, H.H. found Leo. The narrator discovered that Leo, known first to him as a servant, was the head of the spiritual order that had sponsored the original journey. Leo was, Greenleaf (1970) wrote, "a great and noble leader" (p. 9).

Greenleaf (1970) interpreted Hesse's story as a semi-autobiographical account of Hesse's own "tortured life" (p. 7) as he sought peace in his later years. Greenleaf (1970) summarized the most important statement of Hesse's story as this:

This story clearly says that *the great leader is seen as a servant first*, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness. Leo was actually the leader all of the time, but he was servant first because that was what he was, *deep down inside*.

Leadership was bestowed upon a man who was by nature a servant. It was something given, or assumed, that could be taken away. His servant nature was the real man, not bestowed, not assumed, and not to be taken away. He was servant first. (p. 9)

Religion and Servant Leadership

Many researchers and students of leadership theory have identified religious overtones in the principles of servant leadership. The influence of Hesse's (1956) *Journey to the East* on Greenleaf prompted Sendjaya, Sarros, and Santora (2008) to identify Hindu elements in servant leadership. Hanh (1999) also recognized a connection with eastern religion, but with Buddhism. Kurth (2003), Wallace (2007), and Winston and Ryan (2008) pointed out that the priority of serving others is a tenant of numerous religions, including Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism. Numerous writers, including Agosto (2005), Akuchie (1993), Anderson (2008), Banks and Powell (2000), Blackaby and Blackaby (2001), Boyum (2006), Egan (1994), Ford (1991), McClellan (2009), Reinke (2004), Sanders (1994), Warren (2002), Wright (2000), and Yu (2007) have identified servant leadership with Christianity, largely based on the numerous biblical accounts of servant leadership (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002).

Of greater interest in this discussion, however, are the identified religious foundations in Greenleaf's life that contributed to the development of servant leadership principles. In his brief essay, "The Servant as Religious Leader," Greenleaf (1998c) stated of his own belief system: "I am a creature of the Judeo-Christian tradition in which I grew up, as modified by the Quaker portion of that tradition that I acquired after maturity" (p. 112). Nielsen (1998) and, more recently, Crippen (2011) identified Quaker influences in servant leadership. Greenleaf (1996a) also wrote: "I treasure the Judeo-Christian tradition. I do not value it above other traditions, but it is the one in which I grew up. The great symbolic wisdom of this tradition grows on me day by day" (p. 289).

One of the earliest religious influences on Greenleaf was John G. Benson, minister of the Montrose Methodist Episcopal Church in Terre Haute. Benson was young, energetic, and appealing, and both Greenleaf and his sister were involved in numerous church activities. Later, after Benson left, Greenleaf joined another Methodist church in town. These congregations provided examples of Christian believers engaged in service to others—a component that would be developed later in Greenleaf’s leadership strategies. Methodist founder John Wesley emphasized the social aspects of religion, encouraging Christians to work together to improve life for all people. This was very appealing to Greenleaf, and he incorporated that same emphasis in the core of servant leadership (Frick, 2004).

Servant Leadership Defined

Greenleaf resisted setting forth any lists of principles that defined servant leadership (Reinke, 2004). Instead, Greenleaf’s view of servant leadership was developed in essays, narratives, and even fables. A definition of servant leadership, beyond that conveyed by Greenleaf’s (1970) discussion of Leo and H.H. from *The Journey to the East* (Hesse, 1956), is difficult to find.

Several students of Greenleaf’s leadership philosophy have sought to reduce Greenleaf’s teaching to a list of characteristics of the servant leader (see Table 1). Buchen (1998) set forth self-identity, capacity for reciprocity, relationship builders, and preoccupation with the future as attributes found in a servant leader. Farling, Stone, and Winston (1999) cited five characteristics: vision, influence, credibility, trust, and service. Graham (1991) used two broader categories, and stated that a servant leader must be inspirational and moral. McGee-Cooper and Looper (2001) expanded the list: listens to

Table 1

Characteristics of Servant Leaders

	Batten (1998)	Batten (1998) (Continued)	Buchen (1998)	Farling, Stone, & Winston (1999)
Barbuto & Wheeler (2006)	Openness, emotional vulnerability Warmth Consistency Unity Caring Positive listening Unsatisfaction Flexibility Giving Involvement Tolerance of mistakes Values Psychological wages Simplicity Time Winning formula: integrity, quality service An open mind Development of people	Self-discipline Physical fitness Enjoyment of life Broad perspective Faith in self and others Vision Positive thinking Desire to learn Enjoyment of work Enrichment of others Integrity Results, not activity Candor Management by example A clear philosophy Accountability Purpose and direction Expectations of excellence Laserlike focus	Self-identity Capacity for reciprocity Relationship builders Preoccupation with future	Vision Influence Credibility Trust Service
Listening Empathy Healing Awareness Persuasion Conceptualization Foresight Stewardship Commitment to the growth of people Building community Calling				

Table 1 (Continued)

Characteristics of Servant Leaders

Graham (1991)	Laub (1999)	McGee-Cooper & Looper (2001)	Page & Wong (2000)	Russell (2001)
Inspirational Moral	Values people Develops people Builds community Displays authenticity Provides leadership Shares leadership	Listens to and understands the needs and concerns of others Works toward consensus Honors paradox Works to create answers beyond the compromise of negotiations	Integrity Humility Servanthood Caring for others Empowering others Developing others Visioning Goal setting Leading Modeling Team-building Shared decision- making	Vision Credibility Trust Service Modeling Pioneering

Table 1 (Continued)

Characteristics of Servant Leaders

	Sendjaya (2003)	Sipe & Frick (2009)	Spears (2002)	Van Dierendonck (2011)
Voluntary subordination		Person of character	Listening	Empowering and developing people
Authentic self		Puts people first	Empathy	Humility
Covenantal relationship		Skilled communicator	Healing	Authenticity
Responsible morality		Compassionate collaborator	Awareness	Interpersonal acceptance
Transcendent spirituality		Foresight	Persuasion	Providing direction
Transforming influence		Systems thinker	Conceptualization	Stewardship
		Moral authority	Foresight	
			Stewardship	
			Commitment to the growth of people	
			Building community	

and understands the needs and concerns of others, works toward consensus, honors paradox, and works to create answers beyond the compromise of negotiations. Russell (2001) set forth vision, credibility, trust, service, modeling, and pioneering as characteristics of a servant leader. Sendjaya (2003) measured six attributes: voluntary subordination, authentic self, covenantal relationship, responsible morality, transcendent spirituality, and transforming influence. Van Dierendonck (2011) identified six characteristics, as well, but listed them as empowering and developing people, humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, providing direction, and stewardship. Batten (1998) identified a total of 37 values for servant leaders.

Perhaps the most definitive list of servant leadership characteristics is that of Spears (2002), former Executive Director of the Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, an organization founded by Greenleaf himself “to encourage the understanding and practice of servant-leadership” (p. 14). The organization’s stated mission is “to fundamentally improve the caring and quality of all institutions through a servant-leader approach to leadership, structure, and decision making” (p. 14).

After a number of years devoted to “carefully considering Greenleaf’s original writings” (Spears, 2002, p. 4), both published and unpublished, Spears identified 10 characteristics of servant leaders from Greenleaf’s work (see Figure 1). Those attributes are listed below, as described primarily in Greenleaf’s (1970) original essay, *The Servant as Leader*, and in Spears’ (2002) first articulation of those 10 characteristics in an essay, *Tracing the Past, Present, and Future of Servant-Leadership*. Additionally, I have posited some “key descriptors” for each of the 10 characteristics to aid in the

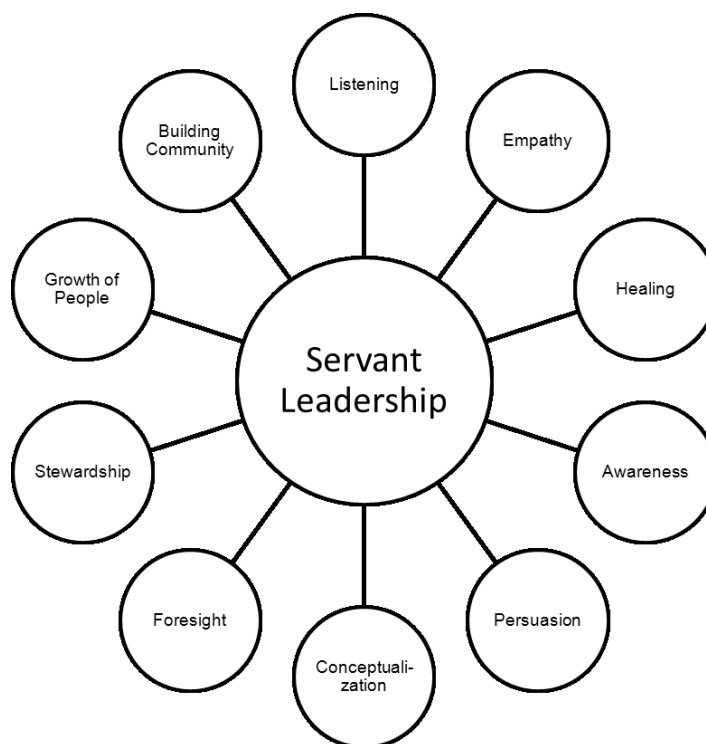


Figure 1. Ten characteristics of servant leadership. Characteristics from “Tracing the Past, Present, and Future of Servant-Leadership,” by L. C. Spears, 2002, in L. C. Spears & M. Lawrence (Eds.), *Focus on Leadership: Servant-Leadership for the Twenty-First Century* (pp. 1-16). New York, NY: Wiley.

identification and differentiation of the characteristics, drawing primarily from the same two essays from Greenleaf and Spears (see Figure 2).

(1) Listening. According to Spears’ (2002) analysis, the servant leader needs a “deep commitment” (p. 5) to a level of listening that includes receptivity and “getting in touch with one’s own inner voice” (p. 5). According to Spears, listening should be accompanied by reflection.

Greenleaf (1970) maintained that “only a true natural servant automatically responds to any problem by listening *first*” (p. 18). Greenleaf’s test for the depth of listening required of servant leaders is to ask of one’s self: “Are we really listening? Are we listening to the one we want to communicate to? Is our basic attitude, as we approach

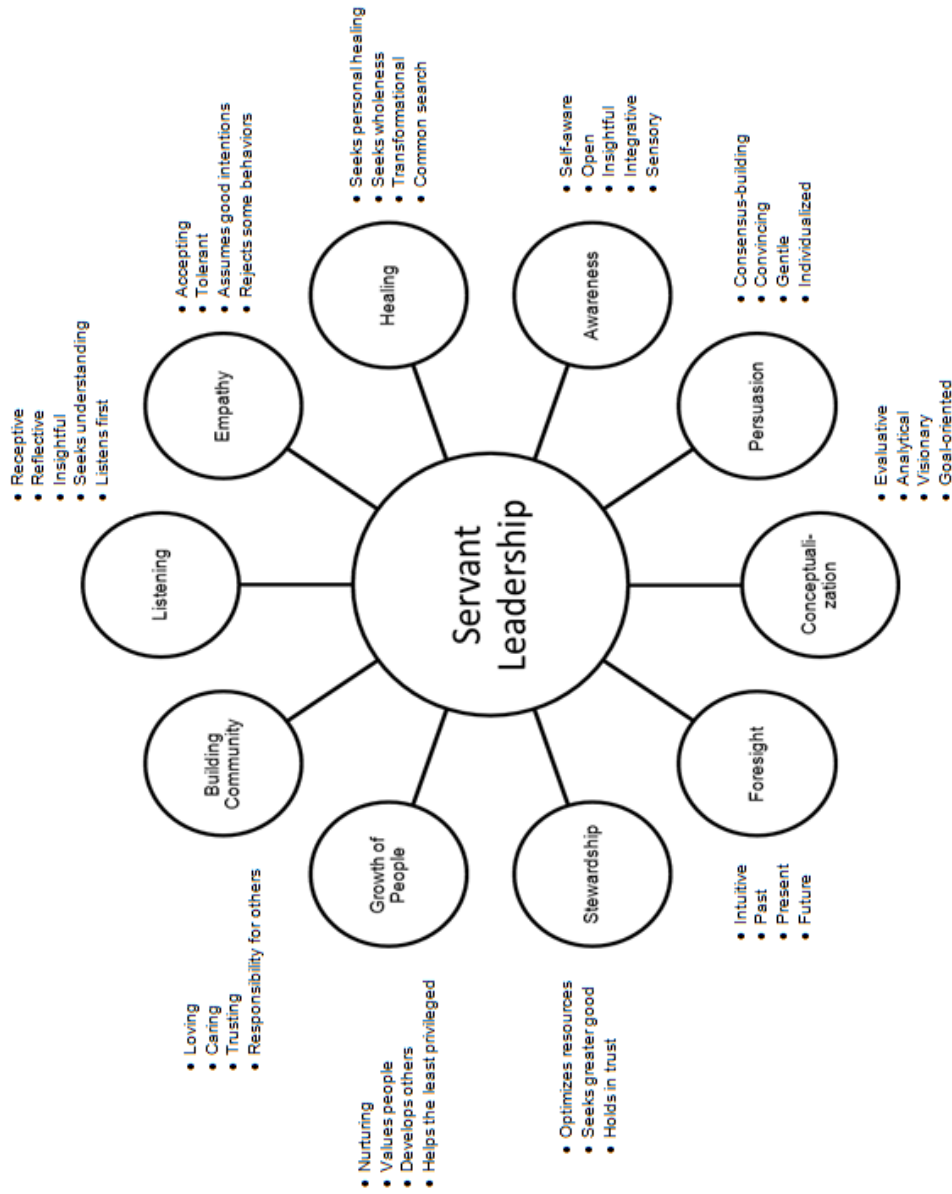


Figure 2. Ten characteristics of servant leadership with descriptors. Characteristics from “Tracing the Past, Present, and Future of Servant-Leadership,” by L. C. Spears, 2002, in L. C. Spears & M. Lawrence (Eds.), *Focus on Leadership: Servant-Leadership for the Twenty-First Century* (pp. 1-16). New York, NY: Wiley.

the confrontation, one of wanting to understand?” (p. 19) Listening, Greenleaf maintained, is “terribly important” (p. 19).

Based on the writings of both Greenleaf (1970) and Spears (2002), key descriptors for listening include being *receptive*, *reflective*, and *insightful*. Additionally, a servant leader *seeks understanding* and *listens first* as a natural response to any problem.

(2) Empathy. Spears (2002) stated that the servant leader “strives to understand and empathize” (p. 5), and realizes that “people need to be accepted and recognized for their special and unique spirits” (p. 5).

Greenleaf (1970) defined empathy as “the imaginative projection of one’s own consciousness into another’s being” (p. 21). “The servant as leader always empathizes, always accepts the person but sometimes refuses to accept some of the person’s effort or performance as good enough” (p. 21), Greenleaf wrote. He continued:

Men grow taller when those who lead them empathize and when they are accepted for what they are, even though their performance may be judged critically in terms of what they are capable of doing. Leaders who empathize and who fully accept those who go with them on this basis are more likely to be trusted. (pp. 22-23)

Key descriptors for empathy include *accepting* and *tolerant*. A servant leader also *assumes good intentions* until evidence demands otherwise. Even while being accepting of individuals, a servant leader often *rejects some behaviors* because they seek to bring out the best in those they lead.

(3) Healing. “Broken spirits” (Spears, 2002, p. 5) and “emotional hurt” (Spears, 2002, p. 5), both of the servant leader and others, may be healed through the “transformation and integration” (Spears, 2002, p. 5) of servant leadership.

Greenleaf (1970) told a story of 12 clergy from various faiths and 12 psychiatrists who gathered for an informal seminar on healing. They concluded that their motivation for seeking to heal was so that they could themselves be healed. “There is something subtle communicated to one who is being served and led if, implicit in the compact between servant-leader and led, is the understanding that the search for wholeness is something they share” (p. 37), Greenleaf wrote.

The servant leader *seeks personal healing* and *seeks wholeness*, and those terms are key descriptors of the characteristic of healing. In addition, servant leaders are *transformational* in their relationships with others, and acknowledge that the quest for healing is a *common search* with other people.

(4) Awareness. According to Spears (2002), Greenleaf advocated both general awareness and self-awareness because each “strengthens the servant-leader” (p. 6), enabling the leader to “view most situations from a more integrated, holistic position” (p. 6).

Greenleaf (1970) phrased it this way:

Framing all of this is awareness, opening wide the doors of perception so as to enable one to get more of what is available of sensory experience and other signals from the environment than people usually take in....When one is aware ... more is stored away in the unconscious computer to produce intuitive insights in the future when needed. (p. 28)

Key descriptors for the characteristic of awareness include *self-aware*, *open*, *insightful*, and *integrative*. Servant leaders possess an awareness that is *sensory* in nature, as the leader opens wide his or her “doors of perception” (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 28).

(5) Persuasion. Servant leaders “rely on persuasion, rather than on one’s positional authority, in making decisions within an organization,” Spears (2002, p. 6) wrote, and the building of consensus is of particular value. Spears attributed this emphasis specifically to the influence of The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) upon Greenleaf.

To explain persuasion, Greenleaf (1970) recounted the story of John Woolman, a Quaker who determined as a young man to embark on a quiet campaign to eliminate slavery from the followers of Quakerism—one slaveholder at a time. Woolman traveled the east coast, visiting slaveholders and persuading them that slavery was not compatible with their religion. “Leadership by persuasion,” Greenleaf wrote, “has the virtue of change by conviction rather than coercion” (p. 30).

Based on the work of Greenleaf (1970) and Spears (2002), key descriptors for the characteristic of persuasion are *consensus-building*, *convincing*, and *gentle*. Greenleaf noted that persuasion is often *individualized*, as Woolman’s story indicated.

(6) Conceptualization. “The ability to look at a problem (or an organization) from a conceptualizing perspective,” according to Spears (2002, p. 6), “means that one must think beyond day-to-day realities” (p. 6). Spears wrote of the need for most managers to change in this area specifically if they desire to become servant leaders.

Greenleaf (1970) called conceptualization “the prime leadership talent” (p. 33). Conceptual talent “states and adjusts goals, analyzes and evaluates operating

performance, and foresees contingencies a long way ahead” (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 66).

Long-term planning is a vital part of conceptualization.

Key descriptors for the characteristic of conceptualization include *evaluative*, *analytical*, and *visionary*. In addition, Greenleaf (1970) maintained that servant leaders are *goal-oriented*.

(7) Foresight. Although related to conceptualization, foresight, specifically, is “a characteristic that enables the servant-leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequence of a decision for the future” (Spears, 2002, p. 7). Spears (2002) stated that this is one characteristic it might be possible to argue that is inherent from birth in a servant leader, while others must be developed.

Greenleaf (1970) cited foresight as being “the central ethic of leadership” (p. 25). Foresight involves intuition—that which fills the gaps in trend data and is “the product of a constantly running internal computer that deals with intersecting series and random inputs and is vastly more complicated than anything technology has yet produced” (p. 25). This foresight is a result of living in two realms—the real world as well as a detached world above the real one, as the leader sees the day’s events in the perspective of history and the foreseeable future.

Foresight is indicated in a servant leader by recognizing such key descriptors as *intuitive* and a focus on *past*, *present*, and *future* as the servant leader understands the past, is aware of the realities of the present, and projects the consequences of a decision for the future.

(8) Stewardship. In Spears' (2002) analysis, Greenleaf felt strongly that servant leaders play "significant roles in holding their institutions in trust for the greater good of society" (p. 7). As such, the first goal of servant leadership is "serving the needs of others" (p. 7).

Greenleaf (1970) spoke of "making optimal use of one's resources" (p. 21), constantly asking, "How can I use myself to serve best?" (p. 21) Everything entrusted to the servant leader is held in trust for the greater good of the community.

Although Greenleaf never used the word "stewardship" in his writings, the principle is important, and is represented by such key descriptors as *optimizes resources*, *seeks greater good*, and *holds in trust* important resources for those being served.

(9) Commitment to the growth of people. People have "an intrinsic value" (Spears, 2002, p. 7) that is far deeper than any person's designated role in an organization. For that reason, according to Spears (2002), "the servant-leader is deeply committed to the growth of each and every individual within his or her institution" (p. 8). The servant leader has a responsibility to "nurture the personal, professional, and spiritual growth of employees" (p. 8).

Greenleaf's (1970) test of servant leadership, mentioned earlier, asks: "Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?" (p. 15)

Key descriptors for the characteristics of commitment to the growth of people include a *nurturing* attitude on the part of the servant leader. The servant leader *values people*, *develops others*, and particularly *helps the least privileged* of society.

(10) Building community. One important function of a servant leader is “building community among those who work within a given institution” (Spears, 2002, p. 8). Greenleaf felt strongly, Spears (2002) asserted, that “true community can be created among those who work in businesses and other institutions” (p. 8).

Greenleaf (1970) wrote:

Where there is not community, trust, respect, and ethical behavior are difficult for the young to learn and for the old to maintain....The opportunities are tremendous for rediscovering vital lost knowledge about how to live in community....All that is needed to rebuild community as a viable life form for large numbers of people is for enough servant-leaders to show the way, not by mass movements, but by each servant-leader demonstrating his own unlimited liability for a quite specific community-related group. (p. 40)

The characteristic of building community is represented by key descriptors such as *loving*, *caring*, and *trusting*. The servant leader also accepts *responsibility for others* willingly.

Spears (2010) articulated the same list in a subsequent publication as “interest in the meaning and practice of servant leadership continues to grow” (p. 29). The list of ten principles did not change and the language Spears used to describe them has evolved very little. Barbuto and Wheeler (2006) add calling as an 11th characteristic.

A growing number of researchers have used Spears’ (2002) 10 principles in recent years as a conceptual framework to examine leadership. Crippen (2004), in a qualitative historical analysis, examined the lives of three Manitoba pioneer women for evidence of the 10 servant leadership characteristics. A study of an automotive group by

Contee-Borders (2002) employed the same 10 characteristics of servant leadership as the conceptual framework for a case study of a for-profit business. In education, Omoh (2007) used the 10 attributes for the conceptual framework of a phenomenological study of a group of people who worked with a particular community college president. The qualitative portion of a mixed-methods study by Kasun (2009) utilized Spears' (2002) 10 characteristics in an examination of the leadership style of public school principals. A quantitative study of public school leaders by Hill (2007) used the same list of characteristics, as well.

Summary

Like virtually all organizations, community colleges require effective leadership. Numerous researchers have voiced the opinion that a different type of leader is needed for the future than has been the norm in the community college's history. Even some 15 years ago, Shugart (1997, 1999) suggested servant leadership as an effective model for community college leadership.

Having introduced Greenleaf's (1970) philosophy of servant leadership in this first chapter, a literature review is undertaken in chapter 2 to further explore servant leadership as a model for community college leadership.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this multicase study was to explore the application of servant leadership principles to community college instructional administration. Specifically, the researcher sought to understand how community college instructional administrators model Greenleaf's servant leadership principles as defined by Spears (2002). To accomplish this study, it was necessary to conduct a review of current literature. The review was ongoing throughout the data collection, data analysis, and synthesis phases of the study.

This literature review explores the use of servant leadership principles in various occupations, K-12 education, and several higher education settings as a background and foundation for a focused review of the literature related to the adoption of servant leadership principles in the community college setting, which is the focus of this study. In addition, this literature review briefly explores comparisons between servant leadership and other leadership theories found in the literature. To conduct this review, the researcher used multiple information sources, including books, published and unpublished dissertations, Internet resources, professional journals, and a few periodicals. No specific delimitating time frame was employed during the search. A summary concludes the chapter.

Servant Leadership in Occupations

Over the last several decades, Greenleaf's principles of servant leadership have been applied to various occupations by researchers and writers. Greenleaf (1977) himself advocated application of servant leadership principles to many different types of

institutions, including churches, universities, and businesses. This broad base of application solidifies the value of servant leadership principles.

Manning (2004) noted that firefighting organizations have traditionally been governed by an extremely structured, “top-down, hierarchical, authoritarian” (p. 6) style of leadership. Widely accepted among firefighting professionals is that the hazardous situations into which firefighters are placed demand highly structured, authoritarian leadership and management. Yet, Manning pointed out that this structure prompts griping among rank-and-file firefighters who complain that the leader has forgotten his or her roots and what it was like to really do the work. Manning and Stanley (1995) offered the principles of servant leadership as a model for fire service leadership. Stanley suggested an inverted pyramid as a better organizational model for firefighting teams, rather than the military-inspired structures that endure in most departments—an idea that Blanchard (1998) echoed. “Working your way to the bottom” was Stanley’s (1995, p. 30) articulated concept of fire service leadership, with leaders providing the resources and encouragement needed to allow firefighters who are placed on the top of the structural pyramid to perform their jobs effectively.

Neill, Hayward, and Peterson (2007) made application of the principles of servant leadership to home health care for senior adults. Neill et al. noted the need to develop “more sensitive, yet effective health care” (p. 427) and proposed the development of servant leadership attributes among visiting health care professionals as a way “to develop a strong, effective, caring team of healthcare providers” (p. 427). The success of the program was largely attributed to the incorporation of servant leadership principles as a part of the organization’s foundation. The researchers noted an improved experience

for both the health care providers and the senior patients served as a result of the adoption of servant leadership principles. Jahner (1993) explored the use of servant leadership principles in rural health settings, as well. Jahner articulated a servant leader in the rural health setting as one sought to “inspire vision, enlist commitment to a mission, and serve the larger vision” (p. 29). In a related field, Peete (2005) described servant leaders in the nursing home and senior living sectors. Jeffries (1998) also applied servant leadership principles to a broad range of health care professions.

Davies (2007) and Moreton (2007) discussed servant leadership principles in the area of retail merchandising using the example of Wal-Mart, the largest corporation in the world. Moreton wrote of the use of Greenleaf’s work as adopted by the Walton chain in the early 1990s. At Wal-Mart, Moreton stated, “the role of an executive is not to dictate but to provide workers with whatever they need to serve the customers in the stores—merchandise, capital, information, inspiration—and then get out of the way” (p. 108). The folksy image cultivated by Sam Walton, the founder of Wal-Mart, and the family atmosphere promoted in the chain’s retail stores seemed particularly fertile ground for the introduction and cultivation of servant leadership principles (Moreton, 2007). Davies, writing primarily of Wal-Mart’s presence in China, mentioned the company’s placement of a poster with servant leadership’s inverted pyramid near the entrance to every Wal-Mart store. The store manager is at the lowest level of the pyramid, while the customers occupy the highest level. The entrance signs declare that Wal-Mart practices servant leadership.

In addition to Wal-Mart, some of the most successful retail companies of the United States and across the world have been cited as being proponents of the principles

of servant leadership. The Men's Wearhouse, a retailer of men's clothing, was noted for practicing servant leadership as a chain (Thibodeau, 2005). Thibodeau (2005) cited Marriott International and Newell Rubbermaid as other servant leadership-savvy retailers. The co-founder of Fog Creek Software wrote eloquently of the importance of mundane tasks with a view to serving others (Spolsky, 2008). Spolsky's (2008) article, "My Style of Servant Leadership," was sub-titled, "Don't bother me, because I'm in the middle of my most important task as CEO—hanging window blinds" (p. 77).

Verespej (1999) cited Pete Harman, the first Kentucky Fried Chicken franchisee in 1952, as an example of servant leadership before the term was even coined by Greenleaf, stating that Harman spent over half of his time in one of his 250 stores. The cook was always the first one greeted by the owner—not the store manager. Similar practices were noted by Osborne (1995) in the work of Kendrick Melrose, CEO of Toro. Melrose was promoted to CEO from executive vice president of the outdoor equipment manufacturer and retailer with the charge of saving the company. The company's new "Pride in Excellence" statement was a combination of "philosophical, motivational, and spiritual principles" (Osborne, 1995, p. 22) that had guided Melrose's personal career. The company set out to eradicate the hostility that existed between management and employees, and sought to instill, instead, the principles of servant leadership. Melrose's tenure at Toro was marked by expansion, profitability—and concern for people (Osborne, 1995).

Chen and Barnes (2008) researched the application of servant leadership principles to the tourism industry, specifically to the management of a luxury hotel. Chen and Barnes found a positive relationship between the introduction of customer service

mangers to servant leadership principles and the level of employee satisfaction within the organization. Reinke (2004) focused specifically on trust within an organization, and found a similar positive relationship between servant leadership principles and the level of trust of county government employees.

Bonanno, Badger, Sullivan, Wiezel, and Bopp (2008) explored the use of servant leadership principles in the construction industry. Using a modified Myers-Briggs assessment, Bonanno et al. found a positive correlation between three characteristics of servant leadership (mentorship, stewardship, and building community) and the feeling preference on the assessment. The same researchers also discovered that profitability was positively impacted by the presence of servant leadership characteristics. Kiechel and Rosenthal (1992) noted the presence of servant leadership characteristics in the same industry and offered TDIndustries of Dallas, a large mechanical contractor, as an example. Lowe (1998), CEO of TDIndustries, detailed their experiences incorporating servant leadership principles into their company's operation.

Vargas and Hanlon (2007) identified servant leadership principles in the area of research administration, and stated that "Greenleaf's servant leadership concept defines the essence of the profession" (p. 48). Vargas and Hanlon wrote that "the bottom line in our business is ultimately to improve society as a whole through the success of our researchers, and that our role is to guide this process by being both good servants and good leaders" (p. 48).

Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) and Ruschman (2002) cited numerous other examples of servant leadership in organizations, including ServiceMaster, The Container Store, AFLAC, Synovus Financial, and Southwest Airlines. A final example of the use of

servant leadership in occupations other than education comes from the arts. Wis (2002) wrote of the leadership role of a musical conductor:

As a conductor, the servant-leader demonstrates a passion for every aspect of the experience: the music, rehearsals, musicians, and audience. Such conductors see their role as facilitating the student's entire musical experience, one that extends beyond the bounds of technical knowledge and skill. They realize that they stand between the music and the student's experience, and they consciously strive to be a doorway rather than a wall. Often these conductors, as students, were "servants"; they spent time during lunch or after school helping their band or choral director plan a tour, organize the music library, or run sectional rehearsals. And they did it because they wanted to help, to make things better—to serve. (p. 19)

Servant Leadership in Education

The body of literature related to servant leadership in education is not voluminous, but it is growing. Servant leadership has been explored in both K-12 education and higher education, including community colleges.

Servant Leadership Principles in Education

Crippen (2005a, 2005c, 2010), after summarizing the history of servant leadership, applied each of Spears' (2002) 10 identified servant leadership principles to educational settings.

(1) Listening. According to Crippen (2005a), educators must be good listeners. Crippen pointed out the need for educators to listen to their own "inner voice" (p. 6), and

to other people, as well. Crippen also maintained that effective decision-making is dependent upon good listening habits.

(2) Empathy. According to Crippen (2005a), “Teachers who reach out to students and extend a caring attitude may present an inviting and safe atmosphere for students” (p. 6). Such an environment produces many positive results in the school, including improved “student effort, problem solving, and academic risk taking” (p. 6).

(3) Healing. Drawing upon the work of other researchers, Crippen (2005a) set forth that a part of education is instilling a sense of social responsibility in students. Meditation is one recommended activity. The development of a healthy personal and school environment is one hallmark of servant leadership.

(4) Awareness. Crippen (2005a) noted that an application of this servant leadership principle in the classroom can be particularly helpful with a challenging student. Such a student is often making a plea for extra attention or assistance, Crippen maintained.

(5) Persuasion. With the ideal of servant leadership to convince rather than coerce, the application of servant leadership principles is clear—seek student participation and parental involvement by invitation and consensus (Crippen, 2005a).

(6) Conceptualization. The educator needs to be able to see and understand both the past and the future in order to create goals, dream dreams, and build relationships (Crippen, 2005a).

(7) Foresight. Crippen (2005a) maintained that “teachers are likely to develop foresight through their experiences in the classroom” (p. 8). The ability to project what is

likely to happen in the future and to foresee the most likely outcome of a situation is essential, Crippen found.

(8) Stewardship. The “greater good of society” (Crippen, 2005a, p. 9) is the goal of an educational institution, “caring for the well being of the institution and serving the needs of others in the institution,” Crippen (2005a, p. 9) expressed.

(9) Commitment to the growth of people. According to Crippen (2005a), “the servant-leader is committed to the individual growth of human beings and will do everything they can to nurture others” (p. 9).

(10) Building community. Speaking of educational institutions, Crippen (2005a) wrote: “The servant-leader seeks to identify some means for building community. Approaches to building community include giving back through service to the community; investing financially into the community; and caring about one’s community” (p. 10). Crippen wrote of schools’ efforts to “move into the community” through “service and real life problem solving” (p. 10).

K-12 Education

Many researchers have made application of servant leadership principles to the K-12 educational setting. Steele (2010) cited servant leadership as one of three characteristics of effective teachers, stating that the traits identified with servant leadership “demonstrate the usefulness of servant leadership by teachers in the classroom” (p. 75). Particularly, Steele stated, “the teacher as servant leader focuses first on the students and their abilities, ideas, and desires” (p. 76).

Bowman (2005) stated, “Servant leadership in the classroom speaks to the universal human longing to be known, to care, and to be cared for in pursuit of the

common good” (p. 257), cultivating an “environment of trust, service, and community” (p. 257). According to Covey (1990), servant leadership in the classroom is supremely student-focused. Wis (2002) spoke of the need to always focus on what is best for the student, and Herman and Marlowe (2005) said that the goal of servant leader teachers should be to create a “community of caring” (p. 175) in the classroom.

Jennings and Stahl-Wert (2003) cited five principles for incorporating servant leadership in the classroom. First, teachers “run to great purpose” (p. 100), or have an overall purpose in mind throughout the day. Second, the servant leader teacher “unleashes the strengths, talents, and passions of those he or she serves” (p. 14). Third, through the power of example, teachers model what they seek to teach. The fourth principle is an encouragement to teachers to “address . . . weaknesses” while “building on . . . strengths” (p. 102). Finally, servant leader teachers are to put themselves “at the bottom of the pyramid so that one can focus on unleashing the energy, excitement, and talents of those being served” (p. 102). Servant leadership, Steele (2010) noted, “has the potential to bring out the best in the teacher and the students” (p. 75). Crippen (2005b) similarly stated that “the servant-leadership paradigm” (p. 22) could “provide a constructive mindset and approach to serving the needs of all our students” (p. 22).

The success of incorporating servant leadership principles in especially challenging school settings is documented in the literature, as well. Guerra and Valverde (2007) cited the value of practicing servant leadership in minority communities and schools, particularly in areas that are heavily Latino. Serving the students in those settings would mean an incorporation of the Latino culture into the practice of the school, they maintained. Herman (2008) wrote of the example of an alternative school in the

mountains of rural western North Carolina. The adoption of servant leadership values and practices brought great rewards for students “scarred by school failure” (p. 54) and allowed them “to experience belonging, generosity, mastery and independence” (p. 54). Herman cited the value of servant leadership principles while seeking to educate these “most challenging and reluctant learners” (p. 55). Tate (2003) made a similar application of servant leadership principles to a residential treatment-based educational setting, and Vonde, Maas, and McKay (2005) recounted a student leadership program with a health emphasis that sought to develop servant leaders. Grothaus (2004) also applied servant leadership principles to the education of at-risk youth.

The adoption of servant leadership principles was listed by Hagstrom (1992) as one of the success factors in transforming a “worn out and unwanted” (p. 25) school in Fairbanks, Alaska, into an exemplary institution that lived up to its title of “Alaska’s Discovery School” (p. 26). Hagstrom, who served as principal at Denali Elementary School for the three-year turn-around period, stated: “Robert Greenleaf, through *Servant Leadership* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), encouraged me to *serve* the Denali community” (p. 26).

Jackson (2009) linked servant leadership principles to the “notions of social justice and culturally responsive teaching” (p. 1141). Numerous complementary goals and characteristics, such as an emphasis on community, were cited by Jackson.

Other researchers have explored servant leadership as a leadership philosophy for principals. Reed, Smith, and Beekley (1997) investigated the leadership orientations of a group of principals, and described a subset of principals whose orientation was aligned quite well with servant leadership. The work of Taylor, Martin, Hutchinson, and Jinks

(2007) involved comparisons between groups of principals identified by their scores on a servant leadership assessment. The study found that principals identified as servant leaders “were rated significantly higher by their teachers” (p. 401) in five leadership areas. Although conducted in Turkey, Cerit (2009, 2010) found in similar studies that “servant leadership has a positive effect” (2009, p. 616) on teachers’ job satisfaction, and stated that “school principals should aim to be servant leaders in order to improve teachers’ job satisfaction” (2009, p. 616). Kelley and Williamson (2006) found a positive correlation between principals who were servant leaders and the “development of an open school climate and an increase in student achievement” (Implications section, para. 3). Hickman, Moore, and Torek (2008) noted that “one of the most important things that any principal can do to encourage the spirit of empowerment throughout the school is to practice servant leadership” (p. 33). Youngs (2007), a secondary school principal, wrote a personal account of his “unexpected journey” (p. 97) as a servant leader.

Numerous dissertations have also explored servant leadership in the public school principalship. Hill (2007) used Laub’s (1999) Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA), an online instrument that measures six servant leadership practices, to explore the impact of servant leadership on school culture and student performance. Hill surveyed leaders and teachers in 14 Minnesota high schools and found a “strong correlation between servant leadership and school climate” (p. 98) that “revealed the potential of the servant leader to influence positively the way teachers feel about their work and their school” (p. 98).

An instrument developed by Page and Wong (2000), the Self-Assessment of Servant Leadership (SASL), was used by Kasun (2009) as a part of a mixed methods

study to examine a group of principals in New Jersey public schools. Stephen (2007) used a revised version of Page and Wong's (2003) instrument to examine the self-reported practices of two groups of Texas principals—one group that had been nominated as Principal of the Year, and another group that had not been nominated.

Brown (2010) conducted a case study of principals in two diverse Virginia communities, and used a 48-item questionnaire that he developed to examine community expectations for school leaders in the two communities. Jennings (2002) used narrative research to examine five principals' leadership roles through the lens of servant leadership characteristics. Still others, including Lubin (2001) and Taylor-Gillham (1998) broadened their research to include not just principals, but also other school-level administrators. Both Lubin and Taylor-Gillham used Spears' (2002) 10 servant leadership characteristics as a conceptual framework for their studies.

Beyond the local school level, other researchers explored the impact of servant leadership principles upon school superintendents. Alston (2005) specifically investigated black female superintendents, and found that they are “archetypal servant leaders” (p. 681) who “not only have a strong sense of efficacy, but they are empowered and are deeply caring about their mission—to serve, lead, and educate children” (p. 682). Crippen and Wallin (2008a, 2008b) found servant leadership behaviors and characteristics present to a high degree among superintendents in Manitoba. Sergiovanni (1993) made similar findings among a group of U.S. superintendents.

Cassel and Holt (2008), Donahue (2003), and Krajewski and Trevino (2004) explored servant leadership as a model for school board members. Cassel and Holt pointed out that the very nature of unpaid school board positions attract people with a

desire to serve others, while Donahue and Krajewski and Trevino discussed servant leadership characteristics as a model specifically for school board chairs or presidents.

Higher Education

Perhaps the earliest application of Greenleaf's servant leadership principles to the role of a professor or instructor in higher education came from the pen of Greenleaf (2003b) himself in the form of a parable, "Teacher as Servant." Greenleaf described the parable in his introduction:

Teacher as Servant is a how-to-do-it book that describes the work of a university professor who cares deeply about the students of his university, not just those in his classes to whom he devotes the usual care of a conscientious teacher, but any students entering the university who respond to the suggestion that they become servants, and who are willing to invest a substantial share of their extracurricular time to developing their servant natures while they are in the university. (p. 77)

Greenleaf's (2003b) parable detailed the actions of a faculty member who taught servant leadership primarily through modeling its characteristics. The faculty member requested an appointment as housemaster of a men's dormitory and, according to Greenleaf, "managed to wield a powerful influence on a group of students who responded to the servant idea" (p. 77). Written as a first-person account of a student looking back over his experiences in Jefferson House, the dormitory, the student concluded in the end that "*servicing and being served by* are reciprocal and that one cannot really be had without the other" (p. 219). "Teacher as Servant" (Greenleaf, 2003b) expressed in parable form Greenleaf's application of servant leadership principles to higher education instruction, and has served as a model for the development of several servant leadership dormitories

on university campuses (Moxley, 2002). Greenleaf's (1977) essay, "Servant Leadership in Education," continued the same educational theme, but in a more traditional essay format.

Hays (2008), in an article that mirrored Greenleaf's (2003b) parable in title, sought to make application of Greenleaf's servant leadership principles as identified by Spears (2002) to higher education. Although the introduction stated that Hays' goal was to apply the principles to management education, the application Hays made was quite broad and made possible transfer to most any curriculum. The work alternated between the voice of the researcher and the voice of the student, represented by quotes from student journals and surveys.

Hays (2008) quoted one student's course evaluation:

My immediate reaction to [the instructor's] teaching style was a mix of trepidation, perplexity and doubt. What was this guy thinking, was he simply disorganized, did he know what he was teaching, did he understand the expectations of the class? He seemed to want to teach without structure, wanted the class to assist in developing the agenda, was prepared to allow the class to take control of their learning, and seemed genuinely interested in learning from the experiences of the class.

What was this? Who was he kidding?

Well several hours later it turned out that he was kidding no-one. The room had been transformed into an incredibly unique learning culture. The class had established some of the highest levels of trust, respect and honesty that I have

ever experienced in study or work, and this from a group of virtual strangers. (p. 114).

According to Hays (2008), teaching as a servant “offers a richness of experience, and permits and promotes learning to occur that may be virtually impossible to achieve through other means” (p. 130). It is not, Hays stated,

a matter of adopting a gentler, kinder demeanour, though these may be a part of the role. And, it is not something that happens overnight. Becoming a “master servant teacher” is undoubtedly a life’s work, a journey one day at a time, and, if readers agree, a road worth taking. (p. 131)

Several researchers have made application of servant leadership principles to educational administration in church-related colleges and universities based on the premise set forth by Greenleaf (1998b) himself. Keith (1994), now CEO of the Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, was formerly president of a Roman Catholic university in Honolulu, Hawaii. Keith cited the examples of many people deemed to be servant leaders, including Father Chaminade, Father Damien, Washington, Lincoln, Gandhi, King, and Mother Teresa, and asserted that “servant leadership is the best kind of leadership for both the leader and the led” (p. 12). He further stated:

It is really common sense. The leader who is not focused on others, will be focused on himself or herself. But the desires or needs of the leader himself or herself may be in no way connected to the desires or needs of the rest of the organization or the rest of society. (p. 12)

Keith asserted, “We are proud to be producing graduates who are focused on giving back to the community” (p. 3).

Writing one of 42 chapters in a volume related to the work of an academic dean, Pence (1999) wrote of servant leadership as an appropriate leadership style for an academic dean at a church-related college, and stated, “In academic communities where both learning and faith are highly valued, servant leadership is undoubtedly the most fitting and most effective leadership model” (p. 181). A self-study report from another church-related institution (Lincoln Christian College, 2005) detailed seven “images” (p. 4) of servant leadership and applied the principles to their Christian setting. Espy (2006) recounted her experiences in administration at another church-related institution that adopted servant leadership principles. Espy became the university’s first Vice President for Servant Leadership.

Freeman (2004) recounted the experience of incorporating servant leadership in the administration of a historically black church-related college, and asserted that “the mission of servant leadership is especially important in today’s social, political, and economic climate” (p. 7). A stated commitment of the college, according to Freeman, its president, is “to help produce the next generation of great leaders, in particular, black leaders” (p. 7). The mission of the college “is what we at Livingstone call ‘servant leadership’” (p. 7).

McKinney (2004) listed servant leadership as one of 10 priorities for evangelical theological education. “The mission,” McKinney stated, “should be to develop servant leaders—mature, disciplined, intelligent disciples of Jesus Christ with leadership skills who will penetrate every walk of life in their respective cultures and indeed around the world” (pp. 158-159). McKinney presented servant leadership as both the model for administration of the higher education institution and one of the primary goals for the

education of students. “In the end,” McKinney wrote, “the goal of theological education is not only to prepare students for careers, but also to enable them to live lives of purpose—not only to give knowledge to students, but to channel knowledge into meaningful Christian service” (p. 159).

In addition to the examples of servant leadership principles being adopted or taught at church-related institutions, numerous researchers have also applied servant leadership principles to other public colleges and universities. Crippen (2005c), mentioned above with regard to the adoption of servant leadership principles in K-12 education, as a model for principals and in conjunction with school superintendents, suggested the investigation of servant leadership “as a viable model for schools and institutions of higher education” (p. 15), after having introduced the principles at the University of Manitoba and, now, at the University of Victoria (University of Victoria, 2011). Clugston (1981) argued for servant leadership values in the area of institutional advancement, particularly in small colleges.

Page (2003) advocated diversity and a commitment to teamwork within academic leadership, and stated that “the most powerful theory of leadership that is supportive of a diverse culture is servant leadership” (p. 79). Page went on to state that “if the institution adopts the theory that leadership must reflect the composition of the constituency and must provide a role model for other leaders, then the leader will recognize that he or she serves the needs of all those represented within the institution” (p. 80). According to Page, students will be successful by “modeling the servant leaders on our campuses” (p. 85), recognizing “the importance of a culture of trust and the commitment to service that is evident in servant leaders” (p. 85).

Hawkins (1996), writing from an Ivy League perspective, made application of servant leadership in the university setting, and stated that “the very essence of leadership is a commitment to serving others” (p. 5). The emphasis, Hawkins maintained, should be on “serving a mission, and more specifically the mission determined by the broader community” (p. 6). An essential element is “helping staff realize that what is important is service to a mission, not a master” (p. 7). Roberts (2006) emphasized the service connection, as well, with both staff and students, while McClellan (2007) applied servant leadership characteristics to academic advising.

Polleys (2002) stated that “the servant leadership model can provide a central focus of leadership for the 21st century” (p. 125). Polleys led the establishment of a “program focusing on both academic and experiential learning” (p. 128) at Columbus State University that sought to call institutions “back to their primary mission of service and groups move toward goals that are in the best interest of the whole” (p. 128). Polleys identified a need for institutions of higher education to recognize that “power and authority are for helping others grow” (p. 117). Buchen (1998) phrased it this way: “Develop everyone you touch” (p. 132).

Focus on Community Colleges

In spite of the acceptance of servant leadership as an effective model for leadership in various occupations, K-12 education, and other higher education settings, only a few examples exist of U.S. community colleges that have adopted servant leadership principles in some formal way for the administration of the institution, and only a limited number of researchers have made this area a focus. Shugart (1997) was perhaps the first to advocate servant leadership in community college administration. At

the time of the cited 1997 presentation at a conference for community college leaders, Shugart was President of North Harris College in Houston, Texas. A former Vice-President and Chief Academic Officer of the North Carolina Community College System, Shugart introduced servant leadership principles to colleagues at the annual International Conference of the Chair Academy meeting in Reno, Nevada, and stated, “Our colleges are perhaps the most vital of the servant institutions created in the twentieth century” (p. 240). Citing Greenleaf, Shugart advocated giving more authority to the college’s board of trustees, and challenging board members to invest their time and resources in the institution (see Greenleaf, 1977, p. 112). Later in the same year, Green (1997) cited Shugart as an example of a servant leader in community college administration when she summarized a presentation Shugart made at a conference in Phoenix, Arizona.

Shugart moved to Florida in 1999 to become President of Valencia Community College in Orlando. Shugart (1999) presented his philosophy on community college leadership once again, citing servant leadership as a primary characteristic. “If community colleges are to sustain the servant ethic that inspires our best work,” Shugart stated, “servant leaders who consistently articulate an authentic, mission-driven vision for the college must lead them” (p. 2). The greatest challenge of the future, in Shugart’s stated opinion, “is not to find followers who will trust their leaders, but leaders who are courageous enough to trust the followers” (p. 3). Shugart went on to state:

For a community college leader, this means fashioning organizations that are open, leadership teams that are non-defensive, decision making processes that genuinely share responsibility, and habits of listening and serving at every level of the organization. Old models of control, hierarchy, benevolent autocracy, and

paternal (even patriarchal) leadership can never achieve this kind of mature trust.

(p. 3)

Early in Shugart's (1999) presidency at Valencia, he committed the administration of the multi-campus district to "a mission of service to the colleges" (p. 6) and presented servant leadership as his personal leadership model as he sought to be "deeply identified with the servant mission and values of the institution" (p. 2).

In Austin, Texas, Kinslow, President of the Austin Community College District, set forth servant leadership as a "model that fits well in a teaching/learning environment, and in the shared governance structure of the college" (Austin Community College, 2008, What is Servant Leadership? section, para. 1). The college launched a servant leadership initiative in 2005 with training sessions for all supervisors and a college-wide professional development day in 2006 with servant leadership as the primary topic. Readings from Greenleaf were prescribed for all supervisors, and the principles of servant leadership were set forth as the college's model for faculty, support staff, and administrators.

Highland Community College in Freeport, Illinois, also adopted servant leadership as a philosophy (Smith & Farnsworth, 2002). Smith served as president of the college for a decade. Prior to her death in 1991, Smith, a board member of the Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, wrote of the influence the servant leader philosophy had on her career and the college community:

Looking back on the evolution of servant-leadership at Highland, I see a web being spun, much like *Charlotte's Web*, with various pieces becoming connected over time. In the end, it is clear to me that the whole is much stronger than the

parts. We now speak a common language internally—and often externally as well. As a result, our college functions even more effectively, and our communities’ organizations work with us and understand the concepts as well. Using servant-leadership principles as our guide, we are building a stronger college, and, together with our communities, we continue to “dwell in possibilities” because we know that many wonderful things can and do happen every day in northwestern Illinois. (Smith & Farnsworth, 2002, p. 215)

Under the leadership of Farnsworth, Crowder College, a community college in Neosho, Missouri, made a similar adoption of servant leadership principles (Smith & Farnsworth, 2002). Now the Community College President in Residence and a Professor of Community College Leadership at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, Farnsworth served as President of Crowder College for 19 years. Farnsworth cited shared governance as extremely important and stated:

At Crowder College, we take Robert Greenleaf’s servant-leadership concept of *primus inter pares*—first among equals—very seriously. Although we realize that education, professional preparation, and job responsibilities establish distinctly important roles for members of the college family, if we are going to serve well, every person’s contribution is critical and must be viewed as important. (Smith & Farnsworth, 2002, p. 216)

Farnsworth stated that servant leadership accepts that good people, if they are given good information and share common vision and values, will make good decisions for themselves and for the organization. It also assumes that when time constraints, legality, confidentiality,

or failure to reach consensus force the decision to the leader, the judgment then made reflects the leader's best effort to serve all concerned. (Smith & Farnsworth, 2002, p. 221)

In addition, Kezar (1996, 2001) investigated the role of several participatory leadership styles, including servant leadership, on a community college campus. Hasselbach (1998), writing from experience in community college leadership, also posited that "the principal goal of the servant leader is to meet the highest priority needs of all members of the community—to create a communal environment where all the members will grow and reach their highest potential" (p. 4).

In spite of the rather limited number of journal articles regarding servant leadership and community college administration, several dissertation writers have explored various aspects of that connection. Adamson (2009) used Laub's (1999) Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA), an online instrument that measures six servant leadership practices, to explore the impact of servant leadership functions on a single community college. Adamson's research found servant leadership to be a means of effecting positive social change that is "consistent with the historic mission of community colleges" (Abstract, unpaginated).

Laub's (1999) servant leadership assessment instrument was also used by Hannigan (2008) to examine the possible relationship between the level of servant leadership on five community college campuses and the college's performance, measured through student learning outcomes, successful completion of courses, number of degrees awarded, and other factors. Results, although not at statistically significant levels, "showed that servant leadership did not exist at the organizational level in the five

colleges” (p. ii). Hannigan argued that “perhaps participatory values have not transcended from the established participatory structures” (p. ii).

Boroski (2009) completed a qualitative phenomenological study that explored the motivations of community college presidents who were judged by their peers to be servant leaders. Boroski interviewed 20 community college presidents and found their values well-aligned with precepts of servant leadership described in the literature.

A study that is perhaps more closely related than any other to my work was performed by Omoh (2007), who conducted a case study of a single community college president who was selected by Omoh because the president was known by the researcher to be an “effective and result oriented” (p. 7) leader. Omoh conducted interviews with all 13 individuals on the research subject’s senior management team and examined their experiences for evidence of servant leadership characteristics, using Spears’ (2002) 10 servant leadership characteristics as a conceptual framework. The research subject was found to possess all 10 of the identified servant leadership qualities. Omoh concluded that the research subject was a servant leader who led primarily by example and was driven by the 10 servant leadership characteristics.

Servant Leadership and Other Leadership Theories

Keith (2008), current Executive Director of the Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership, noted that servant leadership is closely aligned with other leadership theories, an observation that has been shared by several other researchers, as well. Keith saw a parallel with Block’s (1993) call for stewardship as a replacement for the traditional concept of leadership. Block called for leaders to be accountable for the well-being of the larger organization, and to oversee an equitable distribution of benefits.

Heenan and Bennis (1999) described leaders who are not at the top of organizations, but function as key subordinates and work together toward shared goals. Keith (2008) expressed that such a concept was related to the ideals of servant leadership.

According to Keith (2008), servant leadership is also related to transforming leadership, as defined by Burns (1978). Burns maintained that leaders should look for higher-level needs in followers, and then engage the follower in activities that will be beneficial for both the follower and the organization. Burns contrasted this with transactional leadership that often involves exchanges between leaders and followers.

Boroski (2009) compared servant leadership with transcendent leadership, pointing to the work of Fry (2003) and Sanders, Hopkins, and Geroy (2003). Transcendental leadership adds a spiritual component to transformational leadership—not linked to any specific system of faith, but to a more general sense of the sacred. Boroski saw similarities in the religious influences on Greenleaf and servant leadership.

Omoh (2007) explored similarities between servant leadership and contingency leadership theory. Fiedler (1967) stated that organizational effectiveness is achieved as a result of the interface of two factors: the leadership style of the organization's leader and the compatibility of that style with the situation. Omoh viewed contingency theory's emphasis on exploring the situation at hand to be similar to principles of servant leadership.

Lubin (2001) recognized similarities among servant leadership, charismatic leadership, ethical leadership, and visionary leadership. Contee-Borders (2002) identified a link between servant leadership and situational leadership theory.

Van Dierendonck (2011) compared servant leadership to other leadership models and concluded that these seven have the most overlap with servant leadership: transformational leadership, authentic leadership, ethical leadership, Level 5 leadership, empowering leadership, spiritual leadership, and self-sacrificing leadership. Yet, the same researcher, who identified six characteristics of servant leadership, concluded that “none of the theories ... incorporates all six key characteristics, which puts servant leadership in a unique position” (p. 1238).

Although not truly a comparison but, instead, a review, Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber (2009) surveyed current theories of leadership, including authentic leadership, new-genre leadership, complexity leadership, shared/collective/distributed leadership, leader-member exchange, followership and leadership, servant leadership, spirituality and leadership, cross-cultural leadership, and e-leadership. The reviewers summarized each leadership philosophy or theory, and then offered suggestions for future research in each area.

Keith (K. M. Keith, personal communication, May 14, 2012) stated that after reviewing the work of numerous scholars, there are four elements that are “most unique” to servant leadership when compared to other leadership models:

- (1) The moral component, not only in terms of the personal morality and integrity of the servant-leader, but also in terms of the way in which a servant-leader encourages enhanced moral reasoning among his or her followers, who can therefore test the moral basis of the servant-leader’s visions and organizational goals;

(2) The focus on serving followers for their own good, not just the good of the organization, and forming long-term relationships with followers, encouraging their growth and development so that over time they may reach their fullest potential;

(3) Concern with the success of all stakeholders, broadly defined—employees, customers, business partners, communities, and society as a whole—including those who are the least privileged; and

(4) Self-reflection, as a counter to the leader's hubris. (K. M. Keith, personal communication, May 14, 2012)

Summary

While not exhaustive, this literature review has explored the use of servant leadership principles in various occupations, K-12 education, and higher education, as recounted in the literature. Emphasis has been placed on reviewing the literature related to the adoption of servant leadership principles in the community college setting as a part of a foundation for the study at hand. In addition, literature has been cited that compares servant leadership with other leadership theories. With a sound foundation in place, chapter 3 now details the methodology for the study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

The purpose of this multicase study was to explore the application of servant leadership principles to community college instructional administration. Specifically, I sought to understand how community college instructional administrators exhibit Greenleaf's servant leadership principles as defined by Spears (2002).

In seeking to understand this phenomenon, the study addressed two research questions: (1) How do community college instructional administrators exhibit the characteristics of servant leadership? and (2) What are the experiences of those who report to community college instructional administrators who display the characteristics of servant leadership?

This chapter will describe the study's research methodology and will discuss the following areas: (1) rationale for qualitative research design, (2) rationale for multicase study methodology, (3) selection of research participants, (4) overview of research design, (5) proposal and IRB approval, (6) data collection methods, (7) data analysis and synthesis, (8) ethical considerations, (9) issues of trustworthiness, and (10) limitations of the study. The chapter concludes with a brief summary.

Rationale for Qualitative Research Design

Although a few instruments have been developed to study servant leadership quantitatively (Brown, 2010; Laub, 1999; Page & Wong, 2000, 2003), most dissertations and articles have approached servant leadership study using some type of qualitative methodology, as discovered in the literature review of chapter 2. The rationale for this decision becomes clear through a brief review of qualitative research.

Definitions of qualitative research are as diverse as the researchers who use the method. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) offered an oft-quoted definition:

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

Yet, as attractive and all-encompassing as qualitative research might sound in Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) definition, qualitative research is not the right methodology for every situation. Creswell (2007) noted that qualitative research is the right tool when the researcher needs "a *complex*, detailed understanding of the issue" (p. 40). Qualitative research is appropriate when a thorough understanding can only be obtained by talking directly with people, visiting them in their homes or places of work, and allowing them to tell their own stories in their own words with a minimum of structure and constraint. Qualitative research is used, Creswell maintained, "when quantitative measures and the statistical analyses simply do not *fit* the problem" (p. 40). Marshall and Rossman (2011) and Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) echoed many of Denzin and Lincoln's observations about the application of qualitative methods to research in fields such as education and the social sciences.

Qualitative research was selected as the methodology for this study because of the need to achieve a “*complex, detailed understanding*” (Creswell, 2007, p. 40) of the application of servant leadership principles to community college instructional administration. As cited in the literature review, other researchers have applied quantitative methods to the task, and a few have used qualitative methods to explore servant leadership principles in the behaviors of public school principals and college or university presidents, but a search for qualitative, detailed descriptions of the application of servant leadership principles to community college instructional administrators has proven fruitless. This qualitative study was a first effort toward filling that gap.

Rationale for Multicase Study Methodology

Creswell (2007) cited five primary approaches to qualitative research: narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case studies. The rationale for case study research, and specifically multiple case or multicase study research, is revealed through a brief review of the approach.

Stake (1995) defined case study as “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi). He went on to define a case as usually being “people and programs” (p. 1), stating that a case is “a specific, a complex, functioning thing” (p. 2). It is a “bounded system” (p. 2) that draws attention to itself as an object more so than as a process.

Yin (2009) stated that case study may be utilized when the research questions focus on “how” or “why,” and the questions are being asked about “a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control” (p. 13). Stake (1995) used

slightly different language, but agreed that case study research describes what is happening in the case while being “noninterventive and empathic” (p. 12).

Multiple case research, or multicas e research as it is termed in this study, according to Stake (2006), is “a special effort to examine something having lots of cases, parts, or members” (p. vi). The multicas e study examines two or more individual cases with common research questions. Each case should be allowed to tell its own story, Stake maintained, but “the official interest is in the collection of these cases or in the phenomenon exhibited in those cases” (p. vi.). Multicas e research was selected for this study because, although the individual stories of community college instructional administrators were of interest, the focus of this research was to examine the way servant leadership is exhibited by administrators. Through multicas e research, according to Stake, the goal is to “understand more thoroughly, and we choose to study it through its cases, by means of a multicas e study” (p. vi).

Proposal and IRB Approval

I developed and successfully defended a proposal for this study that included my background with the topic, problem statement, statement of purpose, research questions, limitations and assumptions, definitions of key terms, and conceptual framework in chapter 1; a literature review in chapter 2; and the proposed methodological approach in chapter 3. The study was submitted to Western Carolina University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) immediately following approval of the proposal and IRB approval was obtained prior to the commencement of the study (see Appendix A).

Selection of Research Participants

In order to be able to conduct interviews in person and to include observations in this multicase study, some narrowing of possible participants was necessary. There are more than 1,200 community colleges in the United States (American Association of Community Colleges, 2006), and each college has several instructional administrators.

For this study, the instructional administrators selected were the CAOs of their respective institutions, and the selection of CAOs was restricted to those currently holding positions in community colleges in the western region of North Carolina. The North Carolina Community College System divides North Carolina into three regions, with the western region composed of 15 institutions west of Interstate 77. The CAO from my own institution, Catawba Valley Community College, was excluded from selection, leaving the CAOs of 14 community colleges as possible participants.

A two-fold nomination process was employed that was adapted from the work of Nolte (2001) in a study of public school principals. First, an email from the president of my institution, Dr. Garrett Hinshaw, was sent to the CEOs of the 14 identified institutions (see Appendix B). Dr. Hinshaw's email introduced me, requested his peers' cooperation and participation in the study, and asked them to anticipate a follow-up email within two days.

I then contacted the community college CEOs of the 14 identified institutions by email (see Appendix C). The email detailed the purpose of the study and included the following one-paragraph description of the specific type of leader being sought:

The community college chief academic officers (CAOs) being sought for this study have an attitude of service, seek to make sure that employees' needs are

being met, promote growth of other employees, encourage others to develop an attitude of service, and display a compassion for the less privileged. The CAOs being sought place the needs of others above their own and seek to create an atmosphere of awareness, empathy, and community.

Note that servant leadership was not identified by that label. This omission was not an element of deception, but was to increase the likelihood that unbiased information was obtained from the CEOs and all study participants. The CEOs were invited to nominate the CAO of their institution if they believed their CAO would be an appropriate participant in the study. The CEOs were informed that approximately two days of interviews and observations would be conducted on their campus if the CAO from their institution was selected for the study. The nominators were requested to briefly explain why they believed the CAO from their institution should be included in the study. Within 24 hours of receiving an email containing a nomination, I sent a thank-you email to the CEO giving him or her a few more details about the next steps in the study (see Appendix D).

The second step of the nomination process began with an email from the CAO of my institution, Dr. Keith Mackie, to the CAOs of the other 14 institutions (see Appendix E). Dr. Mackie's email introduced me, requested his peers' cooperation and participation in the study, and asked them to anticipate a follow-up email within two days.

I then contacted the community college CAOs in the 14 identified institutions by email (see Appendix F). The email detailed the purpose of the study and included the same one-paragraph description of a certain type of leader being sought.

The CAOs were invited to nominate one or more of their peers who serve as the CAO of a western North Carolina community college if they believed that their peers would be appropriate participants in the study. The nominators were requested to briefly explain why they believed the CAOs they nominated should be included in the study. Within 24 hours of receiving an email containing a nomination, I sent a thank-you email to the CAO giving him or her a few more details about the next steps in the study (see Appendix G).

CAOs who were identified in this process were considered for participation in the study. Based on the responses from the CEOs and peer CAOs, I selected three participants who were nominated by their respective presidents and one or more peers (see Table 2). As stated above, the number and physical location of participants were

Table 2

Chief Academic Officer (CAO) Nominations Received

Chief Academic Officer	Presidential	Peer(s)
Chief Academic Officer A	✓	✓ (1)
Chief Academic Officer B	✓	✓ (1)
Chief Academic Officer C	✓	✓ (2)
Chief Academic Officer D	✓	
Chief Academic Officer E		✓ (1)
Chief Academic Officer F		✓ (1)

Note. ✓ indicates a nomination received. (x) indicates number of peer nominations received.

limited in order to be able to conduct interviews in person and to include observations in this multicase study.

The CAOs selected were contacted by telephone and asked to participate in the study. During this telephone call, the CAOs were informed of the nomination process and given a brief description of the details of the study. The CAOs were informed that the study would begin with an interview of approximately 45 minutes with the CAO alone. In addition, I requested permission to “shadow” the CAO for two or three hours as they performed normal duties of the position.

Because of Greenleaf’s emphasis on the impact of leadership on followers, interview access to approximately five to six of their direct reports was also requested to discuss the CAO’s leadership style and behaviors. The CAOs were informed that the interviews and observation would likely be performed over two days, the interviews would be audiotaped, follow-up questions would be asked, and standard human research protocols would be followed. The CAO’s interview was scheduled during the telephone call. The assistance of the CAO’s administrative assistant was obtained to facilitate the scheduling of interviews with direct reports. All interviews were scheduled during a four-week period.

Data Collection Methods

Case study research may involve a variety of data collection methods and, according to Stake (1995), makes use of many “ordinary ways” (p. 49) of gaining information. This study involved two primary methods of data collection, interview and observation. In addition, a request was made of CAO participants to provide documents for review.

Case study research focuses on obtaining the descriptions and interpretations of other people. It is the goal of qualitative researchers to obtain multiple views of the case (Stake, 1995). In this study, interviews with each of the three cases, the three CAOs, were foundational to the study. However, interviews were also conducted with five or six direct reports of each CAO. By interviewing multiple direct reports in addition to the CAO himself or herself, the multiple views that are the goal of case study research were obtained.

Interview guides were prepared in advance, including an interview guide for CAO interviews (see Appendix H), an interview guide for CAO follow-up questions or second interview (see Appendix I), an interview guide for direct report interviews (see Appendix J), and an interview guide for direct report follow-up questions (see Appendix K). An observation guide for CAO observations was also prepared in advance (see Appendix L). Informed consent was obtained prior to the first interview or observation with each participant by obtaining the participant's signature on the informed consent document for CAOs (see Appendix M) or the informed consent document for direct reports (see Appendix N). Interviews were audio recorded using two digital recorders and, additionally, I made notes regarding setting and context that were not ascertainable from the audio recording. Spradley (1979) emphasized the role of "friendly conversation" (p. 58) in the interview process, as did Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), while Van Maanen (1988) wrote of the role of narratives in interviews. To that end, follow-up questions were included and stories were encouraged. Sample interview transcripts for both a CAO interview and a direct report interview are included in the appendices (see Appendices O and P).

Observation allows the researcher to achieve a more complete understanding of the case (Stake, 1995). Spradley (1980) pointed out the need for observations to be focused; the researcher should have a specific question and goal in mind when beginning the period of observation. All three CAOs allowed a one- to three-hour “shadowing” period as they engaged in the duties of their positions. This period allowed me to observe the CAO’s interactions with various people from the campus and encouraged a period of less-structured dialogue than that of the formal interview. Stake (1995) stated that observation allows the researcher to observe background conditions, relationships, and variables that cannot be anticipated. Immediately following the period of observation, I recorded field notes to retain as much information as possible.

Stake (1995) cited a review of documents as an activity that can reveal “key repositories or measures for the case” (p. 68). The CAOs were invited to supply written documents that provided additional or supporting information about the CAO’s leadership characteristics.

At Community College A, I conducted one interview of 46 minutes with Scott, the college’s CAO (see Table 3). The interview was held in his office that is located in the administration building on the main campus of Community College A. Both the interview guide for CAO interviews (see Appendix H) and the interview guide for CAO follow-up questions (Appendix I) were used during the interview. One period of observation was conducted with Scott that was 1½ hours in duration. During that period, Scott participated in a meeting with human resources officials regarding professional development for faculty and staff. In addition to the formal period of observation, I

Table 3

*Interviews and Observations with Chief Academic Officer A (Scott)
and Direct Reports*

Event	Date	Time	Duration	Transcript Pgs
Interview: Scott	03/06/2012	10:00 a.m.	46 min.	13
Interview: Bruce	03/08/2012	11:00 a.m.	14 min.	6
Interview: Josh	03/06/2012	1:00 p.m.	34 min.	10
Interview: Janet	03/08/2012	1:00 p.m.	19 min.	6
Interview: Patrick	03/06/2012	2:00 p.m.	34 min.	11
Interview: Daniel	03/06/2012	11:00 a.m.	16 min.	5
Interview: Karen	03/08/2012	10:00 a.m.	34 min.	12
Observation: Scott	05/23/2012	10:30 a.m.	1½ hrs.	

accompanied Scott to lunch one day and observed his interactions with staff members and students at various locations on the college's campus.

Individual interviews were also conducted with six of Scott's direct reports. Five of the direct reports were employed in dean- or director-level positions at Community College A, while one was employed in an administrative assistant role. The interviews were conducted in a conference room located in a building across campus from Scott's office. Both the interview guide for direct report interviews (see Appendix J) and the interview guide for direct report follow-up questions (see Appendix K) were used during each interview. The interviews with the direct reports ranged from 13 to 34 minutes in

length. The interviews with Scott and his direct reports resulted in 63 single-spaced pages of interview transcripts that were available for analysis.

I invited Scott to provide documents that might offer additional insight regarding his leadership style. Scott emailed a large file that contained photos of flip charts that were produced during a leadership planning retreat that he led as well as his most recent performance evaluation. Those documents were analyzed, as well.

At Community College B, I conducted two interviews of 45 and 14 minutes with Amanda, the college's CAO (see Table 4). Both interviews were held in a conference room that is located in the same office suite as Amanda's office in the administration

Table 4

Interviews and Observations with Chief Academic Officer B (Amanda) and Direct Reports

Event	Date	Time	Duration	Transcript Pgs
Interview: Amanda (#1)	03/13/2012	9:30 a.m.	14 min.	4
Interview: Amanda (#2)	03/13/2012	12:30 p.m.	46 min.	15
Interview: Danielle	03/15/2012	9:00 a.m.	19 min.	6
Interview: Doug	03/13/2012	11:30 a.m.	31 min.	9
Interview: Cindy	03/13/2012	10:30 a.m.	38 min.	13
Interview: Robinson	03/15/2012	11:00 a.m.	17 min.	5
Interview: Brandy	03/15/2012	3:00 p.m.	20 min.	6
Interview: Katrina	03/15/2012	10:00 a.m.	18 min.	6
Observation: Amanda	03/15/2012	12:00 noon	3 hrs.	

building on the main campus of Community College B. The interview guide for CAO interviews (see Appendix H) was used for the initial portion of the first interview, while the interview guide for CAO follow-up questions (Appendix I) was used for the latter portion of the first interview and all of the second interview. One period of observation was conducted with Amanda that was three hours in duration. During that period, Amanda participated in a meeting of about a dozen faculty and administrators that was a follow-up to a previous meeting regarding admission standards and procedures for a highly-selective program. In addition to the formal period of observation, I observed Amanda's interactions with staff members and students at various locations on the college's campus.

Individual interviews were also conducted with six of Amanda's direct reports. All of the direct reports were employed in dean- or director-level positions at Community College B. The interviews were conducted in the same conference room as the interviews with Amanda. Both the interview guide for direct report interviews (see Appendix J) and the interview guide for direct report follow-up questions (see Appendix K) were used during each interview. The interviews with the direct reports ranged from 17 to 37 minutes in length. The interviews with Amanda and her direct reports resulted in 64 single-spaced pages of interview transcripts that were available for analysis.

I invited Amanda to provide documents that might offer additional insight regarding her leadership style. She did not respond to the request.

At Community College C, I conducted one interview of 41 minutes with Glenn, the college's CAO (see Table 5). The interview was held in his office that is located in the administration building on the main campus of Community College C. Both the

Table 5

*Interviews and Observations with Chief Academic Officer C (Glenn)
and Direct Reports*

Event	Date	Time	Duration	Transcript Pgs
Interview: Glenn	03/27/2012	9:00 a.m.	42 min.	10
Interview: Bonnie	03/29/2012	10:00 a.m.	32 min.	10
Interview: Simon	03/29/2012	9:00 a.m.	33 min.	9
Interview: Kristin	03/27/2012	4:00 p.m.	22 min.	6
Interview: Andrew	03/27/2012	1:00 p.m.	18 min.	6
Interview: Mark	03/27/2012	3:00 p.m.	26 min.	8
Observation: Glenn	03/27/2012	11:00 a.m.	1 hr.	

interview guide for CAO interviews (see Appendix H) and the interview guide for CAO follow-up questions (Appendix I) were used during the interview. One period of observation was conducted with Glenn that was one hour in duration. During that period, Glenn conducted a meeting with about 15 college students and their instructor in a classroom on the main campus. The class was one from an Associate in Applied Science two-year vocational program. In addition to the formal period of observation, I observed Glenn's interactions with staff members and students at various locations on the college's campus.

Individual interviews were also conducted with five of Glenn's direct reports. All of the direct reports were employed in dean- or director-level positions at Community College C. Four of the interviews were conducted in a conference room that is located in

a different part of the same building that contains Glenn's office. One interview was conducted from the same conference room by telephone, with the direct report participating from his office at a secondary campus. Both the interview guide for direct report interviews (see Appendix J) and the interview guide for direct report follow-up questions (see Appendix K) were used during each interview. The interviews with the direct reports ranged from 17 to 32 minutes in length. The interviews with Glenn and his direct reports resulted in 49 single-spaced pages of interview transcripts that were available for analysis.

I invited Glenn to provide documents that might offer additional insight regarding his leadership style. Glenn declined to do so in a lengthy email that explained his reasoning. The primary reason cited was that his leadership style is more reflected in process than product, and the documents that were readily available—meeting minutes, etc.—are more reflective of the product or result of a particular meeting, and would contribute little toward an understanding of his leadership style.

Data Analysis and Synthesis

Stake (1995) pointed out that analysis does not begin at any one particular time, but is imbedded in the data gathering process from beginning to end. First impressions, ongoing observations, and formal analysis all provide information regarding the case.

With the interview being the primary method of data gathering in this study, an accurate record of the interviews conducted was of primary concern. Using a computer, word processing program, transcription software, foot pedal, and a headset, I transcribed all interviews personally. This process resulted in 176 single-spaced pages of transcripts. As suggested by Creswell (2007), transcripts were provided to those interviewed via

email to verify their accuracy prior to analysis. The changes requested by participants were made.

Pseudonyms were assigned to the individuals interviewed. The pseudonyms replaced all names, thus ensuring confidentiality. The three community colleges involved were assigned the pseudonyms Community College A, Community College B, and Community College C. I have retained the chart that assigned pseudonyms in a password-protected digital environment.

Coding the gathered data is a primary function of the analysis process, and involves the assignment of codes, or names, to themes or categories that are identified in the data (Creswell, 2007). The conceptual framework selected for this study provided the 10 codes used in this process—the 10 characteristics of servant leadership identified by Spears (2002). A copy of the 10 codes and their definitions from chapter 2 was printed and available beside my computer as I continued the work of analysis. The interview transcripts were then analyzed for the presence of the 10 characteristics. The presence of characteristics was noted electronically in the transcripts.

Peer debriefing is an important consideration in the coding process, as intercoder agreement contributes to the trustworthiness of the results (Creswell, 2007). I assembled a team of three instructional administrators from my own institution to assist with analysis. None of the three were participants in the study, as all administrators from my own institution were excluded from participation. All three individuals involved have earned doctorates, experience with qualitative research, and numerous years of experience as community college administrators.

The peer debriefing team assembled in a conference room on our campus and I provided a brief review session on qualitative coding. The team was challenged to look for emergent themes in the transcripts. The peer debriefing team was not provided information on servant leadership, Spears' (2002) 10 characteristics of servant leadership, the conceptual framework of this dissertation, or any previously-coded transcripts.

The team worked from printed copies of the interview transcripts. They began their work in the conference room while I went to obtain lunch—their only remuneration for the assistance provided. The team worked two hours in the conference room, but then adjourned to their offices and duties of the day with the promise that they would complete the coding assigned as soon as possible. By the completion of the analysis, the transcripts of the CAO interviews were coded by at least two team members. Each team member also coded two direct report transcripts. The transcripts were all returned to me later in the same week.

I then compared the work of the peer debriefing team with my own coding. Most of the discrepancies were attributed to the difference between a narrow interpretation of the 10 servant leadership principles and a broad interpretation of the principles. Where there were differences, I reviewed the transcript carefully, reviewed the code definition from chapter 2, and, at times, went back to Greenleaf's various writings on a particular subject. I then made a decision on whether to alter my original coding, made the correction if supported, and moved to the next discrepancy. Emergent codes or themes recognized by the peer debriefing team that were unrelated to one of Spears' (2002) 10 characteristics were noted and reviewed during my examination of themes that were unrelated to the 10 characteristics.

With the coding completed, I reconfigured electronic copies of the transcripts to create three “master files”—one for each CAO—of the material related to each of the 10 characteristics. When this manipulation of text was completed, I had available to me three files that contained all the data accumulated regarding the 10 specific attributes grouped by individual attribute. Each of the three documents was approximately 50 single-spaced pages in length, with an average of five pages of text related to each attribute for each CAO. When printed, these three documents were the primary physical sources of the data reported in chapter 4. In addition, I had material available to me about emergent themes that were unrelated to the 10 characteristics.

Although far less data were available from the observations and written documents, a similar process was used to code those items. No peer analysis was performed on this data due to the limited contribution it made to the findings of this study.

The analysis of data in multicase study research, specifically, provides opportunity for seeking meaning by developing each case individually, but also discovering meaning across the multiple cases (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). This rich opportunity was especially relevant in the study at hand.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues related to the protection of research participants are of primary concern in any research study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008; Creswell, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Creswell (2007) stated that ethical issues might include informed consent, deceptive activities, confidentiality, and risks to participants. In this study, informed consent was obtained from all research participants by obtaining each

participant's signature on the informed consent document (see Appendices M and N). No deceptive activities were a part of the study design. Confidentiality of data was assured through secure storage of data and use of pseudonyms instead of names for the participants. There were no foreseeable risks to the participants in the study.

As an additional protection, I completed a course in the protection of human research subjects, as required by Western Carolina University, prior to the commencement of the study. The study proposal was also reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University prior to implementation.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness features, for qualitative researchers, are the efforts to answer questions similar to the issues of validity and reliability for quantitative researchers (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Creswell (2007) noted that other qualitative researchers use terms such as credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and objectivity. Regardless of terminology, the central issue is, "Did we get it right?" (Stake, 1995, p. 107)

This study employed various strategies suggested by Creswell (2007) to ensure trustworthiness. Data was triangulated by the use of multiple corroborating data sources, using multiple interviews, observations, and document review (Creswell, 2007).

Peer debriefing, such as that provided in Western Carolina University's Doctoral Research Seminar, provided external checks of the research process (Creswell, 2007). Peer review was first used during the development of the proposal, particularly as research questions were formulated. Peer debriefing was also used in the analysis of

transcripts, with three instructional administrators performing coding of transcripts as described earlier in this chapter.

Researcher comments on past experiences, such as those provided in the introduction to chapter 1, serve to reveal the researcher's biases and assumptions (Creswell, 2007). I clarified my own involvement with servant leadership and community college instructional administration.

The return of data to the research participants provides opportunity for "member checking" (Creswell, 2007, p. 208) and the addition of missing material. Interview transcripts were provided to all participants for verification.

"Rich, thick description" (Creswell, 2007, p. 209) in the reporting of data allows the reader to make his or her own judgments about trustworthiness. I sought to use descriptions of participants and settings that were as detailed as possible while maintaining participant confidentiality.

Creswell (2007) listed a total of eight validation strategies, and considered the incorporation of any two of the strategies as sufficient. This study made use of five of Creswell's eight strategies as detailed above.

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations in this study as a result of the methods used as well as the research design. Qualitative research, and specifically case study research, is not intended to be generalizable, as it is limited to a small number of participants (Yin, 2009). The study involved interviews and observations, both of which were subject to interviewer bias.

The length of the data gathering period, some six weeks, may or may not have revealed leadership behaviors and characteristics that are representative of the overall leadership behaviors and characteristics of the participants.

Summary

This study explored the application of servant leadership principles to community college instructional administration. I sought to understand how community college instructional administrators exhibit principles of Greenleaf's (1970) servant leadership.

Two research questions were addressed: (1) How do community college instructional administrators exhibit the characteristics of servant leadership? and (2) What are the experiences of those who report to community college instructional administrators who display the characteristics of servant leadership?

This chapter described the study's methodology and discussed the rationale for qualitative research design, the rationale for multicase study methodology, the selection of research participants, an overview of the research design, the proposal and IRB approval process, data collection methods, data analysis and synthesis, ethical considerations, issues of trustworthiness, and limitations of the study. With the methodology described, chapter 4 now details the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The purpose of this multicase study was to explore the application of servant leadership principles to community college instructional administration. Specifically, I sought to understand how community college instructional administrators exhibit Greenleaf's servant leadership principles as defined by Spears (2002).

To fulfill the purpose of this study, the following research questions were addressed: (1) How do community college instructional administrators exhibit the characteristics of servant leadership? and (2) What are the experiences of those who report to community college instructional administrators who display the characteristics of servant leadership?

This chapter presents the key findings obtained from interviews, observations, and document analysis conducted on three western North Carolina community college campuses. A total of 21 interviews were conducted with three chief academic officers (CAOs) and 17 people who report to them. In addition, several periods of observation of the CAOs were conducted, and documents provided by the CAOs were analyzed.

This chapter is organized around the three cases, the CAOs, with subsections offering findings and a summary of data collected regarding servant leadership characteristics. The experiences of the CAOs' direct reports are evident throughout the summary, as well. The chapter concludes with a brief summary.

Chief Academic Officer A: Scott

Scott is a male instructional administrator in his 40s who has served as the chief academic officer of Community College A for less than a year. Scott previously held

several positions at the same college, beginning there as an instructor about six years ago and being promoted several times until being appointed to his present position.

Community College A is located in a small town in rural western North Carolina and ranks in the 4th of five tiers of the 58 community colleges in the North Carolina system with regard to size as defined by FTE (full-time equivalents). When compared with the other 14 community colleges in the western North Carolina region, Community College A ranks in the bottom one-third in size using the same measurement.

Scott holds a doctorate in his field of teaching, but has never studied educational leadership in a formal way. He reported that he has learned how to function as a community college administrator primarily through the examples of his own supervisors, but he also noted that all of those people have been “top-down,” autocratic leaders. Scott has developed his own shared leadership style because it works—not because of formal study or the conscious adoption of a particular model or theory.

As noted in chapter 3, I conducted one interview of 46 minutes with Scott. The interview was held in his office that is located in the administration building on the main campus of Community College A. Both the interview guide for CAO interviews (see Appendix H) and the interview guide for CAO follow-up questions (Appendix I) were used during the interview. One period of observation was conducted with Scott that was 1½ hours in duration. During that period, Scott participated in a meeting with human resources officials regarding professional development for faculty and staff. In addition to the formal period of observation, I accompanied Scott to lunch one day and observed his interactions with staff members and students at various locations on the college’s campus.

Individual interviews were also conducted with six of Scott's direct reports. Five of the direct reports were employed in dean- or director-level positions at Community College A, while one was employed in an administrative assistant role. The interviews were conducted in a conference room located in a building across campus from Scott's office. Both the interview guide for direct report interviews (see Appendix J) and the interview guide for direct report follow-up questions (see Appendix K) were used during each interview. The interviews with the direct reports ranged from 13 to 34 minutes in length. The interviews with Scott and his direct reports resulted in 63 single-spaced pages of interview transcripts that were available for analysis.

I invited Scott to provide documents that might provide additional insight regarding his leadership style. Scott emailed a large file that contained photos of flip charts that were produced during a leadership planning retreat that he led as well as his most recent performance evaluation. Those documents were analyzed, as well.

Findings

Two key findings emerged from the study with regard to Scott:

(1) Scott displayed all 10 characteristics of a servant leader, with two of those characteristics being identified more frequently than the others (listening, commitment to the growth of people) and one characteristic being identified less frequently than the others (healing) (see Table 6). In addition to the 10 identified servant leadership characteristics, Scott displayed the characteristics of honesty and courage.

(2) The experiences of Scott's direct reports were quite diverse, but all of the direct reports attributed many positive experiences to their supervisor's leadership philosophy and behaviors.

Table 6

Servant Leadership Characteristics Attributed to Chief Academic Officer A (Scott)

Characteristic	Self-Evaluation	Bruce	Josh	Janet	Patrick	Daniel	Karen
Listening	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Empathy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Healing	✓		✓	✓			✓
Awareness	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Persuasion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Conceptualization	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foresight	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stewardship	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Growth of People	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note. ✓ indicates the presence of evidence of a specific characteristic.

Characteristics and Experiences

This subsection reports the interview discussion, observation experiences, and document analysis that support the presence of each of Spears' (2002) 10 characteristics of servant leadership in Scott as well as honesty and courage. Along with the presence of the characteristics, numerous experiences of Scott's direct reports are also detailed.

The consideration of each characteristic begins with a brief reminder of the characteristic's definition from Spears (2002) or Greenleaf (1970). The definitions are not repeated, however, in the subsequent sections that explore the same 10 characteristics in the leadership of Amanda and Glenn.

Listening. Greenleaf (1970) maintained that a servant leader "automatically responds to any problem by listening *first*" (p. 18), and further maintained that listening is "terribly important" (p. 19). All six direct reports of Scott interviewed for this study mentioned listening when describing his leadership style. In addition, great emphasis was placed on the attribute by several direct reports, often contrasting Scott's propensity to listen with others with whom they had previously worked.

Daniel, Janet, and Josh cited Scott's willingness to listen and his receptivity as a hallmark of his leadership style. Daniel said in his interactions with people, Scott constantly "ask[s] for their feedback" on the decisions he has made, and often "ask[s] for feedback about something he hasn't decided."

Janet stated that Scott listens to input from those he leads, values their opinions, and "treats everybody like they're important and their opinion matters." Josh said that Scott is "easy to talk to," and "seems to be open to hearing, you know, what's going on."

Daniel also mentioned Scott's willingness to alter his planned actions based on what he hears:

I wanted to change something that's progressing ... and I suggested that we look at something different. And he said, "I don't have a problem with that," whereas his predecessor was like, "We're not making any changes. That's the way it is." So that's a little different, but he was definitely willing to listen to me, and change the way things were moving.

Several direct reports indicated that Scott does a great job balancing the desire to hear everyone with the need to make timely decisions. Patrick stated that Scott takes preemptive action to avoid being in a position where he has to say, "Well, I wish I could hear from everybody, but I've got to make a decision now." Instead, according to Patrick, he "look[s] ahead and get[s] people's input before the decision absolutely has to be made."

Janet also mentioned that Scott works very effectively in a way that allows everyone to be heard, but is also willing to "pull it back in" when the conversation has gone "all the way out in left field." Janet stated, "he's very good at that, very good at that."

Scott's use of open-ended questions, both in meetings and in individual conversation, works very well, according to his direct reports. Josh cited specifically the use of open-ended questions to "pull things out of people that may have been a little more quiet," a comment that reflected Scott's desire to truly understand people. Josh went on to say that "he seems to be open to hearing, you know, what's going on." Patrick noted

that Scott was very good at ascertaining people's strengths and weaknesses, gathering that information primarily through insightful listening.

Scott echoed himself many of the themes associated with listening that were cited by his direct reports. Scott affirmed the importance of listening and spoke of the importance of "listen[ing] to what the faculty members are saying." When it comes to decision-making, Scott said that he "wants to hear what you have to think" and mentioned his desire to listen first.

Of the five descriptors for the characteristic of listening, no data gathering pointed to Scott being particularly reflective in his listening. The overwhelming evidence, though, is that Scott is a leader who listens.

Empathy. Spears (2002) stated that the servant leader "strives to understand and empathize" (p. 5), and realizes that "people need to be accepted and recognized for their special and unique spirits" (p. 5). Greenleaf (1970) stated that "leaders who empathize and who fully accept those who go with them on this basis are more likely to be trusted" (p. 23). Scott's direct reports recognize and value the empathetic attitude that their supervisor displays on a regular basis.

Bruce spoke repeatedly of Scott's holistic interest in people: "I think he's under the idea that if the home life, the personal life, is in good order, they're going to make better employees." Bruce went on to state:

He's interested in people's family lives, lives outside of the college. He's concerned about them if he finds out somebody's sick on the outside, whatever, wife is sick or children, he'll ask about that. He's pretty good about giving time off when they have family emergencies.

According to Bruce, “he does try to generate a friendly or a family—almost—environment. He wants everybody to feel comfortable coming to him with their problems.” Janet described Scott as “caring,” while Josh cited Scott’s willingness to view employees “holistically.” Josh said:

I’d say that he does demonstrate a lot of, you know, compassion and understanding for folks. ... I’ve got two kids, young kids, and so, you know, things happen at home. ... My kids had walking pneumonia, so they spent like a week where my wife and I were both doing half days. ... And he was fine with me working from home on some of those days ... and basically just enabled me to keep on doing my job but also on top of the complications with family. So I think he is kind of looking out for people in that way. ... I think he does understand kind of the psychology of what makes some of us tick ... and he can kind of tune into that, I would say.

A common description of Scott with regard to his caring attitude toward those he leads was that he is a “good guy.” Bruce stated, “I think he comes across as just being a generally good guy—that he wants the best for everyone, and he’ll work for you for that.” Patrick recounted approaching Scott somewhat reluctantly about a leave request related to the direct report’s impending marriage. Patrick said that Scott told him, “Don’t be silly,” and made him feel better about his need to be away, demonstrating tolerance in leadership.

Scott often mentioned themes related to empathy, and many of them indicated that he is accepting of the varied roles his direct reports play. He stated that, “one way to lead people would be to look at their role from 9 to 5,” while another would be to

look at what they do from 9 to 5, but also realize that that person might be pursuing a graduate degree, they may have five kids at home, [and] they might be a regionally competitive marathon runner. They've got other things going on in their life.

“I hope I do a good job looking at the whole person,” Scott stated. “I think usually there's a way to work it out where you can look at their needs as a person and also address the institutional needs.” Scott said that he always tries to “frame it and let them know that I do understand what you're dealing with and I do understand where you're coming from.” Scott assumes that his direct reports have good intentions, and leads from that viewpoint, but does not hesitate to hold those he leads responsible for actions that are not acceptable, from computer errors to behaviors that warrant formal disciplinary action.

Scott clearly models empathy in his leadership activities.

Healing. As he described the 10 identified characteristics of servant leaders, Spears (2002) maintained that “broken spirits” (p. 5) and “emotional hurt” (p. 5), both of the servant leader and others, may be healed through the “transformation and integration” (p. 5) of servant leadership. Greenleaf (1970) emphasized that the “search for wholeness” (p. 37) is shared by leaders and those they lead.

Only three direct reports out of the six interviewed identified healing in Scott's leadership behaviors. It was the attribute cited least frequently of Spears' (2002) 10 characteristics.

Josh mentioned that Scott “had a lot of pieces to try to bring together” when he first assumed his present position. “I think that he’s a good kind of unifier of people,” Josh went on to say.

Janet stated:

Scott is a great leader. He’s actually—we’ve had some changes in leadership over the years, and this is the first time that I see the faculty coming together and as a unit. That’s something that we’ve been lacking for a while.

Karen spoke of Scott doing a good job “handling the emotional side” of a particularly difficult decision. There was a program elimination that affected one employee in particular because the program was “her baby,” according to Karen. Scott “helped her a lot because she was very angry at first,” Karen stated—an example of Scott seeking wholeness for one of his direct reports.

Far more than in any specific statements, Scott displayed an attitude of caring toward employees during my time on the campus of Community College A. His evident concern for the physical and emotional wellbeing of others was indicative of Spears’ (2002) characteristic of healing. Numerous employees cited the difficult circumstances that the instructional area had endured in that past, and Scott acted in a transformative manner to heal many of the rifts and hurt feelings that existed when he assumed his current position.

Although it was displayed with less specificity and frequency than other attributes, and although the descriptors related to personal healing and the common search for healing were not identified in the data collected, Scott is affirmed as a leader who seeks healing for himself and others.

Awareness. Both general awareness and self-awareness are beneficial for the servant leader, according to Greenleaf, and enable the leader to “view most situations from a more integrated, holistic position” (Spears, 2002, p. 6). Greenleaf (1970) stated: “When one is aware ... more is stored away in the unconscious computer to produce intuitive insights in the future” (p. 28).

The characteristic of awareness was identified in statements made by all of Scott’s direct reports. Of particular note was the emphasis placed on Scott’s self-awareness.

Karen did not see the promotion of Scott to his current position coming. Karen said:

“I think Scott stepping up into that role was the furthest thing from what I thought would happen. And the reason I thought that was not because I don’t think he’s very capable. I just never saw that desire in him to go further. I mean, he always seemed to express genuine happiness at the level he was at.

But the story told by Scott revealed a self-awareness and an insightfulness that is a classic example of the leader who is servant first. Greenleaf (1970) stated that “it begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead” (p. 15).

Scott recounted his journey to leadership at Community College A in such a way that displayed his openness and his self-awareness:

I was here about two years and everything was going great and the department I was in, the chairperson decided to retire, and there was an external search for a chair that failed. They didn’t find someone that was appropriate for the position. And so at that point, I was asked if I would consider it on an interim basis and I

did. And at that time, it really wasn't because I had any desire to move into administration. I felt like at that time I could keep the department going.... We had a good department.

So I went along with that, and I was interim ... and I got some good feedback from the faculty ... then they encouraged me to apply for the full-time position when it opened up, and I did. And I was selected for that. ... And then things again were going along pretty good for a while, a couple of years, and our VP here decided to leave and go to [another community college]. And at that time, again, there was this sort of open-ended thing and again I expressed interest in this position, but it was more from the standpoint that I wanted to see a smooth transition. Uh, there were a couple of other folks internally who I thought were strong candidates, and I would have been really pleased if they got it, in fact, if they got it over me. ... So it was more like, again, stepping into it.

Patrick recognized Scott's ascension to leadership in much the same way, and described how Scott integrates teaching, learning, and administration:

I'm not saying that he doesn't have—I don't want to use the word ambition, but I might say—goals. I think that he, he did put his name forward in those situations because, I think, that he sees some things that he'd like to accomplish, and I think that's fulfilling to him, but it's fulfilling to him for the right reasons in the sense that he has an idea about the way education should be done in community colleges, and those positions afford him that opportunity to do that.

Bruce said that Scott is in education because “it’s his life love,” going on to state that “he was always taking an additional course each semester because he believes in lifelong learning and he wants to promote that here.”

Scott brings an exceptional awareness of himself and of others to the chief academic officer’s position. One descriptor of the awareness characteristic, an emphasis on sensory perception, was not identified in Scott.

Persuasion. Spears (2002) wrote that servant leaders “rely on persuasion, rather than on one’s positional authority, in making decisions within an organization” (p. 6), and noted that the building of consensus is of particular value. “Leadership by persuasion,” Greenleaf (1970) stated, “has the virtue of change by convincement rather than coercion” (p. 30).

Greenleaf’s understanding of persuasion was well documented in Scott’s leadership style as described in the interviews with his direct reports. Patrick argued that Scott motivates others to accept decisions through information:

I think that what I would say is, he gives them the information. It kind of goes back to that transparency, you know. He explains to them, you know, exactly how he came to that decision....He gives me the information to at least understand his thought process, and I think that’s huge....Even if I disagree with the decision, I don’t question his motivation and he gives me enough information to understand his reasoning. I don’t know ... how it works with other people, but if I can get those two things from a supervisor, I can almost live with any decision, I think.

Scott reported that acceptance of one particularly difficult decision was made possible because

this was not a behind-the-scenes thing. They had a voice, they had a concern, they had needs, but, I think, at least very quickly I was able to frame it in what the college's needs were. And that was a case where it worked out very well....

We've got to look at the big picture.

Karen spoke to Scott's gentleness in announcing the decision, and reported that Scott was "sensitive to [the] emotions that [were] involved."

Scott spoke of "making a case" to faculty members and other employees, often meeting with them individually:

We have to make a tough decision here. I've invited all sorts of input.... Here's what I'm going with, and here's why. Let me know if I've missed something.

Let me know if I need to reevaluate. And, uh, it's not always easy, but it seems to be an effective, uh, way to let people know about important decisions that are made at the college.

The result of open, shared decision-making, Scott reported, is that "people were really willing to work with me" as consensus was developed. Greenleaf's (1970) "convincement" (p. 31) is an operational principle in the way Scott relates to those he leads.

Conceptualization. Spears (2002) explained his understanding of conceptualization: "The ability to look at a problem (or an organization) from a conceptualizing perspective means that one must think beyond day-to-day realities" (p. 6). Greenleaf (1970) called conceptualization "the prime leadership talent" (p. 33).

Conceptual talent “states and adjusts goals, analyzes and evaluates operating performance, and foresees contingencies a long way ahead” (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 66).

All six direct reports made repeated references to Scott’s use of data to articulate goals, evaluate performance, and make decisions. Patrick spoke at length about Scott’s use of data to advocate for future needs:

We’ve gone up about 34% in the last five years. Well, that puts some pressure ... on the faculty we have, and he’s been a huge advocate where there are faculty positions that need to be added. Even when he was a department chair, he would advocate for me as a fellow department chair ... in terms of classroom space and office space.

Karen stated that Scott does “a really good job of pulling together program data, program completion rates, some employability, future job growth in those areas, and vacant jobs in our area for various job sectors.” The information gain from analysis, according to Karen, drives Scott’s decision-making as he sets vision for the future, and is shared with those who report to him in regular meetings.

Greenleaf’s (1977) “operating performance” (p. 66) reference brings to mind one story that Scott told. He had received numerous complaints that a particular faculty member had made 10 serious advising mistakes in a particular semester. So Scott sought out more information before evaluating and charting a course:

We did an analysis ... and so-and-so made 10 mistakes in advising this fall—10 serious mistakes. And this person in the same program has made one....Well, it turns out that the person who made 10 serious mistakes had done almost 500 Datatel transactions. The person who had done one had made 60. And so, I was

able to go to them and say that we'd like to put measures in place to help with the mistakes, but percentage-wise, this person is doing a lot better.

Scott displays conceptualization through his use of data to think beyond the day-to-day, evaluate performance, and formulate goals.

Foresight. Spears (2002) related foresight to conceptualization, but defined foresight specifically as “a characteristic that enables the servant-leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequence of a decision for the future” (p. 7). Greenleaf (1970) cited foresight as being “the central ethic of leadership” (p. 25). Foresight involves intuition—“the product of a constantly running internal computer that deals with intersecting series and random inputs and is vastly more complicated than anything technology has yet produced” (p. 25).

Several direct reports spoke of Scott being “forward thinking” (Josh), able to “see the big picture” (Patrick), and “futuristic in his thinking” (Karen). Karen mentioned that looking toward the future is one of Scott’s real strengths:

I think especially here recently he’s been more focused on the big picture because that’s just the kind of person he is. And we really—again, from some of our past leadership, they had been solely focused in day-to-day—we really were lacking some clear strategic planning, and so that’s, I think, what he sees that he can bring to the table...We’ve seen a lot of focus on that.

Patrick, as well as others, spoke of Scott’s determination to align resources with need—both present and future. Scott, Patrick noted, uses data to project needs and make data-informed decisions.

Scott reported that foresight is especially necessary when considering new programs, and especially when allocating valuable resources to new programs. Many of his new program ideas, though, originated with others. Scott described a particular direct report coming to him with an innovative idea for a new program:

I said, “Well, you know, give me a proposal and we’ll talk about it.” And the chairperson presented me with a lot of documentation and a lot of facts, and we met together and discussed it. I talked a little bit about what the ramifications would be with other community colleges for students here on campus....At the end of the day, it was a great idea from a very productive administrator on campus, and after we talked about a few things, I took it to my administrative council and said, “I stand behind this 100%. We ought to do it.” They all voted yes.

Scott emphasized using data when making projections for the future, since “when you present that case and you give them data ... it’s really hard to refute over time,” but being aware, too, that people are involved with program closures, new programs, and any change that is instituted on campus. But a continual focus on “us[ing] funds for programs that are growing—and not only for programs that are growing, but where students are getting jobs,” is important to Scott and the future of Community College A and its community.

One foresight descriptor that was missing from interviews regarding Scott’s leadership style was intuitive. Scott is reported to be far more of a data-driven decision maker, using past and present data to forecast the future. Even though he is likely less

intuitive than data-oriented, Scott displays foresight in his leadership, particularly in the area of decision-making.

Stewardship. According to Spears (2002), Greenleaf felt strongly that leaders play “significant roles in holding their institutions in trust for the greater good of society” (p. 7). The first goal of servant leadership is “serving the needs of others” (p. 7), Greenleaf (1970) saw a great connection between “making optimal use of one’s resources” (p. 21) and serving. Greenleaf said that the servant should constantly ask, “How can I use myself to serve best?” (p. 21), and applied the same question to the resources available to the servant leader. Everything entrusted to the servant leader is held in trust for the greater good of the community.

The difficult budget environment for North Carolina community colleges over the past few years was reflected in the interviews with Scott’s direct reports. The optimization of available funds was a repeated theme.

Numerous transcript pages were occupied by the retelling of one story by Scott and several direct reports. An existing program served a quite small student population very effectively, but occupied a large amount of building space that, due to state regulations, could not be used by other programs even though the space was empty for months at a time between the program’s class cycles. At the same time, another program had grown tremendously and desperately needed additional space. After gathering input from many people, Scott requested that the Board of Trustees give its approval to discontinue the small existing program so that the space could be reassigned to meet the burgeoning needs of the second program. According to Scott, very clear explanations of the motives behind the program’s closing and many public affirmations of the value and

unselfish service of the closing program's faculty allowed the decision to be adopted with the fewest hurt feelings, benefitted the greatest number of students, and allowed the best stewardship of available space.

Every direct report made some statement about Scott's stewardship of resources, especially with regard to serving the greater good and assisting as many students as possible: Bruce cited his "really good job ... [making] budget decisions" and the determination to "use [the] money to help the most students." Josh said that Scott places a "fresh set of eyes on things" and is working on changing a policy where "it just seems like there's really just a lot of waste." Janet was complimentary not just of what Scott was able to accomplish with budget, but the way he went about it, saying, "We kind of got into this at one time where I thought when the budget's divided out, and we got into what's mine is mine, yours [is] yours, and forgot that we're all working for the same place....I've seen Scott pull that back together some." Scott is "going to help us get what we need," Patrick expressed. Daniel cited as particularly effective the way Scott works with others in a collaborative budgeting process, and Karen covered the new program story mentioned above at length.

In addition to the new program narrative, Scott was particularly proud of moving some leftover state funds into a one-time renovation project. He accepted little credit for himself, but paid homage to the careful stewardship practices of his entire team as they worked together "on things that would benefit instruction."

The descriptor of holding resources in trust was not overtly mentioned in interviews, but the attribute of stewardship is clearly displayed in Scott's leadership activities.

Commitment to the growth of people. According to Spears (2002), “the servant-leader is deeply committed to the growth of each and every individual within his or her institution” (p. 8) and has a responsibility to “nurture the personal, professional, and spiritual growth of employees” (p. 8). This reflected in Greenleaf’s (1970) test of servant leadership: “Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?” (p. 15)

Scott displays a commitment to the growth of people in particularly compelling ways. Daniel maintained that Scott’s example causes other people to be more interested in their own professional development. Patrick made it obvious that Scott values people, and said that that Scott is “about ... increasing people’s capacity” through informal mentoring, day-to-day conversations, and encouraging attendance at conferences. Janet stated of Scott’s priorities:

Students. I think he is all about the college as a whole, but I think his number one priority is to help students—not just students—he wants to see everybody improve. Whether it’s educational goals or personal goals or whatever, he tends to encourage individuals to pursue that. So he’s very supportive of that.

Bruce called Scott a “major proponent of education,” and stated that “he believes in lifelong learning.” Bruce cited Scott’s involvement as a mentor—and being mentored by Community College A’s president.

Scott repeatedly affirmed his desire to see people grow—students, faculty, staff, and community members. He was somewhat reluctant to claim the title of “mentor,” but

spoke of working with people to improve their skills and benefit both them personally and the college as a whole.

Additionally, in an observed meeting, Scott emphasized to human resources officers the importance of providing professional development for faculty and staff members. He maintained that both the quality and availability of opportunities for professional development were of great concern and displayed a nurturing attitude toward employees.

Scott's commitment to the growth of people—and especially students, the traditionally least privileged—is affirmed.

Building community. One important function of a servant leader is “building community among those who work within a given institution” (Spears, 2002, p. 8). Greenleaf felt strongly, Spears (2002) asserted, that “true community can be created among those who work in businesses and other institutions” (p. 8). Greenleaf (1970) wrote of the need to “rebuild community as a viable life form for large numbers of people” (p. 40)—and servant leaders should be the ones, in Greenleaf's opinion, who “show the way” (p. 40).

Direct reports cited numerous ways that Scott works to bring people together and build a sense of community. Karen mentioned the “shared vision” that Scott cultivates, while Janet stated that “Scott has the ability to pull people together to work for one cause.”

Scott's “participatory” style “leads to a sense of teamwork, for sure,” according to Patrick, although Scott is not afraid to take responsibility for the actions of the team. Janet expressed Scott's caring attitude, saying that “he makes everybody feel important

and like they're part of the college, and it's a whole unit," and contrasting that with the actions of other leaders. Daniel mentioned also that Scott encourages teamwork.

Karen also hit upon the theme of contrast with other leaders:

Scott is very different than our past leaders... He's very different. One of the things he has done is open up [meetings that] had in the past just been for department chairs to anybody on campus who wants to come....When we have our meeting every other Friday, we went from having about six people in the room to sometimes 12 and 14.

Karen continued on the same theme of contrast:

People felt that the administration was literally up here on the hill and we were down there. I think he's done a good job of making sure he's still part of the campus. People still see him, know him. He's kept a very casual air about him. We all asked him when he took this job, ... now that you're no longer just a department chair, do you want us to call you Dr. [Last Name]? And he just started dying laughing, and he said, "No, because I probably wouldn't know to answer, so just keep calling me Scott. And so I think he's got a casual interaction style that a lot of people appreciated him having.

The casual interaction style and trusting attitude that was cited by several direct reports and observed in numerous exchanges on campus serves quite well to promote a sense of community with the people Scott leads. Scott stated:

Teamwork is very important....People need to be able to do group work, play nice with each other, come up with collaborative solutions, all that good stuff. And I promote it a lot. We do a lot of group meetings....Some leaders are pretty

effective at, you know, you have a decision that involves five different administrative units, calling one person and explaining the situation, calling in the next, explaining the situation. My memory's not that good, so I'd rather bring them all in at once. And I also feel that by bringing people in, most of the people I work for are very mature, very responsible people....So I think that's the best thing I do to promote teamwork—to give those folks an opportunity to succeed or fail as a team.

The community descriptor of loving was not overtly present in the interviews and observations of Scott's leadership. Nonetheless, it is apparent that Scott's leadership style and behaviors give priority to the development of a spirit of community.

Additional characteristics. Scott was cited repeatedly by his direct reports for his honesty. Sometimes termed as transparency or even openness, the theme of open, honest treatment of his direct reports was the characteristic other than Spears' (2002) 10 characteristics of servant leadership that emerged most frequently from the interviews.

Bruce's first stated descriptor of Scott's leadership was "open," and went on to say that he is "straightforward" and does not seek to hide decision-making or anything else from his direct reports. Josh said: "With Scott ... everything's out there, just transparent, I guess, would be another thing that I would say about him."

Janet maintained that Scott's decisions are readily accepted because he has been "so open and honest" in the way he arrived at the decision. Patrick described Scott's leadership as always being "above board," and said that he respected Scott's willingness to be totally honest with others.

Another identified characteristic of Scott's leadership style not covered by Spears' (2002) 10 characteristics was courage. Patrick made reference to Scott's willingness to go against popular opinion on difficult decisions: "I'd like to believe that I'm a courageous leader," Patrick said, "but [Scott] is taking it to a whole another level."

Chief Academic Officer B: Amanda

Amanda is a female instructional administrator in her 40s who has served as the chief academic officer of Community College B for about four years. Amanda previously held several positions at the same college, beginning there as an instructor some 14 years ago and being promoted several times until being appointed to her present position.

Community College B is located in a small town in rural western North Carolina and ranks in the 4th of five tiers of the 58 community colleges in the North Carolina system with regard to size as defined by FTE (full-time equivalents). When compared with the other 14 community colleges in the western North Carolina region, Community College B ranks in the middle one-third in size using the same measurement.

Amanda holds a doctorate in educational leadership in addition to other degrees in her field of teaching. Although Amanda's study has certainly influenced her leadership style, Amanda's work as a community college administrator has been profoundly influenced by the example of her father, a retired community college administrator himself. Amanda has developed her shared leadership style through multiple influences, but primarily through her work as a teacher and the influence of her father.

As noted in chapter 3, I conducted two interviews with Amanda that were 45 and 14 minutes in length. Both interviews were held in a conference room that is located in

the same office suite as Amanda's office in the administration building on the main campus of Community College B. The interview guide for CAO interviews (see Appendix H) was used for the initial portion of the first interview, while the interview guide for CAO follow-up questions (Appendix I) was used for the latter portion of the first interview and all of the second interview. One period of observation was conducted with Amanda that was three hours in duration. During that period, Amanda participated in a meeting of about a dozen faculty and administrators that was a follow-up to a previous meeting regarding admission standards and procedures for a highly-selective program. In addition to the formal period of observation, I observed Amanda's interactions with staff members and students at various locations on the college's campus.

Individual interviews were also conducted with six of Amanda's direct reports. All of the direct reports were employed in dean- or director-level positions at Community College B. The interviews were conducted in the same conference room as the interviews with Amanda. Both the interview guide for direct report interviews (see Appendix J) and the interview guide for direct report follow-up questions (see Appendix K) were used during each interview. The interviews with the direct reports ranged from 17 to 37 minutes in length. The interviews with Amanda and her direct reports resulted in more than 60 single-spaced pages of interview transcripts that were available for analysis.

I invited Amanda to provide documents that might provide additional insight regarding her leadership style. She did not respond to the request.

Findings

Two key findings emerged from the study with regard to Amanda:

(1) Amanda displayed all 10 characteristics of a servant leader, with two of those characteristics being identified more frequently than the others (listening, commitment to the growth of people) and one characteristic being identified less frequently than the others (healing) (see Table 7). In addition to the 10 identified servant leadership characteristics, Amanda displayed the characteristics of commitment to family and dedication.

(2) The experiences of Amanda's direct reports were quite diverse, but all of the direct reports attributed many positive experiences to their supervisor's leadership philosophy and behaviors.

Characteristics and Experiences

This subsection reports the interview discussion and observation experiences that support the presence of each of Spears' (2002) 10 characteristics of servant leadership in Amanda as well as commitment to family and dedication. Along with the presence of the characteristics, numerous experiences of Amanda's direct reports are also detailed.

The definitions of each characteristic that were included in the previous section that explored the same 10 characteristics in Scott's leadership are not repeated here.

Listening. Spears' (2002) first characteristic of listening was one of two characteristics cited most frequently by Amanda's direct reports. Katrina was not the only one who tied the priority of listening with the quantity and duration of meetings:

Good, bad, or indifferent, no one actually likes a lot of meetings because it prevents you from being able to do the things you need to do in your own

Table 7

Servant Leadership Characteristics Attributed to Chief Academic Officer B (Amanda)

Characteristic	Self-Evaluation	Danielle	Doug	Cindy	Robinson	Brandy	Katrina
Listening	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Empathy	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Healing	✓						
Awareness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Persuasion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Conceptualization	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foresight	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stewardship	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Growth of People	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note. ✓ indicates the presence of evidence of a specific characteristic.

department. However, I see the necessity of having many of those meetings, because that is how you get a good feel for what's going on across the campus, and where your voice can be heard. So the way that Amanda accomplishes that many times is through her meetings.

Brandy emphasized that Amanda listens before taking action:

Meetings are long.... I'm often frustrated and wanting to rush to decisions, and I'm sure she knows that about me. But she will let others talk, and if the meeting can't be long for whatever reason, it won't get resolved at that particular time if she doesn't think that everybody's been heard or that there's been due consideration of all the points of view—then it will be tabled.

Robinson also seemed less than patient with the meetings, even while realizing their value:

Meetings, meetings, meetings. There are some times when even I say, "Let's just do it. Tell me, what do you want to do? I mean, I'll do it. If it doesn't disagree with my values, morals, beliefs, and it's not going to hurt anybody—what do you want me to do?" If it's going to benefit the college, I'm going to do that. But I know and understand that it's just trying to get everybody at the table so that everybody can at least have an opportunity to share their thoughts.

"You're constantly going to meetings," Cindy affirmed, "but we're all working together as a team, and that encourages interaction between the different departments so that we're not all silos." Cindy later mentioned that "they are—and I think, not just Amanda, but that's the tone of our whole administration—that they do try to listen to what others think."

Doug expressed a favorable opinion about how Amanda is able to bring meetings back to the topic, even while valuing the need to hear everyone:

There have been a few occasions in meetings where I took note that she felt like we were getting a little bit too far off topic, and she just very politely would bring us back to what she felt like was the center of the topic.... You just can't let those kind of things ramble on, and everybody's time is valuable. And if one person is spending too much time on a tangent, then, you know, you have to respect everybody's time and bring it back. And she's—I feel like she's very tactful in that, you know.

Danielle saw Amanda as being insightful, yet practical:

She's so practical in her ideas and thought process that she knows everybody needs to be heard, but then, again, it's not harped on for days or weeks or months. She knows also that a decision has to be made, so she does a good job in getting feedback and then takes that all in consideration.

Amanda seeks to understand, and that requires listening in a deeper way. One individual, Robinson, said that Amanda always “allows for a narrative” and he appreciates being able “to give her this qualitative story line that I hope will put me in a position of obtaining whatever it is I'm asking for.”

Amanda mentioned numerous times her priority of listening to others, and she modeled receptivity to others' opinions and the desire to hear that opinion before taking action during the observed meeting. Amanda stated:

I jokingly said this is probably sort of a cathartic for my employees, but I think there's benefit for people being able to talk through something, even if you can't

always do what everybody wants to do. So, you know, I think everybody needs to have a voice and have an opportunity to speak.

Although the descriptor of reflective was not revealed in the data gathered, Amanda displays in a very dynamic way the characteristic of listening.

Empathy. Several direct reports made known that Amanda is able to lead in a friendly, personal, empathetic way without crossing the line into an inappropriate intrusion into others' personal lives. Cindy witnessed Amanda's concern for a coworker:

She's asked me when I had to be out—you know, she'd come by and say, "How are you doing? How are things going?" When [a coworker]—they had to take her to the hospital, you know, Amanda was concerned and wanted to know....She's always expressed interest and asked about people if she knows that certain things are going on in people's lives. We're kind of a family at Community College B, you know. And so she's always expressed interest in the personal lives, if she's aware of the things that are going on.

Several direct reports portrayed Amanda as being accepting and tolerant.

Robinson stated that Amanda "values me in and outside of the workplace," while Danielle said that "she cares about families" and, "told me when I first started, you know, family will come first." According to Katrina, Amanda's attitude about viewing the whole person

comes from her experience as a parent, and her experience in being a dean herself. She started out as an instructor and has moved up through the ranks here at the college, which is beneficial to her for understanding individuals and where they are in the current system.

Amanda echoed some of the same themes. She placed emphasis on seeing people as individuals, saying, “I don’t think treating people fairly necessarily means treating everybody exactly the same because they’re not the same.” She mentioned that “traveling with people is a good way to get to know them,” and produces an understanding of what is important to each employee—even while the same period of time away from the daily grind can help the employee understand the motivation and goals of the leader. She stated:

I just got back from a conference this past week and I went with three ... staff members who are new. And a great, honestly, part of my reason for going was just to get to know them. The conference was good and I learned some stuff in the sessions, too, and I appreciated that, but a lot of the reason I went was to just kind of spend that casual time. We went out to eat and, you know, that’s a good way for me to get to know them in sort of a less-stressful environment and talk about kids and, you know, whatever they want to talk about and kind of get to know them.... And they sort of learn what I value and what is important to me and what I feel strongly about. And I learn the same thing about them and I think that just helps us to work together better.

Another comment from Amanda mentioned respecting boundaries with those she leads, even while understanding them as people: “I think you have to understand the person as a person and what’s driving them. I think you also, though, have to be kind of careful about respecting people’s boundaries and what they want to share with you.”

The mutual sharing of lives—and the concern about one another that usually develops from that knowledge—is important to Amanda:

I think working together over time, letting people get to know you, letting them get to the point where they trust you with information about themselves other than the 9 to 5, is part of that process.... And, you know, with some people you can get to know them very quickly and they're very open and they're willing to tell you a lot. And then with some people, they're not. And I'm not sure that's something you can really rush. I think I've found that by letting them see me, and being who I am and sharing who I am with them, often makes them feel more comfortable sharing about themselves. But some of that has to be up to them.

Two of the selected descriptors for the characteristic of empathy were not mentioned during the interviews with Amanda and her direct reports. The rejection of some behaviors was not articulated; neither was it displayed during the period of observation. The observed meeting, however, allowed Amanda to demonstrate that she assumes good intentions on everyone's part. Even though numerous opinions, often conflicting, were articulated, Amanda repeatedly voiced that everyone wanted what was best for the program and its students.

Amanda is an empathetic leader.

Healing. None of the interviews with Amanda's direct reports produced any overt comments directly related to healing. However, one observation and Amanda's own comments revealed the attribute of healing, although this characteristic appears to be present to a lesser degree than the other nine in her leadership style.

The meeting gathered about a dozen faculty and administrators for a lunch-time meeting that did not include lunch and was held in a conference room on Community College B's main campus. As Amanda shared prior to the meeting, it was scheduled as a

follow-up to an extremely contentious meeting regarding admission standards and procedures for a highly-selective program. Amanda did not preside over the meeting; one of her direct reports assumed that function as a part of the normal duties of her position. However, through her quiet presence, astute comments, and caring attitude, Amanda brought healing to a situation in need of salve.

Amanda spoke of transformational healing—although not using those terms—with regard to assisting faculty members who were struggling in their positions. The context concerned instructors who were more rule-centered than student-center. Amanda stated of them:

We have to take them where they are, and it doesn't mean we reduce our rigor. It doesn't mean we reduce the quality of what we do. But you can't just say [to students], "Here's where you need to be, now get there." You've got to help them get there. And, you know, there have been some difficult conversations with instructors who had that kind of mentality, and we had to talk about how ... you have a different mentality without reducing rigor in the classroom. And, you know, I've seen them grow and become very nurturing, caring, methodical, and thoughtful instructors.

Amanda continued later and emphasized the common search for positive change: I don't want this to sound as though ... I think my employees are my children, because they're certainly not. But it doesn't happen that way with your children. You know, it's a relationship. It's over time, and you have to stick with it and be with it, you know. And I think with people, any of us, if we're not committed to that person, if we're not committed to that person's success, if we just look at it as

... a quick fix, and if you don't get it, I'm going to be done with you, then that's a very different style than ... [being] committed. If you're committed to that person, and you're committed to their success, you're going to take a very different track in dealing with them. And it's not going to happen with just one conversation.

Amanda is committed to healing in the way that has been described. The descriptors of personal healing and the search for wholeness were not identified in interviews or observation, though.

Awareness. Both general awareness and self-awareness were noted in Amanda's leadership style. Katrina saw Amanda having a strong sense of who she is and where she came from, saying, "I know she is very strong in her faith [and has] very strong values with family, and that ... drives her," adding that "she's very passionate about her community that she was born and raised in," too. Later, Katrina went on to say that Amanda is "very driven and sincere" and "has a passion for the community college system."

Brandy said that "leadership ... seems to be what she was meant to do." Amanda, Brandy stated, "is willing to work however hard it requires to get something done—and I don't know how she does it all. But she believes in the mission, she remembers there's a student in this ... and this just seems to be what she was meant to do."

Robinson had a different take on Amanda. "I think there's a competitor in there," Robinson said, "and I say she wants to win." But the same direct report stated that a "win" for Amanda was placing Community College B "in a preeminent state so that we can be the first option for our citizens in [our two counties] and the surrounding area."

Speaking of Amanda's self-awareness, Cindy stated that Amanda knows herself well. Cindy was confident that Amanda "likes what she does ... cares about our institution and ... cares about our students." Danielle spoke of Amanda's "drive and personal motivation," but then expressed the opinion that students are at the root of that drive.

Amanda displayed both self-awareness and insightfulness as she spoke of her leadership journey with a quiet confidence:

I think part of it is who I am. I enjoy work. I enjoy being productive. I enjoy having a task to do. When I was in college, I worked in a shoe store. I worked as a maid. I've done a lot of different things, and I enjoyed all those things, because if I feel like I'm doing something productive, I feel good about that. And so I think part of that sort of orientation for me is when I come into a job, I see what the things are that need to be accomplished here.... So I just think that that's just who I am as a person.

Knowing herself and being open and at peace with the future is a part of Amanda, too:

I think that it's important that you don't get so caught up in, "What do I want to become?" that you don't take time to enjoy the journey there—because I don't think the goal is the end-all be-all. You know, I do think that I'm the kind of person who needs a goal. I need something to sort of think of in the future and to shoot for. But I love what I do, and I don't, you know—I've had colleagues who applied everywhere and they just, you know, that's their goal. They want to be a president....But I think I'm sort of at a place in my life where I know who I am

and I know what my strengths are and I know what my talents are, and I think if there were a position where that would fit, then, yes.

Although the descriptors of being integrative and emphasizing sensory input were not revealed, Amanda certainly displays the characteristic of awareness.

Persuasion. Several direct reports commented on how Amanda motivates them to accept decisions, and many cited factors closely related to Greenleaf's (1970) principle of individual conviction. Katrina said:

I think what helps is that Amanda is very detailed and explains situations and the reason why decisions are made, which helps in motivating individuals to accept changes. When you understand the reason why, it can help with the outcome.

Cindy had much the same thing to say about persuasion:

I think ... the biggest way [is] she lets us know why she made the decision. I mean, there's a lot of details she can't go into. But I think it's a general rapport.... You learn to trust the person who's over you based on how fair they seem to be in their decision and the reasons that they use. So it's not something that develops over one decision. It develops over a series of decisions that are made, where you can kind of see that things are fair and logical and make sense. So I think you can't really see that with just one decision. It's something that kind of develops over time.

Doug pointed out that Amanda acts to build consensus, stating that when "we've batted the idea around, we've talked it out enough where, in most cases, the best decision seems pretty obvious." Open and honest communication was cited by Danielle as key to accepting decisions.

Amanda related that helping those she leads understand the tie between decision-making and the college's mission is key to persuasion:

One of the things about Community College B that I like about working here is I think we have a strong mission to improve lives through learning.... And I think what I've found in working with faculty and administrators is that if you can tie a decision back to how this is going to impact learning for students, how this is going to impact the community, then that's why most people are here. They want to have that impact. So if I can tie the decisions to that, or if I can show them ... how I see it impacting the community or how I see it impacting students, typically most people will accept that.

Relating decisions to the college's mission is a strong theme for Amanda as she gently persuades:

So as often as I can, I'm going to try to tie that back to our mission and say, "We're all here for the same thing. I'm not pushing something on you that is contrary to the mission that we're all here for." And I think that's the easiest way and the most effective way to do it.

Even when reporting that some decisions are made by external entities, Amanda still uses the mission of the college as a prime method of persuasion:

Sometimes decisions come down to us from auditors, legislators, SACS, Department of Ed, others, and I just have to say, "Here's what it is. You know, whether I like it, whether you like it, we can jump up and down and holler, but eventually we're going to have to come back to this same place. So if we're

going to do it”—and I say this a lot—“if we’re going to do it, let’s not just satisfy that. Let’s do it in a way that goes back to the mission.”

Amanda acts effectively to use persuasion instead of coercion.

Conceptualization. Katrina mentioned Amanda’s ability to see the “big picture”:

I think Amanda is a visionary, which is what I respect most about her. And her vision is community-related. And she doesn’t just focus on the community college setting. She is focused on the needs of the community, and it starts all the way from the public school system. And so she’s really been charged with understanding the whole system and how we can be better connected. And through that, bridging that gap, she’s able to focus on ... what needs to be improved.

Robinson said that Amanda “help[s] you come to an answer” by offering differing vantage points, allowing her reports to see things from her perspective and the perspectives of others. One function of conceptualization cited by Robinson is that, when approached for a decision on something important, Amanda will act in a deliberate, evaluative way: “She’ll have to think about it, process it, and then follow up with whatever that answer is.”

Cindy said that Amanda “does a very good job” because she is able to see with a broader perspective. Doug gave Amanda credit for relying on data for analytical decision-making, “even if that data is personal experience.” The same direct report also viewed Amanda as being “very deliberative ... insightful ... very good at kind of staying back from the situation, and trying to get a good overview and making suggestions for ways to proceed.” Danielle stated that “she does a good job of seeing the big picture.”

Sometimes, Danielle said, “depending on your position, you may not see the big picture. You think you do, but you don’t really.” And Amanda adds to that perspective.

Amanda recognized signs of conceptualization in herself, as well. She spoke specifically of the need to balance the “big picture” with the “down and dirty”:

I’m sort of a big picture person. I like to look at the big picture. But I’ve also found—then again, I found this in the classroom—there’s times when you have to get in and do things and show people that you’re willing to get down and dirty with them.

Often, Amanda reported, she comes up with the general ideas or goals, and then challenges her direct reports with “figur[ing] out a lot of the details.... And then maybe [we] come back together and fine-tune it.” Amanda described this varied viewpoint with an analogy:

So, I think there’s a process of sort of birthing the baby, and then letting someone else sort of play with it for a little while, and then kind of touching base and making sure we’re on the right track, and then just kind of facilitating from that point.

Amanda exhibits Spears’ (2002) characteristic of conceptualization.

Foresight. All direct reports interviewed cited Amanda’s visionary leadership, consistent with the characteristic of foresight, in some way. Cindy stated:

I know that she’s involved in the direction that our college needs to go. And judging from what she says at meetings, I know that she’s very involved in looking at our community, as with [our president], in looking at our community and how we can better meet the needs of our community, the changes that are

taking place, trying to envision the future so that we are prepared for changes that are coming up. I really feel like she keeps her pulse on that.

Cindy also stated of Amanda and the institution's president: "I think they're very fiscally responsible....They plan for the future. They squirrel away money, you know, in case emergencies come up. And we've never faced a crisis that I think other community colleges have."

"I think Amanda very much is a visionary," Katrina stated. Brandy spoke of Amanda being data-driven, but then emphasized her excellent intuition, and offered an insightful question that spoke very succinctly to the characteristic of foresight: "Is it possible that the data drives her intuition?"

Amanda echoed that theme herself:

We just went through leadership training and did the MBTI, and my type indicator is "intuition." But I will say, I'm not sure I'm a firm believer in true intuition. I think intuition is really a lot of data that you've collected over time that you sort of pull in from your mind.... And I think all that information, you sort of file that away, and, for me, a lot of intuition is really going back to, "What do I know about these people and this place?"

Amanda is a classic model of the foresight characteristic, as she looks intuitively to the future based on the realities of the past and present.

Stewardship. Many direct reports praised the fiscal responsibility displayed by Amanda and other administrators at Community College B, as well as their willingness to work collaboratively on the budget. Doug stated that "one of the things I appreciate about the administration as a whole here is they rely on us to be prudent fiscal managers."

Danielle said that morale has been good even during the lean times, largely due to the open communication style and the conservative management of funds.

“As long as we can bring it back to what is best for Community College B and particularly what is best for our student population, administration ... and Amanda as a part of that [is] very supportive,” Doug stated. Cindy agreed, saying, “I think they’re very fiscally responsible.” Robinson appreciated the way Amanda challenged him to optimize resources. He said that Amanda encouraged him to “think through some of the positions that I currently have” and reallocate resources, including personnel, to meet changing needs when adding new positions was not possible.

Robinson also cited Amanda’s educational background as one that provided a great foundation for efficiency and effectiveness. “I think that she looks for ways, again, to utilize folks that we currently have without placing any more of the workload on them so that they can’t do what they currently do well,” Robinson went on to state.

Even while keeping an eye on the bottom line of the budget, Katrina appreciated the way Amanda examined faculty pay scales to seek the greater good for students:

Students come first and what the needs are for the departments with regard to instruction. And my belief is that’s what comes first, and the second would be, with that being of the foremost importance, faculty and what their needs are. In fact, one of the first things she did when she moved into that position was to evaluate the pay scales, salaries of many faculty members and how we could get them more up to par with what the state pays and the national level. North Carolina really isn’t at the national level, anyway. But that was her first focus when she went into this position was to evaluate how to improve that for faculty.

Although the descriptor of holding resources in trust for others was not articulated, Amanda's leadership is characterized by stewardship.

Commitment to the growth of people. Katrina supported Amanda's commitment to the growth of people:

From the day I moved into Community College B and walked through the door, I've always thought of her as a mentor. And she has that ability to really focus on individuals and be more than just a boss or supervisor. She's a mentor.

Brandy emphasized the teaching opportunities that Amanda seizes as she nurtures growth in her direct reports:

She tries to use every ... situation as a teaching opportunity. In questioning anything that I've done—a course substitution form, for instance, that I've signed off on and sent to her and it looks questionable to her—I think often she probably is comfortable signing off on it, but is not real sure that I've gone through the proper thinking and, you know, have checked on everything that I should have checked on. And sometimes I think she questions me about things in order to use that as an opportunity to get some training on that, as opposed to, "Let's talk about course substitutions."

Cindy pointed out that Amanda has several direct reports who are new to their positions, and Amanda is involved with training and mentoring those individuals. The same direct report also emphasized Amanda's involvement with students and determination to help students develop by always doing what is in their best interest. Danielle echoed the same sentiments and said that Amanda often asks, "How does this directly benefit the student?"

Amanda made it clear that values people as she spoke at length about the priority she gives to helping people grow and realize their potential:

With teaching, you take students from point A and you try to get them to point B. And I see, really, my role with direct reports much the same. They're individuals who have a role to play, and it's my job to help them to grow and to learn and to mature in that role so that they can be more effective for the institution and so they can feel more productive and confident in what they're doing.... And so part of supervision for me is getting to know them and sort of getting to know what are their strengths and what are their weaknesses and how can I help them improve on the weaknesses and how can I help them best use the strengths that they have.

Amanda stated that her leadership style involves "helping people to grow and then turning them loose.... And helping them not to feel afraid to fail, because if you're not trying anything new, you're probably never going to fail." Her primary goal, she said, is "to improve lives through learning."

Encouraging other employees to pursue additional education is a part of the role Amanda sees for herself, as well:

There are several people that I've worked closely with on campus that have come to talk to me about their educational goals, ... what they want to do, where they want to go. And I've talked to them about that and mentored them in that way.

Amanda also mentioned her desire to return to the classroom on an occasional basis to teach a college student success or other course. "There's sort of a unique connection that you have in the classroom that you don't have anywhere else," she said. "But at the same time ... the people that report to me, in some ways, [are] like the class

that you get to keep. You know, they don't rotate after one semester. You just keep them going on and on.”

Some of Amanda's strongest statements related to the growth of people came from a narrative about growing up in a family of teachers and then seeing her own students move into the workforce. Amanda related:

When I was a young kid, I'd go to class with [my dad] sometimes and, you know, hold up pictures for the class to see. You know, I'd been around for a long time, but it really struck me how student-focused and how focused the faculty were really on taking this individual and helping them become all that they could become. And I saw them interacting with students outside the classroom and, you know, being involved in clubs and, you know, being involved in student life in a way that I had never experienced as a student or as a teacher.

When you live in a small community and you see people in multiple situations, I think you tend to take a more holistic view of a person—this is not just a student, this is a community member. Probably the clearest that that came to me was a few years ago when I had surgery. And having taught where the medical sciences were located, they were prepping me and rolling me down the hallway, and the whole way down the hallway: “Well, hey, Ms. [Last Name], how are you?” And I'm thinking, “Oh my gosh, what kind of grade did I give that person? I hope I was nice to them.” But you realize, you know—I'm sending this person out, and they're going to be caring for me and my loved ones. They're going to be teaching my children. They're going to be—you know, I'm

as dependant on what I'm teaching them as they are on me teaching it. So that kind of interdependence—I just really like that.

A commitment to the growth of people—especially students and others who are the less-privileged in the educational system—is one of the strongest characteristics of Amanda's leadership style.

Building community. The theme of community was cited by several direct reports, and the theme was manifested both in comments about a sense of teamwork cultivated by Amanda among her direct reports and also in her role in the larger community in which the college is located. Katrina mentioned Amanda's caring, "community-related" focus, and said that she focuses on "the needs of the community" and what "needs to be improved." Katrina also cited the meetings that promote a sense of community among Amanda's direct reports, and was one who bemoaned somewhat the frequency and duration of those meetings as described above. But, Katrina stated, "the togetherness would not be like it is if it were not for all the meetings." The sense of community and teamwork was not built through team exercises and activities, in Katrina's opinion, but through "accomplishing a hands-on task that needs to be done here at the college." Instead of teaching teamwork through artificial exercises, "I think the most effective way to build teamwork is just to really take an application that is real and ask people to take charge of doing something with it," Katrina said. According to several direct reports, that is the path Amanda has chosen.

Brandy mentioned Amanda's interest in "making us all feel like we're all on one team." The same direct report complimented Amanda's ability to act impartially and to treat all areas equally, saying that such a policy is "a very high priority for her."

Robinson stated that twice monthly, the college's administration brings various campus leaders together for about four hours to "talk about things such as teamwork" and other leadership and management issues. Amanda is a part of the college's administration that has established such training as a priority. Cindy mentioned a college-wide retreat that sought to foster the "team mentality ... that Amanda and [the president] very much believe in."

Amanda spoke at length about the benefits—and the realities—of living, working, and leading in a small town, and the sense of community that is present as the college plays an integral part in both the present and the future of the community. She spoke humorously of one occasion where the practicalities of being a resident of such a community were made real:

One day after class, I had gone to the gym, and I had two small kids, and so after the gym I was going to run in Walmart real quick. And, you know, I had my gym clothes on and I was sweaty and, I mean, my hair was sticking up. And I went in Walmart and I was just going to run in and come right back out. And I probably ran into like three students and another peer at the college. And I thought, oh my goodness, I should never have just run in here like this. I should have taken the time to change before I came. But that's one of the things that happens in a small community.

Amanda clearly appears to thrive on such encounters and such a close relationship between the college and community. She continued:

You know, I've taught people I went to high school with, people I go to church with, my children's parents, you know, PTO. All those things come together and,

I think, in a small community, people tend to know a lot about you. And that's just part of living in a small town. So, you know, while I don't let it all hang out, you know, they're going to see me out, they're going to see me eating out, they're going to see me with my family....So a lot of people have connections to me in other ways or through other family members.

Amanda also emphasized a sense of responsibility toward the community when she stated:

Community College B has also been referred to as the "hub of the community," and I think that's really a compliment, to say that we're not just a college stuck over here. We really are part of a much larger picture of a community.

Amanda clearly values her role in that larger community. But the presence of a sense of community among her direct reports and the need to trust the direct reports to do what is best for students were also mentioned frequently by Amanda. She stated:

I think one of the things that I've been very pleased about is my academic deans. They meet together outside of our meetings. They take that initiative to get together and work on projects.... And they do act as a team. And they call each other and they talk to each other. And I think sometimes people who are uncomfortable in the authority that they have feel like they have to be a part of every conversation and every decision. And I like to know what's going on. But I don't think I have to be at the table every time. In fact, it's easier for them if I'm not always there because sometimes when I'm there, it skews the conversation. And sometimes in the classroom, I found that once I had my teams working, it was better to walk outside and let them work. Because when they feel like they're

sort of being micromanaged, it stifles it. And so I find the same thing's true of administration. There's times they don't need me in the conversation.

The descriptor of loving was not identified, but it is clear that Amanda values and exhibits the leadership characteristic of building community.

Additional characteristics. In both interviews, Amanda repeatedly cited her commitment to family as important, and the same characteristic was mentioned by her direct reports, as well. The theme of commitment to family was the characteristic other than Spears' (2002) 10 characteristics of servant leadership that emerged most frequently from the interviews.

Amanda spoke of the example offered by her father as he worked on the campus of Community College B, and recounted his influence on her life with a great deal of respect and obvious pride. In addition, Amanda mentioned her commitment to her own children as a priority in her life.

Danielle stated: "I know she cares about families ... and she told me when I first started [that] family will come first.... And I know she feels that way." Katrina expressed, "I know she is very strong in her faith, very strong values with family, and that, I am sure, from what I am able to observe, drives her." Katrina also said that if Amanda was not at work, she was at home taking care of her family.

Another identified characteristic of Amanda's leadership style not covered by Spears' (2002) 10 characteristics was dedication. Sometime phrased as commitment or perseverance, Amanda affirmed this characteristic in an interview: "I think I'm a very committed person.... I feel very strongly about what I'm doing and ... I'm not here as a short-term kind of person. I'm dedicated to what I'm doing."

Chief Academic Officer C: Glenn

Glenn is a male instructional administrator in his 50s who has served as the chief academic officer of Community College C for about six years. Glenn previously held several positions at the same college, beginning there in student services about 20 years ago and being promoted several times until being appointed to his present position.

Community College C is located in a small town in rural western North Carolina and ranks in the 3rd of five tiers of the 58 community colleges in the North Carolina system with regard to size as defined by FTE (full-time equivalents). When compared with the other 14 community colleges in the western North Carolina region, Community College C ranks in the middle one-third in size using the same measurement.

Glenn holds a doctorate in educational leadership in addition to other degrees in his field of work prior to education. Although Glenn's study has certainly influenced his leadership style, Glenn's work as a leader has been significantly influenced by the example of a supervisor early in his original career field. Glenn has developed his shared leadership style primarily through the influence of that supervisor and the current president of Community College C.

As noted in chapter 3, I conducted one interview of 41 minutes with Glenn. The interview was held in his office that is located in the administration building on the main campus of Community College C. Both the interview guide for CAO interviews (see Appendix H) and the interview guide for CAO follow-up questions (Appendix I) were used during the interview. One period of observation was conducted with Glenn that was one hour in duration. During that period, Glenn conducted a meeting with about 15 college students and their instructor in a classroom on the main campus. The class was

one from an Associate in Applied Science two-year vocational program. In addition to the formal period of observation, I observed Glenn's interactions with staff members and students at various locations on the college's campus.

Individual interviews were also conducted with five of Glenn's direct reports. All of the direct reports were employed in dean- or director-level positions at Community College C. Four of the interviews were conducted in a conference room that is located in a different part of the same building that contains Glenn's office. One interview was conducted from the same conference room by telephone, with the direct report participating from his office at a secondary campus. Both the interview guide for direct report interviews (see Appendix J) and the interview guide for direct report follow-up questions (see Appendix K) were used during each interview. The interviews with the direct reports ranged from 17 to 32 minutes in length. The interviews with Glenn and his direct reports resulted in approximately 50 single-spaced pages of interview transcripts that were available for analysis.

I invited Glenn to provide documents that might provide additional insight regarding his leadership style. Glenn declined to do so in a lengthy email that explained his reasoning. The primary reason cited was that his leadership style is more reflected in process than product, and the documents that were readily available—meeting minutes, etc.—are more reflective of the product or result of a particular meeting, and would contribute little toward an understanding of his leadership style.

Findings

Two key findings emerged from the study with regard to Glenn:

(1) Glenn displayed all 10 characteristics of a servant leader, with one of those characteristics being identified more frequently than the others (empathy) and one characteristic being identified less frequently than the others (healing) (see Table 8). In addition to the 10 identified servant leadership characteristics, Glenn displayed the characteristics of flexibility and informality.

(2) The experiences of Glenn's direct reports were quite diverse, but all of the direct reports attributed many positive experiences to their supervisor's leadership philosophy and behaviors.

Characteristics and Experiences

This subsection reports the interview discussion and observation experiences that support the presence of each of Spears' (2002) 10 characteristics of servant leadership in Glenn as well as flexibility and informality. Along with the presence of the characteristics, numerous experiences of Glenn's direct reports are also detailed.

The definitions of each characteristic that were included in the previous section that explored the same 10 characteristics in Scott's leadership are not repeated here.

Listening. Several of Glenn's direct reports related how he gives priority to listening. Bonnie said that those who report to him can see how their "points of view have been considered." The same direct report is a fan of the way Glenn will respond after a meeting to make sure he understood others' points of view, a practice that reflects a commitment to insightful listening:

Very often he will ... come back with an email or a phone call, but usually an email a little later, summarizing to be sure ... that he understood and was able to

Table 8

Servant Leadership Characteristics Attributed to Chief Academic Officer C (Glenn)

Characteristic	Self-Evaluation	Bonnie	Simon	Kristin	Andrew	Mark
Listening	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Empathy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Healing	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Awareness	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Persuasion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Conceptualization	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Foresight	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stewardship	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Growth of People	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note. ✓ indicates the presence of evidence of a specific characteristic.

articulate your points of view. So you had a chance to see how he had heard what you'd said.”

This active listening style is particularly effective, in Bonnie's opinion. But Bonnie also stated that Glenn was “worried to death” about a recent project because “he is so eager to be sure that we feel the process has been open and that everybody's had the opportunity [to be heard].”

Simon emphasized Glenn's receptivity, and said that “we all know he's going to listen, and he's going to value our opinions.... You know that Glenn's listening.” Kristin stated that people can always be confident that they will be “allow[ed] to participate in the process, to voice their opinions.” Kristin mentioned the reflection that Glenn encourages when she said that Glenn has always “involved a lot of people and given us time to discuss, time to reflect.”

Kristin mentioned, too, that Glenn holds a lot of meetings: “He gets us together a lot and everybody's voice is heard. Everybody is included.... He's extremely good about sharing information and keeping us informed and letting us express our opinions.” Mark discussed the meetings, too, stating that Glenn's “meetings will get a little bit off track, and will be fairly lengthy.... He's not been as quick [as I would be] to cut off the discussion that might not be as relevant.” But Mark went on to affirm the value of making sure all of the voices are heard.

Glenn discussed his commitment to listening—and the long meetings that sometimes accompany such a commitment—before the direct reports mentioned it:

I think it's sort of like that saying, “So-and-so does something to a fault.” I think there are times when ... I probably let things be discussed a little too long. But

even in performance reviews with the president—I have told him—I said, “Even if I get feedback that that is the case, I will acknowledge that feedback and I might take it into consideration, but in the long run, I believe that you come out better allowing everybody’s voice to be heard. I believe you benefit from having multiple points of view presented....I do strive for balance in that, and I am aware ... of when I think things are maybe getting discussed too much and I can draw it to a conclusion. One of the tools I use for that, by the way, is to try to redirect the group back to, “What is the core of our purpose? What is at the core of this decision?” And, you know, you get all out there with the discussion, and then to bring it back and say, “What was our purpose in making this decision?”

Glenn went on to say that I should find it interesting to see what his direct reports have to say about the issue, but stated that

this current group has adapted to my leadership style in that sense. It’s like occasionally we’ll have a topic that gets hashed and rehashed a little too much, but it’s almost like the folks in this group that report to me maybe now know.

Glenn displays the servant leadership characteristic of listening.

Empathy. Glenn’s direct reports praised his level of involvement with them on both a professional and personal basis. Mark recounted:

He ask[s] me how my weekend was and, you know, to me personally, he’s just very friendly. I’ve been with him on a lot of trips where we roomed together, you know, traveled together, and so, you know, we have a different kind of relationship than I guess some people have with their supervisor.... I mean, I don’t go over to his house or anything like that. He does a really, really good job,

in my opinion, of being personable and engaged and interested, but not too much, you know. To me, it's just a really good level of closeness.

Citing Glenn's "people-type skills," Andrew described Glenn's tolerance and understanding when he stated: "He's always encouraging professional development; he's always encouraging time away, vacation time, if you're sick, if you have a family member sick. He's always concerned about how you're developing as a person.... He's holistic."

Glenn's compassion toward people impressed Kristin, who stated that "it's obvious that he cares about his employees," then offered an example:

We have a dean, a new dean who came in the same time I did, who's had [a serious illness]. And she's been out a lot. The position started in July, but she's had to be out a lot and had major surgery and is going through her own health issues. And I think it's admirable that what Glenn has done is, rather than kind of replacing her or putting an interim in there, he has actually kind of taken on some of her duties. And, you know, he'll sit in the meeting, and sometimes he'll say, "OK, I'm now dean." And he'll also reflect that he's representing her and he'll try to think from her perspective. I think that's extremely admirable because she knows she has a position to come back to.

Bonnie told a story with a similar theme:

He's definitely concerned about everyone. He'll check in with you and your family and your circumstances. And if he knows that you're dealing with things, you get a lot of support and get a lot of accommodation if there's things going on. My father died not too long ago, and he—they—live a ways away and I had to be

away for a while.... You never feel that he's impatient or irritated that you have to be gone [when] it's a matter of family or those sorts of things. You know, that said, I think he—if somebody exploits something, overdoes, you know—I think you'll get a nudge from him. But for the most part, I think he—you get a sense that he knows that we have other elements in our lives, and he's never absolute about anything and if you can explain, you know, what you need ... he'll move everything around as needed.

Simon stressed that Glenn is “caring” and contrasted his style with other leaders: You have some leaders that are strong personalities and they lead by the force of that personality. And you have others that lead by—the force of their personality is about caring and is about doing the right thing.... And that really epitomizes Glenn. And I think we're fortunate. We're very fortunate to have him in that role.

Several direct reports emphasized Glenn's concern about their families and personal situations. Bonnie recounted how his compassion even played a part in a meeting with a faculty member that was disciplinary in nature:

One time I remember him—one guy ... didn't seem to take anything seriously. I remember after having this conversation and telling him that his job was on the line, the guy didn't seem all that worried about it. And Glenn leaned over and said, “Do you understand we're talking about your job, your livelihood, your ability to support your family?”

Bonnie spoke of Glenn's manner when correcting errors:

If he understands what you're working with and what factors have been in play, he's very reasonable. Sometimes you go in and you have a meeting and you walk away and think, "Did I just get the message that I did something wrong? I'm not really sure." He's so careful about it. You know, "This is what we're going to do next time." And you have to factor back, "Well, maybe that's because I didn't do it right this time." But he's so gentle.

The same individual, Bonnie, was laughing when she stated later, "I've never, never caught him being unreasonable. It's really irritating!"

Glenn spoke at length about the role of relationships and compassion in leadership.

I think the folks who report to me know about my family, my children. I know about their families, their children. I know some about all of them in their outside activities, what their interests are—that type of thing. So, I think it helps as part of building the relationship and having some commonalities to talk about, and to build a work relationship on. I think it takes it to a higher level than what it does if you're just saying, "I'm your boss and you're the employee, and we're going to talk about work today." I doubt that there is a significant interaction, meaning time-wise, that goes on with any of us ... that somebody doesn't ask somebody across the table about, "How is so-and-so doing in your family?" or "What's going on?" ... So the bottom line is—I think it matters.

Glenn spoke of the personnel issue setting and empathy toward the people around him, expressing his assumption of people's good intentions:

I guess another thing ... that for some reason I have to remind myself more recently than I used to ... even when you're dealing with people with personnel, performance issues and that type of thing, I think that I always respect that individual and, again, it goes back to this person is doing the best that they can with whatever type of upbringing they had, the current life situation they've got, baggage, whatever you want to call it. They're doing the best they can.

Glenn's leadership style is highlighted by an accepting, tolerant attitude that communicates the value of people and gives evidence of the presence of empathy. This characteristic was cited by direct reports more frequently than any other characteristic of servant leadership.

Healing. Although cited less frequently than the other characteristics, some aspect of healing and the search for wholeness was mentioned by at least several of Glenn's direct reports, and in his own comments, as well. Simon described it most succinctly:

Glenn is very personable. He listens to not only the work problems, but he's one of the go-to people for a lot of folks in the college with their personal problems because they know he listens. And, so, he's very holistic in the—particularly with the folks that report to him—with the way he deals with us, the way he listens to us, the way he understands.

I'll give you a perfect example. My daughter's dog has cancer. Now, that sounds bizarre and everything, to call your boss and say, "My daughter's dog has cancer and I need to go with her to a canine oncologist." I didn't even know that such a thing existed. And calling up Glenn and saying, "I really need to do this,"

and he was just, “Yeah, you do. Go ahead.” And not everybody would be that understanding about something like that.

A narrative that was cited above about Glenn dealing with a personnel issue displays evidence of the healing characteristic when continued. Glenn related his opinion about the individual with performance issues:

They’re doing the best they can. They did not come in here to work today to try to make my life miserable or the lives of the people they work with miserable, or the students miserable. Something else is, you know—they’ve just got an obstacle or issue and my job is to help that person get back to the point to where they are able to be productive and to help themselves.... [It’s] a basic appreciation and value, you know, in human potential.

Glenn acted in a transformative manner to help the individual.

While the descriptors of personal healing and a common search were not identified, and although present in a lesser degree than the other nine of Spears’ (2002) characteristics, Glenn possesses the characteristic of healing.

Awareness. Direct reports of Glenn cited evidence of both general awareness and self-awareness as defined by Spears (2002) and Greenleaf (1970). Bonnie invoked Glenn’s “sense of people and their importance, and our students and their importance in particular.” The same direct report praised Glenn’s sense of personal integrity, saying that “when he signs onto something, a position, he takes it very seriously. He’s just one of those people who’s going to do the best job he can,” primarily for the benefit of students.

Simon stated:

Glenn's one of the good guys. He cares. He cares about the students. He cares about making a difference. And I think that is a big part of the reason he's in this field, is he sees an opportunity to make a difference.

Simon continued, "If Glenn was born 20 years earlier, he'd probably have been a hippie. He wants to change things. He wants to make things better, and he is intellectually curious." Kristin spoke of Glenn's "heart" in this way:

He's genuine. And he doesn't—there's no airs. In fact, he has his doctorate, but he doesn't want to be called Dr. [Last Name]. So he's just down to earth, genuine, and his heart's in the right place. He's motivated for the right reason and not for, you know, money or glory.

Mark spoke to his motives, as well:

I think Glenn has some really pure motives. Honestly, as far as one of those things that I really like about him, I don't see him having a dishonest or insincere aspect to him at all.... I just think he has very, very pure motives.

Glenn also made comments that spoke to his awareness of others and of himself. He claimed one of his weaknesses while talking about his manner of working throughout the day:

I do try to prioritize and deal with what I think are priorities. I always deal with the person in front of me rather than taking a phone call. I always—I won't say always, I will say the vast majority of times—I carry around little 3 by 5 cards and I will, just because I don't trust my memory, I will make a note of things I need to do. And I keep a running list and I have a stack of those, and I go back through them periodically to see if I've missed anything.

Glenn also spoke with great insight of his love of his job and an awareness of his position in life:

I love the job or I would not do it. I mean, I'm at the point now to where I could leave if I chose to. But I enjoy what I do. I enjoy trying to help the college progress.... I have always enjoyed doing things to help other people help people.... That's really, I think, what I was put on the planet for. That's my role. I'm not the best at providing the direct—but I am good at working within the organization—or I think I'm good at that part—and being the go-between between administrative and budgetary and planning and accreditation and all that stuff and the people who then go out and deliver the direct instruction or provide the service.

Although the descriptors of being integrative and emphasizing sensory input were not revealed, Glenn's open style of leadership offers evidence of both general and self-awareness.

Persuasion. Most of Glenn's direct reports stated that he uses consensus as a decision-making tool, and the involvement of people in reaching a decision motivates them to accept it willingly, often as a result of individual consultation. Simon stated:

Glenn is a consensus builder—a very strong consensus builder. He's very deliberate in the processes he uses. He is very inclusive—not only with those he supervises, but including those that have—all the stakeholders, if you will. That can be—in some cases, that can start with those that report directly and go all the way down to your administrative assistants or custodial folks if they will be impacted by the decision.

Motivating others to accept decisions, according to Bonnie, starts with “always including key people and having discussions,” which promotes “buy-in” of the decisions made. The same direct report mentioned that Glenn values and practices transparency as he seeks to convince, and that causes his decisions to be accepted more readily.

Simon tied persuasion back to listening: “You know Glenn’s listening. And he’ll ultimately make a decision, and he’ll explain it very well, and so everybody kind of comes together.” Confidence in Glenn as a person also helps, Simon said:

You know that the decision is solid. You know that, as I said, it’s well-thought-out, that all angles have been considered, and that you’ve had a voice—if it directly affects you—that you’ve had a voice and some ownership in helping make that decision.

Mark spoke of Glenn “getting a lot of consensus and talking things out, and not doing snap decisions, but engaging people in making the decisions, so at least they know their voice was heard.” The impression that Glenn is so “likeable” helps Andrew accept decisions: “Glenn is super, super likeable. You can’t help but like him.... He’s probably one of the best persons I’ve ever worked for.” Glenn is exceptionally gentle in his manner with people.

Kristin objected to thinking of Glenn as motivating or persuading people to accept his decisions:

I don’t think he really has to motivate people because I think he goes through the process, because he has asked some people for their opinions, and he’s done his groundwork. Maybe I’m too new or maybe I’m out of some of the loops that I’ve

never seen a decision that's come down that there was any conflict or any disagreement on.

Speaking of his own leadership priorities, Glenn said this about persuasion:

A key point of probably what would define my leadership is I think it's important to have the people in the room. I think it's important that they all have the opportunity to hear what I hear.... I really have having those folks have access to the same information that I have. Otherwise, it's like they have insufficient knowledge of what went into making the decision.

That knowledge of what went into the decision is a key element of Glenn's ability to persuade. The "long discussions" that Glenn acknowledges having in meetings serve to bring consensus in decision-making. Glenn stated that a leader can only get close to 100% buy-in by having everyone's opinions out in the open, and decision-making accomplished collaboratively.

Glenn is an example of a leader who uses Greenleaf's (1970) principle of persuasion effectively.

Conceptualization. Even while placing so much emphasis on listening and collaborative decision-making, there is evidence that Glenn is visionary, is able to see the big picture, and employs analysis in leading and setting goals. Mark mentioned that prior to the latest reorganization, Glenn was stretched so thin that "he wasn't able to do everything that he needed to do." However, more recently, Mark said, "he's got the time to focus on the things he needs to do—both the big picture and the more focused things." Andrew agreed: "so often times he would seem to be fairly fragmented, but not so much now, in the last couple of years. I think he's got a handle on that and is doing well." The

same direct report also stated that “he does see the big picture ... he’s a vision-type person,” and that he takes time to analyze and make quality “data-driven” decisions. “What some people may typically answer in a day or two days,” Andrew said, “he’s going to give it time to really think through it. So he’s a thinker.”

Kristin agreed with the “data” aspect of Glenn’s leadership style: “From what I can see, he is data-driven. He makes good data-driven decisions, and he does a lot of research. He does a lot of reading. He keeps up with what’s going on out there.”

With the “big picture” being one of the key elements of Spears’ (2002) identification of conceptualization as a characteristic of servant leaders, an observed exchange between Glenn and a class of about 15 college students seems particularly noteworthy. The class in question was one from an Associate in Applied Science two-year vocational program that has very specific equipment and space needs. The conversation between Glenn and the students was prompted by a lengthy letter from the students to the president of Community College C that was largely concerned with the students’ assessment that the program has an inadequate amount of space for optimal education. The students offered several suggestions, most of which involved taking space that is currently being used by another program and reassigning it to their own.

Glenn walked into the classroom of gathered students and greeted them warmly. He complimented the students on recent work they had accomplished, and mentioned several specifics that indicated a high level of knowledge and interest in the program. Glenn thanked the students for the thoughtful concern that was expressed in the letter, but he did encourage them to address concerns through the “proper channels” in the future, asking them to approach their instructors, department administrator, and himself—the

vice president—before resorting to a letter to the president. The polite admonition was received well by the students, as it was not punitive and did not leave the impression that their voice was being silenced due to approaching the president directly.

Over about 30 minutes, Glenn patiently opened the eyes of the students to the bigger picture. He told the students of the history of their program, and pointed out that the program is assigned several times more space than it was in the past. He pointed out that enrollment in all technical programs in community colleges tends to be quite cyclical, and no community college can afford to build enough buildings to have an abundance of space when the enrollment cycle peaks due to high unemployment.

After talking about the value of their own program, Glenn affirmed the value of the programs from which the students had proposed taking space. He pointed out that those programs are operating at and above capacity, too, and would find it difficult to give up space.

Glenn affirmed the value of two specific suggestions that the students made, wrote those down on a card in their presence, and assured them that he would get back to them through their instructors after he had researched and evaluated the options.

In this observation, Glenn not only displayed his grasp of the big picture, but he sought to educate others—in this case, students—on the realities of the big picture, too. Glenn displayed the servant leadership characteristic of conceptualization.

Foresight. Mark's description of Glenn's balancing data and intuition in decision-making is a perfect example of Greenleaf's (1970) foresight. Mark discussed:

Well, he's a former IE person, so I would hope [his emphasis] would be on data.

But I tend to think—I don't know—he's mixed on that, too, because he does

regard data importantly, you know—he really does preach research and continuous improvement and that kind of thing—but I think he just personally has more of an intuition. He’s been in education a while, so I think he’s not always going to use the data.

Bonnie stated that Glenn is “very much intuition and feeling when left alone, but he knows he’s got to have the other stuff. So you’ve seen him really working hard to keep the two elements in balance.” Kristin praised Glenn’s focus on “future investments and what we’re going to get if we invest in this.” Simon mentioned that Glenn’s “keeping us moving forward years down the road” as a real strength.

Glenn spoke more clearly than most of his direct reports concerning foresight. He clearly articulated the relationship between past, present, and future—and the intuition that comes from an ample knowledge of all three of those dimensions—when he stated:

I don’t know if this comes from my background in psychology or not, but I think intuition is based upon data. I think that what you have done, probably subconsciously, is you have gleaned through observation, through reading, through the retention of tidbits of information, whatever, and so I think all of that somehow magically gets funneled into making a good intuitive decision.... I think there’s a part of that intuition that you’ve got data that can tell you that you need to do something. But I think intuition comes into play especially when you realize that you’ve got to make that decision and apply that decision—implement that decision. You don’t do that in isolation; you do that in the context of the organizational structure. You do that in the context of the personalities of the people you work with and who are going to be affected. And I think you have to

take those things into account and I don't know that there's a quantitative way of doing that. So especially in that sense, I think you have to have some sense of emotional intelligence to apply intuition.

Glenn displays the characteristic of foresight.

Stewardship. The theme of meetings returned as direct reports summarized the stewardship and budgetary role played by Glenn. Simon said:

I know of other institutions and colleagues at other places where someone in Glenn's role controls the academic side of the budget. If you want to do something, you go to the vice president or whatever the title is. But here the divisions and the campuses are allocated funds based upon—there are lots of meetings and things, of course. And it's our responsibility to manage those funds.

The meetings usually produce a sense of harmony, though.

Simon continued:

Going back to budget, for instance, of all the time we've worked with Glenn, there's never been a time we've sat down and divvied up what money we've got—and there's never been a time where I think anybody has left mad. They may leave disappointed that they didn't get something that they thought they needed and it was a priority, but everybody comes out of it feeling like, "At least I had a chance to make my case."

Andrew spoke of what would happen if a sum of money were available for a one-time expenditure such as equipment: "He won't make the decision. We'll all get in a room together and we'll, "OK, I'll take off \$20,000 if you need \$20,000. So it's kind of a

team or group decision.” Andrew continued: “He’ll tell you straight up, if you ask him, that he leaves that to us.”

Indeed, Glenn refused to take credit for his success in optimizing resources for the college’s instructional area. He stated:

You know, I’d like to take a lot of credit for how we manage here, but I don’t think I personally can do that. And part of that is because ... when we have X amount of dollars to work with and we’re faced with personnel decisions, I guess a criticism that could be levied toward me would be, “Well, it’s your job to make those tough decisions. You need to make them.” And I will, but the way I choose to make them is when we have multiple requests—as we always do—for positions, I get the division heads, VPs, deans, ... I get them in a room and we talk about ... the direction the college is going in. Here are the accreditation issues that I think we’re facing. Here is [a] new opportunity.... Here are the retirements that we’ve had. Here are the student complaints that we’ve had about full-time instruction and that sort of thing. And so we sit down and pretty much as a group reach some sense of—consensus may not be the right word, but, again, everybody walks out of that room feeling like, “Well, I maybe don’t feel real good about my division and what I got, but I can see where this could be the priority, and I know I’m not off the list for the next round.” ... Folks seem to be willing to play well together on that.

Glenn clearly seeks the greater good. Although the concept of holding resources in trust was not encountered, the attribute of stewardship is evident in Glenn’s leadership style.

Commitment to the growth of people. Glenn, according to Bonnie, “models the student-centeredness that, at the college, we always aspire to.” Speaking of his priorities, Bonnie captured the essence of helping the least privileged when she stated that “it’s his sense of people and their importance, and our students and their importance in particular, and how we can serve them best.”

Kristin said that Glenn “has a way of bringing out the best in everybody.”

Another direct report, Andrew, stated of what motivates Glenn, “I think it’s the pride of being able to say, you know, ‘I’ve helped one person better themselves.’” The same direct report commented that Glenn is consistent in encouraging professional development and continued education. Mark also spoke to Glenn’s drive: “I think he just wants to see the students do well. He wants to see the staff do well and the college be effective and succeed.”

Glenn spoke warmly of a supervisor in his past who impacted his leadership style and offered a model of a “laid-back style” that “gave you room to operate and to make some mistakes ... and grow from your mistakes.” Glenn recounted how he sees his priorities: “I enjoy providing ... the opportunities for so many in our community to better their situation in life.” Glenn clearly values people.

In response to a specific question about mentorship, Glenn spoke of the opportunities he has to mentor colleagues—although mostly in an informal way rather than through an established mentorship program.

I have a colleague who used to report to me who now has been elevated to a peer level.... That person turns to me sometimes for advice or suggestions. I don’t

know if they would consider that a mentor, or more like here's this person who has been here a while, and they've been in their role longer than I have.

Nurturing was not specifically mentioned by Glenn's direct reports. It is clear, though, that Glenn displays a profound commitment to the growth of people.

Building community. The theme of building community was mentioned by several of Glenn's direct reports. "We have a lot of meetings," Kristin reported about the deans and Glenn's other direct reports. "It's like twice a month that we'll get together and that's been great. You know, previous to [his] move into this new role, we just didn't have meetings. And everybody's just doing their own thing. But this has been really good."

Andrew stated that the sense of community did not come from a retreat or team-building activities:

It's not so much in spoken terms, as the actions and activities, the meetings we have. It's just, everyone's just involved and a part of that. And they're given opportunities to speak and talk about different things. As per se, taking that group that reports to him and going off on a retreat—he does not do that. But in the meetings, which are biweekly typically, he gets everybody involved and [they] interact with one another.

Bonnie agreed with that assessment:

He's very careful not to use our time, to take us away, if we don't need to. Now administrative council—they do a retreat a few times a year, and I'm not part of that.... But, no, [he doesn't do] team building in the sense of being very structured about it or using other devices. I think it's happened as part of doing

our jobs.... I certainly prefer that, [and] maybe he's just aware of who he's dealing with.

Glenn attributed the sense of teamwork and the atmosphere of a caring community to the meetings that are held, but more so to the manner in which those meetings are conducted:

I wonder if some of the relaxed atmosphere we have in our meetings where people can, you know, joke and chitchat—and it might not be the most efficiently run meeting, but it might be efficient in another manner—it allows people to interact in a less formal manner.

Glenn's manner with his direct reports encourages a trusting atmosphere and emphasizes his willingness to take responsibility for others. The descriptor of loving was not articulated by Glenn's direct reports. It is evident that a commitment to building community is an integral part of Glenn's leadership style.

Additional characteristics. Glenn was cited repeatedly by his direct reports for his flexibility. The theme of flexibility was the characteristic other than Spears' (2002) 10 characteristics of servant leadership that emerged most frequently from the interviews.

Blair was among those who mentioned this characteristic: "He's very supportive and understanding and ... flexible, extremely flexible. So it isn't an authority sort of a relationship where he says, you shall have this done by the 28th or there'll be hell to pay." John, too, cited flexibility in the way Glenn interacts with his direct reports: "He gives me flexibility ... to venture on some territory that most probably would not go." Glenn mentioned his goal of being a flexible leader when interviewed. He cited the example of a previous supervisor, and stated that he aspired to be a leader in that mold.

Another identified characteristic of Glenn's leadership style not covered by Spears' (2002) 10 characteristics was informality. Sometimes referred to by adjectives such as comfortable, casual, laid-back, or relaxed, the theme of informal interaction with colleagues was mentioned repeatedly.

Chief Academic Officers A, B, and C: Cross-Case Analysis

While case study is "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances" (Stake, 1995, p. xi), multiple or multicase research is "a special effort to examine something having lots of cases, parts, or members" (Stake, 2006, p. vi). Having allowed each of the three cases to tell his or her own story, we now turn to "merged findings" (Stake, 2006, p. 75), as "the official interest is in the collection of these cases or in the phenomenon exhibited in those cases" (Stake, 2006, p. vi.).

Specifically, we now seek to answer through cross-case analysis, our research questions: (1) How do community college instructional administrators exhibit the characteristics of servant leadership? and (2) What are the experiences of those who report to community college instructional administrators who display the characteristics of servant leadership?

Merged Findings

Two key findings emerged from the study through cross-case analysis:

(1) All three CAOs displayed all 10 characteristics of a servant leader, with some of those characteristics being identified more frequently than the others (listening, commitment to the growth of people, and empathy) and one characteristic being identified less frequently than the others (healing) (see Figure 3, Table 9). In addition to

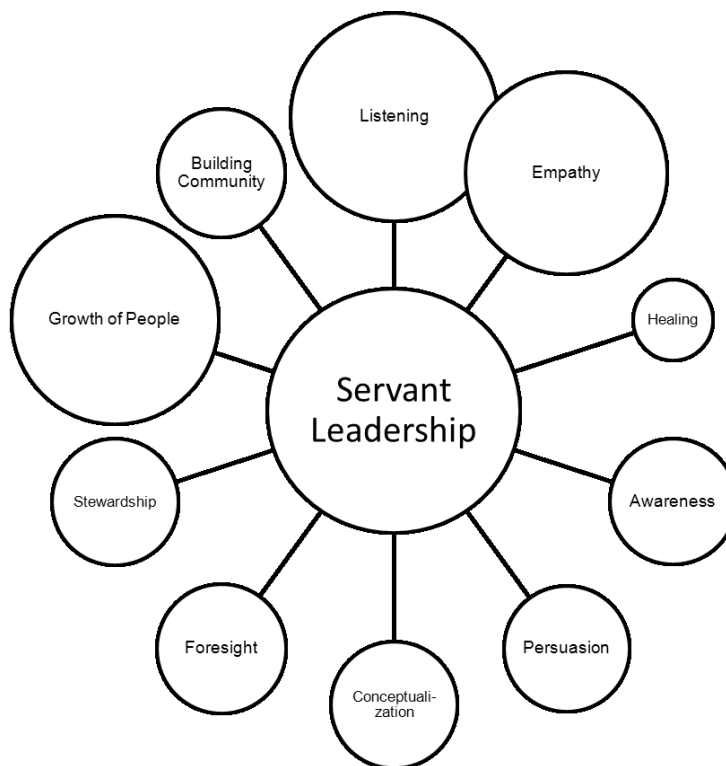


Figure 3. Ten characteristics of servant leadership in three community college CAOs. Characteristics from “Tracing the Past, Present, and Future of Servant-Leadership,” by L. C. Spears, 2002, in L. C. Spears & M. Lawrence (Eds.), *Focus on Leadership: Servant-Leadership for the Twenty-First Century* (pp. 1-16). New York, NY: Wiley.

the 10 identified servant leadership characteristics, the CAOs displayed other characteristics consistent with servant leadership (Scott: Honesty, courage; Amanda: Commitment to family, dedication; Glenn: Flexibility, informality).

(2) The experiences all three CAOs’ direct reports were quite diverse, but all of the direct reports attributed many positive experiences to their supervisor’s leadership philosophy and behaviors.

Characteristics and Experiences

This subsection examines the presence of each of Spears’ (2002) 10 characteristics of servant leadership in the three CAOs as well as several other

Table 9

Servant Leadership Characteristics Attributed to Three Chief Academic Officers

Characteristic	Scott	Amanda	Glenn
Listening	✓+	✓+	✓
Empathy	✓	✓	✓+
Healing	✓-	✓-	✓-
Awareness	✓	✓	✓
Persuasion	✓	✓	✓
Conceptualization	✓	✓	✓
Foresight	✓	✓	✓
Stewardship	✓	✓	✓
Growth of People	✓+	✓+	✓
Community	✓	✓	✓

Note. ✓ indicates the presence of evidence of a specific characteristic. ✓+ indicates the presence of particularly strong evidence of a specific characteristic. ✓- indicates the presence of weaker evidence of a specific characteristic.

characteristics that are consistent with servant leadership. Along with the presence of the characteristics, the experiences of the three CAOs' direct reports are also summarized.

The consideration of each characteristic begins with a brief reminder of the characteristic's definition from Spears (2002) or Greenleaf (1970). Although this information is repeated from the initial section that explored the characteristics in Scott's

leadership, it is essential to have an understanding of Spears' (2002) and Greenleaf's (1970) concept of servant leadership close by as merged findings are discussed.

Listening. Greenleaf (1970) maintained that a servant leader “automatically responds to any problem by listening *first*” (p. 18), and further maintained that listening is “terribly important” (p. 19).

The direct reports of all three CAOs frequently cited listening as one of the prime characteristics of their leadership style. Both Scott's and Amanda's direct reports mentioned this attribute more frequently than any other, as noted in Table 6. These CAOs were noted for their listening in individual settings as well as group gatherings.

The theme of meetings—often long meetings—emerged during an examination of the listening practices of the CAOs. Direct reports of all three, but particularly Amanda and Glenn, seem to have a love-hate relationship with the lengthy meetings that their CAOs frequently lead. The direct reports realize the value of allowing time for everyone's voices to be heard, but also cite the sheer number of work hours spent around conference tables. Perhaps the best characterization of their opinions is that the lengthy meetings are a “necessary evil” that is a part of their CAO's leadership style that they value and appreciate so much.

Greenleaf (1970) told a story about the head of a large public institution who determined that he would do nothing but listen to the people of his organization—with no outside influence from newspapers, television, etc.—for three months. Greenleaf portrayed the investment in the time-consuming role of listener as essential. Using various terms, direct reports of these CAOs, too, reported that they value the willingness of their supervisors to hear the larger story of what they have to say. Far from a “just the

facts, ma'am” attitude, these CAOs take time to hear the narratives that, in turn, often inform their decision-making.

Listening is an important part of the leadership style of these three community college instructional administrators.

Empathy. Spears (2002) stated that the servant leader “strives to understand and empathize” (p. 5), and realizes that “people need to be accepted and recognized for their special and unique spirits” (p. 5). Greenleaf (1970) stated that “leaders who empathize and who fully accept those who go with them on this basis are more likely to be trusted” (p. 23).

These three administrators care about people. Expressed in dozens of different ways, the direct reports of Scott, Amanda, and Glenn appreciate the personal and professional concern that is extended to them by their supervisors. The CAOs are aware of the larger context of life, and are quick to make inquiries and offer words of encouragement when their direct reports are struggling with work, home, or life in general. Not a single direct report voiced a concern that the CAO overstepped boundaries and made excessive demands for personal revelation. In fact, several direct reports complimented the line that the CAOs walk to show concern and empathy but not be intrusive.

Glenn’s direct reports cited the characteristic of empathy more frequently than any other characteristic. The direct reports of all three CAOs, but especially Glenn’s, mentioned the compassionate and caring attitude that characterizes their interaction with their supervisor. This empathy is regularly extended by all three leaders to their direct reports, faculty, staff members, and students—especially to students, some observed.

A frequent theme when discussing empathy was contrast between these three CAOs and other leaders the direct reports had observed in the same position. Although few had extremely derogatory comments about other community college leaders, several direct reports at all three colleges acknowledged the superiority of their current instructional leader over others who occupied that office.

The three instructional administrators in this study clearly display empathy in their interactions with others.

Healing. As he described the 10 identified characteristics of servant leaders, Spears (2002) maintained that “broken spirits” (p. 5) and “emotional hurt” (p. 5), both of the servant leader and others, may be healed through the “transformation and integration” (p. 5) of servant leadership. Greenleaf (1970) emphasized that the “search for wholeness” (p. 37) is shared by leaders and those they lead.

As noted in Table 6, comments attributed to the characteristic of healing were cited less frequently than any other of the 10 characteristics for all three CAOs. Although there is some evidence that the attribute is present in all three, it is present to a lesser degree than other characteristics.

The most dominant theme in this area is the ability of the CAOs to bring peace to contentious situations. The personalities and leadership styles of these three leaders seem to be particularly well-suited to allow them to act as a healing agent in difficult situations. In all three cases, this emerged more from observation than from interviews.

These three CAOs display the characteristic of healing, but to a lesser degree and with reduced frequency when compared to the other characteristics.

Awareness. Both general awareness and self-awareness are beneficial for the servant leader, according to Greenleaf, and enable the leader to “view most situations from a more integrated, holistic position” (Spears, 2002, p. 6). Greenleaf (1970) stated: “When one is aware ... more is stored away in the unconscious computer to produce intuitive insights in the future” (p. 28).

The three CAOs in this study are characterized by a comprehensive general awareness of their surroundings and a self-awareness that is noted by their direct reports. Glenn and Amanda, especially, display this awareness in a way that is acknowledged by others, while Scott’s narrative of his leadership journey revealed a similar awareness.

All three leaders excel particularly in self-awareness. They spoke of their leadership with the quiet confidence of those who are aware of their places in the world, and have progressed past the searching that is typical of so many uncertain professionals. These leaders make daily contributions to their institutions that are only possible because of an awareness of their own strengths, shortcomings, and abilities.

As I listened to each one speak of their leadership journey, I was struck by the harmony of their stories with the words of Greenleaf (1970) when he stated that “it begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*.” Leadership comes later, according to Greenleaf. Such was the testimony of all three of these CAOs. Not one set out to be a college president—or administrator or even faculty member—when he or she was a child, or a teenager, or even young professional. Instead, life circumstances and sequences of events led them to choose to lead after a number of years of service. Indeed, all three speak very modestly of any possibility of a future presidency, even though the most common career path for community college presidents is through the

chief academic officer's position. These leaders talk quietly of a willingness to serve where needed—a willingness that brought them to their current positions.

Greenleaf's (1970) awareness is present in a notable way in these community college leaders.

Persuasion. Spears (2002) wrote that servant leaders “rely on persuasion, rather than on one's positional authority, in making decisions within an organization” (p. 6), and noted that the building of consensus is of particular value. “Leadership by persuasion,” Greenleaf (1970) stated, “has the virtue of change by convincement rather than coercion” (p. 30).

Although not one of the most-frequently cited characteristics of these three academic leaders, Greenleaf's (1970) idea of persuasion is an essential element of these CAOs' leadership. It does not appear that there is an authoritarian bone in their bodies. In fact, one of the direct reports' most common initial descriptors of their CAO's leadership style was that it is *not* authoritarian.

These leaders persuade others to accept their decisions by including them in the decision-making process in the first place. There is ample evidence that consensus is their primary decision-making style. As noted above with regard to listening, such a style may require many lengthy meetings—a theme that was repeated in the narratives of the CAOs themselves as well as those of their direct reports—but decisions gain widespread acceptance, these leaders believe, when the decisions are reached in a participatory fashion.

These community college leaders use the consensus-building power of persuasion rather than the divisive action of coercion.

Conceptualization. Spears (2002) explained his understanding of conceptualization: “The ability to look at a problem (or an organization) from a conceptualizing perspective means that one must think beyond day-to-day realities” (p. 6). Greenleaf (1970) called conceptualization “the prime leadership talent” (p. 33). Conceptual talent “states and adjusts goals, analyzes and evaluates operating performance, and foresees contingencies a long way ahead” (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 66).

The ability of the CAO to see the “big picture,” to use data to evaluate performance, and to employ data-driven decision-making were all elements cited by the CAOs and their direct reports that are in keeping with Spears’ (2002) understanding of Greenleaf’s (1970) principle of conceptualization. These CAOs regularly cite data in meetings with their direct reports. These leaders glean data from Datatel—the North Carolina Community College System’s campus management software—to inform decisions about personnel and programs. These administrators challenge their direct reports to look beyond the day-to-day realities of their own department’s programs to desire and work toward the best for their college and community. Several direct reports pointed out that the data may, indeed, be the qualitative data of the CAO’s past experience, but such data gained from one’s tenure at the college, around the system, and in the community is of tremendous value in their opinions.

The leadership style of the three academic officers is characterized by efforts to employ what Greenleaf (1970) termed conceptualization.

Foresight. Spears (2002) related foresight to conceptualization, but defined foresight specifically as “a characteristic that enables the servant-leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequence of a decision

for the future” (p. 7). Greenleaf (1970) cited foresight as being “the central ethic of leadership” (p. 25). Foresight involves intuition—“the product of a constantly running internal computer that deals with intersecting series and random inputs and is vastly more complicated than anything technology has yet produced” (p. 25).

During my considerable time spent reading Greenleaf’s writings over the last few years, a working definition of foresight, especially as differentiated from conceptualization, was the last understanding to crystallize in my mind—and it is still a bit fuzzy at times. Greenleaf’s (1970) “internal computer” (p. 25) analogy was the most helpful piece in the puzzle.

The direct reports of these three CAOs commonly described them as being forward-thinking, future-focused, and visionary—all adjectives related to foresight. The most common example offered by the direct reports was their CAO’s ability to make decisions about new programs based not just on present-day data, but also upon past experiences, knowledge of the community, and an awareness of the political realities. Interviewees often spoke of intuition and insight added to the hard facts of enrollment trends, unemployment figures, and need projections. Of particular note were several assessments of decisions being made by intuition that was based on data. This blending of two elements that are often seen as opposite ends of a continuum is, at least in my current thinking, truly the essence of Greenleaf’s (1970) foresight.

Foresight, then, is an important factor in the leadership of these three CAOs.

Stewardship. According to Spears (2002), Greenleaf felt strongly that leaders play “significant roles in holding their institutions in trust for the greater good of society” (p. 7). The first goal of servant leadership is “serving the needs of others” (p. 7),

Greenleaf (1970) saw a great connection between “making optimal use of one’s resources” (p. 21) and serving. Greenleaf said that the servant should constantly ask, “How can I use myself to serve best?” (p. 21), and applied the same question to the resources available to the servant leader. Everything entrusted to the servant leader is held in trust for the greater good of the community.

When speaking to community college instructional administrators about resources, it is difficult to steer the conversation to anything other than funding mechanisms and state budget issues. The difficult budget environment for North Carolina community colleges over the past few years was reflected in the comments of the CAOs and their direct reports. Such an emphasis is not outside Greenleaf’s (1970) principle of stewardship, though. As noted above, Greenleaf connected resources and serving in a way that resonates with today’s community college leaders.

Direct reports in all three colleges pointed out that their CAO’s primary budget decision is to allow a team—usually all their direct reports—to make the budget decisions. Although a few exceptions were cited, mostly the CAOs examined in this study practice shared leadership when it comes to fiscal decisions. None of the CAOs were hesitant to accept final responsibility for the decisions made, though. They all stated that allowing others to help them make budgetary decisions does not relieve them of responsibility.

In turn, such budget practices resulted in enthusiastic praise for the stewardship practices of the three CAOs. Similar to the attitude documented above with regard to persuasion, it is more likely that an individual will be pleased with a decision that he or she had a part in making, as opposed to a decision that was handed down unilaterally.

All three CAOs in this study recognize this reality, and practice a form of stewardship that appears to be very compatible with Greenleaf's (1970) principles.

Commitment to the growth of people. According to Spears (2002), “the servant-leader is deeply committed to the growth of each and every individual within his or her institution” (p. 8) and has a responsibility to “nurture the personal, professional, and spiritual growth of employees” (p. 8). This reflected in Greenleaf's (1970) test of servant leadership: “Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?” (p. 15)

By virtue of their occupation, educators have made a commitment to the growth of people. All three CAOs involved in this study display that commitment in a dynamic way. For Scott and Amanda, this commitment to the growth of people was expressed more frequently and forcefully by their direct reports than most of the 10 characteristics—on par with the listening characteristic.

All three CAOs' direct reports spoke of their commitment to education, modeling the value of education in their own careers, desire to mentor others, and, in Amanda's case, the desire to return to teaching in the classroom on a limited basis. All repeatedly affirmed their desire to see other people grow.

Two of the three CAOs, Amanda and Glenn, attributed at least a portion of their commitment to others' growth to the example of mentors who influenced them in a positive way. Both spoke warmly of individuals who invested in them in the past, and they indicated their commitment to have the same impact on others. Scott did not voice

such a relationship, but his direct reports attested repeatedly that he displays a commitment to growth in others' lives.

All three CAOs display the characteristic of a commitment to the growth of people.

Building community. One important function of a servant leader is “building community among those who work within a given institution” (Spears, 2002, p. 8). Greenleaf felt strongly, Spears (2002) asserted, that “true community can be created among those who work in businesses and other institutions” (p. 8). Greenleaf (1970) wrote of the need to “rebuild community as a viable life form for large numbers of people” (p. 40)—and servant leaders should be the ones, in Greenleaf’s opinion, who “show the way” (p. 40).

All three CAOs were recognized by their direct reports for their team-oriented approach to leadership and their ability to create and encourage a sense of shared vision. Yet none of the three CAOs have employed leadership retreats, team-building exercises, competitions, or social events in any significant way to create such an atmosphere. Rather, all three CAOs are credited with leading their direct reports toward a team-oriented approach to the work of the college that is not created by artificial means. The lengthy meetings that have been a theme through this study have done more than a ropes course or a trust fall to build a sense of community among the people the CAOs lead.

A second theme with regard to community has to do with the larger community in which the colleges are located. Service to community is an important part of the community college mission, and these three community college administrators reflect that commitment to the community in their leadership. Amanda has roots in the

community in which Community College B is located, and Glenn grew up a short distance away from Community College C. Scott is a transplant to the area of Community College A, but he and the other two CAOs are heavily involved in the college's greater community in a variety of ways. Church, parent-teacher organizations, the arts, athletics, and numerous other activities were mentioned by the CAOs as ways that they are involved in their local communities.

Both on- and off-campus, all three academic officers involved in this study make building and being involved in community a priority.

Additional characteristics. Analysis of gathered data revealed that numerous other leadership characteristics are present in these three CAOs' leadership styles. In particular, honesty, courage, commitment to family, dedication, flexibility, and informality were identified. However, there was no consistency among the CAOs as to the additional characteristics present in their leadership styles. Each CAO's leadership style adds to Spears' (2002) 10 characteristics of servant leadership a number of other traits that were found in this study to be unique to their leadership.

Summary

This chapter presented the key findings obtained from interviews, observations, and document analysis conducted on three western North Carolina community college campuses. The chapter was organized around the three cases, the CAOs, with subsections offering findings and a summary of data collected regarding servant leadership characteristics. All three chief academic officers displayed all 10 characteristics of a servant leader, although some of those characteristics were identified more frequently than the others, and a few were identified less frequently than the others.

The experiences of the CAOs' direct reports were reported throughout the summary, as well. Although the experiences of the chief academic officers' direct reports are quite diverse, all of the direct reports attributed many positive experiences to their supervisor's leadership philosophy and behaviors.

The chapter also reported the results of a cross-case analysis of the three CAOs structured by an examination of the same 10 characteristics of a servant leader. Commonalities were explored and differences were noted. Additional characteristics beyond the 10 identified by Spears (2002) were identified, as well.

With the findings of the study set forth clearly, the final chapter of the dissertation, chapter 5, turns to discussion, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this multicase study was to explore the application of servant leadership principles to community college instructional administration. Specifically, I sought to understand how community college instructional administrators exhibit Greenleaf's servant leadership principles as defined by Spears (2002).

To fulfill the purpose of this study, the following research questions were addressed: (1) How do community college instructional administrators exhibit the characteristics of servant leadership? and (2) What are the experiences of those who report to community college instructional administrators who display the characteristics of servant leadership?

With the findings articulated in chapter 4, this chapter turns to a discussion of the findings, conclusions based upon the findings of the study, and recommendations for several groups. The chapter is organized by the three stated areas—discussion, conclusions, and recommendations—with subsections offering detail in each area. The chapter concludes with a brief summary.

Discussion

Chapter 4 articulated two primary “merged findings” (Stake, 2006, p. 75) that resulted from the cross-case analysis:

(1) All three CAOs displayed all 10 characteristics of a servant leader, with some of those characteristics being identified more frequently than the others (listening, commitment to the growth of people, and empathy) and one characteristic being identified less frequently than the others (healing). In addition to the 10 identified servant leadership characteristics, the CAOs displayed other characteristics consistent

with servant leadership (Scott: Honesty, courage; Amanda: Commitment to family, dedication; Glenn: Flexibility, informality).

(2) The experiences all three CAOs' direct reports were quite diverse, but all of the direct reports attributed many positive experiences to their supervisor's leadership philosophy and behaviors.

These two findings are now discussed, but that discussion is preceded by a discussion of the three CAOs individually.

Chief Academic Officer A: Scott

The Chief Academic Officers in this study were initially designated as A, B, and C, based solely on the order in which I conducted their initial interviews. However, other patterns have emerged. The three are also in order from the youngest to the oldest and from the least experienced in the CAO position to the most experienced in the position. Painting with a broad brush and expressing a somewhat qualified opinion, they are also in order from a nominal example to the best example of servant leadership.

Scott possesses all 10 characteristics of a servant leader and, based on that evaluation, I believe he is an example of such a leader. However, he is a servant leader in the earliest stages of development. When the consideration is expanded from the 10 characteristics to the 41 descriptors that have been identified for those characteristics, Scott's example is not nearly as strong as the other two CAOs. While there is no doubt that Scott is an effective leader, his strongest days as a leader are before him with continued development of his servant leadership potential.

Introspection is an important tool for the servant leader. Falling within the characteristic of awareness, the availed opportunity to examine one's own self, actions,

and motivations is a hallmark of a servant leader. Although Scott is quite aware of his own strengths and weaknesses, he and his direct reports offered little indication of regular self-examination.

Scott's leadership goals are quite in line with those of a servant leader, but he sometimes makes sacrifices to get there that are not indicative of the ideals of servant leadership. One example lies in the desire to improve listening and build community. In an effort to improve in these areas, Scott has expanded a particular academic meeting to include not only direct reports, but numerous faculty members. There is an undercurrent of dissatisfaction related to this decision of which Scott appears to be unaware. Some direct reports feel like they have been undercut and are not being trusted to bring the needs and desires of their faculty members to the table.

In one area, Scott may be the most like Robert Greenleaf of the three CAOs. I believe that Scott's motivation to adopt a leadership style that is consistent with servant leadership is quite simple—it works. While others may have philosophical, religious, or humanistic motivations, Scott is somewhat pragmatic, and has found a way of leading that simply works. That is not unlike Greenleaf, and is a testimony to the power and value of servant leadership.

Reflecting upon my interactions with Scott and all the data collected, I believe that Scott is a servant leader with huge potential. He certainly qualifies as an example of servant leadership based not only on the presence of the 10 characteristics in his leadership style, but also on the positive impact that he is having daily on students, faculty, and staff.

Chief Academic Officer B: Amanda

Amanda displays all 10 characteristics of a servant leader and, based on that evaluation, I believe she is an example of such a leader. Amanda is an excellent example, too, of a servant leader who has made some mistakes, refined her leadership example, and is several years down the road of the servant leader journey. When the 41 descriptors are added to the 10 characteristics of a servant leader, it is apparent that Amanda's leadership is characterized by a maturity that is, in many ways, midway between the examples of the other two CAOs considered. Amanda provides a model for those who wish to see this leadership philosophy in development.

In the area of introspection, Amanda is aware of her own strengths and weaknesses based on periods of self-reflection during her career. Many of these periods of self-assessment have accompanied changes in job duties and advancements in her career.

Although Amanda's servant leadership example is a mature one, it is not perfect. Especially with the long tenure Amanda has enjoyed at Community College B, she has—not surprisingly—accumulated a few colleagues who, while expressing a general admiration and appreciation for her leadership, still harbor resentments over a decision that did not go their way or a perceived slight directed toward them by Amanda. Although virtually any leader has these feelings and situations lurking around campus, Amanda has the opportunity to apply the principle of healing to those situations once she discovers them through empathetic listening.

Like Greenleaf, I believe Amanda's faith and family have been a significant influence in her motivation to adopt a leadership style that is consistent with servant

leadership. Amanda is also supremely concerned about her community, and those three factors—faith, family, and community—form a strong, three-stranded cord that binds Amanda and her leadership style to her work.

Based on my interactions with Amanda and all of the data collected, I believe that Amanda is an extremely strong example of a servant leader. She qualifies as an example of servant leadership based on the presence of the 10 characteristics that are the conceptual framework for this study, but also upon the day-to-day successes that she is having as she impacts members of the college community in a positive way.

Chief Academic Officer C: Glenn

Glenn possesses all 10 characteristics of a servant leader and, on that basis, I believe is an example of a servant leader. But such an evaluation only begins to express Glenn's role at his institution and his example of leadership. When the 41 descriptors are used to illuminate the scope of the 10 characteristics, it is easily recognizable that Glenn is, indeed, an unusual leader. Glenn's maturity as a leader and his heart for service are exceptional. Glenn's leadership is not perfect, but it is a well-developed, mature example of servant leadership in action.

Quite possibly as a result of his original area of study, Glenn is more self-aware than most people, and articulated most of his strengths and weaknesses prior to the direct report interviews that would reveal them later. Self-reflection and introspection are an integral part of Glenn's leadership style. Indeed, Glenn appears to be a person who regularly—even daily—looks within himself.

Glenn struggles, though, to balance hearing everyone's voices with the reality of decision-making. His direct reports are sometimes impatient and wish that he would be

more decisive. Glenn readily admitted that such points are occasionally made during his annual review with the president of his institution, but he also articulated that he is willing to accept that as a consequence of making sure everyone's opinion is voiced and considered.

Based primarily on the interview with Glenn, I believe he has adopted a leadership style that is consistent with servant leadership because of his belief in the value of people. Glenn's humanistic approach has been fostered by his prior field of work and the example of an early supervisor in that field. He also cited the example of the current president of Community College C, but it appears to me that Glenn's background has been the most significant factor in the molding of his leadership style.

Based on my interactions with Glenn and all of the data collected, I believe that Glenn provides an example of servant leadership that is worthy of emulation by those aspiring to such a role themselves. He qualifies as a servant leader based on the presence of Spears' (2002) 10 characteristics, but he is a servant leader role model who is far more advanced in the servant leadership journey than others I have witnessed. Glenn enjoys success in his daily work and is a transforming presence for the colleagues and students he serves.

Having discussed the three CAOs individually, we now turn to a discussion of the two merged findings that have been articulated previously.

Merged Finding #1

It was somewhat unexpected that all three CAOs would display all 10 of the servant leadership characteristics. In retrospect, though, perhaps that should have been anticipated for two reasons. First, the purposeful sampling embodied in the nomination

process of the study sought to identify administrators who were likely to be servant leaders. This made it more likely all three CAOs selected as participants would display the 10 servant leadership characteristics. Secondly, the study design allowed for a tremendous amount of data to be gathered regarding the CAOs—data that was garnered from virtually every aspect of their professional duties. The CAOs are observed by their direct reports in both large and small group settings, in both formal and informal atmospheres, and in both pleasant and difficult circumstances. The diverse settings allowed opportunities for all of the characteristics to be displayed and, indeed, they were.

The varied strengths of the CAOs are reflective of their diverse backgrounds, interests, and passions. The three strengths—listening, commitment to the growth of people, and empathy—are closely related. Listening and empathy, particularly, go hand-in-hand. A commitment to the growth of people is an outgrowth of hearing their voices—listening—and caring about them as people—empathy. I am convinced that the three CAOs possess a deep and abiding concern for people that makes these three characteristics somewhat “second nature” for them.

It is also my belief that the “weakest” characteristic, healing, is a deeply-rooted part of all three of these leaders, and I make two notes regarding the somewhat nominally reported presence of this attribute in these leaders. First, the characteristic of healing as it is discussed by Greenleaf (1970) is sometimes not recognized as healing. Listening and empathy are essential attributes of healing—in the work of these CAOs and in Greenleaf’s writings. To describe healing in his original essay, Greenleaf cited the example of Alcoholics Anonymous—an organization that promotes healing through the sharing of one’s story in group meetings. Listening and empathy are important factors in

healing, and healing is sometimes not recognized as such because of the essential relationship among the three characteristics.

A second factor regarding the characteristic of healing may also be at work in these participant leaders. The culture in most of today's educational institutions inhibits some of the expressions of healing that might otherwise be displayed in a more frequent and overt fashion by these servant leaders. Generally, it is not acceptable for employees in a public institution of higher education to lean heavily on others. Neither is it acceptable to offer such emotional support. All three CAOs engaged in what might be termed as "professional healing"—that is, healing of the professional relationships that are sometimes strained by the realities of the job. All three interacted with their direct reports and others in an empathetic way, and were mostly praised for their listening. However, the CAOs only made the most tentative steps toward extending that attitude of healing in a personal way. It is a reality of our day, though many of us might view it as a sad reality.

The findings of this study are quite consistent with those of other research that used Spears' (2002) 10 principles as a conceptual framework. Crippen (2004), in a qualitative historical analysis, found evidence of all 10 characteristics of servant leadership in the life of one of the three Manitoba pioneer women she considered, although weaker or more uncertain evidence of two or three of the 10 characteristics in the lives of the other two women. Contee-Borders (2002) found that all 10 characteristics were incorporated in the operation of a for-profit business. The qualitative portion of a mixed-methods study by Kasun (2009) found evidence of all 10 characteristics in a group

of 15 public school principals. In a phenomenological study, Omoh (2007) identified all 10 characteristics in a particular community college president.

As noted above, this study of servant leadership in community college instructional administrators, as with the other studies just cited, used a purposeful sampling strategy that was designed to identify likely servant leaders (Creswell, 2007). No attempt was made in this study or the others cited to identify the frequency of occurrence of servant leadership or to contrast those who display servant leadership characteristics with those who do not. Given these factors, it was not surprising that all 10 attributes were discovered in the three leaders who were the primary participants in this study.

In addition to the 10 identified servant leadership characteristics, the CAOs displayed other characteristics consistent with servant leadership. Neither Spears (2002) or anyone else has maintained that the 10 characteristics of servant leadership that comprised the conceptual framework for this study are the *only* visible evidences of servant leadership. In fact, as detailed in chapter 2, other scholars have identified numerous additional—or different—characteristics.

The additional characteristics identified in this study are indicative of the personalities and priorities of the three CAOs. The selection of three different CAOs would likely bring a varied set of additional characteristics. However, it is noteworthy that the presence of all 10 of Spears' (2002) characteristics of servant leadership in these three CAOs supports Spears' work to establish a baseline set of characteristics.

An additional note about Spears' (2002) 10 characteristics—and, indeed, my own descriptors—is appropriate here. The 10 identified characteristics, the 41 descriptors, and

indeed the entire philosophy of servant leadership is somewhat ambiguous. It is intuitive rather than logical or linear. Greenleaf (1970) himself stated:

I did not get the notion of the servant as leader from conscious logic. Rather it came to me as an intuitive insight as I contemplated Leo. And I do not see what is relevant from my own searching and experience in terms of a logical progression from premise to conclusion. Rather I see it as fragments of data to be fed into my internal computer from which intuitive insights come. Serving and leading are still mostly intuition-based concepts in my thinking. (p. 14)

Greenleaf (1970) went on to discuss the contradictions present in servant leadership—and that is an appropriate note here, as well. The 10 characteristics and 41 descriptors that have been used in this study harbor some kind of relationship to one another, but that relationship has not been empirically defined. Crippen has suggested in personal conversations that the 10 characteristics form a progression of development, but that has not been substantively explored. It is my belief that the heart of the servant leader drives the development of these characteristics simultaneously in a way that defies definition or even cogent explanation—in other words, in such a way that Greenleaf emphasized intuition and insight rather than logic and definition.

Merged Finding #2

My personal experiences as a faculty member, associate dean, and dean at the community college I serve have left me extremely impressed with the chief academic officer at our institution. In fact, had he not been excluded from this study, I am confident he would have been identified by this study's nomination process as one who

displays servant leadership characteristics. I consider working for and with him to be an extraordinary blessing.

But I left the three campuses I visited as a part of this research study knowing that there are other great community colleges—and other great instructional leaders—in addition to my own. The direct reports of the three chief academic officers in this study had similar comments to make about them as I make about my own CAO. In fact, they struggled at times to come up with enough positive adjectives and adverbs to describe their administrator's leadership style. In particular, they were extremely positive about the impact that their leader has on them personally.

Qualitative research does not establish hypotheses to be tested. However, it was my informal supposition that the experiences of the direct reports would be positive. I underestimated the enthusiasm with which the direct reports would recount their experiences, though.

There were few negatives expressed in the voluminous data gathered. The only repeated negative—and everyone who expressed it as a negative acknowledged that it is only negative to a degree—was the amount of time consumed by the collaborative effort that is a hallmark of the three CAOs' leadership. Long, frequent meetings are not generally viewed as a positive, and several direct reports voiced that. However, all participants acknowledged the need to allow everyone to be heard and to work toward consensus. The willingness with which the direct reports approach this reality is a testimony to their respect for their CAOs and their desire to be a part of the CAO's team.

Conclusions

The two primary merged findings give rise to some conclusions. These conclusions are based on the two primary merged findings and are discussed separately.

Conclusions Based on Merged Finding #1

In view of the first merged finding that articulated that all three CAOs displayed all 10 characteristics of a servant leader, although in varying degrees, I conclude that there are servant leaders who occupy positions as community college chief academic officers. Although there is no evidence that the actions of the three CAOs in this study—or, for that matter, any other CAOs—were affected by the words of Shugart (1997, 1999) when he asserted that “if community colleges are to sustain the servant ethic that inspires our best work, servant leaders who consistently articulate an authentic, mission-driven vision for the college must lead them” (1999, p. 2), the instructional programs of the three community colleges in this study are, indeed, led by servant leaders. Coupled with my own personal involvement and observation of the CAO at the institution I serve, it appears that the instructional divisions of at least a quarter of the community colleges in western North Carolina are led by men and women who are believed by others to be servant leaders.

Some degree of concern was expressed by two of my dissertation committee members that this study’s nomination process would not produce a sufficient number of servant leaders—or even *any* servant leaders—to be examined. In retrospect, that concern was needless. Instead, I conclude that servant leadership is being used by instructional administrators in western North Carolina in a significant way.

It is interesting to speculate on why the community colleges—or at least the western region of North Carolina community colleges—have so many servant leaders employed as administrators. Many of my colleagues and classmates who work in four-year universities say that they have not met even one servant leader on their campuses.

It is not my purpose to pit two-year institutions against four-year universities, public institutions against private ones, or any other such distinction in higher education. I maintain, though, that a particular type of person is attracted to teaching in the community college, and I believe those persons are more likely to be servant leaders.

Community college faculty members teach a lot of students. At my own institution, full-time faculty members teach 18-20 contact hours per semester. For faculty members who teach in the humanities, social sciences, and many other areas where classes are typical three semester hours and have 25 students per section, the typical teaching load is six sections of 25 students—a total of 150 students per semester. That load could also involve multiple different courses, resulting in as many as four or five different preparations. It is my experience that a faculty member must possess a strong desire to serve students in order to maintain that pace year after year.

A great many community college administrators are drawn from the ranks of the college's faculty and staff. Such was true of all three of the CAO participants in this study. As a result, if the typical community college faculty is composed of caring, serving individuals and the majority of administrators are drawn from that pool, then many—if not most—community college administrators will have that same desire to serve. This situation, then, creates an atmosphere in which the attitude of service that is at the root of servant leadership can flourish—and, although qualitative research rarely

produces generalizable conclusions, it appears to me that such a phenomenon is *exactly* what is happening in many of today's community colleges. After all, that was Shugart's (1997, 1999) plea.

As stated above, qualitative research does not emphasize the articulation of generalizable conclusions. However, one is tempted to extrapolate these conclusions to community colleges beyond the confines of western North Carolina. This will be addressed below as a recommendation for further research.

Conclusions Based on Merged Finding #2

As a result of the second merged finding that maintained that the experiences all three CAOs' direct reports were quite diverse, but all of the direct reports attributed many positive experiences to their supervisor's leadership philosophy and behaviors, I conclude that those who report to servant leaders who occupy positions as community college chief academic officers have very positive and satisfying work experiences that largely stem from their supervisor's leadership style. Although it was not the goal of this study to establish that employees who report to servant leaders are happier or more fulfilled than other employees, it *is* within the scope of this study to conclude that the experiences of many who report to servant leaders are overwhelmingly positive.

As I spent weeks interviewing direct reports of the three CAOs, I did so with the nagging (and increasing) realization that many of the people who have reported to me through the years would not be nearly so positive in their descriptions of their work experiences as were the direct reports in this study. The example of servant leadership that I have put into practice during my own leadership journey has been largely inferior to that of the three CAOs in this study. I conclude that just as servant leaders display the

characteristics of servant leadership with varying frequency and intensity, the experiences of those who report to a servant leader vary, as well.

Recommendations

Recommendations seek to answer the “so what” question of dissertation research—indeed, of *all* research—and provide some context for future consideration of topics and situations related to those of this study. To that end, recommendations are cited below for community college administrators, for servant leaders, and for future researchers.

Recommendations for Community College Administrators

I echo the words of Shugart (1997, 1999) and recommend that community colleges consider selecting servant leaders for administration posts, and especially positions in instructional administration. Such individuals are the different type of leaders that some have cited as being needed in higher education, and particularly in the community college, today (Kezar, 2001; Roueche, Baker, & Rose, 1989; Roueche, Richardson, Neal, & Roueche, 2008; Shugart, 1997, 1999; Walker and McPhail, 2009). This study revealed little desire for autocratic leadership, but found excellent support for the acceptance of servant leaders in community college leadership posts.

As a result of the study, I further recommend that servant leaders who are employed in the community college system should not “give up” on their collaborative, team-oriented, servant leadership approach. At times, this style of leading may seem to be too time-consuming, too difficult, and even too expensive. Some direct reports may even express occasional dissatisfaction with the leadership style. However, this research study demonstrates that such a leadership style is effective for a community college

administrator, and most people who report to servant leaders in a community college organizational structure have positive experiences.

Recommendations for Servant Leaders

At least at first glance, it would seem rare that there would be a servant leader without an outlet for that leadership philosophy. In other words, it seems unlikely that one would encounter a servant leader just hanging around, looking for an unstated, unspecified career where he or she could practice servant leadership principles.

However, such a case may not be so rare when described in a different way. Young people—or even older, second-career types like me—are often drawn into education because of a desire to help improve people’s lives. Such a motivation is not foreign to servant leadership at all, but is reflective of the principles for which servant leaders stand. Yet with the reputation of college administrators as being mostly autocratic and somewhat ego-driven, educational administration is rarely a first-line career choice for someone who desires to help people. However, this study demonstrates that the two are, indeed, compatible. Servant leaders looking for a place to serve where larger numbers of people can be impacted quickly in a positive way should certainly consider academic administration as a career. The need is still as great as it was when Shugart expressed it in 1997.

Recommendations for Future Researchers

This study was designed to fill an identified gap in existing literature. Specifically, this study explored the application of servant leadership principles to community college instructional administration. However, the completion of this study

raises other possibilities for research that could be seized by future researchers who wish to broaden or deepen the work done in this study.

The participants in this study were all employed by relatively small community colleges located in primarily rural or small-town communities in western North Carolina. Future research that expands this work to larger community colleges located in urban and suburban areas is recommended. Replication of the study in other parts of the country is warranted, as well.

The participants in this study were all chief academic officers (CAOs). Future research that explores the application of servant leadership principles to other community college administrators, such as presidents, deans, and department heads, is recommended.

This study explored servant leadership only in the two-year, community college setting. Future research should expand upon this work to study the application of servant leadership principles to other types of higher education institutions, such as state universities, private colleges and universities, and for-profit institutions. Exploration of servant leadership in institutions that have a large online teaching component would be a further expansion of this study.

The expansion of servant leadership research into other types of non-profit organizations is suggested. This additional study should include both religious and non-religious organizations.

This study focused solely on contemporary leaders. The use of qualitative historical analysis to explore the leadership styles of educational and other non-profit leaders would be helpful.

Finally, only a brief mention was made in this study's literature review of a comparison of servant leadership with other leadership theories that place high value on collaborative, team-oriented leadership. Studies that explore these relationships would be of great value to servant leadership scholarship and, indeed, the entire field of leadership scholarship.

Summary

Building upon the findings articulated in the previous chapter, this chapter offered a discussion of the findings, conclusions based upon the findings of the study, and recommendations for several groups. In particular, the chapter offered numerous suggestions for continuing the work of both servant leadership and community college research by expanding on either the breadth or depth of the work done in this study.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Western Carolina University
 Institutional Review Board
 c/o Office of Research Administration
 109 Camp Building
 Cullowhee NC 28723
irb@wcu.edu | 828-227-7212



IRB number: 2012-0143 Date of review: 2/15/12
 Investigators: M. Elliott & M. J. Herzog
 Project Title: Servants first: A multi-case study exploring servant leadership in community college instructional administrators

Your IRB protocol has been approved, effective with today's date, under the following category of expedited review, as authorized by 45 CFR 46.110 and 21 CFR 56.110:

- Clinical studies of drugs and medical devices (a) when an investigational new drug application (21 CFR Part 312) is not required or (b) medical devices for which (i) an investigational device exemption application (21 CFR Part 812) is not required; or (ii) the medical device is cleared/approved for marketing and the medical device is being used in accordance with its cleared/approved labeling
- Collection of blood samples by finger stick, heel stick, ear stick, or venipuncture
- Prospective collection of biological specimens for research purposes by noninvasive means
- Collection of data through noninvasive procedures (not involving general anesthesia or sedation) routinely employed in clinical practice, excluding procedures involving x-rays or microwaves
- Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected, or will be collected solely for nonresearch purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis)
- Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes
- Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies
- Continuing review of research previously approved by the convened IRB

Your protocol is approved for one year and may be renewed annually. If you wish to make changes to your protocol, including recruitment procedures, sampling, consent, interventions, data collection methods, and investigators, please use the amendment request located on the IRB website (<http://www.wcu.edu/6801.asp>) to submit your request in advance.

This approval does not cover research conducted prior to the approval date. Please remember that you are responsible for reporting adverse events or unanticipated risks to the IRB immediately.

IRB representative:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Melissa Kow".

Date: 2/15/12

Appendix B

Email to CEOs: Initial contact from Dr. Hinshaw

From: Garrett Hinshaw
Sent: Monday, February 20, 2012 4:20 PM
To: CEOs
Cc: Marvin Elliott
Subject: CVCC Faculty Dissertation Research Request

Hi colleagues. One of our faculty members at Catawba Valley, Marvin Elliott, is a doctoral student at Western Carolina University. His dissertation research involves a qualitative study of the leadership styles of Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) in western North Carolina community colleges.

Marvin is seeking to interview and observe several CAOs as a part of the study. You will be receiving an email from Marvin within 48 hours that explains the study and invites you to nominate the CAO at your college if you believe he or she would be an appropriate participant and you would be willing for Marvin to conduct approximately two days of interviews and observations of the CAO and his or her direct reports on your campus.

I ask for your consideration when you receive the email, as I believe this study will provide value for our colleges and add to the current body of literature in our profession. Thank you.

Garrett D. Hinshaw, Ed. D.
President
Catawba Valley Community College

Appendix C

Email to CEOs: Invitation to nominate

From: Marvin Elliott
Sent: Tuesday, February 21, 2012 8:20 AM
To: CEOs
Subject: Dissertation study nominations

Good morning.

This email is a follow-up to the one sent yesterday by Dr. Garrett Hinshaw, President of Catawba Valley Community College.

In addition to serving as a faculty member at Catawba Valley, I am a doctoral student at Western Carolina University. My dissertation research involves a qualitative study of the leadership styles of Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) in western North Carolina community colleges.

I am seeking to interview several CAOs who might be described by the following paragraph:

The community college Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) being sought for this study have an attitude of service, seek to make sure that employees' needs are being met, promote growth of other employees, encourage others to develop an attitude of service, and display a compassion for the less privileged. The CAOs being sought place the needs of others above their own and seek to create an atmosphere of awareness, empathy, and community.

If you believe the CAO at your college would be an appropriate participant in this study and you would be willing for me to conduct approximately two days of interviews and observations of the CAO and his or her direct reports on your campus, I invite you to nominate your CAO. Please reply to this email and briefly explain why you believe the CAO at your college would be a good participant.

Thank you for your assistance with my dissertation study.

Sincerely,
Marvin Elliott

Marvin L. Elliott, Ed.S.
Catawba Valley Community College
2550 Highway 70 SE
Hickory, NC 28602
Office: REP 248

Phone: (828) 327-7000, ext. 4373

Email: melliott@cvcc.edu

Appendix D

Email to CEOs: Thank you for nomination

From: Marvin Elliott
Sent: Tuesday, February 21, 2012 8:50 AM
To: CEO
Subject: RE: Dissertation study nominations

Thank you for nominating _____ to participate in my dissertation study.

Over the next couple of weeks, I'm gathering nominations from presidents and CAOs and will approach possible participants based on those nominations.

Thanks again for your assistance.

--Marvin

Marvin L. Elliott, Ed.S.
Catawba Valley Community College
2550 Highway 70 SE
Hickory, NC 28602
Office: REP 248
Phone: (828) 327-7000, ext. 4373
Email: melliott@cvcc.edu

Appendix E

Email to CAOs: Initial contact from Dr. Mackie

From: Keith Mackie
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2012 11:10 AM
To: CAOs
Cc: Marvin Elliott
Subject: Doctoral study

Good Morning,

One of our faculty members at Catawba Valley, Marvin Elliott, is a doctoral student at Western Carolina University. His dissertation research involves a qualitative study of the leadership styles of Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) in western North Carolina community colleges.

Marvin is seeking to interview and observe several CAOs as a part of the study.

You will be receiving an email from Marvin within 48 hours that explains the study and invites you to nominate one or more of our western North Carolina CAOs if you believe they would be appropriate participants.

I ask for your consideration when you receive the email, as I believe this study has value for our colleges.

Thank you!
Keith

Keith Mackie, Ed.D.
Vice President of Instruction
Catawba Valley Community College
2550 Highway 70 SE
Hickory, NC 28602
828-327-7000 Ext. 4161

Appendix F

Email to CAOs: Invitation to nominate

From: Marvin Elliott
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2012 7:31 AM
To: CAOs
Subject: Doctoral study nominations

Good morning.

This email is a follow-up to the one sent yesterday by Dr. Keith Mackie, Vice President of Instruction at Catawba Valley Community College.

In addition to serving as a faculty member at Catawba Valley, I am a doctoral student at Western Carolina University. My dissertation research involves a qualitative study of the leadership styles of Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) in western North Carolina community colleges.

I am seeking to interview several CAOs who might be described by the following paragraph:

The community college Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) being sought for this study have an attitude of service, seek to make sure that employees' needs are being met, promote growth of other employees, encourage others to develop an attitude of service, and display a compassion for the less privileged. The CAOs being sought place the needs of others above their own and seek to create an atmosphere of awareness, empathy, and community.

If you believe one or more of your western North Carolina peers would be appropriate participants in this study, I invite you to nominate your colleagues.

Please reply to this email and briefly explain why you believe a particular CAO would be a good participant. For those selected, I will conduct approximately two days of interviews and observations of the CAO and his or her direct reports on their campus.

Thank you for your assistance with my dissertation study.

Sincerely,
Marvin Elliott

Marvin L. Elliott, Ed.S.
Catawba Valley Community College
2550 Highway 70 SE
Hickory, NC 28602

Office: REP 248
Phone: (828) 327-7000, ext. 4373
Email: melliott@cvcc.edu

Appendix G

Email to CAOs: Thank you for nomination

From: Marvin Elliott
Sent: Friday, February 17, 2012 12:22 PM
To: CAO
Subject: RE: Doctoral study nominations

Thank you for nominating _____ to participate in my dissertation study.

Over the next couple of weeks, I'm gathering nominations from presidents and CAOs and will approach possible participants based on those nominations.

Thanks again for your assistance.

--Marvin

Marvin L. Elliott, Ed.S.
Catawba Valley Community College
2550 Highway 70 SE
Hickory, NC 28602
Office: REP 248
Phone: (828) 327-7000, ext. 4373
Email: melliott@cvcc.edu

Appendix H

Interview Guide for Chief Academic Officers

- (1) Thank the participant for consenting to the interview.
- (2) Review the purpose of the interview and remind the participant of his/her control over the interview. Obtain a signature on the informed consent form.
- (3) Potential interview items and questions:
 - (A) Please tell me about your leadership style.
 - (B) In particular, please describe for me how you relate to your direct reports.
 - (C) Please give me some examples of how you interact with your direct reports.
 - (D) Please think of one particular situation in which you provided leadership for a direct report. Describe that situation.
 - (E) If you could summarize your manner of leading in just a few descriptive words, what words would you choose?
 - (F) Are there any specific situations that led you to select the words you did? Tell me about one or two of them.
 - (G) Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about your leadership that I haven't asked already?
- (4) Thank participant for his/her time. Remind participant that consent may be withdrawn at any time. Remind participant that he/she will be asked to review information from the interview.

Appendix I

Interview Guide for Chief Academic Officers: Follow-Up or Second Interview Questions

- (1) Thank the participant for consenting to the interview.
- (2) Review the purpose of the interview and remind the participant of his/her control over the interview.
- (3) Potential interview items and questions:
 - (A) Please tell me how you balance allowing everyone to be heard with the need to make timely decisions.
 - (B) Would you please give me some examples of how understanding those you lead, particularly in a holistic, “whole-person” way, influences the way you lead?
 - (C) Does leadership in general, and in a community college specifically, fulfill a personal need or motivation for you? If so, please explain.
 - (D) Is a knowledge of one’s self and a knowledge of one’s surroundings helpful to a leader? If so, in what way?
 - (E) Please tell me how you motivate others to accept the decisions you make.
 - (F) How do you make sure you see the “big picture” of your position, even while you’re so busy with the day-to-day?
 - (G) Does intuition play a part in decision-making? Data? How do the two interact in your leadership style?
 - (H) In these difficult budget days, what would you have to say about the way you manage resources—human, financial, personal?
 - (I) Are you involved with your direct reports as a mentor? Please give me some examples of that involvement, if you are.
 - (J) Please tell me how you create a sense of teamwork among those you lead.
 - (K) Is there anything else you’d like to tell me about your leadership that I haven’t asked already?

(4) Thank participant for his/her time. Remind participant that consent may be withdrawn at any time. Remind participant that he/she will be asked to review information from the interview.

Appendix J

Interview Guide for Direct Reports

- (1) Thank the participant for consenting to the interview.
- (2) Review the purpose of the interview and remind the participant of his/her control over the interview. Obtain a signature on the informed consent form.
- (3) Potential interview items and questions (all blanks are for the name of the college's CAO):
 - (A) Please tell me about _____'s leadership style.
 - (B) In particular, please describe for me how _____ relates to his/her direct reports.
 - (C) Please give me some examples of how _____ interacts with his/her direct reports.
 - (D) Please think of one particular situation in which _____ provided leadership for you. Describe that situation.
 - (E) If you could summarize _____'s manner of leading in just a few descriptive words, what words would you choose?
 - (F) Are there any specific situations that led you to select the words you did? Tell me about one or two of them.
 - (G) Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about _____'s leadership that I haven't asked already?
- (4) Thank participant for his/her time. Remind participant that consent may be withdrawn at any time. Remind participant that he/she will be asked to review information from the interview.

Appendix K

Interview Guide for Direct Reports: Follow-Up Questions

- (1) Thank the participant for consenting to the interview.
- (2) Review the purpose of the interview and remind the participant of his/her control over the interview.
- (3) Potential interview items and questions (all blanks are for the name of the college's CAO):
 - (A) Please tell me how _____ balances allowing everyone to be heard with the need to make timely decisions.
 - (B) Would you please give me some examples of how _____ understanding those he/she leads, particularly in a holistic, "whole-person" way, influences the way he/she leads?
 - (C) Do you think _____'s leadership in general, and in a community college specifically, fulfills some kind of personal need or motivation for him/her? If so, please explain.
 - (D) Does _____ appear to have a good knowledge of himself/herself and a good knowledge of his/her surroundings? If so, in what way?
 - (E) Please tell me how _____ motivates others to accept the decisions he/she makes.
 - (F) How do you think _____ sees the "big picture" of his/her position, even while he/she is so busy with the day-to-day?
 - (G) Does it seem to you that intuition plays a part in _____'s decision-making? Data? How do the two interact in his/her leadership style?
 - (H) In these difficult budget days, what would you have to say about the way _____ manages resources—human, financial, personal?
 - (I) Is _____ involved with his/her direct reports as a mentor? Please give me some examples of that involvement, if he/she is.
 - (J) Please tell me how _____ creates a sense of teamwork among those he/she leads.

(K) Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about _____'s leadership that I haven't asked already?

(4) Thank participant for his/her time. Remind participant that consent may be withdrawn at any time. Remind participant that he/she will be asked to review information from the interview.

Appendix L

Observation Guide for Chief Academic Officers

- (1) Thank the participant for consenting to the observation.
- (2) Review the purpose of the observation and remind the participant of his/her control over the observation. Obtain a signature on the informed consent form.
- (3) Description of the observation protocol:

Each CAO will be requested to provide a campus tour to the researcher as a part of a two- to three-hour “shadowing” period. The campus tour and shadowing will allow the researcher to observe the CAO’s interactions with people across campus and will encourage a period of less-structured dialogue than that of the formal interview. Observations will be approached in a holistic manner, with both descriptive and reflective notes being made by the researcher. Notes will be made as soon as possible after the observation to retain as much information as possible.

Appendix M

Informed Consent Document: CAOs

I am interested in the leadership styles of community college instructional administrators and am collecting data on the subject for my dissertation. I would appreciate it if you would be a participant in my study. Participation is completely voluntary, and there is no penalty for declining to participate. Other than the personal benefit that may come as a result of answering introspective interview questions regarding leadership styles, there is no anticipated direct benefit for participating. In a wider sense, though, the study will result in a greater understanding of how leadership principles are currently being modeled by community college instructional administrators. There are no foreseeable risks for study participants.

Your agreement indicates your willingness to participate in three aspects of the study:

- Two semi-structured interviews that will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes each. During the interviews I will ask you to describe your leadership style. The interviews will be digitally recorded for accuracy. You will also be asked to review the transcripts to confirm that they are an accurate record of your remarks.
- A period of observation that will last half a day or less as you perform the regular duties of your position. During the observation I will take notes about your leadership style.
- An opportunity to submit documents for analysis. The documents that you select and provide will be analyzed for evidence of your leadership style.

You may end your participation in the interviews at any time or ask me to stop the recording. Likewise, you may end your participation in the observation at any time.

Strict confidentiality will be maintained throughout this study. No records of participant names will be kept. Moreover, no identifying information will be used in the reporting of this research. All personal identifying data will be removed or changed in order to maintain confidentiality for participants and any individuals they describe. No information gathered from you will be revealed to the president of your college, your direct reports, or anyone else at your college. All digital recordings and observation notes will be preserved in a password-protected environment.

If you have questions about this study, you may ask me now, or contact either me or my faculty advisor later. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant, you may also contact the chair of the WCU Institutional Review Board. Contact information is below. As a reminder, you may withdraw consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

Principal Investigator:

Marvin L. Elliott
124 Taylorsville Beach Court
Taylorsville, NC 28681
(828) 635-1101

Institutional Review Board:

WCU Research Administration
Cordelia Camp Building, Room 110
Cullowhee, NC 28723
(828) 227-7212

Faculty Advisor:

Dr. Mary Jean Ronan Herzog
School of Teaching and Learning
Western Carolina University
Killian Building, Room 108B
Cullowhee, NC 28723
(828) 227-3327

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this research study.

Participant's Signature

Date

Appendix N

Informed Consent Document: Direct Reports

I am interested in the leadership styles of community college instructional administrators and am collecting data on the subject for my dissertation. I would appreciate it if you would be a participant in my study. Participation is completely voluntary, and there is no penalty for declining to participate. Other than the personal benefit that may come as a result of answering introspective interview questions regarding leadership styles, there is no anticipated direct benefit for participating. In a wider sense, though, the study will result in a greater understanding of how leadership principles are currently being modeled by community college instructional administrators. There are no foreseeable risks for study participants.

Your agreement indicates your willingness to participate in a semi-structured interview that will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes. During the interview I will ask you to describe your supervisor's leadership style. The interview will be digitally recorded for accuracy. You will also be asked to review the transcript to confirm that that it is an accurate record of your remarks.

You may end your participation in the interview at any time or ask me to stop the recording.

Strict confidentiality will be maintained throughout this study. No records of participant names will be kept. Moreover, no identifying information will be used in the reporting of this research. All personal identifying data will be removed or changed in order to maintain confidentiality for participants and any individuals they describe. No information gathered from you will be revealed to your supervisor or anyone else at your college. All digital recordings will be preserved in a password-protected environment.

If you have questions about this study, you may ask me now, or contact either me or my faculty advisor later. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant, you may also contact the chair of the WCU Institutional Review Board. Contact information is below. As a reminder, you may withdraw consent and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.

Principal Investigator:
Marvin L. Elliott
124 Taylorsville Beach Court
Taylorsville, NC 28681
(828) 635-1101

Institutional Review Board:
WCU Research Administration
Cordelia Camp Building, Room 110
Cullowhee, NC 28723
(828) 227-7212

Faculty Advisor:

Dr. Mary Jean Ronan Herzog
School of Teaching and Learning
Western Carolina University
Killian Building, Room 108B
Cullowhee, NC 28723
(828) 227-3327

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this research study.

Participant's Signature

Date

Appendix O

Sample CAO Interview

Note: Portions redacted to preserve confidentiality.

Q: Just a couple of demographic things, if we could. I've got your title and your name, but how long have you been here at [Community College X], and how long have you been in your current position?

A: OK. I've been at [Community College X] since [date], and I've been in my current role as [title] since [date].

[question/answer redacted to preserve confidentiality]

Q: That sounds good. So tell me a little bit about your leadership style ... just very open-ended, whatever you'd like to say.

A: Yeah, I ... it'll be really interesting to see what other people say. Uh, I guess my leadership style is ... I try to give my direct reports as much leeway as possible. So, uh, I've come into this position and everybody's already in place. I haven't hired or appointed anyone other than [name], which we mentioned. So I had a group that already had been in place. At some point in their past history, their supervisors and interview committees had decided they were appropriate for their job, so I went on the assumption that they were good at what they did. And, so, I see my job as making sure they have all the information they need to make good decisions, make myself available to help them vet any decisions they want help with, like ... come to me ... I'm thinking about doing this with this program, but I want to hear what you have to think. And a lot of times that's when a lot of times I can provide context from a local county school board to a state system office, uh, the political powers that be in the county, and then, you know, we can sort of reframe that and talk about it and see if it's a good way to go. And I really, I really try to take more of that approach, a facilitator, coach is almost too strong, I think facilitator is a good model, as a facilitator and not a manager and definitely not a micromanager. Occasionally I have to step into that role if we're having some specific challenges, uh, but I really prefer the facilitator role.

Q: You've mentioned being a facilitator and then you've mentioned manager, or micromanager.

A: Right.

Q: Could you give an example of each? Does anything come to mind where you've especially fulfilled the facilitator role, and then maybe somewhere where you had to step in and be more of a manager than you want to be?

[answer redacted to preserve confidentiality]

Q: That's great.

A: So it worked out really well. And I like that kind of stuff. An example where I've had to step in and be a micromanager would be where I've had faculty approach me with concerns about a chairperson. And they've come and said to me that, well, I feel like this chairperson is not following the policies and procedures we have, or they're being unfair. And at that point, I have to listen to what the faculty members are saying, I have to talk to the chair, and I have to come to some sort of resolution that's going to help both parties move forward. And in that case, I'm usually looking at documenting conversations, and if there are other documents related to the grievance or complaint to me, I have to put those together. And that requires a lot of meetings with people, a lot of, well, did you do this, did you do that? Have you thought about the chairperson's point of view? Have you looked at this in the context of budget, and that gets to a level of detail that I'd prefer not to delve into, but it's ultimately part of the job.

Q: Part of the job ...

A: Yeah.

Q: If you could choose just a few words to describe your leadership style, a few adjectives, if you will, two or three or four, or how many ever you want, what would those words be? And then I'll ask you to justify them, of course, with examples.

A: Um, I do feel like I, I'm trying to choose the right words, um, I have, I've worked for people before who are good administrators, but they were very top-down oriented. They were good, but it was always clear what I had to do and when I needed to do it, and often I needed to do it ... which makes for sometimes kind of a serene working environment because there's no questions about where you should go or shouldn't go. Uh, but when I came to this position, it was the biggest leadership challenge that I've ever had in my career. You know, I went from I think the most that I've ever managed was 15 full-time folks to about 90 full-timers and another about 90 part-timers. Uh, and so, I really see my role as being service-oriented, so I make sure, again, that they have every they need to do their job. And that's where I see the focus of my position being right now, is ... I've got to help them do their job better. They're the experts in their field, my background training is [field], and I'm not an expert in humanities or fine arts or nursing or business or any of those things. So the best I can do for the college is provide them with the resources they need to do their jobs.

Q: Is your doctorate in your field of study or in educational leadership?

A: It's in my field of study.

Q: OK.

A: It's actually in [field].

Q: So that helps a lot with managing people, I'm sure.

A: Well, it's interesting because when I first was asked about this, I kind of thought the same thing, but, in reality, when you pursue any Ph.D., educational doctorate, any sort of higher degree, ultimately you're managing grants, you're managing students, you're managing interactions of multiple campuses, so although it's different than what I do now on a day to day basis, the realm of the challenges is similar.

Q: I have a few questions that are a little more leading, more specific, toward leadership attributes. How do you balance the need to hear everyone's voice with the need to make timely decisions?

A: Um, that's a tough one. It's a good leading question. Uh, it's really tough, and I think what I've tried to do, and hopefully the majority of time successfully, is just be really honest with people. In other words, I've had, uh, people raise concerns about moves or space on campus, for instance. I'll give you a very clear example, and this one's a matter of public record. We had a building on campus that about half of the space was dedicated to an esthetics certificate and an esthetics instructor certificate. Uh, program had plenty of enrollment, but we only taught it once every other year.

Q: Oh.

[answer redacted to preserve confidentiality]

Q: That's a great example. Uh, how about some examples of, I guess, do you believe that understanding the people you lead in a holistic way, a whole-person kind of a way, is a valuable, uh, consideration, and, if you do, how does that influence the way you lead—understanding the whole person and not just purely the business function, I guess?

A: OK, so I think I understand what you're saying, but let me feed it back to you a little bit.

Q: I hope I do.

A: So you're saying one way to lead people would be to look at their role from 9 to 5 or whatever their hours are. Another way would be to look at what they do from 9 to 5, but also realize that that person might be pursuing a graduate degree, they may have five kids at home, they might be a regionally competitive marathon runner. They've got other things going on in their life.

Q: Exactly.

A: I hope I do a good job looking at the whole person. And certainly when it's come to things like evaluating special requests for leave or course load reduction or an easy one to

address is committee time release, because we put faculty on way too many committees, and when someone has come to me and said, look, I've got these external things going on, I've always tried to vet that in the needs of the institution. I think usually there's a way to work it out where you can look at their needs as a person and also address the institutional needs. And on the rare occasion when there's not an easy solution, we've looked at other professional development opportunities, so could we, would it be conceivable for you to change your position for a brief time in order to take care of your mother that's not doing well? Or could you take a leave of absence for that amount of time? You know, to look at other alternatives so I can work with them within the system to a point, and then after that point try to make sure, along with human resources, that they realize every option that's available to them.

Q: So you try to be a leader who's human?

A: I try, I try.

Q: What a radical thought.

A: Well, I think really a lot of people do try that, but it's hard work, and it's a lot harder, it's much easier to look at, you know, we have like many colleges a ton of policies and procedures. And they are almost overwhelming to a point. It's much easier to lead from the policy and procedure standpoint. It's says you need to be here 15 credit hours a week or 15 to 30 contact hours and just check, check, check, you've done it all. But that makes a lot of people ultimately feel constrained and unhappy. They'll live by most of those rules and they'll follow most of them, but I really do like to leave room for when a faculty member or chair comes to me and says, look, we've got this situation, and here's the college policy. And I can work with them and say, after we've evaluated all the facts, OK, it's true that your particular load assignment for that faculty member for this semester looks a little low by the policy. But you and I know that their accrediting board had changed their curriculum and turned it on its ear. And they're going to be spending an extra 15 hours a week working on that, and so, you know what, I'm going to back you. This person's load looks low on paper, but we're going to approve it. And a lot of people, run into, well, not a lot, I run into other leaders who will never do that because it makes their life more complicated. Because as soon as you approve one of those, you have to realize that there are going to be three that get turned down, because, well, I heard so-and-so got a course reduction ... But I think, ultimately, you spend a little bit more time explaining your actions, but I think more people are satisfied that you're trying to do a good job.

Q: That makes sense. Does leadership in general, and maybe leadership in the community college specifically, fulfill any kind of personal need or motivation for you? I assume it probably does, or you wouldn't be doing this. What's your motivation to be in leadership? Big money? Or what is it?

A: Well, it'll be really interesting to see, yes, big money, when we go to lunch I'll take you in my Cadillac. Uh, no, actually, uh, yeah, this is going to sound really strange. I

think sometimes I got here almost by accident. Uh, my true love, I enjoyed research for a long time. But the, uh, and I published papers and done all that stuff. That got to be almost this game of getting the next grant and getting the next paper and I always really enjoyed teaching. I actually came back to the community college system because I had this hope of doing a lot more teaching.

[balance of answer redacted to preserve confidentiality]

[question/answer redacted to preserve confidentiality]

Q: I understand. Uh, it sounds like, I don't want to put words in your mouth, it sounds like knowing who you are as a person is helpful to a leader. Sort of a philosophical question, I guess.

A: Oh, you're talking about me knowing myself?

Q: Knowing yourself, uh huh. Uh, how does that contribute to leadership for you?

A: Uh, it's, it's really how, you know, outside of the pragmatic things, you know, the tough decisions I have to make, if it's a personnel management issue, you have to weigh all the data there and make sometimes hard decisions. You might have to put somebody on disciplinary probation, or if it's a program cut, the most egregious thing we have in academia, a battle over space ...

Q: Right.

A: That's the worst. You know, I try and look at all sides, I really do try to do that, knowing myself helps, and I'm saying it's an ongoing, that's an ongoing process. I'm, I'll be [age] in April, in a few weeks here I'll be [age]. I don't even think I got 50% of the way there until maybe a couple of years ago. And stepping into some of these leadership roles helped me reframe some of that. Yeah, this really who I am. But as I go through that process, it is very important because I know when I'm making those decisions what I, what I can live with, and what I can do and still go home and sleep really well at night. And I sleep really well. And sometimes, you know, I've talked to other people who, you know, they go to some of these academic disciplinary hearing and you've got a faculty member who's struggling with some sort of issue, and they'll talk about how they were up all weekend. I don't do that. I really don't. And it's not that I'm a person who doesn't care, because I care a lot. I've reached a point in my life where I can make a call and right or wrong, it works out or it doesn't, I don't make that decision until I'm comfortable I've done the best I can do with it. And at that point, I can let it go.

Q: You can sleep.

A: Yeah, there's a great, there's a great Chinese proverb, I think it's Chinese, it could be Japanese, but it's about two, an older gentleman and a younger gentleman, and they're just walking along on a country road and there's a very loud, wealthy person who's held

up at a muddy creek. And they don't want to cross it because they don't want to get their expensive clothes dirty and everything. The older gentleman picks up the person and carries them across the mud and sets them down and gets himself all muddy. And the younger person gets across and a couple of hours later the younger person is still complaining. I can't believe you carried that rich fool across the mud. And he said, I put that person down hours ago. Why are you still carrying them? And that's kind of the way I try to approach these decisions and make them. And so do the best you can at that moment in time and then ...

Q: Sleep well?

A: And then sleep well. Correct.

Q: How do intuition and data intersect in decision making?

A: Hmm. That's a good one. That's a tough one. Uh ...

Q: You've said that about several of my questions. It's a tough job.

A: Yeah, I mean, they're really insightful questions because we do a lot, we do a lot with that, and I happen to be a very data-driven person, and a lot of it is my academic background. And one thing that we've done a lot in academic affairs, not as much as I had hoped, but, every academic affairs meeting, we'll highlight a new data point or something that's come forward. And I try to in a short time, and it's a long work in progress, probably like in many community colleges people are uncomfortable with data. Wait a second, your program went from 20 FTEs to seven. So they start thinking about jobs and careers. But in order to be an effective college we've got to look at data like that. And in the past here, lots of data was collected and analyzed, but people got real fearful of it, because they felt like it was going to be used to make a change that wasn't necessary. What I've tried to do is, let's all look at the data, and let's use it in ways that we can make the college better. And, yes, preserving positions is important, but there's a lot of ways we can, all right, we know over time that program enrollments are going to go up and down. So when we do get to hire a new person, if we have a choice, we have a person that's good in forestry and also has enough graduate hours that they can teach biology, let's hire that person. Because then when one or the other waxes or wanes, we can move the person around. And looking at data from that standpoint. Also, uh, another example this fall is ...

[portion of answer redacted to preserve confidentiality]

And so we try to use data that way. And I think that crosses the barrier between that emotional piece and the data-driven piece, presenting them with hard data that we can use in decisions, but also realizing that we are looking at people, and we're aware that we're looking at people. Uh, program closures are never an easy thing, and I've had to do one entire program closure as a leader here, once as chair, and do a program reduction, going from a two-year to a diploma here, and then closing two certificates. And it's never easy,

it's never easy, because you have to have some hard conversations with faculty. You have to have some hard conversations with your community partners. I mean, that brings in that emotional piece. So how can I as a leader take the hard data, the hard enrollment data, take it to these folks, and say, and they don't have to be happy about it, but they can walk away comfortable that we looked at the limited resources we had, and decided that by closing this program, we're not building [the CAO] a penthouse office, we're going to use those funds for programs that are growing and not only for programs that are growing but where students are getting jobs. Ah, or, able to articulate into a four-year institution. And, you know, when you present that case and you give them data, even if they're unhappy with it, it's really hard to refute over time. And so I guess that's where the two merge. It's part of making a case. We have to make a tough decision here. I've invited all sorts of input. At the end of the day, this one falls on my shoulders. Here's what I'm going with, and here's why. Let me know if I've missed something. Let me know if I need to reevaluate. And, uh, it's not always easy, but it seems to be an effective, uh, way to let people know about important decisions that are made at the college.

Q: Sounds like that's a part of your secret to the age-old question of how you get everyone on board with the difficult decisions that you make.

A: Right, right. And I don't know that they're on board, but get everyone looking at the same ship.

Q: How do you create a sense of teamwork among those you lead? How important do you see that as being, and if it is, how do you create a sense of teamwork?

A: It's very, teamwork is very important. And oddly enough, it's one of those things that shows up forever when we're doing program reviews and when employers contact us. People need to be able to do group work, play nice with each other, come up with collaborative solutions, all that good stuff. And, uh, I promote it a lot, uh. We do a lot of group meetings when more than one functional unit at the college is involved. Some leaders are pretty effective at, you know, you have a decision that involves five different administrative units, calling one person and explaining the situation, calling in the next, explaining the situation. My memory's not that good, so I'd rather bring them all in at once. And I also feel that by bringing people in, uh, most of the people I work for are very mature, very responsible people. But if there are any turf wars, if there is any unspoken history, if we meet as a group, this is your chance for it to come out. And most of the time, if it's based on invalid assumptions, these programs have always battled each other, or I don't like that person, they don't surface in a group meeting because nobody wants to be seen as unhappy. Where if you meet with people individually, you hear eight different sides to the story. So I think that's the best thing I do to promote teamwork, to give those folks an opportunity to succeed or fail as a team. Here's your chance; you guys fix this. And then if they don't fix it, you start to examine why the team didn't come together and didn't work out, you know. Maybe I failed, in that I didn't give them the appropriate tools or leeway or whatever they needed. Maybe it failed because there's someone in that group that isn't a team player, and we need to work with them on professional development or something.

Q: Do you do anything social, or leadership retreats, or anything like that to help with the sense of teamwork?

A: Well, yeah, I've only been here [number] months, but we did this year at our academic strategic planning session, we actually went off campus. We did it on a Friday afternoon, made sure no one had to be anywhere. We set it up to where afterwards we were near a restaurant. People could go and hang out together. Yeah, I think that helps a lot. I also, um, am willing to make a fool of myself in front of my faculty. One of my favorite things to do is we have a school mascot. And when the student reps can't do that, I love that. So it's [name].

[question/answer redacted to preserve confidentiality]

Q: I imagine so.

A: Just, just showing them that I am human. And that I am willing to be human in their presence and, uh, and even in a professional sense, I think one of the best things you can do is just own up to your mistakes. And I do that a couple of times a week—send out an email: Hey, guys, I missed this one. Take a look at it. We need to fix this.

Q: Are you involved with anyone specifically on campus in what might be called a mentorship relationship?

A: Yeah, I mean, I would say I see [our president] as a mentor. Uh, I also see [name] who's our, what's her official title, she's our [title], she's also a direct report of the president, so we're colleagues.

Q: OK.

A: I would probably say those two on campus more than any others I look to for mentoring.

Q: And then is there anyone that you provide mentorship for, over and above your ...

A: Professional responsibilities?

Q: Yes.

[answer redacted to preserve confidentiality]

Q: Maybe a little of both.

A: Yeah, could be a little of both.

Q: Um, these are difficult budget days in the community college—understatement of the year. What would you say about the way you, any philosophies or guidelines, about the way you manage resources—human, financial, personal resources?

A: Uh, well, one thing we've done, we've actually, I'm quite proud of this, because it required buy-in from my chairs and their faculty. Last year, we had a really tough, basically we chairs were approached in the middle of the year, I was a chair then, and we've got to come up with 10%. And 10% was at the point where programs were involved. You know, we just couldn't continue to cut travel and supplies and still be able to operate. So what, when I came in this summer, I said, look, you guys know I'm kind of a data person. We can do better. And we can save money for other things if we're more efficient at what we're doing. I took a real quick analysis of the course schedule. For years, we had to become more efficient in [department] because the programs grew like crazy. And we had to look at alternative ways to schedule things. Uh, we, for instance, decided that lab size was critical and we didn't want to get it over 12 or 14. But in order to do that, without being able to grow faculty positions, we actually had to go to more of a university model for lectures. We have a [curriculum] class that has a hundred students for the lecture. So we will run 10 labs that are six-hour labs where they learn to identify the trees, no more than 14 in any one lab, and usually more like 12. So not every department's like that, but when I started serving as interim, I said, a couple of areas we need to look at. One is, if we've got, I appreciate people wanting to grow online programs to match seated programs, but we've got to take a hard look if we've got 27 in the seated class and two in the online, we need to make a call. Sounds like the online program there is barely making it. We're not going to write overload contracts for someone to have 2 or 3 students. If you guys will work with me on doing that, it's going to free up a lot of money. I also looked at our past model was, anytime we had, say our online cap was 20, and all of a sudden it's got 20 plus 5 on a waitlist. We would write a whole another contract for the second one. This is growing, let's write another contract. What I said was, we know in a month, if you've got 25 in there now, you going to be lucky to have 16. 'Cause we service a lot of folks online, it's a great way to deliver course material, but it has a high rate of withdrawal. People get in there and don't realize how challenging it can be. And so I said, you know, will you as faculty allow me, trust me, that let's watch this for a month. And let's say you come back in a month and you've still got 25. So whatever you're doing there is working. You haven't lost a student. I'll write you an extra 25% contract for that additional work. And we did, and it vastly eliminated a need for additional courses. I think last semester I wrote \$6,000 in sort of these supplements. I went back and using the old model it would have cost close to \$30,000. And people were happy with it. And there were some other less popular proposals I made. One was I identified a couple of our, of my direct reports, that were essentially full-time teachers. So, our policy on this campus is our chairs teach one class each semester and the rest of their time is for growing programs, hopefully they're doing some grant writing, hopefully they're working with faculty, they're evaluating faculty. And I had a couple that semester in and semester out were writing 4 to 5 adjuncts contracts for themselves. And they were doing the teaching, and they were doing a good job teaching. In a couple of cases, I think they were people who really loved teaching more than being chairs. But I said, OK, folks, I really need you in these leadership roles.

You need to be leaders. So we got a new policy, took it to Administrative Council, and for now on you will be held, unless there's an emergency, you have a faculty member leave unexpectedly, you will do the equivalent of one per semester. And that, again, you would think, wow, you'll need a lot more money in adjuncts, and we didn't need a lot more money in adjuncts. When that opportunity disappeared, apparently the need did also.

Q: Amazing!

A: Yeah. So, uh, what's allowed us to do, we're not sure yet. We're still looking as of this moment, but you're probably aware this year, for the first time ever, if you have leftover state funds, you can move them into a one-time renovation project. We actually, in this tight budget year, have enough money that we may be able to do a pretty major renovation on instructional space that we wouldn't have had if we had kept operating like we always had. Uh, so that's sort of been my recommendation, is inviting them to work with me, but they've had to trust me that on the other end, I was going to work on things that would benefit instruction. The old faculty fear is, oh yeah, we're going to save money, and suddenly there's going to be eight new administrators. And I had to, had to get them, uh, through the way I operate, to believe in me enough to follow through on that. And they made it very easy on me when I suggested these ideas, other than the ones of leaders only teaching one class, uh, people were really willing to work with me on those.

Q: Well, we've talked about a lot of specifics, big picture things, small things. Uh, what have I missed about your leadership role and you as a leader? What have I missed? What else would you like to add?

A: Um. You know, I think, I am not a person who has studied leadership. But I think one, at this campus and others I've been at, both campuses I've worked at and ones where I've maybe collaborated with folks at that campus, it seems like one of the biggest mistakes I see and what I try, when they ask me for advice, what I try to tell them ... this goes way back to when I was growing up. My dad used to tell me all the time, uh, you can't stop doing your job for fear that you're going to lose it. You, basically that's when you should step down. And due to budgets and all that sort of stuff, uh, at four-year institutions and at community colleges and even at high schools, I've seen people do that. I've seen people go against their professional convictions, uh, for self-preservation. And I don't knock 'em for that, cause you got a family, you got to feed kids, mortgage to pay, all that. But I have, I really have tried to adhere to that. Uh, I've fought a few battles I probably shouldn't have, but, again, I think that goes back to me being able to sleep really, really well at night. I can live with that decision. One day it may make me look really foolish, but so far it has served me well even when I fought some of those battles that I've lost, I feel like I've been lucky enough to have leaders at that moment in time that realized I was putting it all on the table. And maybe they had to push me back down and say no, no, no, no, but they respected the fact that I was willing to go toe to toe on it. And that's the hardest thing to do these days because we've got budget challenges, economy challenges. You talk about treating the whole person. People have got

members of their family they're worried about. I've run into more than one faculty member here who are sending money to family members that have lost jobs. Uh, you know, not a lot, but just sort of helping out. And those are things that, for the most part, 7 or 8 years ago didn't really exist that we're seeing kind of for the first time here. I'm having, again, these, it's a very, very, I try to make them aware that I understand the situation they're in. And I'm asking people to be very careful about writing overload contracts and at the same time our faculty haven't had a raise in 5 years. So, that, that's the call there. Yeah, maybe it only has 3 or 4, but you know, this helps make up for the increase in insurance costs. There's sort of those realities there. So I think, even though when I ask them to do things, I try to frame it and let them know that I do understand what you're dealing with and I do understand where you're coming from. You know, one of the first things we looked at was when the budget came out this year, and we realized we might have some extra money, you know, I didn't care, could we give a one-time bonus? Could we give them 200 bucks? Sure enough, in the language, you know, the financial officer looks at, oh yeah, cannot give bonuses. So at that point it becomes, OK, we can't give them anything like that, can we be careful with money and then increase their instructional space? Make some space where they're teaching nicer? And that's kind of where we went with that. Always letting them know I guess that we're thinking about those kinds of issues helps.

Q: Even when you can't do a whole lot.

A: Even when you can't do a whole lot, even when the state prevents. You know, I'm all for these one-time bonuses because I feel like when the state will allow it, they're not risking anything.

Q: Right.

A: They're not increasing their year-end what they have to come up with for the next year. Uh, but they kind of didn't allow that this year.

Q: Good when it can happen.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Well, if you don't have anything else to add ...

A: I think we're good.

Q: I think that's it.

A: OK, good.

Q: Thanks for your help. I appreciate it.

Appendix P

Sample Direct Report Interview

Note: Portions redacted to preserve confidentiality.

Q: Well, [name], thanks for joining me. I appreciate it. Just a couple of demographic things as we start, if you would. Uh, first of all, your title?

A: Director of [department].

Q: Now, you've got a short one. A lot of people around here have long titles.

A: I know, I'm lucky.

[question/answer redacted to preserve confidentiality]

Q: OK.

A: And I've been in this position for about [number] months, [number] months maybe.

Q: OK. What did you do before this position?

A: [Department] instructor. [Department].

Q: OK. Well, I, we're talking about [your CAO] today. Isn't it fun sitting around talking about people? And with her permission, too. If you would, just tell me anything about [your CAO]'s leadership style you'd like to, especially the way she relates to the people who report to her.

A: Well, you know, I've not had a lot of time to observe a lot because I've only been in this position [time]. And, uh, I don't know that there's a whole lot I can say.

Q: Maybe just your impressions of her as a leader. Think of it that way.

A: Well, she's a good leader.

Q: OK. What makes her a good leader?

A: Uh, well, she's very calm. She's very patient. She, uh, deals with issues and not personally. I mean, uh, I don't know, some leaders can handle things on a very personal basis—you like me, or you don't like me. But she handles the situation and it's not a I like you or I don't like you. You know, she never, you never feel like she's putting things in those kinds of terms. You know, she handles the issues. Which is not to say that she's impersonal, because she's not. She's friendly and she smiles—all those things

that you'd expect a good leader to do. Uh, so she's not impersonal. She takes a personal interest, but she doesn't handle things ... do you understand what I'm trying to say?

Q: Yes, I think so.

A: She doesn't take things personally. Nor put things out to us personally.

Q: OK.

A: Uh, I mean, in that respect, it's easy to work for her. She, uh, provides guidance when it's needed, but she leaves you alone if she thinks you're doing OK. So she does not micromanage. Uh, but she does like to have her hand in things, where her hand needs to be, and things. I've never felt like she was breathing down my neck, or, you know, I've kind of felt like, and I know that the woman in my position before me, she asked me, you know, how things were going, you know, and I said, well, I guess OK. I've not really heard from Kim in some time. And she said, then she feels like you're doing OK. If she's not, you know, checking up on you, then she's got confidence that you're doing what you're supposed to be doing.

Q: So you think if you were straying out in left field somewhere, she'd probably be on your doorstep.

A: Yeah. She really does know what's going on. She does keep, and I don't know how she does it, but she does, I mean, when things come up, she seems to know about it. And so, I mean, she really does know what's going on. She's not, uh, isolated in her administrative office. She really does know what's going on.

Q: If you could choose two or three or four adjectives to describe her as a leader, you mentioned calm the very first thing, what other adjectives would you use?

A: Organized, fair, uh, logical, uh, I guess that's the best ones.

Q: That works. So fair in her treatment of people?

A: Yes, the people that report to her. So far as I can see, you know. She's very fair across the board.

Q: And, uh, logical in decision making?

A: Yes. And she's, she, uh, is good to inform us about things, you know, about how she makes decisions, as much as she can. You know, it's not a mystery.

Q: One of my questions, one of my specific questions is something like, how does she, uh, let me just look at it. How does she motivate others to accept the decisions that she has made? It sounds like information might be one way?

I think that's the biggest way because, uh, she lets us know why she made the decision. I mean, there's a lot of details she can't go into. But I think it's, a general rapport, I'm not sure rapport is the right way, but you kind of learn to trust the person who's over you based on how fair they seem to be in their decision and the reasons that they use. So it's not something that develops over one decision. It develops over a series of decisions that are made, where you can kind of see that things are fair and logical and make sense. So I think you can't really see that with just one decision. It's something that kind of develops over time. But, you know, one decision, well, that favors someone else, but over the process of time, you see how things are logically fair among the folks involved.

Q: Right.

A: Does that make sense?

Q: Makes sense. Makes perfect sense. Tell me something about how you see [your CAO] balancing the need to hear everyone versus the need to make timely decisions and get on with things. Sometimes the two are in opposition to each other.

A: They are, and I think, not just [her], but that's the tone of our whole administration that they do try to listen to what others think. They try to get opinions from, and ideas, from the people who are affected, all the stakeholders and whatever the particular decision is. But they don't belabor it either. You've got to make the decision based on whatever information you have. And so, uh, it's not something you can drag out. I'm sure that there are times when, you have to make a decision so quickly, you don't have much time to gather a lot of information. But I think because [the CAO] and the president, as well, they keep, they try to keep abreast of what's going on, and what general, they get to know us. I mean, they know the people.

Q: Right.

A: And so I think that helps them make decisions even without getting, you know, belaboring, you know, a ton of information. That when decisions have to be made quickly, I think, for the most part, they make pretty good decisions, because they know the people.

Q: That's good. How long has your president been here?

A: Well, [the president's] been here probably about as long as I have, but not as president. She started as an adjunct instructor.

Q: So she came up through the ranks here?

Yes, she did. And [the CAO], I believe, we had as an adjunct instructor, as well. Uh, [name]'s been president longer than [the CAO]'s been vice president, but I can't remember just how long—maybe a year or two before [the CAO] became vice president, [name] was president.

Q: Uh, do you see that, uh, have you witnessed examples of [the CAO], having a dedication of understanding a person in a whole-person kind of way, as opposed to just a 9 to 5 kind of way?

[answer redacted to preserve confidentiality]

Q: Does she do anything specifically to encourage the family or team-oriented feeling at [Community College X]?

A: Gosh, everything that she, I mean, our whole college is based on a team mentality. Uh, so, I mean, everything is kind of done that way.

Q: Would you say it's more imbedded in sort of the ...

A: It's pretty imbedded.

Q: ... imbedded in the college rather than ...

A: It's imbedded in the culture.

Q: Culture—that's the word I was looking for.

A: It's imbedded in our culture.

Q: More so than, we're going to have a certain picnic to rub elbows with each other? It's more imbedded than that?

A: It really is imbedded. And, and, you know, there's a plus side and a down side to that. Because that team mentality is so embedded, we're constantly going to meetings. You know, you've got [committee], I forget what [committee acronym] stands for, but it has to do with the advising process and registration and all that stuff. And you've got what used to be called the VP Council but now it's got a nice long, new name. And you've got the academic deans who, who are meeting. And then you've got College Council, which, you know, is all the leadership team, you know, from the whole campus and [secondary] campus as well. So you're constantly going to meetings, but we're all working together as a team, and that encourages interaction between the different departments so that we're not all silos. And that mentality started years ago, where they tried it, tried to, can we think of verbiage to where we're not called divisions because that's divisive. So what word can we use that's not division. So, you know, I think, for a time we kind of avoided calling it anything. Area, maybe. I think it's called, well, more area now. I think area's used more, although I hear people use department sometimes. But, uh, it was to try to, we've done things, and not just [the CAO], and maybe this is completely off topic, but in a way, it's not, because this is the culture that she was a part of as a faculty member, and then, wanted to carry on, I think, as an administrator. But, you know, we had the [college] Retreat where the whole college went and spent three

days at [retreat center]. And we were grouped together, and we were in groups to where we had administrators and faculty and maintenance and secretaries and, you know, leave your hat at the door kind of thing. Uh, and that started kind of with the Pew roundtable, with the leave your hat at the door kind of thing, where they came and did some stuff. But anyway, I think that leads to that team mentality that started years ago, and that I think [the CAO] and [president] very much believe in, and they have tried to foster and continue that. Of course, we've got new people that weren't there.

[question/answer redacted to preserve confidentiality]

Q: Right.

A: And the structure, so there have been some changes. And it's kind of undergoing an assessment. They're kind of looking at that to see where we are and where we need to go from here as far as that part of it.

Q: Sounds like a cool place to work.

A: It is. It is.

Q: I like where I work, but it sounds like a cool place to work.

A: You know, you're not afraid to walk into [the CAO]'s office, if you've got a ... I'm not afraid to call her. I'm not afraid that she's going to, if I call her and tell her that I've got a problem, that she's going to fuss at me.

Q: Right.

A: Uh, you know ...

Q: She'll help you with it rather than get after you because it's present?

A: Right, right. You know, and that's what I mean about her patience and her calmness. When there are real issues, there are sometimes real issues, she maintains her composure, which helps those under her maintain their composure. I think that's important in a leader because you need to be the calming influence on those underneath you. And, uh, I think she does, I've never seen her get really flustered. Now, this is not to say that she hasn't but I've never seen it. And I know there have been things that have happened that any normal person would have been flustered. So, uh, what she did behind the door, I don't know, but I didn't see it.

Q: That will never be known.

A: I didn't see it.

Q: What would you say about the way [the CAO] balances the big picture with the day to day minutia?

A: That's something I don't see so much.

Q: OK.

A: I don't see, I know that she, I think she does it because I don't think things would run so smoothly if she didn't.

Q: So do you see her primarily in the big picture role, or primarily in the day to day ... maybe it's leadership versus management is what I'm really talking about.

A: Uh, I don't know.

Q: OK.

A: I'm not really clear what you're asking. Maybe you can rephrase.

Q: OK. Let me try again. Uh, with a position like [the CAO]'s, somebody's got to be watching over the little details, making sure there's enough bodies for registration and students don't have to wait too long in Student Services and that kind of thing. So, certainly keeping her figure on the pulse of those day to day things is important. But there's also big picture things like working with the Board of Trustees and setting vision for the future and sometimes it seems like those two pull you in opposite directions because they're very different functions. How do you see [her] balancing those two?

A: Uh, she does it. I think she does a very good job because she's able to, uh, from what I can see, because my perspective is limited. I do not see her interaction with the board. I just see what comes out of the board minutes. So things are going smoothly, so I guess she's doing a good job.

Q: That makes sense.

A: And we have recently revised, uh, what it last year or year before last? It all runs together. We looked at our mission statement again, and, you know, had discussions about that. So I know that she's involved in the direction that our college needs to go. And I, uh, judging from what she says at meetings, I know that she's very involved in looking at our community, as with [the president], in looking at our community and how we can better meet the needs of our community, the changes that are taking place, trying to envision the future so that we are prepared for changes that are coming up. So, uh, I really feel like she keeps her pulse on that. Now, for managing what comes underneath her, I think, uh, well, you know, every college has got people who don't do their job well. But I think uh, we've got really good people working at our college, and I don't think [the CAO] has to micromanage a lot of stuff. And I think that frees her up, although

there are probably times she does have to. Because you have people who are not doing what they're supposed to from time to time.

[question/answer redacted to preserve confidentiality]

Q: I see some of those people on my list, so I'll talk to them specifically about the mentoring and the training aspect.

A: And I'll tell you, there's not been a lot of training for leadership positions and, uh, I know, uh, what they're doing this year, they're actually doing a leadership training this year, to try to catch up on people who have been put in leadership positions who didn't necessarily have the training. So we've just kind of doing the best we can.

Q: Figuring it out as you go?

A: Yeah, yeah, you basically do. You figure it out as you go because, you know, with [the CAO] and the ones before her, there's no a lot of time for a lot of training. You just kind of handle issues as they come up.

Q: So somebody resigns, you need to fill the spot, and it's filled. And then you figure out what you're doing?

A: Right.

Q: Sounds like most every college I know.

A: Yeah.

Q: Does it seem to you that intuition plays a part in [the CAO]'s decision making. Or data? Or what's the intersection of the two?

A: Uh, well, she's bound to have some intuition. I do know that she likes to have data. I mean, she's a business person. That's her background, is in business. We were talking yesterday. I had given her a document. She said, it's got tables, I like tables. I said, yes, I do, too.

Q: That's probably a great example right there. So does she ever bring charts and graphs to meetings, showing enrollment trends and that kind of thing?

A: I love it. Yeah, PowerPoint, she shows us PointPoints. I love it.

Q: Uh, in these difficult budget times, what would you have to say about the way she manages resources? Not just financial, but human and personal resources?

A: Well, our administration has always tried to preserve full time jobs. I mean, even over the years, in tight budget years, I can think of only once where we actually, I think

we let two people go one time, and one of them there I think they were trying to get rid of anyway, so it was a good opportunity, that was, you know, not doing their job very well.

[question/answer redacted to preserve confidentiality]

Q: Sounds like they make good decisions to be able to do that.

A: Yeah, I think they do.

Q: This is my strangest question. What do you think makes [the CAO] tick? I mean, what's her personal motivation the way you see it?

A: I don't know, [the CAO] doesn't let you, she plays her cards close to the vest.

Q: OK.

A: I don't think she lets a lot of her personality shine through. And maybe I'll see more of that as I get to know her better. Um, but, uh, I think she likes what she does. I think that she cares about our institution and I think she cares about our students. I think the decisions she makes are, I think she always wants to do what's in the best interests of our students.

Q: OK.

A: And, uh, of course, personnel, what's in the best interests of the personnel, but the students have to come first. Uh, and I think that that's what she wants to do. That's the side of her that I see. There are probably other motivations and driving influences as well, but that's the side that affects me, so that's the side that I see.

Q: Very good. That's why I talk to more than one person. They may see other things, particularly ones that have been working with her maybe for a longer period of time.

A: And in other capacities, too.

Q: Well, uh, that's sort of it. I guess the last thing is, what have I missed? Is there anything you'd like to say about her leadership style that I haven't touched on?

A: If I had known what you were going to ask me about, I wish you'd have told me what you were going to ask me about, because actually I'd have had more time to think about it. And I'll probably think of a bunch of things that I should have said.

Q: That's OK.

A: I'm a, you know, we talk about students' learning styles and stuff, I'm a reflective, not an impulsive. I'm the one who doesn't ask a, answer a question immediately. I think about it a while, so I'm never the one who gives the answer, because there's other people,

you know, who shoot the hand up as soon as, and I'm thinking of me as a student, shoot the hand up as soon as the question's asked.

Q: That was me.

A: Was it? I'm the one who sits and thinks, and only after I've thought about it do I give an answer. So I'm sure I'll think of a little of things. Yeah, I should have said that.

Q: Well, let me.

A: Yeah, I forgot about that.

Q: There's no right and wrong answers to any of this.

A: Yeah, I'm sure.

Q: But I ... be thinking ... if there is something else that you think of, when I, I'll give you my email address. And as a matter of fact, when I email you this transcript to you, if there's anything that you don't mind putting in print, I'd be glad to receive it like that.

A: OK. The only thing I would say is that overall I think [the CAO] is a good administrator. Uh, I know that there are some faculty that feel like administration doesn't listen to them. And not just [the CAO], but when I say administration, I'm talking about those who work in this office, not other deans.

[question/answer redacted to preserve confidentiality]

Q: Well, this has been very helpful. If you think of anything else, email is good, or a phone call either one. That's not a problem. Thanks for joining me.

A: You're welcome.