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By

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An Exploration of Organizational Behavior that Affects California Community Colleges' Ability to Remove Sanctions and Have Accreditation Reaffirmed

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An Exploration of Organizational Behavior that Affects California Community

Colleges' Ability to Remove Sanctions and Have Accreditation Reaffirmed

by

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Treatise

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Dedication

This treatise is dedicated to all community colleges that work to exhaustion to meet accountability requirements and to provide evidence that they are indeed high-quality institutions of higher education. This treatise is also dedicated to those brave, dedicated volunteers who serve on evaluation teams, who spend long hours reading reports and writing reports, and who do it for the love of community colleges and community college students, with faith that the peer review process is the most effective method for assuring quality in higher education.

Acknowledgements

This has been a long journey into learning. I could not have done it without the continuous support and undying encouragement from my wife Teri. She tolerated my whining and complaining and gave me strength to pursue despite the many frustrations and confusions. She boosted my morale and commiserated with me. I also extend special appreciation to my son Zachary and my daughter Emma. As they pursued their college interests, I was inspired to continue my doctoral journey to its conclusion.

Family—it's the most important.

In addition to my family, I extend my gratitude to my committee members for hanging in there with me and providing words of encouragement. Additionally, I must recognize the extra support I have received from Dr. Rob Frost for lending me so many books (I promise to return them all) and for supporting my educational and professional pursuits in more ways than I can count; from Dr. Norma Cantú for the feedback she gave me during the writing process; and many thanks to the College of the Siskiyous Board of Trustees for providing me the sabbatical opportunity. I also want to acknowledge and extend special thanks to Dr. Dnika Travis, for introducing me to positive psychology and appreciative inquiry as a research method. As a research method and as an evaluation tool for organizational planning and change, appreciative inquiry aligned well with my generally optimistic outlook on life.

And then there are all my many friends and mentors from the CCLP. Without them, none of this would be possible.

Thank you all.

An Exploration of Organizational Behavior that Affects California Community

Colleges' Ability to Remove Sanctions and Have Accreditation Reaffirmed

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Accreditation is a federally recognized review process of quality assurance in higher education and is intended to engage institutions in continuous efforts to improve quality. If a college does not receive a positive evaluation as a result of an accreditation review, its regional accrediting agency may impose a sanction until that time when the college can fix deficiencies identified during the evaluation process. In California, the number of public community colleges having a sanction imposed by the western region's Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) has increased since the turn of the century, rising from one college on sanction in 2003 to as many as 27 colleges on sanction in 2012. From 2008 through 2013, 70 of California's 112 community colleges had experienced a sanction. Of those, 49 made recommended improvements and had their accreditation reaffirmed within two years. However, some colleges take longer to make improvements and to have the sanction lifted. Focusing on colleges that successfully removed a sanction, this study employed a qualitative research approach using multiple methods: a survey questionnaire and a multiple case study of

two colleges. Accreditation Liaison Officers from eight colleges responded to the survey.

Two colleges participated in the multiple case study in which administrators, managers,

faculty, and classified staff were interviewed. Survey and interview participants were asked

what they believed were the organizational behaviors and characteristics that contributed to

their successful removal of the sanction. Findings indicate that successful colleges did not

delay responding to the sanction; they organized human resources into work groups to

accomplish tasks; they mapped out plans and created timelines for completion; they increased

communication efforts across campus; they involved many persons from their multiple

constituent groups; and they documented all work and accomplishments. Findings also

indicate that leaders at successful colleges are effective communicators and organizers; value

the accreditation process; exhibit trust, respect, and openness, and work collaboratively and

collegially. The findings in this study may provide helpful information to sanctioned

colleges in the future.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Background and Purpose of the Study

Introduction and Background

Nobody likes going to the dentist. Just thinking about a trip to the dentist

conjures mental images that employ several of the five senses: bright light glaring in

one's eyes, the smoky stench of drilled tooth enamel, the pain of a Novocain needle

slowly inserted into the gum (several times), the gritty scrape of sharp metal tools across

a tooth's surface. The senses of touch and hearing probably provide the most vivid

images. The high pitched squeal of the drill inspires goose bumps and cold sweat on the

skin of even the bravest adult's inner child. Still, the discomfort and inconvenience of a

visit to the dentist, even for a routine cleaning, are far better than the alternative. No one

wants to lose his or her teeth because of tooth decay or gum disease.

Similarly, no college likes accreditation. Writing the institutional self-evaluation

report, also known as the self study, is a daunting task filled with inconvenience and

discomfort as administrators, managers, and employees assume duties in addition to their

usual responsibilities. It takes at least a year of preparation and writing to produce a self

study. Most schools begin the self study process two years ahead of the accreditation

visit. Then with squeamish grimaces and white knuckles, the college experiences the

stress of having an evaluation team from the accrediting agency invade its system and

poke around, scraping through documents to see what's under the surface, peering into

data, and drilling the employees and students for more information. Of course, the

visiting team may not be aware that its efforts are perceived as poking, scraping, and

drilling; yet there sits the college, open and vulnerable, trusting the expertise of the

evaluation team—or perhaps not trusting, as the case may be. Then after the visit, the college waits for the diagnosis, which arrives several months later in the form of the completed evaluation report and the action letter from the accrediting commission, including recommendations for improvement and timeframes in which the recommendations must be addressed. Hopefully upon reading the report, the college jumps into action to reverse whatever decay or deficiency was found by the visiting evaluation team.

Accreditation is the manner in which colleges and universities provide quality assurance of their programs, services, and operations. Thus it is an important process and an important status for institutions (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2010). As a process, accreditation requires institutions to enter into self-analysis and reflection on the quality of educational programs and services and on the quality of resources and institutional operations that support instruction and all student support services. As a process, accreditation asks institutions to provide quality assurance and to strive continuously toward quality improvement (Eaton, 2008). This process utilizes both internal and external reviews that are intended to assure quality to stakeholders: to students who will spend a small fortune to gain an education; to communities, alumni, and donors who support institutions; to other institutions that accept transfer credit and that trust that a transferring student is well-prepared to continue his or her studies; to state and federal government, which provide financial aid; to taxpayers who don't want to see their tax dollars evaporate into the thin air of some diploma mill; and to employers who trust that a graduate is well-prepared to enter the workforce.

As status, accreditation signals to communities and to potential students that the institution does indeed provide quality higher education. In California, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), the two-year college arm of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), echoes similar ideas in its Policy on the Benefits of Accreditation:

> Accreditation is the primary means by which colleges and universities in the United States assure and improve quality. Both accrediting bodies and the institutions they accredit must use the highest standards of professionalism to ensure that accreditation provides value to the institutions themselves, the students, the public, the government, and other institutions of higher education. (Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges, 2013a, p. 31)

Thus, an institution's accreditation status has high-stakes consequences to students who attend and who graduate (Oguntoyinbo, 2010)—transferability, employability, salary, reputation.

Accreditation provides a complex watchdog service through professional peer review. Quality institutions assess the quality of other institutions. Experts in the academy assess the quality of other experts in other academies. Assessment is "the means [for higher education] to examine its educational intention on its own terms" (Maki, 2004, cited in Driscoll & Cordero de Noriega, 2006, p. 3). A description provided by the Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) implies that this peer review system should remain the system of choice: "higher education institutions have *primary responsibility* for academic quality: they are the leaders and the *primary sources* of authority in academic matters [emphasis added]" (Eaton, 2008, p. 5).

Accreditation is organized and conducted by non-government agencies or organizations. According to Eaton (2009), president of the Council for Higher Equation Accreditation, accreditation is a decentralized process conducted by over 80 non-government agencies that are as diverse as the institutions they accredit. These agencies can be classified into several types: six regional accrediting agencies, which serve public and private colleges and universities according to geographical regions in which the institutions are located; national faith-related agencies, which accredit seminaries and doctrinally based institutions; national career-related agencies, which accredit career and technical schools, some that focus on specific careers such as nursing; and special programmatic accrediting agencies, which accredit particular programs within larger schools, such as engineering and teacher-training programs (Eaton, 2009).

This study focuses on community colleges that are accredited by one of the six United States regional accrediting agencies—the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). More specifically, this study looks at California public institutions accredited by the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC), which is the branch of WASC that accredits two-year institutions. Chapter 1 presents a description of the problem and its context, the purpose of this study, the research questions that the study will seek to answer, a brief overview of the methodology, definitions of important terminology, delimitations and limitations of the study, assumptions, and the significance of the study.

Statement of the Problem

Accreditation is a continuous process of quality review. After an institution has achieved its initial accreditation, it is expected to conduct periodic reviews for the purpose of reaffirmation of accreditation. The time between periodic reviews varies from agency to agency. For example, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) conducts its periodic reviews once every ten years (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, 2011), whereas the ACCJC conducts reviews for reaffirmation once every six years (ACCJC, 2013b). In the western region, if a college has an unsuccessful visit and the ACCJC finds that a college is deficient in meeting eligibility requirements or standards of accreditation, then the ACCJC imposes a sanction (ACCJC, 2013b). The college must respond, making institutional improvements in order to have the sanction removed.

In California, many community colleges have been sanctioned after the Commission has reviewed all documents pertaining to an accreditation visit. Since January 2008, or during the most recent six-year accreditation cycle, 70 of California's 112 public community colleges have received some form of sanction and have remained on warning or probation for at least one year. The numbers have had chancellors, presidents, and faculty on edge as these results create a negative public image for community colleges. In 2009 when the sanctions had risen to 24 colleges (see Figure 1), the CEO organization of the California community colleges met with Barbara Beno, Executive Director of the ACCJC, to discuss the reasons for all the sanctions. The leaders of California's community college faculty union also met with Beno. Beno's

Figure 1: California Community Colleges on Sanction, 2004-2013
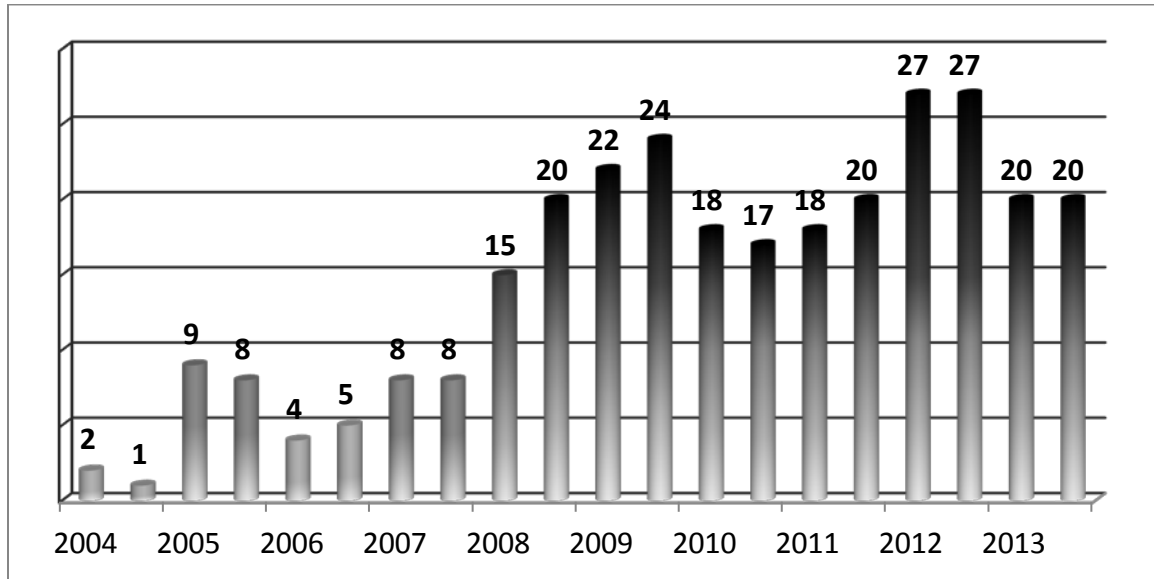
Source: Appendix A and *ACCJC News* (ACCJC, n.d.)

responses to these groups were very clear; she provided a succinct list of the types of

deficiencies that led to the sanctions (2009b, Beno to CEOs, March 20, 2009). Not

satisfied with Beno's explanations, Chancellor Jack Scott, head of the California

community college system, put together a task force headed by the research director for

the State system office and comprising representatives from all the constituent groups

across California: CEOs, CIOs, faculty union, faculty senate, and classified employees

union (2009, Scott to CEOs, July 23, 2009). Ironically, two years earlier E. Jan Kehoe,

who was chairperson of the 19-member Accrediting Commission at that time, had

warned all the colleges that the Commission was under pressure from the Department of

Education to evaluate colleges more stringently and that "if an institution is out of

compliance with *any* standard, the commission *must* initiate adverse action [emphases

added]" (2007, Kehoe to Presidents, April 26, 2007).

California community college leaders have been stunned by the increased number of sanctions over the past several years. Unfortunately, California's colleges had developed bad habits of not responding to recommendations—they used to receive the same recommendations report after report, through two, sometimes three accreditation cycles (Fulks, 2008; Kawaguchi, 2009). Presidents or administrators might at any time have confessed that their colleges needed improvement, but very few have thought the problems at their colleges have been so far deficient that they deserved sanction. For the most part they believed that their colleges have been achieving their missions, but they generally did not have the data to support that claim. This is not a recent problem. Roueche, Johnson, Roueche, and associates (1997) discovered this same weakness over a decade ago: "The data show clearly that most colleges are not collecting the kinds of information that would tell them whether they are accomplishing their missions" (p. 42). Accrediting agencies, including the ACCJC, now train their evaluation teams to look for data, to make sure the college is providing the evidence that it is meeting its goals and achieving its mission (ACCJC, 2013d, pp. 9-10). If the college cannot demonstrate in its data and in its analysis of the data that it is achieving its mission, then the evaluation team is obligated to write a recommendation for the college to fix the deficiency quickly.

From Spring 2008 through Fall 2013, a full six-year cycle, 70 of the 112 California community colleges, or 62.5% (Appendix A), have been sanctioned by ACCJC for not meeting the standards of accreditation, for not meeting eligibility requirements, or for not making sufficient progress in addressing recommendations from the previous accreditation cycle. ACCJC (n.d.) reports its accreditation decisions in its

semiannual newsletter. The year with the highest number of colleges on sanction was 2012. In June of that year, 27 of California's 112 community colleges, or nearly one-fourth, were on warning (14 colleges), probation (10 colleges), or show cause (3 colleges), either placed on sanction at the June convening of the Commission or remaining on sanction from the prior semester (ACCJC, 2012a). One year later, the number decreased to 20, or 18% of the community colleges, with 12 on warning, 6 on probation, and 2 ordered to show cause (ACCJC, 2013a). Most of the sanctioned colleges have been able to have their accreditation reaffirmed within one or two years, but of those 70 colleges, 15 of them, or 13.4% of the 112 colleges in the California system, have languished under sanctions for longer than two years.

This two-year marker is important because of the "two-year rule" (Fulks, 2008), the common expression in California community colleges for a procedural constraint established by the United States Education Department and supported by policy of regional accrediting bodies (ACCJC, 2013b). According to the rule, the time that post-secondary institutions use to fix deficiencies found during the accreditation evaluation process should take no longer than the time required for a student to obtain a degree (Pond, 2011). Thus, if an accreditation evaluation team finds deficiencies at a bachelor's degree-granting institution and places that institution on sanction, that college or university has four years to fix the recommended areas of deficiency, the expected time a college-ready student takes to finish a degree. At community colleges, the time to complete a degree program is generally two years; therefore, community colleges have two years to fix problems—and the rule became known as the "two-year rule." Despite

the two-year rule, 11 of California's community colleges have remained on some form of sanction longer than two years. The colleges experiencing the most difficulty commonly slip from the mildest sanction at first to more serious or the most serious sanctions upon follow-up visits by evaluation teams, yet other colleges find themselves suddenly ordered to show cause.

Sixty percent of the community colleges in California! The effect of all these sanctions is a loss of the colleges' trust in the accreditation system. Moreover, the other effect is the loss of the public confidence in not only the sanctioned colleges but also the whole California Community College System. It is therefore in every college's best interest if colleges that are sanctioned move quickly to make recommended improvements in order to have the sanctions lifted and accreditation reaffirmed. Colleges may be aided if more information were known about the organizational behavior and characteristics that community colleges need in order to remove the sanctions.

Unfortunately, little research exists that looks at what happens to colleges on which sanctions have been imposed. Barker and Smith (1998) assumed that most colleges must receive reaffirmation of accreditation: "Most self-studies apparently have been successful, because the literature does not address unsuccessful self-studies" (p. 741). Keep in mind that a successful self-study means that the college had its accreditation reaffirmed whereas an unsuccessful self-study would mean that the college had a sanction imposed. One study (White-Cook, 2008) looked at attributes of historically black colleges and universities that contributed to their having accreditation reaffirmed. Other studies (Abrahamson, 2008; Bontenbal, 2006) have focused on

California community colleges' responses to the 2002 revisions of the ACCJC Standards of Accreditation and the increased demand for assessment of student learning outcomes, but the ACCJC has yet to impose sanctions due to deficiencies in assessment of student learning outcomes. Only one study (Young, 2009) analyzed the experience of a college that had sanctions imposed, specifically a California community college that was placed on Show Cause and then had its accreditation terminated. Ewell (2007) acknowledged that some colleges get sanctioned, though not because of deficiencies in achievement of student learning; however, he did not cite any actual studies on accreditation sanctions. In the western region, the ACCJC (2009a, 2012b) has provided summary reports on the five or six most common reasons for which member colleges have sanctions imposed. Although research on accreditation is discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2 of this study, no studies were found that looked specifically at colleges that have been sanctioned, what those colleges have done to have sanctions removed, or what attributes those colleges enjoy that helped them to have sanctions removed. The problem is that more information is needed regarding colleges that have successfully had sanctions removed.

Purpose of the Study

This study is an investigation to discover organizational behavior, characteristics, and attributes of colleges that help California community colleges remove their accreditation sanctions and have their accreditation reaffirmed. From this investigation, it is hoped that patterns and trends will emerge that will reveal organizational traits and habits that contribute to successful institutional improvements and removal of sanctions.

10

The researcher would like to discover organizational strengths that can be developed, amplified, and perhaps multiplied in an organization, as well as duplicated in other colleges that have been sanctioned.

Research Questions

Because little research has been done on colleges that have been sanctioned, this study sought answers to the following research questions:

- What actions or activities of a college community contribute to its success in having the sanction removed?

- Which college personnel (should) play key roles in the college's work to remove the sanction?

- What skills and personal traits of college personnel contribute to the college's success in having the sanction removed?

- What kinds of assistance might a college need in order to have the sanction removed?

- What organizational characteristics might hinder a college's attempts to have a sanction removed? Answers to this last question uncovered some actions, attitudes, or errors that should be avoided.

Methodology

As an exploratory investigation, this study was inductive in nature, gathering qualitative data from several colleges that have been sanctioned. The qualitative data was collected in two ways: first through a questionnaire sent out to California community colleges that have successfully had sanctions removed, and second through case studies

of two California community colleges that have successfully had sanctions removed. Because of the qualitative emphasis of this study, the data from both the questionnaires and the case studies was analyzed for patterns and trends from which some generalizations were made (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Inferring generalizations based on observed data is the essence of inductive, qualitative studies (Willis, 2007). The research design will be based on phenomenology, the philosophy that knowledge can be gained from conscious analysis of and reflection on experience (Willis, 2007). The foundations of this phenomenological approach will be discussed further in Chapter 3.

Actual data collection occurred in two phases. Phase 1 consisted of the questionnaire, which contained open-ended questions to generate initial data regarding organizational characteristics and activities that helped with the colleges' success. Data from the questionnaires was used to create focused questions for the interviews that were conducted as part of the two case studies. Phase 2 comprised the case studies of two colleges that were successful in addressing the ACCJC recommendations and having sanctions removed. Data collection activity in the case studies consisted mainly of interviews and reviews of college documents that chronicled the colleges' activity in regard to accreditation. The interviews were semi-structured using the same questions as the questionnaire plus additional questions based on responses generated in Phase 1. The participants who were selected for the interviews were college leaders or other personnel who had institutional memory of the activities the colleges' engaged in to have the sanctions removed—institutional memory of what was done, who was involved, and what resulted. The documents that were reviewed included evaluation reports of the

accreditation visiting teams, action letters from the ACCJC, and the college's written responses to the Commission.

Definitions of Terms

Accreditation: The process of a college's self-evaluation and external evaluation of institutional effectiveness, and the status of quality assurance that the evaluation process affords the college (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, 2010).

Accountability: The responsibility that colleges have to inform stakeholders regarding institutional effectiveness, student performance, fiscal management, and allocation of resources. Colleges must be able to demonstrate that they are accomplishing their mission and that they are successfully responding to students' and the communities' needs (Roueche, Johnson, Roueche, & Associates, 1994). Accreditation is one method through which colleges demonstrate accountability.

Assessment: Refers to evaluation methods employed by a college to measure gains toward achieving its mission, goals, and objectives. In its broadest use, assessment encompasses all evaluation methods. In a more focused use, the term refers to specific assessment practices or instruments such as campus climate surveys, or portfolios of student work designed to measure student achievement of particular learning outcomes within a course or program of study.

Sanction: A verdict handed down by an accrediting commission when a college seeks reaffirmation of accreditation but falls short of accreditation standards or eligibility requirements. When a sanction is determined, the college temporarily maintains its status as an accredited institution, but long-term reaffirmation of its accreditation (for the next

six to ten years, depending on the region) is withheld until the college demonstrates satisfactory progress toward eliminating deficiencies that have been identified by the accrediting commission as the reason for the sanction. In the western region, the ACCJC uses three levels of sanctions:

A. **Issue Warning:** When the Commission finds that an institution has pursued a course deviating from the Commission's Eligibility Requirements, Standards, or Commission policies to an extent that gives concern to the Commission, it may issue a warning to the institution to correct its deficiencies, refrain from certain activities, or initiate certain activities. The commission will specify the time within which the institution must resolve these deficiencies. During the warning period, the institution will be subject to reports and visits at the frequency to be determined by the Commission. If warning is issued as a result of the institution's educational quality and institutional effectiveness review, reaffirmation is delayed during the period of warning. The accredited status of the institution continues during the warning period.

B. **Impose Probation:** When an institution deviates significantly from the Commission's Eligibility Requirements, Standards, or Commission policies but not to such an extent as to warrant a Show Cause order or the termination of accreditation, or fails to respond to conditions imposed upon it by the Commission, including a warning, the institution may be placed on probation. The commission will specify the time within which the institution must resolve deficiencies. During the probation period, the institution will be subject to reports and visits at a frequency to be determined by the commission. If probation is imposed as a result of the institution's educational quality and institutional effectiveness review, reaffirmation is delayed during the period of probation. The accredited status of the institution continues during the probation period.

C. **Order Show Cause:** When the Commission finds an institution to be in substantial non-compliance with its Eligibility Requirements, Standards, or Commission policies, or when the institution has not responded to the conditions imposed by the Commission, the Commission will require the institution to Show Cause why its accreditation should not be withdrawn at the end of a stated period by demonstrating that it has corrected the deficiencies noted by the Commission and is in compliance with Commission Standards, Eligibility Requirements, and policies. In such cases, the burden of proof will rest on the institution to demonstrate why it's accreditation should be continued. (ACCJC, 2013b, pp. 40-41)

14

Should the Commission find that the college has not or cannot fix its deficiencies within a given timeframe after a show cause order, it may terminate accreditation (ACCJC, 2013b).

ACCJC: The Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges is the agency that accredits two-year colleges in California, Hawai'i, and the territories of the Pacific. The ACCJC is authorized to operate by the U.S. Department of Education through the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008.

WASC: The Western Association of Schools and Colleges is one of six federally recognized regional accrediting agencies in the United States. The ACCJC is one of three branches within WASC. WASC also comprises the Western Association of Schools, which accredits K-12, and the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities.

Delimitations and Limitations

Although accreditation of institutions of higher education is both a nationwide interest and a global interest as well, this study focused only on California public community colleges and the ACCJC, the regional accrediting agency that has created the eligibility requirements, standards of accreditation, policies, and procedures that these colleges must adhere to in order to maintain their accredited status. The collection of data from the questionnaires was limited to only those colleges that have had successful experiences removing sanctions between 2008 and 2011 (37 colleges). The case studies were conducted at two institutions that had been sanctioned and successfully removed their sanctions within the two-year limit.

Because of the qualitative nature of this study, it is understood that the findings are descriptive only and not statistically conclusive. This limitation should by no means discount the value of this study. The descriptive data is illustrative of college characteristics that lead to success and as such can be generalized to other institutions that experience similar circumstances.

Assumptions

A college that has been mandated by the ACCJC to improve its functioning before its accreditation is reaffirmed is, in essence, being asked *to change*. A truism learned from the study of organizational behavior is that "organizations and their members resist change" (Robbins & Judge, p. 246). Therefore theories of organizational behavior, especially in regard to organizational change, provide a framework for analyzing and interpreting the data that was collected through the questionnaires and the case studies. Theories of organizational behavior will thus be discussed in Chapter 2, the literature review, including the importance of leadership's role in promoting organizational change (Collins, 2001; Eddy, 2010; Gardner, 1990)

Significance of the Study

The discussion generated by the results of this study of college characteristics may prove helpful for sanctioned colleges. It may open doors for the development of a framework for understanding how colleges respond to sanctions when they are imposed. The findings reveal patterns of institutional characteristics that advance institutional improvements and lead to the removal of the sanctions. These results and ensuing discussion can inform colleges that have been sanctioned that there are characteristics

they can develop and activities or behaviors that they can enhance in order to expedite reaffirmation. The findings also reveal some institutional characteristics that may hinder improvements and lead to continued sanctions, or at the least may not help and therefore should probably be avoided. Colleges may want to assess the extent to which beneficent or detrimental characteristics exist on their campuses before embarking on efforts to address evaluation teams' recommendations for improvements. Thus, the conclusions offer some suggestions to help colleges remove sanctions as quickly as possible.

In addition, the descriptive results inform future researchers about institutional qualities that can perhaps be tested through quantitative means to determine causal relationships, thus providing colleges, the ACCJC, and other accrediting bodies with even more information that can be used for professional development.

Summary Conclusion

This chapter has presented an overview of the purpose and scope of this research project. It has discussed background information to provide the reader with a basic understanding of the importance of accreditation and why a study of colleges that have been sanctioned is important. This chapter has provided a description of the problem and its context, the purpose of the study, the research questions that the study will seek to answer, a brief overview of the methodology, definitions of terminology, the delimitations and limitations of the study, the researcher's assumptions, and the significance of the study. Chapter 2 will provide even more details about the importance of accreditation and the urgency with which colleges should treat sanctions if any should be imposed upon them.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This study is an investigation into characteristics of community colleges that help the colleges to remove accreditation sanctions and to have accreditation reaffirmed. To fully comprehend the gravity of a college's need to remove sanctions, it is important to understand accreditation and its evolution in the United States as a system of quality assurance for higher education. The first half of this chapter provides an overview of the history of accreditation and the controversies and concerns that have been raised in recent decades in regards to accreditation. This historical context provides a glimpse into the ever-increasing need for colleges to be accountable and to provide evidence of their quality; it also provides insight into the urgency colleges should feel whenever sanctions are imposed.

Regardless of the urgency, some community colleges experience difficulty in removing sanctions. To understand organizational characteristics that may influence colleges' ability to remove sanctions, the second half of this chapter reviews literature of organizational behavior to understand community colleges as organizations. The concepts of organizational behavior will provide direction for parsing and organizing the research methods that will be described in Chapter 3 of this study.

The Evolution of Accreditation in the United States

1800s to 1930s: The Early Development of Regional Accreditation Associations

Higher education developed originally in this nation in an environment of freedom and autonomy. The framers of the Constitution of the United States created an environment in which accreditation would eventually develop (Brittingham, 2009). The

18

Tenth Amendment in the Bill of Rights establishes that any function of government not established in the Constitution should be left to the States and to the people to establish. The Constitution made no provision of the government of the United States to oversee or regulate education in this country, neither for elementary through high school education nor for higher education, so institutions of higher education developed on their own, without regulations (Brittingham, 2009), guided primarily by the wisdom of their leaders and governing boards.

In addition to the Bill of Rights, two other federal decisions supported an environment of autonomy for higher education. In 1819, in the case *Dartmouth v. William H. Woodward*, the Supreme Court stopped the state of New Hampshire from taking over Dartmouth College, thus setting a precedent that private organizations are protected from such acquisitions by government (Brittingham, 2009). The second federal decision supporting an environment of autonomy was a Congressional decision that occurred around the same time. Legislation to establish a national public university was defeated (Brittingham, 2009), thus continuing the legacy of freedom established by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. As a result, states, churches, entrepreneurs, and philanthropic individuals and organizations were free to establish colleges, academies, seminaries, technical and trade schools, and institutes.

Another aspect of the American social and political landscape that influenced the beginnings of the system of self-regulation through accreditation is the First Amendment, which guarantees the right to assemble (Harcleroad, 1980). In the case of higher education, institutions enjoyed this right by forming groups with peer institutions, the

groundwork leading to the formation of accrediting agencies, though none of the groups foresaw they were headed in that direction. Concerned with the quality of institutions in the state of New York, the University of New York established a Board of Regents in 1784, the earliest such board in the United States (Harcleroad, 1980). This board was required to visit and review all higher education institutions in the state of New York. In the second half of the nineteenth century, more states founded similar boards. In 1867, the United States Department of Education (USDE) was established, primarily as a statistical organization that gathered data on schools and colleges around the nation (Harcleroad, 1980). Nevertheless, interest in the quality of higher education was growing as a national concern.

In the 1870s and 1880s, awareness grew that the nation lacked a common framework for understanding what it means to be a college or university. As Harcleroad (1980) pointed out, "The need became critical for stronger academic standards and institutional evaluation of the rapidly expanding secondary schools and colleges" (p. 15). Thus, in the 1880s and 1890s, regional accrediting organizations began forming. The first was the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) in 1885, followed by the Middle States Association of Schools and Colleges in 1887; and in 1895 both the North Central Association of Schools and Colleges and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) were founded (Brittingham, 2009). These were voluntary membership organizations through which institutions evaluated themselves and held each other accountable to standards of quality. These associations came into being

20

to make sense of and bring a semblance of order to the confusion of educational

institutions that appeared to be springing up all over.

> Contributing to the confusion were: the development of new academic disciplines
> and a new diversity of institutions such as normal schools and other professional
> schools, junior colleges, universities, and technical colleges; the elective system
> and the breakdown of the classical curriculum; great expansion of both secondary
> and post-secondary education, often with no clear distinction among types of
> institutions, leading to the question "What is a college?"; and lack of commonly
> accepted standards for admission to a college or for completing a degree.
> (Harcleroad, 1980, p. 3)

In these early years of associations of peer institutions, the main focus was to identify

which institutions were to be considered colleges (Brittingham, 2009). The North Central

Association developed criteria for membership in 1912 (Harcleroad, 1980), thereby

developing for all intents and purposes a set of criteria for an institution to be considered

a college and thus to be allowed membership into the association. In 1913, the North

Central Association published its first list of accredited institutions (Harcleroad, 1980).

The New England Association adopted criteria for membership in 1929 but did not use

the term *accreditation* until 1952 (Brittingham, 2009). The other three agencies adopted

criteria for accreditation between 1914 and 1935 (Harcleroad, 1980). The Northwest

Association of Colleges and Universities and the Western Association of Schools and

Colleges (WASC) were the last two associations to form, the former in 1917 and the

latter in 1924 (Brittingham, 2009). In the early 1900s another body formed, the

Association of American Universities, which published a list of colleges and universities

ranked in groups according to their educational quality (Harcleroad, 1980). The

Association of American Universities continued publishing its lists for the next 40 years

and was the organization that most people turned to when they wanted to know about the quality of an institution (Harcleroad, 1980).

During this early period in American higher education, roughly from 1850 to 1900, specialized associations also developed for the purpose of evaluating and accrediting specialized schools, such as bible colleges, and specialized programs, such as medical education and teacher training (Harcleroad, 1980). The American Medical Association, founded in 1847, was the first of these specialized agencies to form (Brittingham, 2009). College and university presidents preferred to keep their institutions' memberships in such additional associations to a minimum if possible because of the extra time and expense involved in preparing for as many extra visits by these agencies' evaluating teams (Harcleroad, 1980).

One reason why the six regional associations established criteria for membership and for what it means to be a college, or for accreditation, was in reaction to the rapid increase in the number of correspondence schools in the 1890s through 1920s, which reached out to non-traditional students. One of the earliest such private, for-profit corporations was the International Correspondence Schools, founded by Thomas J. Foster in 1892 (Noble, 2002). Following in the footsteps of the for-profit sector, public universities attempted to expand their services to non-traditional students. The University of Chicago began offering correspondence courses in the 1890s with the creation of its Home Study Department (Noble, 2002). State institutions of higher education in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Kansas, Texas, Indiana, and California jumped on this band wagon. By 1919, "when Columbia University launched its home study

22

program, there were already seventy-three colleges and universities offering instruction by correspondence" (Noble, 2002, p. 9). The growth of university correspondence courses and for-profit correspondence schools flourished throughout the first third of the twentieth century. For example, Columbia University's program grew from 156 students in 1920, its first year of operation, to about 5,000 students by 1926, to nearly 10,000 students by 1929, with students enrolling from nearly every state in the union and fifty countries worldwide (Noble, 2002). The most lucrative of these early distance learning ventures, of course, paid the most attention to packaging and selling the courses and programs rather than to teaching and learning (Noble, 2002), sometimes selling nothing more than an empty package, a degree with no learning or minimal learning attached— thus leading to the term "diploma mill" or "degree mill." The term "diploma mill" first appeared in 1914 ("Diploma mill," n.d.) to describe disreputable organizations that deliver degrees or diplomas for a fee with minimal or no academic requirements. The regional associations of colleges used their membership criteria to root out these diploma mills and degree mills.

In the 1930s, the North Central Association adopted a new criterion for accreditation, one that would soon catch on in the other associations, by which institutions would be evaluated according to the degree to which they achieve their own purposes or mission (Harcleroad, 1980). This emphasis on an institution's effectiveness in achieving its stated mission has been a mainstay of self-regulation ever since. As a policy among accreditation standards, it echoes the values of freedom and autonomy on which the American system of higher education has evolved, and it respects the immense

23

diversity among the many institutions in the United States; for this policy allows each institution to determine its own purpose.

1940s to 1960s: Increased Access, Increased Federal Funding, and Consequent Federal Interest in Accreditation

In the 1940s, the evolution of accreditation opened with a growing concern that there may be better ways to assure the quality of higher education. In the later 1930s during the Franklin D. Roosevelt years, federal aid programs administered through the USDE, now called the Office of Education, used colleges' and universities' accredited status as a determinant as to whether a student or an institution would receive federal funds (Arnstein, 1973). The Social Security Administration and the Veteran's Administration, however, did not rely on accreditation and instead used lists of eligible institutions developed by state offices of education (Arnstein, 1973). In 1940, the federal Office of Education published a report recommending that states assume the responsibility for accrediting the institutions within their borders; however, this idea met with a chilly response from accreditors and from legislators because states were receiving federal aid from the various government agencies (Orlans, 1980). States would have vested interest in ensuring that their public institutions would be accredited, yet it was predicted that states would be tougher on private and for-profit institutions, their competitors, if States had assumed responsibility for accreditation (Orlans, 1980). So accreditation stayed the responsibility of the accrediting associations.

New legislation after World War II altered the face of higher education in the United States. After World War I, the country had not done a good job of taking care of

its returning troops (U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, 2009). To ensure that such mismanagement of funds intended for U.S. troops did not occur again, Congress passed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, more commonly known as the GI Bill (U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, 2009). One of the provisions of the law was to provide education and job training for returning veterans. Many servicemen took advantage of this opportunity, and college and university admissions grew.

As access to higher education increased, fueled by returning veterans, and as more federal dollars were pumped into colleges and universities for these new students, leaders in Washington became more interested in the quality of higher education in the United States. Because the Veterans Administration was now responsible for managing funds that would eventually go to colleges and universities, leaders in Washington wanted to make sure that these funds for higher education distributed through the GI Bill were money well spent. However, in 1948 the Association of American Universities stopped publishing its rankings of American colleges and universities (Harcleroad, 1980). Now how would Washington leaders know which schools were the quality schools and not just degree mills or diploma mills? Without the Association of American Universities published list, the federal government turned to accreditation to determine an institution's eligibility to receive funding.

In the 1950s, federal reliance on information about the accredited status of institutions grew. Then as troops returned from the Korean War, there was even more federal emphasis on preparing them for re-entry into civilian society. President Harry S. Truman signed the Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1952, which provided

financial assistance specifically for veterans of the Korean conflict ("GI Bill turns 62," 2006). This law included a provision mandating that the Office of Education maintain a list of "trustworthy" accrediting agencies (Finn, 1975), not schools, mind you, but the accrediting agencies. Then in 1958, the National Defense Education Act stipulated that institutions had to be accredited by a nationally recognized (i.e. federally recognized) accrediting agency in order to participate in Veterans Administration funding (Finn, 1975). Thus, serious federal interest in accreditation materialized first when in 1952 the Office of Education was asked to maintain a list of reliable accrediting agencies, and this interest was solidified in 1958 when it became law that a college or university had to be accredited by one of the agencies on that list.

As the 1960s saw expanding enrollments in higher education, more concerns rose regarding the quality of that education. In 1966, the Veterans Readjustment Benefits Act was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, providing funding for education and training of not only Vietnam veterans but for post-Korean veterans who missed out on the Korean GI Bill, whose benefits had expired in 1955 ("GI Bill turns 62," 2006). After military conscription, i.e. "the draft," was discontinued in 1973, veterans' funding for education continued as a benefit in order to attract recruits into the military, through the Post-Vietnam Era Veterans' Education Assistance Program of 1976 and again through the Montgomery GI Bill of 1985 ("GI Bill turns 62," 2006). All in all, between 1944 and 1989, the GI Bill in its several iterations helped 14.5 million veterans to attend colleges and postsecondary technical schools ("GI Bill turns 62," 2006). To put these details into other terms, in veterans' benefits alone, the federal government helped to

fund the education of 14.5 million individuals—that's 14.5 million men and women who otherwise may not have attended college.

These facts are important for accreditation because the federal government began to wonder if it was receiving any return on its investment. Was the funding being put to good use, providing quality education to the 14.5 million veterans who deserved a quality education for their years of sacrifice? And there wasn't just the spending of Veterans Administration funds. Other departments were also funding grants and aid to colleges, universities, and the students who attended them: the Office of Education, the Department of Agriculture, and the Social Security Administration (Arnstein, 1973). Furthermore, the Higher Education Act of 1965 greatly expanded the availability and types of financial aid to all students in addition to veterans, especially low-income students (Brittingham, 2009). Consequently, the many financial aid and grant programs were monitored by "'the triad': states for purposes of licensure and basic consumer protection, the federal government for purposes of effective oversight of financial aid funds, and recognized accreditors to ensure sufficient educational quality" (Brittingham, 2009, p. 21)—and Washington wanted greater assurances that its funds were well spent.

1970s: Growing Distrust in Self-Regulation of Higher Education

Growing concerns of the quality of higher education and the lack of information coming from accrediting agencies regarding the quality of institutions, prompted more research into higher education for the purpose of developing policy. During the Nixon Administration, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) appointed Frank Newman to lead a task force/commission to review higher education and determine

recommendations for policies (Newman, 1972). Accreditation's critics asserted that the self-regulation processes of accreditation favored traditional colleges and universities and tended to reject or judge more severely post-secondary vocational/technical schools and proprietary schools thereby favoring conformity and disfavoring diversity (Newman, 1972; Hodgkinson, 1972). Thus the federal government ended up subsidizing conventionality and traditional institutions and ignoring others. One of the problems with the lack of diversity of institutions also pertained to diversity of students; many minority students attended non-accredited proprietary schools and vocational schools (Hodgkinson, 1972). Accreditation needed to change to allow these schools into the fold so that minority students could receive federal funds. Accrediting all institutions with their diverse missions would allow service to diverse students who have diverse goals and needs (Hodgkinson, 1972). Thus the Newman Commission came up with recommendations for financial aid, for more consideration of vocational education and proprietary schools, and for broadening the scope of higher education to include more than just traditional colleges and universities; and it recommended more federal oversight of accreditation, proposing that HEW should set its own eligibility criteria for schools to receive federal financial aid or funding apart from accreditation (Newman, 1972). The report also recommended better training of the accreditation teams who make evaluation visits, and it recommended that an institution's eligibility to receive federal funds should not be based on accreditation (Hodgkinson, 1972).

Discontent with accreditation continued into the Carter Administration. It was thought that the criteria utilized to determine which accrediting agencies should be

recognized really had nothing to do with the agencies' ability to determine educational quality, that institutions should be evaluated against externally imposed standards rather than against their own stated goals, and that using accreditation for eligibility purposes misled students into thinking that the federal government was vouching for the educational quality of the institution (Orlans, 1980). Another complaint was that the process of self-regulation allowed institutions to be too easy on each other (Benezet, 1981). The Commissioner of Education returned to the idea from the 1940s that States should be in charge of eligibility for government funds, not the accrediting agencies (Orlans, 1980; Benezet, 1981). Others again proposed that the federal government should take over completely to decide which institutions should receive federal aid, believing that since it is federal money that is under consideration, the federal government should decide which institutions are good for students (Orlans, 1980). The 1970s conversations and debates of disgruntled and disenchanted critics of accreditation laid the foundations for what was to come in the next decade—attempts to define quality higher education as a primary attribute of quality institutions.

1980s: A Search for Definitions of Quality

The Reagan decade began with both accreditation's critics and supporters searching for universal determiners of quality in higher education. Benezet (1981), a supporter of self-regulation through accreditation, was the first writer who actually asked for a definition of quality: "One speaks of accrediting a college in terms of its quality; yet to identify what and where the quality is remains a problem" (p.7). Benezet is also one of

the first writers to suggest that thinking about institutional quality should shift from a focus on inputs to a focus on outputs:

> A source of confusion about accreditation is our neglect of the fact that most measures of educational quality are of input—student selectivity, faculty preparation, academic equipment and support, etc.—rather than outcomes. Outcomes might include the numbers of late-bloomers who graduated four years later with creditable records; the careers entered by the majority; the percentage of first-generation college students in the enrollment; or the features and tone of campus life. (p. 7)

Millard (1983) suggested that educational quality is understood as a combination of inputs and outputs: a college should set institutional and educational objectives (outputs), which can be reasonably attained using resources at its disposal (inputs), and can provide evidence that it is doing so (outputs). Millard (1983) claimed that these criteria provide the basis of accreditation. In 1984, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) was the first of the regional accrediting agencies to adopt institutional effectiveness as one of its criteria for accreditation—a college's ability to and processes for setting objectives, measuring achievement of those objectives, and using the results to make institutional improvements—and the other five regional accrediting agencies followed suit shortly thereafter (Brittingham, 2009). Still, critics of self-regulation continued, believing that educational quality would be better served if reviewed by outsiders.

Critics of accreditation thought that the system of self-regulation was inadequate. Scott (1983) complained that self-regulation merely advanced institutions' self-interests. He claimed that accreditation is little more than intimidation of an out-group of institutions by the in-group of institutions, who set the standards according to their own

whims, thus attempting to create and maintain other institutions in their own image. Millard (1983) presented four complaints of critics, rebutting three but agreeing with the fourth. First, regarding the complaint that self-regulation leads to protection of self-interests, Millard questioned who better than professionals in the field would be qualified to evaluate the quality of higher education. Second, regarding the complaint that the system lacked quantitative measures or used inappropriate measures to determine quality, Millard claimed that qualitative assessments of institutions' achievement of their objectives is a valid form of evaluation. Third, regarding the complaint that accreditation produced no hierarchical ranking of institutional quality or value, Millard asserted that such ranking is inappropriate; the diverse institutions in the United States have different missions and therefore should compare their own objectives to their own results, not to other institutions. Fourth, regarding the complaint that accreditation operates with too much confidentiality and secrecy, Millard agreed that more transparency of the process and the results should be encouraged.

The culmination of public discontent and distrust of education's ability to assure its own quality was voiced when the National Commission on Excellence in Teaching published *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, which decried the growing mediocrity in American education from kindergarten through college. In the latter half of the 1980s, there were increasing demands for more transparency and accountability in order to turn the tide of mediocrity. These calls for accountability led to a rapidly growing interest that colleges should establish and assess learning outcomes (Ewell, 1994; Peters, 1994; Roueche, Johnson, Roueche, & Associates, 1997; Eaton, 2009). It was proposed that accrediting

agencies should adopt accountability of student learning into their accreditation criteria. The regional accrediting agencies began adopting assessment of student learning into their accountability measures, and by the end of the 1980s the assessment movement gained momentum (Brittingham, 2009).

1990 to 2010: Increasing Emphasis on Accountability, Assessment of Student Learning, and Institutional Effectiveness; and a Push for National Standards

In the early 1990s, regional accreditation agencies were challenged by policy-makers and other stakeholders to intensify scrutiny of institutional effectiveness and accountability. Accreditation needed to provide more evidence of academic quality. Enrollment growth kept expanding as more and more jobs required higher levels of education. With each reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, attention was drawn to rising enrollments, rising costs, and the accompanying rise in demand for financial aid (Ewell, 1994). The proliferation of the demand for dollars prompted calls for even more accountability, "based on demonstrable return on investment" (Ewell, 1994, p. 27). Because ever increasing amounts of tax dollars were going to higher education, and because government agencies still did not trust that accreditation was a reliable indicator of institutional quality, the 1992 Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act added State Postsecondary Review Entities (SPREs) as additional determiners of school eligibility to receive federal funding, in addition to accreditation (Bloland, 1999). Accrediting agencies felt this was a federal intrusion on their ability to determine institutional quality, and colleges thought this was an intrusion into their autonomy (Bloland, 1999). The 1992 reauthorization also "upped the ante on student learning assessment. The bill

specified areas that accreditors needed to include in their standards and reviews, including curriculum, faculty, and student achievement" (Brittingham, 2009, p. 23). In response, the accrediting agencies included language about assessment of learning outcomes in their requirements for evidence of institutional effectiveness.

As the 1990s progressed, the emphasis on evidence of student learning gained ground. All six of the regional accrediting agencies linked institutional effectiveness with accountability and assessment of student learning (Edgerton, 1993; Peters, 1994), but most institutions were not doing a good job of assessing student learning (Ewell, 1994; Peters, 1994; Roueche, Johnson, Roueche, & Associates, 1997; Alexander, 1998). In fact, in some areas, faculty were resistant to assessment initiatives (Lee, 2010), so early faculty implementation of assessment activities was spotty and isolated and not sustained (Dill, Massy, Williams, & Cook, 1996). Peters (1994) reported that because faculty believed that the effectiveness of teaching and learning is "a) self-evident, b) ineffable, and/or c) already measured by grades, most faculty continue to reject demands for accountability as picayune and counterproductive if not spiteful, and go about their business as usual" (p. 19). Peters (1994) also remarked, "We, like most colleges, have yet to take the decisive step: using assessment results to drive changes so dramatic that they convince our constituents that we are serious about doing a better job" (p. 23). As can be seen in Peters's and others' discussions, higher education in the 1990s was trying to connect all the dots: assessment of student learning, evidence of quality education, institutional effectiveness, accountability, quality assurance, and return on investment. However, even though leaders in higher education were making the connections,

Roueche, Johnson, Roueche, and Associates (1997) discovered that institutions had not progressed much since the decade before: "The data show clearly that most colleges are not collecting the kinds of information that would tell them whether they are accomplishing their missions" (p. 42).

Because of higher education's slow progress in providing more transparent accountability of its effectiveness, the 2000s were a decade of impending threats of government intervention. In the Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 2005, Congress called for more accountability from higher education institutions, "to encourage the highest possible levels of teaching, learning, and other achievement" (Lingenfelter & Lenth, 2005, p. 16). Eaton, Fryshman, Hope, Scanlon, and Crow (2005) debated to what extent federal or state government should be involved with or dictate accreditation practices. At stake again was the autonomy of colleges and universities:

> Increasing governmental oversight of academic quality raises questions about whether higher education is truly self-regulating, potentially impinges on the role of institutional governing boards, and has implications for academic freedom. There is, after all, a difference between the academy imposing obligations on itself and the government imposing the same obligations. (Eaton et al., 2005, p. 43)

The more extreme reaction of practitioners in higher education appeals to common American values of liberty and individualism, calling such possible federal interventions "totalitarianism" (Hope, as cited in Eaton et al., 2005, p. 46) and threats to our freedom. Other practitioners pointed out that higher education is already under suspicion of not delivering its promised benefits to citizens and that accreditation does not do an adequate job of staving off such suspicions: "the credibility of accreditation is as suspect as is the

success of our colleges and universities in graduating well-educated students" (Eaton et al., 2005, p. 48). One source of the suspicion has been the silence that results from the confidentiality imbued in some accreditation processes; this silence causes unwarranted negative speculation that institutions and accrediting agencies are hiding bad news. To ward off these suspicions, Crow (as cited in Eaton et al., 2005) suggested that accrediting agencies create processes and templates for disclosing information to the public before the federal government intervenes and creates them for the higher education community.

In 2006, Margaret Spellings, Secretary of the United States Department of Education (USDE), released a report from her Commission on the Future of Higher Education. Commonly called the Spellings Report, it emphasized that colleges and universities should "provide the highest possible quality of education to the most students possible at the lowest cost possible" (Basken, 2007). The three main areas of concern to come out of this report were transparency of accreditation processes and reporting, evidence of student learning, and the marginal influence of accrediting agencies to hold institutions accountable and to effect improvements in institutions (Brittingham, 2008; Ewell, 2007). A reciprocal concern that institutions have had as a result of the report has been the fear that standardized testing would be mandated for higher education (Basken, 2007) similar to the manner in which No Child Left Behind led to standardized testing throughout the nation's K-12 systems. Ewell (2007) did not agree that the aftermath of the Spellings Report would include standardized testing at the post-secondary level, asserting that, due to updated accreditation standards in the past decade, institutions have improved their accountability through better systems of assessing and reporting student

learning. "But," he stated, "it is equally the case that only recently have institutions been sanctioned in this area and that none have lost their accreditation" (p. 12). Nevertheless, institutions' concerns of standardization are not unfounded. The Spellings Report empowered the National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality and Integrity (NACIQI) and urged accrediting agencies to identify levels of student achievement, to require institutions to provide evidence of student achievement, and to determine if those institutions' levels of achievement were acceptable (Eaton, 2010). The 2008 reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, known as the Higher Education Opportunities Act of 2008, "resulted in 110 new rules or reporting obligations for higher education and accreditation" (Eaton, 2010). These include rules regarding accreditors' oversight of distance education and standards of achievement, and many other topics (ACCJC, 2009b).

Since the Bush administration, there has been more intrusive federal oversight of accreditation. The regional accrediting commissions and other agencies have been under fire, and the number of rules that colleges, universities, and the accrediting agencies must follow have increased. Judith S. Eaton (2010), president of the Council of Higher Education Accreditation, reported the following:

> Federal law and rules now constrain the peer and professional review process of accreditation, taking us down a path of accreditation as a compliance intervention—in stark contrast to its traditional collegial role. There are new controls on what accrediting organizations can and cannot tell their accredited institutions. In certain situations, the Department of Education may even seek information about an institution, and the accreditor is prohibited from informing the institution of the inquiry. Accreditors now must scrutinize institutions frequently when the latter undergo major changes, such as establishing new campuses or substantially increasing online course offerings. The process by

36

which institutions can appeal accrediting bodies' decisions has been redesigned
by Congress. (Eaton, 2010)

In sum, the pressure on accrediting agencies to keep colleges and universities accountable

has increased dramatically since the inception of accreditation as a system of peer

evaluation of institutional quality. Though the federal role in accreditation of higher

education is indirect, it imposes great influence on the policies and actions of the

accrediting agencies.

2002 to present in California: ACCJC and Its Efforts to Hold Colleges Accountable

In 2002, the ACCJC published new Standards of Accreditation (ACCJC, 2013b).

Beginning with the publication of those standards, the ACCJC altered the emphasis of its

accreditation evaluation processes of institutions. Starting in 2004, evaluation teams

were instructed to analyze "the adequacy of [a college's] resources, the effectiveness of

its procedures, the quality of its performance in pursuit of its stated goals, and its

evidence of student achievement and student learning" (ACCJC, 2013d, p. 6). Shortly

thereafter, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of colleges being

sanctioned. Appendix A chronicles the California Community Colleges that have been

sanctioned since January 2004. The number of colleges with sanctions jumped in

January 2005 and has not dropped to pre-2004 levels (ACCJC, n.d.). In the past six years

(which constitute one full accreditation cycle), 70 of the 112 California community

colleges, or 62.5 percent, have been sanctioned by ACCJC for not meeting the standards

of accreditation, for not meeting eligibility requirements, or for not making sufficient

progress in addressing recommendations from the previous accreditation cycle.

Does this mean that the ACCJC is taking its role as an assurer of educational and institutional quality more seriously than it did in prior decades? Research does not reveal an answer to that question. However, it appears that the changes in the ACCJC's standards of accreditation have led to changes in the way evaluation teams and the Commission itself assess their peer institutions, for they are fulfilling their tasks as charged:

> to verify quality and integrity and to inspire continuous improvement of institutional performance. The task of the evaluator is that of a colleague who shares a commitment to educational excellence by making diagnostic recommendations that improve the institution's ability to meet the Commission's Accreditation Standards. (ACCJC, 2013d, p. 6).

Sometimes those diagnostic recommendations are accompanied by sanctions in order to leverage a sense of urgency in encouraging the college to expedite improvements. Yet whether or not a college is sanctioned, it is still bound by the two-year rule (Fulks, 2008) to correct deficiencies that are identified by the visiting evaluation team.

Accreditation and Organizational Behavior

Because the accreditation process evaluates institutional effectiveness of colleges, it is relevant to take a look at concepts of organizational behavior, especially as they relate to change in organizations. But first it is important to understand accreditation as an impetus for change.

In the region overseen by WASC accreditation, the accreditation evaluation process has three basic phases (ACCJC, 2013c). First the college undergoes a rigorous self-evaluation, comparing its practices to the standards of accreditation published by its regional accrediting commission. The self-evaluation period ends with the production of

38

a self-study report, which is submitted to the ACCJC. In the second phase, a team of evaluators from peer institutions reviews the self-study and conducts an evaluation visit to the college. The evaluation team compares the actions of the college—as recorded in the self-study, as found in evidentiary documents, and as observed at the college itself— to the standards of accreditation and writes a report of its findings. The evaluation team submits this report to the ACCJC. The final phase occurs when the commission reviews the report and takes action on the college, either reaffirming its accreditation or imposing a sanction. The ACCJC reports its decision to the college and also to state government agencies (depending on the state [Ewell, Boeke, & Zis, 2010]) and federal government agencies.

Whether the college has its accreditation reaffirmed or sanctions imposed, the report it receives from the ACCJC will include recommendations made by the evaluation team and by the commission itself. The college is expected to follow the recommendations and make the necessary institutional changes. This practice aligns with accreditation's emphasis on continuous quality improvement. However, if a college is sanctioned, the recommendations carry a stronger sense of urgency for the college to follow through. Thus, the recommendations become instruments of organizational change.

What is Organizational Behavior?

Organizational change is an important element in the study of Organizational Behavior (OB). According to Robbins and Judge (2010), OB as a formal field of study looks at the relationships between individuals, groups, and organizational structure within

an organization as influences on an organization's functioning. The purpose of studying

OB is "to apply that knowledge toward improving an organization's effectiveness"

(Robbins & Judge, 2010, p. 2). Similarly, a goal of accreditation is to improve an

organization's effectiveness (ACCJC, 2013b; Eaton, 2010). So let us review a couple of

popular theories of OB that can be used to analyze organizational behavior of colleges as

they undergo the changes recommended through the accreditation process.

Two Models for Organizational Success

In recent decades, two popular models of understanding successful organizations

have been proposed by Peter Senge (1990/2006) in *The Fifth Discipline* and by Jim

Collins (2001) in *Good to Great*. The following section provides a brief comparison of

Senge's "learning organization" and Collins's "good-to-great" companies.

People for Success

Both models emphasize that the most important element in any organization is the

people. Collins (2001) stated that the first priority is to get "the right people on the bus,

the right people in the right seats, and the wrong people off the bus" (p. 41). According

to Collins (2001), being the right person "has more to do with character traits and innate

capabilities than with specific knowledge, background, or skills" (p. 64). So an

organization needs to hire individuals who are committed to the organization's success

and spirited such that they will "debate vigorously in search of the best answers"

(Collins, 2001, p. 63) yet unify behind the decisions that will lead to an improved

organization once those decisions have been worked out. These are the people who are

"self-motivated to produce the best results" (Collins, 2001, p. 42) yet are driven more by

a desire to participate as a member of something great than by a desire to achieve personal greatness and have their egos stroked. Senge's version of the right people is people with "personal mastery" (Senge, 1990/2006, p. 7). As members of a learning organization, these persons "consistently realize the results that matter most deeply to them" and are "committed to their own lifelong learning" (Senge, 1990/2006, p. 7). Senge (1990/2006) described them as living life "from a creative as opposed to reactive viewpoint" (p. 131); as having a personal vision for the future which is tied to their sense of purpose in life; as being able to change their underlying beliefs that bring on "structural conflict" (p. 146), which Senge explained is the tension between the fear and belief in one's own powerlessness or unworthiness, one's understanding of the current reality, and one's vision for the future; and as seeking truth in themselves while staying connected to and committed to the whole (the organization). In sum, the people that both Collins and Senge recommend are they who are creative, willing to learn, able to be honest with themselves, and committed to the organization.

Leaders for Success

Another element of a successful organization that both Collins and Senge discuss is leadership, whether one defines leader as a single individual or as individuals on a leadership team. Other writers (Eddy, 2010; Gardner, 1990; Roueche, Baker, & Rose, 1989) have written about qualities that leaders should hold—communication skills, organizational skills, vision for the organization. Whereas Roueche, Baker, and Rose (1989) recommended that leaders be charismatic, Collins (2001) emphasized humility. Similarly, Senge (1990/2006), quoting a proverb by Confucius, advised leaders to first

41

"become a human being" (p. 318). Senge drew much of his description of a leader's attributes from wisdom writings of Eastern philosophers such as Confucius, Lao Tsu, and the Buddha (Senge, 1990/2006; Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004). But more than anything, Senge (1990/2006) recommended that leaders should model the traits of the ideal members of the organizations: vision, purpose, creativity instead of reactivity, the willingness to go deep to understand the self, and commitment to and vision for the organization. In addition, a leader should be a designer, a teacher or model of learning, and a steward—servant and caretaker of an organization (Senge, 1990/2006). According to Collins (2001), the ideal leader embodies a combination of personal humility and professional will. Theirs is an infectious will to produce sustained results, yet they will attribute success to factors external to themselves, perhaps pointing out the successes of other individuals in the organization; and they will take full responsibility when things go wrong. These are not "larger-than-life saviors with big personalities" (Collins, 2001, p. 22), but they are "seemingly ordinary people producing extraordinary results" (p. 28), exhibiting humility paired with "ferocious resolve" (p. 30).

Attitudes for Success

For an organization to be successful Collins's good-to-great organization and Senge's learning organization embody similar characteristics—attitudes that permeate the organization. Collins (2001) spoke of a willingness to "confront the brutal facts (yet never lose faith)" (p. 65). He called this "disciplined thought" (p. 69). An organization and the people in it must honestly assess their current situation, the totality of it—strengths, weaknesses, resources. The vision that the organization creates for itself must

be achievable within the limitations of its reality. The people within the organization

must be committed to face the truth, although in doing so never engage in a blame game

(Collins, 2001). From Collins's perspective, facing the brutal facts also involves an

organization's not comparing itself to competitors but aiming for its personal bests based

on its knowledge of its strengths and its situation.

An attitude discussed by Senge (1990/2006) was an openness to confront mental

models. Mental models are assumptions and presuppositions operating within

individuals and organizations. They are generalizations and "images that influence how

we understand the world and how we take action" (Senge 1990/2006, p. 8). Some of

these assumptions may be helpful, but some mental models will impede organizational

effectiveness and improvements. All mental models need to be scrutinized by an

individual for their usefulness to the individual and by the organization for their

usefulness to the organization. If the mental model, or paradigm, doesn't help, then it

should be discarded.

Another attitude found in successful organizations is patience to observe and

reflect (Collins, 2001; Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004). Collins (2001)

noted that good-to-great companies made sure to spend adequate time facing the brutal

facts before moving to the next actions. A thorough assessment of the situation followed

by visionary yet realistic planning takes time. Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, and Flowers

(2004) described a process of observation (gathering data on the present situation) and

reflection (assessing the situation) as requiring adequate time for the group to identify

true problems or opportunities rather than simple surface problems or opportunities

43

before moving forward to the action phase. If the observation and reflection phases are shallow, then whatever actions the organization takes will most likely be ineffective, whereas if the organization is willing to go deep, especially in the reflection phase, then the organization's actions will be effectual and long-lived (Senge et al., 2004). Senge et al. (2004) emphasized the importance of the reflection phase. It is at that point when the members of the organization, through dialogue, debate, and more reflection, connect the organization's current situation to a much broader context beyond the organization itself, where the observed details of the past can connect to the organization's vision of its future. And it may require an adjustment of the vision. Of course, a successful organization has a vision of its future self.

Another way to consider organizational attitudes is to think of these in terms of organizational culture. The culture of the organization is apparent in the values that the institution holds most dear. Pettigrew (1979) defined organizational culture "as the amalgam of beliefs, ideology, language, ritual, and myth" (as cited in Masland, 1985/2000, p. 145). Similarly, Kuh and Whitt (1988/2000) defined organizational culture as

> a social or normative glue that holds organizations together and serves four general purposes: (1) it conveys a sense of identity; (2) it facilitates commitment to an entity, such as a college or peer group, other than self; (3) it enhances the stability of a group's social system; and (4) it is a sense-making device that guides and shapes behavior. (p. 161)

Peterson and Spencer (1990/2000) also defined organizational culture as "shared values, assumptions, beliefs, or ideologies" (p. 173). Culture influences people's behaviors because culture carries expectations of which behaviors are preferred and

44

accepted and which are frowned upon. Organizational culture involves more than just values and attitudes. It is partly formed by organizational vision.

Vision for Success

A vision embodies an organization's sense of purpose and its imagined future. Although Roueche, Baker, and Rose (1989) placed the responsibility for developing the organization's vision on the CEO, Senge (1990/2006) and Collins (2001) asserted that the vision must come from the group. Senge (1990/2006) stated that members of a successful organization will be committed to the vision, not just acknowledge it as an act of compliance. According to Senge (1990/2006), creating a shared vision "is actually only one piece of a larger activity: developing the governing ideas for the enterprise, its vision, purpose or mission, and core values" (p. 207). According to Collins (2001), these shared and focused governing ideas, vision, mission, and core values are what he calls the organization's "hedgehog concept" (p. 91), the one simple thing that the organization does best, around which it spends its energy and resources and at which it works to become the best. Notable about Collins's hedgehog concept is that a great organization will not engage in activities that do not support its hedgehog concept nor activities that will pull the organization in directions away from its hedgehog concept. As another way of looking at shared vision, an organization must figure out what its hedgehog concept is—a blending of what it is passionate about, what it can do better than anyone else, and what drives its economic engine—and be committed to making it happen.

Senge (1990/2006) tied his interpretation of shared vision into his model of the learning organization. He stated, "Generative learning occurs only when people are

45

striving to accomplish something that matters deeply to them" (p. 192). This idea is grounded in the notion that individuals desire to grow through continuous learning and that organizations will also grow through continuous learning. Creating a shared vision is then a product of the desire to learn and to commit to something that one cares deeply about. In this regard, shared vision grows out of the personal vision of each individual. Understanding the connection between personal vision and shared vision reinforces why it is important to hire the right people, to get "the right people on the bus" and to get "the right people in the right seats" (Collins, 2001, p. 41). If an organization can do this, it can cultivate team learning: "Individuals do not sacrifice their personal interests to the larger team vision; rather, the shared vision becomes an extension of their personal visions" (Senge, 1990/2006, pp. 217-218). Then all members of the organization align their efforts to move the organization toward completion of its goals. Such team efforts in concert are the actions needed in a successful organization.

Action for Success

When all members of the organization are the right people with the right attitudes, sharing the same vision for the organization, a vision that aligns with their personal visions for themselves, then the organization is geared for success. Senge (1990/2006) couched this concept of action in terms of team learning. In a learning organization, members continually learn how to improve themselves and improve the organization. To do so requires dialogue in which "a group explores complex difficult issues from many points of view. . . . The result is a free exploration that brings to the surface the full depth of people's experience and thought, and yet can move beyond their individual views"

(Senge, 1990/2006, p. 224). At this point an organization can devise its plans to achieve its goals, which Senge et al. (2004) called "realizing" (p. 219), transformational actions that turn the organization's vision into reality.

In terms of a good-to-great organization, Collins (2001) emphasized a "culture of discipline" (p. 126) in which the organization realizes its goals by staying focused on actions that further its hedgehog concept. It is not a tyrannical culture that oppresses workers to stick to the concept, but instead is a culture that blossoms from the shared vision and commitment of each member all working in the same direction for the good of the organization because each shares in the passion.

Concluding Summary: Accreditation, Organizational Behavior, and Community Colleges

This study looks at community colleges and their experiences with accreditation. In light of the historical context of accreditation as presented in this chapter, it is clear that the nation is interested in the institutional and educational quality of its colleges. The nation desires quality institutions and quality education for its citizens. Organizational Behavior as a field of study presents a way of understanding the workings of organizations. Collins and Senge have taken some of those elements of Organizational Behavior and applied them to their research and analysis of successful organizations. This chapter's overview of accreditation's history, national concerns for quality, and characteristics of successful organizations provide the groundwork for looking into the characteristics of community colleges that contribute to their success. The characteristics presented by Senge and Collins also provide a framework for analyzing some of the

47

characteristics that have contributed to colleges' successful implementation of change

initiatives such that they were able to have their accreditation reaffirmed. The next

chapter will describe more specifically the research methodology.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Recall from Chapter 1 that accreditation in higher education is an important system of peer evaluation that serves dual purposes: first, to assure the quality of institutions and, second, to encourage continuous improvement of institutions. This study focuses more on accreditation's purpose of continuous improvement of colleges than on the quality assurance aspect of accreditation, though both purposes of accreditation are equally important and work in tandem. To encourage and support continuous improvement of colleges, peer evaluators make recommendations for improvement to the college under review, especially if the institution falls short of the standards of accreditation and has a sanction imposed. The recommendations are intended to help the college make institutional improvements, remove sanctions, and have accreditation reaffirmed. Colleges are expected to make the needed improvements within two years. Some colleges are able to make the necessary changes within the two-year timeframe, but some take more time. This study explores the college characteristics and organizational behavior of colleges that have been successful in making improvements and having sanctions lifted.

Chapter Two described the development of accreditation in the United States, and because accreditation recommendations precipitate organizational change in a college and because organizational change is an aspect of organizational behavior, Chapter Two also presented a brief overview of concepts of organizational behavior. Chapter Three provides a description of the research design and methodology that were used to gather data on the characteristics and organizational behaviors that supposedly assist colleges in

their efforts to make improvements that satisfy accreditation recommendations and that help colleges remove sanctions and have their accreditation reaffirmed. This chapter explains the rationale for the selected design and methods, including a brief discussion of the philosophical grounding of the design. It also describes the considerations and decisions that were part of the planning process, including the specific research methods, sample selection, delimitations, instrument design and protocols, data collection, and data analysis. Among the considerations, this chapter also covers ethical treatment of the study's participants and limitations of the study.

Restatement of Purpose and Research Questions

The overall purpose of this study is to explore institutional characteristics and organization behaviors that have contributed to a community college's successful removal of an accreditation sanction. This exploration is driven by a curiosity to find answers to the following research questions:

- What actions or activities of a college community contribute to its success in having the sanction removed?

- Which college personnel play key roles in the college's work to remove the sanction?

- What attributes (skills and personal traits) of college personnel contribute to the college's success in having the sanction removed?

- What kinds of assistance might a college need in order to have the sanction removed?

Research Methodology and Design

The purpose of this study is to explore what has happened on community college campuses as the college communities worked to have accreditation sanctions removed, and through this exploration to tease out variables that have positively affected the colleges' recovery from the sanctions. This exploration used qualitative research methods to collect data from narratives of participants' experiences during post-accreditation-visit processes and activities undertaken by their colleges. Qualitative research is the appropriate classification for this study since "qualitative researchers seek to make sense of personal narratives and the ways in which they intersect" (Glesne, 2006, p. 1). Qualitative research is based on an ontological framework that asserts that

> reality is socially constructed, complex, and ever-changing. What is "real" becomes relative to the specific location and people involved. The qualitative epistemology holds that you come to know those realities through interactions and subjectivist explorations with participants about their perceptions. (Glesne, 2006, p. 6)

Thus participants' narratives of events and descriptions of people and activities at the colleges will provide the basis of knowledge to be gained from this study. The details that the participants recalled from the memories of their experiences provided the data that was analyzed. The overlap of details from the various participants' memories form the socially constructed reality of the college's experience.

This study is grounded in an epistemology of empiricism. All knowledge comes through experience and is gained through the senses. As Francis Bacon (1620) stated,

> Man, being the servant and interpreter of Nature, can do and understand so much and so much only as he has observed in fact or in thought of the course of nature. Beyond this he neither knows anything nor can do anything.

51

Thus, human experience and observation are the sources of human knowledge (Bacon, 1620; Willis, 2007). This equation is the essence of empiricism. What we know comes to us through our experiences and through observations of the world in which we live—or more aptly, the *worlds* in which we live. The specific focus of this study is the world of community colleges that have been sanctioned as a result of an institutional evaluation for the purpose of reaffirmation of accreditation.

The branch of epistemology that most informs this study is phenomenology. Phenomenology is based on an ontology that reality is both subjective and relative (Willis, 2007), the understanding of which is dependent on the perceivers of that reality. Phenomenologists, like Husserl, assert that what can be known is found in the consciousness of the subjects: "All we know of the world is what we experience of it" (Earnshaw, 2006, p. 128). As Dilthey said, "all experience must be related back to and derives its validity from the conditions and context of consciousness in which it arises" (as cited in Willis, 2007, p. 52). The conditions and context of this study are the lives and social situations of the participants in their community college settings, and all that the participants can know is what they have observed and experienced in their lives and in those work settings. Similarly, all that the researcher can know of the colleges' experiences with accreditation is that which can be discovered within the consciousness of those who have experienced the process. The delimiter "all" does not mean that participants' explanations, descriptions, or narrations from memory will provide the total truth of what can be known. The word "all" in the sense used here denotes that the details held in the consciousness of the participants is a limited truth of the total

52

experience; those contents of human consciousness are *all* that can be known—in other words, they are *the only* facts that can be known because they are the data that is accessible. As Bacon (1620) confessed, the understanding gained from experience and observation will be incomplete:

> Now for grounds of experience—since to experience we must come—we have as yet had either none or very weak ones; no search has been made to collect a store of particular observations sufficient either in number, or in kind, or in certainty, to inform the understanding, or in any way adequate.

Bacon's description defines this study as inductive: from the specific details observed in the narratives of the participants, the investigator will draw general conclusions; however, these conclusions will be probable (Lunsford & Rusckiewicz, 2010)

The phenomenological epistemology easily leads to an interpretivist epistemology, relative to the limitations and biases of the participants being studied and how through those limitations and biases they interpret their experiences, give those experiences names, and systematize those experiences into meaningful knowledge that explains to them in a personal way the significance of their experiences. Interpretivism starts with the empirical experiences of the participant but understands that the experience will be tempered by relativism and rationalism (Willis, 2007)—relativism: the unique perspective of the participant "conditioned by [his or her] experiences and culture" (Willis, 2007, p. 48); and rationalism: the ability of the participant to think through the experience and to make his or her own sense of the event (Willis, 2007). Portelli (1991/2002) explained that "memory is not a passive depository of facts, but an active process of creation of meanings" (p. 69). Still, this research intends to be more

phenomenological than interpretivist, presenting and analyzing only those details that subjects are able to retrieve from their conscious minds, details that they recall from their observations and experiences of the processes, communications, and challenges they experienced during the accreditation process and its aftermath once the sanctions were imposed. These research intentions fit a description of phenomenology offered by Marshall and Rossman (2011): phenomenological approaches utilize "in-depth interviews with individuals who have experienced the phenomenon of interest," and the data from these interviews are analyzed "from the central assumption that there is an *essence* to an experience that is shared with others who have also had that experience" (p. 20). The essence that this study investigates in the narratives of participant experiences, after analysis, is the variables that affect a college's efforts to have accreditation sanctions removed.

The Specific Research Design

The study was conducted in two phases, first using a survey-questionnaire of several colleges and second using a multiple case study. Case studies as a methodology are helpful for studying not only the phenomenon but also the context (Yin, 2003). The questionnaire in the first phase was qualitative, comprising open-ended questions designed to generate themes that were researched in a more in-depth manner in the multiple case study. The multiple case study in this investigation looked at two California community colleges that had been successful at having sanctions removed. A case study is a complex form of qualitative research often involving multiple methods: interviews, focus groups, participant observations (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Case

studies can analyze a "full variety of evidence—documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations" (Yin, 2003, p. 8). This particular case study used semi-structured interviews and document reviews to gather data on the two colleges.

Glesne (2006) defined three types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. An intrinsic case study "contributes to better understanding of that particular case" (Glesne, 2006, p. 13). An instrumental case study is intended to provide revelation about a topic that can be expanded beyond the particular case being studied, perhaps to draw generalized conclusions (Glesne, 2006). A collective case study investigates multiple occurrences of a phenomenon in multiple participants—individuals or groups (Glesne, 2006). This study falls within the category of instrumental case study because it is intended to discover college attributes that might be generalized across the population of California community colleges. Although post-positivists, who believe that "the scientific method is the only valid and reliable source of knowledge" (Willis, 2007, p. 239), would cringe at the suggestion that the findings of this case study *might* be generalized across a population, Yin (2003) defended case studies as a viable method of empirical research:

> "How can you generalize from a single case?" is a frequently heard question. . . . However, consider for a moment that the same question had been asked about an experiment: "How can you generalize from a single experiment?" In fact, scientific facts are rarely based on single experiments; they are usually based on a multiple set of experiments that have replicated the same phenomenon under different conditions. The same approach can be used with multiple-case studies. (p. 10)

The multiple-case study method is suitable to answer the primary research question of this study: "What characteristics of a college contribute to its success at having a sanction

removed?" This is an open-ended question; it does not lend itself to experiment or quasi-experiment to uncover those attributes. Instead, conclusions will have to be inferred from an inductive analysis of the descriptive data collected through the survey-questionnaire and from the narrative data gathered from participants and from institutional documents that tell the colleges' accreditation stories.

The questions that were asked in the survey questionnaire and then later in the multiple case study interviews were influenced by appreciative inquiry as a research method. Appreciative inquiry is grounded in positive psychology (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010) and in positive organizational behavior (Luthans, 2002; Wright 2003; Youssef & Luthans, 2007), which is a blending of positive psychology with organizational behavior (Luthans, 2002). The emphasis of positive psychology has been "to shift the emphasis from what is wrong with people to what is right with people" (Luthans, 2002, p. 697). To apply positive psychology to organizational behavior, there is a similar shift in emphasis—from what is wrong with an organization to what is right with an organization. Appreciative Inquiry is a method of research that digs into positive aspects of an organization in order to initiate and facilitate positive change. Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010) explained it succinctly: "It is based on the notion that human systems, individuals, teams, organizations, and communities grow and change in the direction of what they study" (p. 6). In other words, if an organization looks at its successes and analyzes those, it will move forward with more successes as it dreams and plans for its future. However, if an organization focuses on problems and remediation, it

will continue with problems and the need for remediation. Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010) explained:

> In contrast, most other approaches to change are deficit based—focused on problems and how to overcome them. Success depends on a clear identification and diagnosis of the problem, the selection of an appropriate solution, and the implementation of that solution. . . . Appreciative Inquiry is an invitation to shift from a deficit-based approach to change to a positive approach to change. (p. 15).

In their inquiry into organizations' approaches to change, Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010) found that companies and agencies that used a deficit-based approach (what is *wrong* with the organization) focused on problems and, yes, often found solutions to those problems; however, organizations that focused on their "successes, hopes, and dreams" (p. 18) were able to create longer-lasting sustainable positive change and not just elimination of or control of problems.

The positive outlook on organizational change that undergirds positive organizational behavior and appreciative inquiry inspired the wording of the survey and interview questions. Each question asks about a particular aspect of the organization that contributed to or facilitated the college's success (Appendix B). In the beginning stages of this study, the investigator weighed the options: he could focus on the problems that led to colleges' struggles with overcoming accreditation recommendations (what went *wrong* with the college), or he could focus on the successful strategies employed by colleges and other organizational characteristics that employees believed contributed to their college's success at removing a sanction (what went *right*).

The researcher realizes that this study does not follow the protocols that would make it an exercise in appreciative inquiry. Although it has an "appreciative perspective"

using positive questions in "appreciative interviews" (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010), this study does not take the research to scale of a complete appreciative inquiry, which would involve interviews with "tens, hundreds, even thousands of people with questions of organizational relevance and vitality" (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010, pp. 11-12). In order to take this to scale, the researcher would have needed greater resources to conduct more interviews at more colleges in the California Community College system. Nevertheless, this study was intended to explore what works—what went right—in community colleges for the purpose of identifying organizational behavior and characteristics that result in positive outcomes, namely having accreditation sanctions lifted. Consequently, the emphasis of the survey and interview questions is *what worked well*.

Acknowledgement of Researcher Bias

As an Accreditation Liaison Officer who has had ten years of experience with accreditation and as an employee of a college that has been sanctioned, this researcher recognizes that he brings his own experience into the research because his own consciousness of accreditation and sanction may have influenced his formulation of the interview questions, including those that were asked spontaneously during the interviews, and may have influenced his interpretation of the data. The noumena of his existence play a part in the phenomena of his understanding, but rather than be a detriment, his consciousness of his experience helped him navigate the data collected and determine reasonable classifications of activities and responses of the participants and their institutions. After all, it is not possible "to conduct research from which your views and

58

subjective opinions are completely separate" (Willis, 2007, p. 51). Such involvement by the researcher is expected in phenomenological studies and is acceptable; a case study such as this, which employs a building of relationships between the researcher and the participants, "permits an explicit focus on the researcher's personal experience combined with those of the interview partners" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 148). Together, during the conversations that occur in interviews, the participants and researcher develop meaning and understanding of the events as they unfold through the narratives shared by the participants. In this research experience, the investigator observed that because of his experience with and knowledge of accreditation and because his college was on Warning, the participants appeared comfortable being interviewed by him. There was a sense of kinship between interviewer and participant, which created a space where participants could be completely open, free to express whatever views they held about the experience.

Nevertheless, the researcher wanted to avoid bias as much as possible and, conscious of his own experiences and personal understanding of accreditation, strove to remain objective during the interviews and during the analysis of the data. During the interviews, he asked the questions and then listened intently, using effective listening techniques such as repeating what the interviewee had said, or rephrasing what the interviewee said as a question, using informal member checking techniques such as "What I hear you saying is—" or "Tell me more about that," allowing the participant to clarify his or her response or add more detail. The investigator interjected very little or none of his own experiences into the conversation. His primary influence in each conversation occurred when he explained the primary research questions for the project

59

and his interest in the participants' experiences and how they will help him answer his research questions. Doing so informed the participants that the investigator was interested in what worked well on their campuses. Yet he encouraged them to speak freely and share whatever they could remember about the experience—what the college did and who was involved. Then he simply asked his interview questions and let the participants recount their tales and describe the details.

Limitations

As qualitative research, the information that was gathered and analyzed is descriptive and informative. The goal of the data gathering and analysis is "to understand phenomena from the participants' perspectives" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 77). It is acknowledged and understood, therefore, that the "traditional 'gold standards' [of scientific research] such as generalizability, replicability, control groups, and the like" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 77) are not the aim of this study. Also, because of limitations of time and other resources, because of the purposive selection of the participants, because of each participant's limited participation in the very complex processes of addressing accreditation recommendations (i.e. no participant could have a hands-on experience of every single activity that occurred at the college), and because of the limits of participants' memories to recall events, the researcher realizes that not all the relevant information could be gathered; some details have been missed. Such limitations have to be expected. As Patton (2002) stated, "There are no perfect research designs. There will always be tradeoffs" (p. 223).

It can also be expected that misunderstandings or misinterpretations may have

occurred between speaker and listener during interviews. As Reynolds (2010) stated,

"Words are slippery things." Statements can be misinterpreted, and ideas can get lost in

translation from one person to the next (Reynolds, 2010). People would like to believe

that they say what they mean, but as Bacon (1620) pointed out, "There are, however, in

words certain degrees of distortion and error." In his treatise *Novum organum*, he

explained:

> And therefore the ill and unfit choice of words wonderfully obstructs the
> understanding. Nor do the definitions or explanations wherewith in some things
> learned men are wont to guard and defend themselves, by any means set the
> matter right. But words plainly force and overrule the understanding, and throw
> all into confusion, and lead men away into numberless empty controversies and
> idle fancies. . . . Yet even definitions cannot cure this evil in dealing with natural
> and material things, since the definitions themselves consist of words, and those
> words beget others.

Bacon is astute in stating that "definitions cannot cure this evil," though this researcher

would not necessarily call such misunderstandings evil. Whereas dictionaries can

provide denotative definitions of what a word or idiom means to a general population,

each individual also derives meanings of words from personal experience, and he or she

attaches emotional content to words (Hacker, 2009). This emotional content creates

connotative meanings (Hacker, 2009) that are unique to that individual. The parties in a

conversation may be unaware of the connotations that words carry, and so each may not

realize that what was said meant one thing to the speaker but something else to the

listener—and misunderstanding or confusion can result.

The researcher attempted to compensate for this limitation of language by using the member-checking methods described above, the same member-checking techniques employed to avoid researcher bias—repeating what the speaker has said and allowing him or her the opportunity to correct the investigator if he had heard incorrectly, and using clarifying questions such as "What I hear you saying is—" or "Can you tell me more about that?"

Another limitation that can occur with open-ended questions, such as those used in the survey and in the case study interviews, is socially desirable responding, or desirability bias (Paunonen & LeBel, 2012). Because the colleges' reputations of quality are at stake with accreditation sanctions, and because the respondents take pride in their institutions and see themselves as members of successful institutions, it is possible that their responses were influenced by a desire to look good or to make sure their college looked good for an audience. They might overemphasize positive details and downplay negative details. The investigator worked to compensate for desirability bias by emphasizing to the participants that the colleges would remain anonymous in the final report, stating and restating as necessary that all details that could identify the colleges or the individual respondents or participants would be removed in the final version of this report. Participants were encouraged to narrate descriptive details of their and their institutions' experiences as honestly and as accurately as they could remember.

Selection of Sample

Sample selections for the survey-questionnaire and for the multiple case study were conducted according to the following criteria.

Sample Selection for the Questionnaire

The sample for the questionnaire was criterion-based (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Participants for the questionnaire were selected based on these criteria: (1) respondents will be Accreditation Liaison Officers of California public community colleges; (2) the college must have been on sanction as a result of its most recent six-year comprehensive accreditation visit, as opposed to a sanction that resulted from a follow-up visit; (3) the college must have had its sanctions removed between January 2009 and January 2012. The total number of colleges that fit these criteria was 38.

Sample Selection for the Case Studies

The two colleges that were selected for the multiple case study were drawn from the 38 colleges that fit the following criteria: (1) the college must have been on sanction as a result of its most recent six-year comprehensive accreditation visit; (2) the college must have had its sanctions removed between January 2009 and January 2012; and (3) the researcher has not participated on any evaluation team that has visited either college nor provided any training to college personnel regarding how to address recommendations. Of the two colleges that the researcher selected, one had its sanction removed and accreditation reaffirmed in January 2010. This college will be referred to as Queens College from here forward. The other college, which will be referred to as Kings College, had its sanction removed in January 2011. Consequently, at both colleges institutional memory of their processes was still somewhat fresh in participants' minds. In addition, both colleges had been placed on Warning, and both were successful at having the sanction removed within the two-year time limit. The researcher had not

Table 1: Descriptive details of the two colleges in the case study.

	Kings College	Queens College
Size (enrollments)	1,500 - 3,000	20,000 - 25,000
Location	rural	perimeter suburbs of large metro area
Duration of sanction	2 years	2 years
Removed from sanction	January 2011	January 2010
Reasons for sanction/ Recommendations	• Integrated budget and planning • Program Review • Research planning (systems) • Curriculum update/Student learning outcomes	• Mission Statement • Integrated budget and planning • Governing Board evaluation • Curriculum update/Student learning outcomes • Program Review

participated on any evaluation team that had visited either college nor provided any training to college personnel regarding how to address recommendations. Table 1 presents descriptive details of each college.

Kings College

Kings College is a small rural community college in a single college district. Enrollments at this college are approximately 3,000 students. The college is located in a rural area and serves several small communities, none of whose populations exceed 2,500. Like many other community colleges in California, Kings College had not yet a sanction until recently. After Kings College's last comprehensive self-study evaluation and evaluation visit, it received eight recommendations for improvement and was placed on warning by the ACCJC. One year later after the college submitted a progress report and received a follow-up evaluation visit, the ACCJC removed Kings College's warning status and reaffirmed accreditation. However, the college was required to submit a focused midterm report two years later and to receive another evaluation visit. In the

focused midterm report, the college was expected to report its progress on all eight recommendations as well as on self identified plans for improvement. Upon reviewing the focused midterm report and the evaluation report written by the third visiting team, the ACCJC issued a second warning to Kings College, this time requesting that the college completely resolve the problems identified in four of the eight recommendations (2009c, Beno to Kings College, June 30, 2009). The actual text of these four recommendations is presented in Figure 2. The four remaining recommendations are not presented here because the college had already demonstrated satisfactory work on them and did not work to continue to address them during this period of warning. According to the report of the evaluation team, the college had not completed its work on Recommendation 1, Integrated Budget and Planning, the college had created a draft planning document but had not yet implemented it; the team stated that the college needed to complete the cycle: implement the plan and then evaluate it. Regarding Recommendation 2, Program Review, the college had created and effectively implemented an ongoing, scheduled system of evaluative reviews of its student services units; the college had created and implemented a system of reviews for its academic units, but not all the units had adhered to the published schedule; and the college had begun conducting evaluative reviews of its administrative services units but had yet to create an ongoing, scheduled system of reviews for its administrative units; so the task of addressing this recommendation was incomplete. Regarding Recommendation 4, Research Planning (Systems), the college had installed a new information system but was still learning how to extract data from it, so the data needed for academic units and other

Figure 2: Recommendations for Kings College

Kings College was required to address the following recommendations to have its sanction of "Warning" removed. The recommendations below are quoted verbatim from the action letter from the ACCJC to the president of Kings College:

Recommendation #1: Integrated Budget and Planning
The team recommends that the college should integrate the planning and budget processes at various levels of the District so that the budget allocations are directly linked to the planning process, and clearly communicate and delineate the process as well as who is responsible. (Standards I.B.1, I.B.2, III.D, IV.A.2, IV.A.3)

Recommendation #2: Program Review
The team recommends that the college instructional program review process be expanded and the non-instructional program review process implemented, to include student services, library and learning support services; where each incorporates good practices, ongoing and timely reviews, data analysis and assessment to support student learning achievement; and is fully integrated into institutional planning and budget processes. (Standards I.B, I.B.1, II.A.1.b, II.A.1.c, II.A.1.e, II.A.2.f, II.B.1, II.B.3.c, II.C.1, II.C.1.a, III.A.1, III.A.1, III.A.4, III.B.3, IV.A.1, IV.A.3, IV.A.5, IV.B.2, IV.B.2.b)

Recommendation #4: Research Planning (Systems)
The team recommends that the college refine its process for the incorporation of data from its various service areas that assist in planning activities, ensuring that all necessary information is entered into the system so the widest range of research and planning information can be extracted. (Standards, I.B.5, I.B.6, I.B.7)

Recommendation #6: Course Outlines/Prerequisites/SLOs
The team recommends that the college review and update all course outlines, desired prerequisites and advisories, while integrated into on-going assessment that supports student learning achievement and student learning outcomes. (Standards II.A.1.c, II.A.2, II.A.2.a, II.A.2.e. II.A.2.f)

Kings College had received four other recommendations for improvements after its comprehensive self-study evaluation report and visit. However, those four had already been satisfactorily addressed by the college and therefore were not repeated as actionable items in this Warning sanction.

Source: Beno (2009c) to Kings College [letter], June 30, 2009

units to complete their program reviews was delayed; thus, the college had the potential

but had not yet reached its capacity. Regarding Recommendation 6, Course

Outlines/Prerequisites/SLOs, the college had made progress on this recommendation, but the evaluation team believed that it needed to move more quickly to complete its work establishing student learning outcomes (SLOs) in all programs and courses and begin its work of regularly assessing SLOs. The work that the college did to address the recommendations and to remove the second warning sanction was the subject of the interview participants' memories as they recollected their experiences—the types of actions or activities the college engaged in, which persons were involved, the personal traits of these persons, and any hindrances that arose during the work to improve.

Queens College

Queens College is a suburban community college in a single college district. It started as a small rural college when it was first founded, serving a county of approximately 60,000 inhabitants, but as the nearby metropolis expanded and grew, suburban communities sprouted and burgeoned within Queens College's district boundaries. It now serves a population of 350,000. The student population of Queens College grew rapidly within the last 20 years. The college now enrolls approximately 25,000 students annually, serving those suburban communities and continuing to serve the rural communities in the farther regions of its service delivery area. Cities within the district range in population from 12,000 to 115,000. In addition to the main campus, Queens College operates three smaller satellite centers in its remote communities.

Queens College had received its sanction of "Warning" after submission of its comprehensive self-study report and a visit by an evaluation team. The ACCJC requested that to remove the sanction of Warning, the college must make improvements

to its systems based on four out of six recommendations and within one year it was to

provide a progress report on those four recommendations (Figure 3) and it would receive

a follow-up visit from representatives from the ACCJC. According to the report of the

evaluation team, the college needed to update and improve its mission statement

(Recommendation 1); improve its institutional planning, evaluation, and resource

allocation decision making (Recommendation 2); begin a committed effort of assessing

student learning outcomes (Recommendation 3); strengthen its online student support and

library services (Recommendation 4); develop a long-term debt financing plan

(Recommendation 5); and create and implement regular processes for evaluating the

governing board (Recommendation 6). The ACCJC felt that the reasons for

Recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 6 were sufficient cause to issue the Warning sanction. The

Figure 3: Recommendations for Queens College

Queens College was required to address the following recommendations to have its sanction of "Warning" removed. The recommendations below are quoted verbatim from the action letter from the ACCJC to the president of Queens College:

Recommendation #1: Mission Statement
To ensure services and programs offered by Sierra College are meeting its stated purpose, the team recommends that the college amend the mission statement to specifically identify its intended student population and its commitment to achieving student learning. (Standard I.A.l , IV.B.l.b)

Recommendation #2: Integrated Planning, Evaluation, and Resource Allocation Decision Making
In order for the college to ensure an ongoing, systematic, and cyclical process that includes evaluation, planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation, the team recommends the following plan development, implementation, evaluation and improvement steps:
1. Develop a comprehensive, integrated, long-range Strategic Plan including goals that can be used to influence resource allocation decisions. The Strategic Plan

Figure 3: Recommendations for Queens College (continued)

should incorporate the priorities established in all of the college's major plans to include its:
- a. Technology Plan
- b. Facilities Master Plan
- c. Educational Master Plan
- d. Human Resources Staffing Plan

(I.A.4, I.B.2, I.B.3, 4, III.A.2, III.B.2.b, III.C.2, III.C.1.d)

2. Modify the budget development process in a manner that will place the college's strategic plan priorities at the center of its resource allocation decisions. (Ill.D.1, 1.c)
3. Develop and work to implement as appropriate a Human Resources Staffing Plan that will satisfy the college's long standing expression of need for additional full-time faculty and support personnel to improve student learning. (III.A.2, II.C.1, II.C.1.a., II.C.1.d.)
4. Develop mechanisms to regularly evaluate all of the college's planning and resource allocation processes as the basis for improvement. (I.B.6, ll.A.2.f., II.B.4, III.D.3, IV.A.5)

Recommendation #3: Student Learning Outcomes
The team recommends that the college identify assessment methods and establish dates for completing student learning outcomes assessments at the institutional level and for all of its courses, programs and services. This process should also include the development of performance measures to assess and improve institutional effectiveness of all programs and services. The college should disseminate the outcomes widely and use these results in the strategic planning and resource allocation process. It is further recommended that the college include effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes as part of its faculty evaluation process. (Il.A.1.a, c, II.A.2.a, h, II.B.4; II.C.2, III.A.1.c)

Recommendation #6: Governing Board Evaluation
The team recommends that the Board complete an annual board self evaluation to ensure that its policies promote quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services. (IV.B.1)

Queens College had received two other recommendations for improvements after its comprehensive self-study evaluation report and visit. Although the college was required to address these recommendations, neither was reason for the sanction and progress on neither was required to be reported in the follw-up report.

Source: Beno (2008) to Queens College [letter], January 31, 2008

visiting team wrote Recommendation 1 because the college's mission did not identify the institution's intended students nor underscore the college's aim as student learning. The college received Recommendation 2 because its institutional planning processes had not been utilized to their full extent; there was no overarching strategic master plan to unify the smaller division plans to meet institutional goals and although individual divisions utilized data to evaluate their effectiveness, the college lacked an overarching institutional evaluation process that would complete the planning and evaluation cycle at the institutional level. It received Recommendation 3 because there was no evidence that student learning was being assessed or that assessment results were analyzed and used for program or institutional effectiveness evaluation, and because non-academic had not established outcomes or assessment metrics to evaluate their effectiveness. The college received Recommendation 6 because the college had not evaluated the effectiveness of the Board for the past two years.

One year later, after Queens College had submitted a follow-up progress report and after a follow-up evaluation team had visited the college, the ACCJC continued the college on Warning and added one more recommendation of its own that did not originate from the follow-up visiting team nor the previous comprehensive visiting team. Regarding Recommendation 1, the follow up visiting team determined that the college had satisfactorily updated and improved its mission statement. Regarding Recommendation 2, the college was found to have made significant progress but not enough. It was noted in the follow-up visiting team's report that the college's work to obtain approval from all the constituency groups of the processes to be used in planning,

70

resource allocation, and evaluation was time consuming and prevented the college from

moving as far forward on this recommendation as the ACCJC would have preferred to

see. Regarding Recommendation 3, the college was found to have made satisfactory

progress on a portion of this recommendation but needed to continue developing

processes to integrate student learning outcomes into institutional planning, budgeting

(resource allocation), and evaluation, including faculty and employee evaluation.

Regarding Recommendation 6, it was found that the college had completed its work on

this task. Because the college had only partially completed its work on Recommendation

2, the ACCJC reiterated Recommendation 2 in its action letter notifying the college that it

would continue on Warning. Furthermore, based on the follow up evaluation team's

finding that the college did not evaluate the currency or relevancy of curriculum in its

program review process, the ACCJC added a recommendation of its own: that the college

"improve its program review process to include analysis of the currency and relevancy of

the programmatic curriculum" (2009a, Beno to Queens College, February 3, 2009). This

new recommendation was a centerpiece of the work of the college during the second year

on Warning, as reported in several of the interviews. Figure 4 lists the two

recommendations that Queens College was required to work on as it continued on

Warning and that the college was to report progress on in October 2009. In its Midterm

Report, which was due to the ACCJC in October 2010, the college was to report its

progress on all six recommendations. That work was beyond the scope of this study and

was not a focus of the interviews with participants.

Figure 4: Continuing Recommendations for Queens College

As Queens College remained on Warning, it was required to address the following recommendations to have its sanction removed. The recommendations below are quoted verbatim from the action letter from the ACCJC to the president of Queens College:

Recommendation 2: Integrated Planning, Evaluation, and Resource Allocation Decision Making
In order for the college to ensure an ongoing, systematic, and cyclical process that includes evaluation, planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation, the team recommends the following plan development, implementation, evaluation and improvement steps:

2b. Modify the budget development process in a manner that will place the college's strategic plan priorities at the center of its resource allocation decisions. (III.D.1, 1.c)

2d. Develop mechanisms to regularly evaluate all of the college 's planning and resource allocation processes as the basis for improvement. (I.B.6, ll.A.2.f., II.B.4, III.D.3, IV.A.5)

Commission Recommendation 1: Program Review
The Commission requires the college to improve its program review process to include analysis of the currency and relevancy of the programmatic curriculum.

Source: Beno (2009a) to Queens College [letter], February 3, 2009

The Presidents of both colleges were contacted in order to gain their consent to interview individuals who were involved in addressing the Accrediting Commission's recommendations to get the colleges off their sanctions. After telephone contact wasmade and the Presidents gave their verbal consent, consent forms were sent to each college for the President's signature. A copy of a blank consent form is contained in Appendix C.

Participant Selection for Interviews

At both Kings College and Queens College, the investigator interviewed administrators, middle managers, classified personnel, and faculty. The participants at each site were selected based on their leadership positions and/or based on their

Table 2: Interview participant list

Kings College		Queens College	
Position	**Classification**	**Position**	**Classification**
President	administrator	Vice President of Instruction	administrator
Dean of Instruction	administrator	Director of Institutional Research	administrator
Executive Assistant to Dean of Student Services	classified	Research Analyst	classified
Faculty Leader/SLO Coordinator	faculty	Associate Dean of Liberal Arts	administrator
IT Specialist/ Distance Education Specialist	part-time faculty/ classified	Former Academic Senate President	faculty
Institutional Researcher	administrator		

participation in the College's activities to address the accreditation recommendations.

These were persons who possessed knowledge of the college's experiences with

accreditation and had been in their positions at least as long as the last accreditation cycle

(i.e. the most recent self-study, visit, and follow-up activity). These persons had

significant involvement in the recovery-from-sanctions activity of the college. Table 2

lists the participants who were interviewed at the two colleges. All interviews at both

colleges were conducted privately in the participants' offices or in conference rooms.

One exception was the interview with the Vice President of Academic Affair from

Queens College, which occurred off campus.

The participant list for Kings College was developed with the help of the

president of the college. The researcher contacted the president, who agreed to

participate in the study. At Kings College, in addition to completing the consent form,

the president had his executive assistant arrange interviews between the investigator and

college personnel who played key leadership roles in the accreditation activities at the

college. Interview appointments were set up with six of the college's personnel, including the president.

At Queens College, the president gave consent for the college to participate in the study but then, because the current president was new and had not occupied the office of president during the Warning period, he referred the investigator to the Accreditation Liaison Officer, who was the Vice President of Instruction. The Vice President of Instruction then gave the investigator the name and contact information for the Dean of Institutional Research. The investigator scheduled interviews with both the Vice President of Instruction and the Dean of Institutional Research. No other interviews were arranged prior to the site visit to Queens College. During the site visit, the Dean of Institutional Research helped the investigator determine other individuals to speak to, so the interview schedule snowballed to a total of five individuals. Snowball sampling (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) describes what occurred at Queens College; the first person who was interviewed identified other individuals who were active in the college's work to remove the sanctions and who would be able to provide more narrative data from their perspectives. These additional front-line leaders were interviewed to get a more complete picture of the college's story. One of the intentions in participant selection was to ensure that the data gathered from the interviews included an administrative perspective, a faculty perspective, and a researcher perspective.

Procedures for Data Collection

The research was conducted in two phases: first a survey-questionnaire and afterwards a multiple case study, which consisted of document reviews and interviews at

two community colleges. The questionnaire laid some groundwork to assist in the development of interview questions for the multiple case study. The document review in the multiple case study was used to help triangulate the data and to gain a better grasp of the colleges' official situations in relation to accreditation. However, because the approach of this study is predominantly phenomenological, the narrated experiences and understandings of the interview participants serve as the primary sources of data.

Survey-Questionnaire

Although the interviews were the main source of data for this study, the survey-questionnaire was administered as the first phase. To help prepare for an interview, Glesne (2006) recommended that a researcher begin by observing the subject that is to be studied. Details observed can be used to help the researcher formulate questions to be used in the interviews (Glesne, 2006). However, for this study it was considered unreasonable to conduct preliminary observations on the college campuses; such observations would not generate information that would be usable for honing the interview questions, especially since the colleges are no longer in the throes of having to remove the sanctions. Nevertheless, some preliminary information regarding colleges' experiences with accreditation sanctions was helpful in planning the interviews. Consequently, instead of conducting onsite observations, the researcher used the brief questionnaire with several other colleges from among the 34 that fit the original criteria for selection.

The colleges who participated in the questionnaire were selected as described in the following process.

Between January 2009 and January 2012, there were 36 colleges that have had sanctions removed not counting the two colleges selected for the multiple case study (Appendix A). The questionnaire (Appendix B) was emailed to the Accreditation Liaison Officers (ALOs) at each of the 36 colleges in May 2012. This list of ALOs had been gathered from the office of the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). Over the next two weeks, only five colleges responded, which is a return rate of 14%. In order to boost the rate of return on the survey, the investigator made personal phone calls to the ALOs of the thirteen colleges that had had their sanctions removed and their accreditation reaffirmed within the previous 18 months. In the second week of June 2012, he was successful in contacting seven of those thirteen ALOs from the colleges in that grouping, all of whom promised to complete the survey. The researcher e-mailed the survey to those seven persons. Out of those seven, three completed the survey, boosting the number of returns to eight, a rate of return of 21%. Chapter 4 presents the resulting data from the survey instrument and compares those data to the data collected from the multiple case study.

Multiple Case Study

Both colleges selected for the multiple case study had gone through the process of being placed on sanction, of making institutional improvements in response to the ACCJC's recommendations, and of having sanctions removed. Because these processes of making institutional improvements and removing sanctions occurred in the past, the data to be analyzed was found in two locations: within the formal documents that record and report both the colleges' activity and the ACCJC's responses, and within the

memories of those college personnel who participated in the colleges' activities to have the sanctions removed. Thus, the two primary data-gathering strategies that were utilized in the case-study portion of this research were document reviews and interviews. Before the collection of data proceeded, permission to conduct the study was sought from the Presidents of the two colleges where the case studies were conducted. These permissions were given in writing and were submitted with the IRB.

Document Review

"Archaeologists reconstruct life in past times by examining the documents left behind" (Glesne, 2006, p. 65). To add to the understanding of the two colleges' history, all official documents between the ACCJC and the colleges were analyzed. Both colleges had made all official documents related to the accreditation process publicly accessible on their websites. The researcher utilized each college's website to access all of the relevant documents. As artifacts of these colleges' experiences, the documents provided background information regarding the concerns of the ACCJC that led to the sanctions and the recommendations that prompted the colleges' activities to remove the sanctions. The documents included the following:

- the self-study evaluation reports from both colleges

- evaluation reports of visiting teams representing the ACCJC

- action letters from the ACCJC

- follow-up reports and progress reports in which the colleges documented their progress on the recommendations contained in the action letters from the ACCJC and repeated in the evaluation reports written by the visiting teams

- evaluation reports of follow-up visiting teams representing the ACCJC

- midterm reports in which colleges reported to the ACCJC their progress on all accreditation recommendations contained in the visiting teams' evaluation reports, including those which did not have bearing on the sanction imposed

- other documents that chronicled the colleges' responses to the Commission's recommendations, such as minutes from meetings of an Accreditation Steering Committee or similar committee.

These documents provided a portion of the narrative framework of the colleges' activities in response to the Commission's recommendations. Data from the interviews provided interpretations and significance of those recommendations, from the perspectives of the individuals and from the institution as a whole. The triangulation of interview data compared to document data provided a fuller understanding of the paths that the institutions took to remove the sanctions and of the motivations and reasoning behind those paths.

Interviews

Because this study is grounded in a phenomenological approach, participant interviews served as a useful tool for gathering data; "Phenomenological approaches seek to explore, describe, and analyze the meaning of individual lived experience" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 19). Yin (2003) stated that "one of the most important sources of case study information is the interview" (p. 89). Interviews allow the investigator to obtain not only the facts about the event but also the participants' opinions (Yin, 2003), which speak to the participants' understanding of the event. The investigator used a

single-issue interview approach (Slim, Thomnpson, Bennett, & Cross, (1998/2002)

because this is the "main method for learning about a particular event" (p. 117). The

singular event under investigation is the colleges' removal of an accreditation sanction.

The questions on the questionnaire (Appendix B) provided the basic framework

for the interview questions in the multiple case study. But the questions were used to

create a "guided conversation" rather than a "structured query" (Yin, 2003, p. 89) as in

the survey. Interviews at both colleges were thus semi-structured. The investigator

allowed the respondents to respond to the questions in any manner that they thought was

appropriate. Morrissey (1998/2002) advised that an interviewer should play it by ear and

just let the interviewee talk. Questions should be open-ended and should not be phrased

in a way that gets to an answer that one wants or expects to hear (Morrissey, 1998/2002).

So the investigator kept the questions open-ended. Since the research questions focus the

intent of the study on what worked well at a college, the questions were phrased in such a

way to ask the participants to describe what worked well or what they thought influenced

the college's successful removal of the sanction. But the investigator allowed the

participants to speak of whatever came to mind in order to collect data on the

phenomenon of the college's experience as understood by the participants. The

combined interview data collected from the several participants at each college helped the

investigator construct the meaning of (a portion of) the institutional lived experience.

Consequently, data were gathered from the stories the participants told. The interviews

were intended to mine the memories of the college personnel in order to gain descriptive

details of their experiences and to explore the participants' understanding of their

colleges' experiences. Therefore, interview as a method is well aligned with the phenomenological foundation of this study. The participants' conscious recollections and their reasoned interpretations of lived experiences during the un-sanctioning process provide the data that are analyzed in Chapter 4.

The researcher visited each college in person to conduct the interviews. He spent a full day at King's college, meeting the participants individually in their offices or in conference rooms, and he used a day and a half to conduct the interviews at Queens College, also meeting the participants individually in their offices or at an off campus location. All interviews were recorded using a digital recording device. Although each interview used the same set of questions (Appendix B), the researcher encouraged open conversation and free exchange of stories and ideas. The researcher asked follow-up questions and clarifying questions during the interviews to make sure that participants had ample opportunity to present their perspectives as thoroughly as possible. The interviews lasted from 30 minutes to 60 minutes or longer if more time was needed. The interviews with the senior administrators at both colleges lasted roughly 75 minutes. The digital recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim into word-processed documents.

Procedures for Data Analysis

Responses from the returned questionnaires were analyzed for common themes and recurring details regarding institutional actions, persons responsible, and attributes of the persons responsible. Analysis of the questionnaire results were used to create more specific questions that were used in the participant interviews.

The transcripts from the interviews were analyzed for patterns and common themes that surfaced through the described experiences of the various participants. In the coding of the interview data, most filler words and phrases were deleted, such as *y'know*, *basically*, *I think*, *kind of*, *um*, *I mean*, and the word *and* when it was overused as a device to string together statements that constructed a narrative sequence of actions, events, or ideas as they developed in the interviewees' stream-of-consciousness speaking. The first round of coding was open coding (Marshall & Rossman, 2011), making notes of discernible concepts that the researcher observed in the transcripts. The second round of coding involved organizing the concepts into categories using axial coding, "clustered around points of intersection, or axes" (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 215). Patterns and themes were clustered into meaningful categories to help provide an understanding of these colleges' experiences. Based on these categories and the outcomes discovered in the work of these colleges, as revealed through the documents, conclusions were drawn as to the efficaciousness of particular institutional behaviors and of personal attributes of leaders and other personnel to produce desired results. These conclusions are presented in Chapter 5.

The analysis of the data will be presented in Chapter 4 of this study, "Findings." Because this is a qualitative study and not a quantitative study, no statistical testing was conducted to determine the validity of the findings.

Ethical Treatment of Participants

Because accreditation sanctions are a sensitive issue and present a negative institutional image to the public, confidentiality has been maintained with respect to the

identities of the colleges and the participants, including the President, other administrators, staff, and faculty. No individual persons are identified by name. Confidentiality has been maintained with respect to information or data that participants disclose in a relationship of trust with the researcher, with the expectation that information and data will not be shared with others in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the confidentiality agreement.

To maintain confidentiality and privacy, data have been stored in secure files on the researcher's personal computer. Back-up files have been maintained on USB drives that will not be shared with anyone. Digital recordings have been stored in the same manner. The original recordings were deleted from the original recording device once the files were transferred to the researcher's personal computer and backed-up on a USB drive.

The risk to individuals for participating in this study is no greater than everyday life. The opinions of individuals expressed openly and candidly during the interviews or focus groups might have negative impact on their workplace relationships. Negative impact may occur if the source of criticism of college leadership, other personnel, or college systems is traced back to the specific participant who expressed the criticism. Therefore all reasonable efforts have been made to protect participants' identities and the confidential nature of their responses.

In addition, because accreditation is a public process that impacts an institution's reputation in its local community as well as among peer institutions, risk to institutions for participating in the study could affect its public image and perhaps its relationship

with peer institutions and with the ACCJC. Therefore, to ensure the confidentiality of the participating institutions, all reasonable efforts have been made to protect their identities.

Concluding Summary

This chapter of the study has presented the underlying epistemological basis of this study—the understanding that what can be known of an event or of an experience can be known through the conscious experience and recollection of experience of the persons who observed or participated in the event. By definition, this study will take a phenomenological approach. This chapter has also outlined how the study was conducted by identifying the participants, why they were selected, and how the study proceeded. The procedures for data collection and data analysis have been described. In the description of the procedures, care has also been taken to describe how the study's participants will be cared for, how their privacy and confidentiality will be protected. The next chapter, Chapter 4, presents the findings that have resulted from the data collection and analysis procedures.

Chapter 4: Findings

Chapter 4 presents the qualitative data gathered and analyzed from the questionnaire and from the multiple case study. This chapter opens with a description of the several colleges that participated in this study. Following those descriptions is a presentation of the data organized according to the topics under investigation as posed in the research questions. Those topics are (1) the actions or activities that colleges engaged in that helped them to remove their accreditation sanction, (2) the key persons involved in those activities and their personal characteristics, (3) the resources that colleges turned to for assistance, and (4) hindrances to the colleges' progress in addressing the accreditation sanction. But first, an introduction to the participating colleges—

Eight colleges responded to the questionnaire and two colleges participated in the multiple case study. However, before presenting descriptive information about these colleges, the investigator would like to reiterate that accreditation sanctioning is a sensitive issue among colleges. Although all matters of accreditation are available as public information and although all of the colleges that have participated in the study have disclosed their accreditation documents publicly online, the accreditation sanctions are experienced by colleges as a chastisement and therefore a public embarrassment, like having a "scarlet letter" (Hawthorne, 1850) sewn to a college's homepage. And even though accreditation is a matter of professional integrity and public accountability, it was promised to all colleges that participated in this study that their names would be withheld. Therefore, to help identify the various colleges the investigator assigned pseudonyms to the institutions based on locations that are named in the popular fictional series, *A Game*

Table 3: The colleges that participated in this study

	Approximate Size (enrollments)	Location and District type	Years on sanction	Sanction level	Position of Respondent
Colleges that responded to the questionnaire					
Blackwater College	30,000 – 35,000	Suburban Single college dist	1	Warning	(No answer)
College Beyond the Wall	30,000 – 35,000	Rural/Suburban Multi college dist	1	Warning	Academic Dean
Dorne College	30,000 – 35,000	Suburban Single college dist	1.5	Probation	Executive Assistant to CIO
Dragonstone College	1,500 - 3,000	Rural Single college dist	2	Warning	President
Lannisport College	70,000 – 80,000	Urban/Suburban Multi college dist	1	Warning	Faculty
Oldtown College	25,000 – 30,000	Urban/Suburban Multi college dist	1	Warning	(No answer)
Riverrun College	10,000 – 15,000	Rural Single college dist	2	Warning	Director of Institutional Research
Winterfell College	30,000 – 35,000	Urban Multi college dist	1	Probation	Faculty
Colleges in the multiple case study					
Kings College	1,500 - 3,000	Rural Single college dist	2	Warning	- - -
Queens College	20,000 - 25,000	Rural/suburban Single college dist	2	Warning	- - -

of Thrones (Martin, 1996). Brief descriptions of the participating colleges, with their pseudonyms, are contained in Table 3.

All of the colleges that participated in this study experienced the following process: (1) Each college conducted an institutional self-evaluation. (2) Each college submitted a report of the self-evaluation results to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC). This report is commonly known as a Self Study. (3) A team of peer evaluators from other member institutions in the region visited the college to verify what the college said about itself in its self-evaluation and to verify that the college has continued to satisfy eligibility requirements and has continued to

meet the standards of accreditation. This team wrote a report of its findings, which it submitted to the ACCJC. Included in this report were the team's recommendations for improvements. (4) The ACCJC reviewed the college's self-evaluation, the visiting team's report, and other historical documents related to the college's accreditation. The ACCJC then took action on the college to reaffirm accreditation or, if it found sufficient deficiencies, to impose a sanction. (5) The ACCJC sent an action letter to the college notifying the college of its decision to reaffirm or to impose a sanction. If a sanction was imposed, which indeed was the case for each of the colleges in this study, then the letter also specified which of the visiting team's recommendations, plus any recommendations from the ACCJC itself, the college must address in order to have the sanction removed. The recommendations are written as actions that the college must take in order to improve and to meet the eligibility requirements and/or standards of accreditation.

In this chapter there are many references to steps in the fore-mentioned process. In the participants' descriptions of their colleges' work to remove the sanctions, the survey respondents and the case study interviewees discussed actions that the colleges engaged in, in response to the visiting team's recommendations and the ACCJC's recommendations, although from this point forward these recommendations will be referred to only as the ACCJC recommendations since ultimately the visiting teams represent the ACCJC, and it is the ACCJC that imposes the sanction and informs the colleges which of the recommendations they must address in order to have the sanction removed and their accreditation reaffirmed.

Survey Participants: Eight Colleges

The intended participants for the survey questionnaire were colleges within the California community college system that had been sanctioned by the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) and that had been successful at removing their sanctions. At the time that the research was begun, there had been 38 public community colleges in California that had been removed from sanctions and had had their accreditation reaffirmed between January 2009 and January 2012. Two of the 38 colleges were selected for the multiple case study and were not invited to participate in the survey. The survey questionnaire was distributed to Accreditation Liaison Officers (ALOs) at the other 36 colleges in May 2012. Even after several attempts by the researcher to encourage respondents, only eight colleges participated in the survey, a rate of return of 22%. If for clarity's sake any of these eight colleges need to be named in the discussion of the survey results, they will be referred to using the pseudonyms noted in Table 3: Blackwater College, College Beyond the Wall, Dorne College, Dragonstone College, Lannisport College, Oldtown College, Riverrun College, and Winterfell College.

Multiple Case Study Participants: Two Colleges

For the multiple case study, the investigator selected two California community colleges from among the 38 colleges that had had sanctions removed within the previous three years. The investigator visited these two colleges to conduct focused, semi-structured interviews with persons who had participated in the activities related to addressing the accreditation recommendations. These two colleges will be referred to as Kings College and Queens College. At Kings College six persons were interviewed, and

Table 4: Interview participant list

Kings College		Queens College	
Position	**Classification**	**Position**	**Classification**
President	administrator	Vice President of Instruction (CIO)	administrator
Dean of Instruction (CIO)	administrator	Dean of Institutional Research (DIR)	administrator
Executive Assistant to Dean of Student Services (CSSO)	classified	Research Analyst	classified
Faculty/SLO Coordinator	faculty	Associate Dean of Liberal Arts	administrator
IT Specialist/Distance Education Specialist	classified/part-time faculty	Former Academic Senate President	faculty
Institutional Researcher (DIR)	administrator		

at Queens College five persons were interviewed. Table 4 lists the participants who were interviewed at the two colleges. All interviews at both colleges were conducted privately in the participants' offices or in conference rooms. All participants at Kings College were interviewed on June 20, 2012. The participants at Queens College were interviewed on June 21, 2012. One exception was the interview with the Vice President of Instruction from Queens College, which occurred off campus on June 23, 2012. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed for accuracy of reporting in this chapter.

Through the rest of this chapter, the interviewees will be identified by the positions they held. It is noted that the two colleges had different names for similar positions. Specifically, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at each college was called the President and will be referred to as the President of Kings College or the President of Queens College. Although the President of Queens College was not interviewed, he was mentioned in the interviews with the Queens College participants. The Chief Instructional Officer (CIO) at Kings College was called the Dean of Instruction and at

Queens College was called the Vice President of Instruction. These shall be referred to as the CIO of their respective colleges. The Director of Institutional Research (DIR) was called the Institutional Researcher at Kings College and the Dean of Institutional Research at Queens College, but they will both be referred to as the DIR for their respective colleges. The faculty members from the colleges will each be referred to as the faculty participant. The other participants will be referred to specifically by their job titles at their respective colleges.

The rest of this chapter presents the findings from the questionnaire and case-study interviews as they pertain to the research questions: (1) What actions or activities of a college community contribute to its success in having the sanction removed? (2) Which college personnel (should) play key roles in the college's work to remove the sanction? And what skills and personal traits of college personnel contribute to the college's success in having the sanction removed? (3) What kinds of assistance might a college need in order to have the sanction removed? (4) What organizational characteristics might hinder a college's attempts to have a sanction removed?

(1) Activities and Actions

In both the questionnaires and in the interviews in the multiple case study, all participants were asked what actions or activities their colleges engaged in that they thought helped to contribute to their college's successful removal of the accreditation sanction and to have their accreditation reaffirmed. Activities that the colleges reported included (1) relying on committees to oversee or to do the work, (2) creating strategies and timelines for completing the work, (3) communicating effectively across the

institution throughout the process, (4) involving members of the institution from multiple constituencies and multiple departments, and (5) creating documents as evidence that the work was completed or in progress. It did not matter which accreditation recommendation the college was working on. The above actions were common regardless of the recommendation. Many of the colleges were recommended to improve their planning processes by linking plans to evaluations and to budget development. The exact wording of this sort of recommendation changed from college to college, but the overall gist of the recommendation was the same: link institutional planning, institutional assessment and evaluation, and institutional budgeting and resource allocations. Many colleges created new or ad hoc committees to tackle a recommendation such as this, or they assigned the addressing of this recommendation to a committee already in existence at the college, or in some cases the President locked himself or herself (figuratively speaking) in an office and created plans, evaluations, and linkages all by himself or herself. These are examples of the types of activities that this study focuses on, activities or actions that can be applied to any recommendation.

This section of Chapter 4, looking at actions and activities, does not look specifically at how each college addressed each recommendation but instead looks at actions or activities in common. For example, it was common for a college to create a separate committee to address each recommendation, so the action to be looked at is the action of creating a committee and not how they created an institutional strategic plan or created an evaluation or linked one process to another. Out of the five actions or activities identified above, the major themes present in nearly every college's responses

90

were (1) relying on committees, (2) developing strategies and timelines, (3) improving communication throughout the institution, and (4) involving as many people as possible from as many of the constituent groups as possible in these college-wide activities. These four could be considered the major themes that surfaced in answer to this research question. The fifth action, creating documents as evidence, was mentioned to a lesser extent and so could be considered a minor theme; yet it was no less important to the colleges' having their sanctions removed than the other activities, for all colleges were required to provide evidence of the work that they had completed.

(1) Relying on committees and other groups

A noticeable action taken by a number of the colleges who participated in the survey was the formation and use of committees to address one or more recommendations. Six of the eight colleges that responded reported that they created specialized response teams or committees to oversee the college's response to the ACCJC's recommendations. The following statements are quoted from the survey responses:

> Monthly meetings of the Accreditation Team to address the specific recommendations of the visiting team. (Winterfell College)

> A small task force was appointed within a week of receiving the Commission's notice. (College Beyond the Wall)

> Increased dialogue at participatory governance committees and the Academic Senate. (Lannisport College)

> We created an Accreditation Response Team (ART) that included all constituent groups with Administrator and Faculty Co-Chairs. . . . Subcommittees were formed for each recommendation where subject matter experts could join in providing information, documentation, and evidence. (Blackwater College)

Created an Accreditation Oversight Committee (AOC) led by the ALO and a Faculty Co- Chair. This committee became an official standing committee of the Shared Consultation Council. . . . Individual work groups were formed for each recommendation with oversight from the AOC. All work groups had representation from all constituencies. (Dorne College)

We had to do some reorganization of committees and define the roles of those committees and how processes would be different than how things had "always" been done. (Riverrun College)

We eliminated the Accreditation Committee and shifted this responsibility to the College Council. (Dragonstone College)

Dragonstone's response stands in contrast to the others because it expressed a negative action on a committee, ceasing to use an Accreditation Committee and assigning those oversight responsibilities to its College Council. Although Oldtown College (OTC) made no mention of committees, task forces, response teams, or any sort of work group, it cannot be assumed that they did not form committees or that they did not assign tasks to committees. Additionally, even though Riverrun College described a restructuring of committees in order to respond to the recommendations, the respondent from Riverrun College also stated the following,

In regards to committee structures, to be honest, I don't think the committee structure is all that important because it is a handful of individuals who get the most work done and they will get the work done regardless of the organizational structure as long as they have support from the president.

So even though a college mentioned the formation of committees or the assignment of work to a committee, it cannot be assumed that every member of a committee participated and contributed as a member of the team. It can also not be assumed that formation of a committee is itself a solution to any problem or challenge.

Kings College

Kings College is another college that formed committees as a way to tackle the accreditation recommendations. In the interviews with persons from Kings College, the word *committee* was used 169 times. All six participants at Kings College mentioned the formation of committees, their personal participation on committees, or the assignment of work to committees as important activities in the college's removal of the sanction. The following quotations from each of the interviewees capture their recollections of the uses of committees. The faculty participant recalled her participation in the college's work to address the ACCJC recommendations:

> I serve on the SLO committee, which we called the SLOAC Committee, the Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Cycle, and that committee was really instrumental in getting this college beyond the recommendation and moving toward proficiency.

She also remembered how the President would inform the whole college of the progress that each committee was making on its assigned tasks:

> He [the President] would formulate ideas, and he would bring those not just to the committees—planning, budgeting, the cabinet level—but he also conducts at least once a semester community meetings with the whole campus community. . . . "This is what the Budget Committee is working on. This is what the Strategic Planning Committee is working on."

The CIO's memory of the college's work to address the ACCJC recommendation echoed what the faculty participant had stated:

> We had these little task forces that were supposed to work out a response to the recommendations, address the recommendations. So I was part of one of those. . . . For the planning and budgeting [recommendation], yes, because as a division chair I was part of the Budget Committee; so I played a role as part of the Budget Committee.

93

Besides his participation on the Budget Committee, the CIO noted the importance of

other committees and how the work of one committee intersected with the work of

another:

> At the moment technically on paper we have a Strategic Planning Committee that
> reviews the program reviews, and they provide some kind of guidance to the
> Budget Committee. That's been the process. And again the success of all that
> depends on the quality of the work that the people on the Strategic Planning
> Committee do reviewing the different requests.

Regarding the benefit of working on an institutional committee, the CIO stated, "Yeah,

it's great to be able to see beyond your own direct sphere of influence and get a better

understanding of what people are facing." The Executive Assistant to the CSSO also

recalled how important the committee work was, except that she referred to the

committees as workgroups, implying that the committees did more than discuss; they

worked:

> What I found, and I had to refresh my memory because we had too many things
> going at once, is that we did it in workgroups as I recall. Everything I can look
> back to looked like we had established workgroups that were built with projects.
> Different groups had different recommendations that we had to correct to get off
> warning.

She also noted that the mere fact of having committees kept personnel focused and on

task:

> What kept us on track was the committee work and then a small workgroup that's
> just overseeing— and I think [the President] and I were on that workgroup
> actually together. We kind of chaired it together, and most of the time it was just
> a small group double-checking, reporting in: "Yes, I know that this is happening
> in this committee; we know that this is happening in that committee"; and that
> kept us on track. So I think it worked well.

The DIR recalled his participation in the committee work:

We used this Institutional Research and Planning group. I think that's what it was called. And basically it was a committee that was put together to help [the part-time researcher] with coming up with solutions to institutional research problems. . . . [The former CIO] and a few others were on that Institutional Research Committee. See, they tried to do this committee approach to solve the problem, and in theory I think it's a pretty good idea. Where that type of thing works best, I think, is when you are talking about some sort of system where you have a very identifiable problem that needs to be solved. They bring the committee together; they put their other work and jobs on a side burner; work hard on that particular thing; and then once that product is complete, then they can disperse and go back to their jobs. But as far as— doing that on a daily basis doesn't work. So that's my personal opinion why I support having an Institutional Researcher other than just giving me gainful employment. (DIR, personal communication, June 20, 2012)

The IT Specialist had similar memories:

We set up some different teams and groups of people that were specifically formed for responding to the accreditation issues, and they were divided up by recommendation. And I think in some ways that went well. It depended on the team; it wasn't, I don't think, consistently successful as a strategy. But I think there were a lot of good things that came out of it, as far as people that normally might not have been involved in those types of processes, to be involved, such as associate faculty, and maybe some staff members that might not have been involved if we hadn't taken that approach.

So the IT Specialist saw that a benefit to dividing the work among committees was that doing so encouraged individuals to break out of their normal routines and participate in a college-wide endeavor. The committee redesign also had a favorable impact on the college and its processes. He stated,

What I have heard from a number of people was that the restructuring of some of those decision-making processes about— especially in the link between budgeting and administrative decision-making, and the bringing together of the processes of different committees into a better workflow and information flow— was really effective.

The President recalled changing committee processes and membership in order to address the ACCJC recommendations:

95

I called a special meeting of the Planning Committee. Very unusual. The Planning Committee traditionally meets once a month during the academic year and not otherwise. The activities of the committee started changing rapidly after August. . . . the Planning Committee started meeting more often. Every other week.

He remembered other committees that played important roles:

Those were the key people, and they had key people that they called on, including the outgoing researcher. But they formed a little group that they called, ad hoc Institutional Research Committee . . . we decided to use that group through the fall semester at least, perhaps for longer. . . . There had been an Enrollment Management Committee created previously, but it had [somewhat] fallen away and not been meeting for a year or something. And I said, let's get this thing going. That was within my first year, and I said we need this committee. . . . and I said, let's pull together the Enrollment Management Committee and the Planning Committee and have them meet as a group.

The President reiterated specifically how a committee's work intentionally addressed the ACCJC recommendation: "The Planning Committee was charged in the new process with providing the Budget Committee with guidance of whatever form seemed appropriate, based on the strategic plan. And that was the core way to address that integration." In the following statement he summarized his perception of how Kings College was successful *because of* its committees and the work they did: "So the governance system is very important to that, and it's hard for me to imagine addressing recommendations without a concerted effort in these committees."

This is just a sampling of the more than 169 times that committee work was referred to in the interviews with participants from Kings College. Kings College utilized existing committees and formed new committees to do the work of addressing the ACCJC recommendations to get the college removed from sanction. They resurrected the Enrollment Management Committee briefly. They revitalized the Strategic Planning

96

Committee, also called simply the Planning Committee, and assigned it the task of addressing Recommendation #1, the recommendation on integrated budget and planning. The Budget Committee was also instrumental in addressing Recommendation #1. To tackle Recommendation #2 on program review, the college created a small workgroup to brainstorm processes. The Institutional Researcher created the Program Review template, with input from the Program Review work group and the Strategic Planning Committee and Budget Committee. The Strategic Planning Committee took on the task of reviewing the Program Reviews to mine for information that would inform the planning and budgeting processes. Recommendation #4, on research planning systems, was assigned to an ad hoc group that was known as the Institutional Research and Planning Group or Institutional Research Committee. They worked on developing data plans that would be utilized in the program review processes and strategic planning and budgeting processes. After an Institutional Researcher (DIR) was hired, this committee was used less and less, and the research and data planning functions fell to the DIR. To address Recommendation #6, on updating course outlines and prerequisites to include student learning outcomes, the college utilized the expertise of the faculty on its Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Cycle (SLOAC) Committee. In sum, much of the work at Kings College was accomplished by committees and groups of individuals working together.

Queens College

Information gathered from the participants at Queens College revealed how their institution also turned to committees and other types of workgroups to do the planning

and the work to remove its sanction. However, the Queens College approach was

sometimes less formal than approaches taken at other colleges, turning to the formation

of ad hoc task forces. The word *committee* was used only 51 times during interviews

with participants, less than in interviews at Kings College. Although committees exist at

Queens College, much of the work was accomplished by informal groups but also by the

formal groups known as Senates, which are the officially recognized constituent groups

at the college. The word *Senate* was used 62 times in the interviews. (In contrast, the

word *Senate* was used only 12 times in Kings College interviews.)

In the chronology of work completed at Queens College, the first step was to

gather a small group of the institution's key leaders. The CIO recalled:

> So starting completely from scratch, we pulled together myself, the Vice
> President of Student Services, and the Director of Finance, then the presidents of
> the Senates . . . and then the Researcher . . . and huddled in the conference room
> and said, "What are we going to do?" . . . We basically huddled in the room, we
> pulled in samples from other colleges, including [another college]'s strategic plan,
> and basically crafted Queens' first official strategic plan.

However, the CIO recognized that committee work has its limitations. Consequently, she

intentionally kept the group small during this design phase:

> What do you get when you build a horse by committee? You get a donkey. You
> can't have too many people in the design phase of any project. You need key
> folks who represent broad sections of the college, people with the knowledge,
> history, and experience of the college itself and the structure, and understanding
> of the mission of the community college. They need to be individuals who have
> had enough experience in their positions to look beyond their own constituents.
> And so you bring those folks together. . . We needed every single person at that
> table because nobody had the answers in and of themselves. They simply didn't. .
> . . But having the folks, the right people at the table. . . .

Thus at Queens College the initial discussions to address the recommendations began

with only seven individuals in a room: three administrators, the DIR, and the Presidents

of three Senates: faculty, classified, and management. On the other hand, the college's

Strategic Council was the larger formal committee with multiple representatives from

each constituent group, but because of its large size, the CIO described it as ineffective:

> The college had what we called the Strategic Council, which is the shared governance planning. It had five members from academic, classified, management, students, and the exec[1]. So there were—did I count that off right?—20 members? Five students, five classified, five faculty, and five managers, two of whom were on the exec team. So there were 20 people total. They had that— but it wasn't really a particularly effective committee. It had been in existence for a long time.

The DIR also pointed out limitations of working with large groups, specifically

highlighting the ineffectiveness of the college's Strategic Council:

> Our Strategic Council which has like 30 to 25 members. If you try to get them to create stuff, it's going to take forever and you are going to have to listen to that part-timer that never gets a chance to talk, and this is their big chance to tell you what their dissertation was about.

Like the CIO, he underscored the benefit of working with a small group for the design

work.

> You start at the tactical level with who even understands this. Is there a faculty member who has taught planning before? Is there a person who worked at another district where they got off warning or they knew about plans or whatever? So we ended up with two or three people, just brainstorming stuff. And then going, "Hey, we can do this, or we can do that!" and then starting to map it out, and then showing it to people and getting their feedback.

His description paralleled the CIO's description of the planning process as the college

addressed its Recommendation #2 (regarding integrated planning, evaluation, and

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[1] "Exec" is the common abbreviation for "executive cabinet" or "executive team," composed of the President and Vice Presidents—the senior administration team.

resource allocation decision making), how the work started with the small key-leader

group and from there the plans and process descriptions were vetted with larger groups of

people, in ever-widening circles, until the plans had been reviewed by nearly every group

on campus.

In addition to this ad hoc group of key leaders, the CIO discussed other important

committees and work groups in her interview: the Program Review Committee, the

Strategic Council, the various Senates of the constituent groups, and the Planning And

Resource Allocation Committee:

> We created a Program Review Committee, reassigned time. In three months, from March to June of 09, we did—they did 130 program reviews. . . . So what had happened was, the Strategic Plan now was vetted through the Senates and back to Strategic Council, and Strategic Council started to grow in importance. . . . A second committee was established to help bring decision-making more out into the open, and so a subcommittee of Strategic Council was formed called PARAC, which—I hate the name—is Planning And Resource Allocation Committee.

The faculty participant described how Queens College has a culture of

encouraging representatives from constituent groups to participate on committees. She

remarked how this culture influenced the formation of the Program Review Committee.

She provided a description of the committee's membership:

> But typical to our culture, we also, even though program review technically would be under—it is a [Faculty] Senate standing committee—we asked for equal representation from classified and managers as well, and from operations, instruction, and student services. So there was an enormous mix of folks, and we had a really, a pretty big group.

Fortunately, this large group was not hindered by its size. The faculty participant

described how effective this committee was at addressing the ACCJC recommendation

on Program Review: "We broke into teams. Then we all read our things and then we had to meet with our team and norm our results and write the reports that then had to be reviewed. I mean it wasn't just writing." The Associate Dean also recalled how productive this committee was:

> I was on the Program Review Committee that was formed out of our desire to get off sanctions. . . . And we really worked. It was the most intense committee work I've done short of a hiring committee or something, where we had to come up with the forms, we had to distribute them, people had to complete them, and then we had 100—over 100—to read and get through and comment on over the summer. They gave a stipend to the faculty to come back and basically work through June, to the folks who were on the committee. And we just did a tremendous amount of work.

She also described how the Program Review Committee illustrated Queens College's desire to include representatives from all constituent groups on its committees:

> If there is a committee to be formed, you know it's going to have mostly faculty, usually, then a handful of managers and a handful of classified folks. There was a little bit more than a handful of classified on this one because there was so much to do. It was a pretty big committee.

Besides the Program Review Committee, the Associate Dean recalled participating as a member of another group whose task was to address ACCJC Recommendation #1: to review and rewrite the college's mission statement: "And I sat on that committee too [to rewrite the college's mission], I guess. I had forgotten that that came out of the—out of accreditation." The DIR did not refer to this group as a committee but instead described this ad hoc task force as one of those large work groups that included representatives from every constituent group imaginable, including students and citizens from the communities within the college's service area. He recalled that due

to its size and the many perspectives held by its members, this group took a long time to accomplish its assigned task:

> [The mission] was 125 words or something. It took a year and a half. We had community members; we had advocates for sustainability and green; you just had to open the spigot and let all of it flow and let it take its course and not stand in the way and just exhaust them and let them own it and— [shaking his head] a year and a half to write a paragraph.

The interview participants described the other groups and committees in their recollections of the college's efforts to address the ACCJC recommendations. The faculty participant recalled the composition of the Planning And Resource Allocation Committee: "The PARAC now seats exec [executive cabinet], but it also seats the presidents of the three Senates, well, the four Senates including the students. So there's more discussion." The representative nature of the PARAC led to more discussion because the representatives from the constituent groups brought multiple perspectives to the table, whereas prior to the formation of the PARAC, resource allocation decisions had been discussed and made only by the executive cabinet. In addition to PARAC, the Research Analyst remembered that there was much faculty involvement in the work on ACCJC Recommendation #3 concerning student learning outcomes, or SLOs:

> We had a system with the SLOs, an ambassador system with key faculty members who did some very good things to help people, ran workshops—hands-on workshops—where people could do something in an hour's time, or whatever. And it just kind of created a network of contacts for the faculty members to do this.

Included within this theme of creating or assigning committees to tackle the work of addressing the recommendations, a subtheme surfaced in statements made by the CIO. When she described how the earliest responses to the accreditation sanctions began with

a meeting of "key folks," she implied that one of the tasks within committee formation is that the person or persons who are making committee assignments should make sure that the right people are asked to work on the committees. The CIO reflected on the criteria she used for inviting people to join that initial small group,

> You need key folks who represent broad sections of the college, people with the knowledge, history, and experience of the college itself and the structure, and understanding of the mission of the community college. They need to be individuals who have had enough experience in their positions to look beyond their own constituents. And so you bring those folks together. . . We needed every single person at that table because nobody had the answers in and of themselves. They simply didn't. . . . But having the folks, the right people at the table. . . .

In her description, these individuals were not invited simply because of their positions as leaders at the college, as if she had an obligation to invite them. She selected them purposefully, taking into consideration their personal attributes, such as "knowledge, history, and experience" and the ability to "look beyond their own constituents," implying that the members of a committee need to care about the whole institution and not just their own departments or constituencies. She punctuated the end of this description noting the importance of "having the folks, the right people at the table." However, the CIO is the only interview participant form Queens College who mentioned anything about putting the right people in place. The investigator attributed this outlier observation of hers to her role as CIO, the person who did the inviting, who selected people to participate, and who was responsible for assigning work tasks to individuals and groups. Making sure the right person is assigned to a task is frequently the purview of a CIO, so she would be conscious of the importance of this task.

Thus Queens College utilized formal and informal groups to accomplish its work on the accreditation recommendations. To work on Recommendation #1, the college's mission statement, it created a special committee or work group comprising representative members of the college community and the surrounding communities. To work on Recommendation #2—integrated planning, evaluation, and resource allocation—it utilized the brainstorming power of a small task force of representative leaders, then vetted its plans through the constituent groups' Senates, finalized the plan in the Strategic Council, and created the Planning And Resource Allocation Committee to oversee the ongoing implementation of the plan. The work on Recommendation #3, student learning outcomes, was accomplished mostly by the faculty. The work on Recommendation #6, on governing board evaluations, was completed by the Board of Trustees, working with the President. And the work on the recommendation regarding program review was completed by the Program Review Committee, which included representatives from classified personnel and management in addition to the faculty. In sum, Queens College, like other colleges, utilized committees, work groups, and special task forces to address its accreditation recommendations; and it was important to make sure the right people were assigned to the right tasks.

(2) Creating Strategies and Timelines

Few colleges that participated in this study reported that before beginning their work to address the accreditation recommendations, they mapped out strategies and timelines of the work that needed to be done. The two colleges in the multiple case study reported that they mapped out strategies and identified timelines for completing the work.

Only one of the participants in the survey mentioned specifically that his or her college mapped out strategies for addressing each of its recommendations before embarking on the actual work. The ALO from College Beyond the Wall wrote, "A small task force was appointed within a week of receiving the Commission's notice. The task force mapped out a strategy for proceeding, then met regularly to direct and monitor the college's progress." Although the other survey participants did not mention creating strategies and timelines in their responses, it cannot be assumed that those colleges did not do so. The investigator surmised that the other colleges probably did create strategies and timelines but simply did not report doing so. As for Kings College and Queens College, they both identified this activity as an initial part of their responses to the ACCJC's recommendations and sanction.

Kings College

At Kings College, the President was the individual who created the initial map of how the college would address the recommendations. The President was very active in the college's response to the accreditation sanction. He recalled that as soon as he saw the draft report from the evaluation team with its recommendations for institutional improvement, he began to draft plans of attack for addressing those recommendations. Before the ACCJC had even taken action on the college, the President had sat down and developed an action plan that he would implement at the college in order to address the evaluation team's recommendations. He stated,

> I started mapping out what I thought the steps probably were that we were going to take to address them [the recommendations], all by myself, like a set of notes—

and I called it "Action Plan" or "Action Steps to Address the Recommendations" or something like that.

One of the actions that this President took was to attend the ACCJC meeting at which the

Commission made its accreditation decision and took action to put Kings College on

sanction. The President shared his action plan with the Accrediting Commission hoping

to avoid the sanction. However, because his plan described activities that the college had

not yet engaged in, the Commission could only make its decision based on the data and

descriptions reported in the college's self-study evaluation and in the evaluation report of

the visiting team. Therefore, they had to impose the sanction. Nevertheless, this

President was bold in initiating contact with the ACCJC in order to influence their

decision. Still, he preserved the action plan and shared it with the college. He described

how his notes became the work plan:

> After basically pulling— creating my action steps that I had discussed with the Commission and then with the campus, I did this whole Word document— Accreditation Work Plan. It had action steps under each recommendation—the things we needed to do, target date for completing, the person responsible for it, has it been done, and check it off.

> Twice a year the president would remind the campus of the Accreditation Work

Plan as well as the revised institutional planning and evaluation cycle. He stated, "I

would roll out the diagram, which I keep up here on the wall— of the basic planning

process. And I rolled it out at every campus meeting practically for months on end." The

Executive Assistant to the Chief Student Services Officer corroborated this evidence:

> I think that helped to keep on track with reports because our workgroups— I even had notes of what we were doing, what our plan was, who was handling it, what's our goal for completing it. And we did keep track. And I pulled one up, and there: done, done, done, done, done. So we had built ourselves our own little

106

plans to keep us on track. It was called the Workplan for Accreditation Recommendations.

The President's reminding the campus community of the diagram echoes what the ALO at Riverrun College advised in the survey response: "After that, it's a matter of following through on what is implemented. The college has to have a plan and stick to it. The tendency to drift back into old, bad habits is strong; and this must be prevented."

Queens College

At Queens College, the Vice President of Instruction (CIO) led the initial discussions within the small key-leader group. This group produced the map of what needed to be accomplished and how all the pieces would fit together to address the ACCJC recommendations regarding integrated planning, evaluation, and budgeting. In her interview, the CIO described these early brainstorming sessions, but it was the DIR who recalled that the CIO had actually drawn diagrams:

> Well first— one of the delights of working for [the CIO] is, [she] is a gee-whiz-what-will-it-look-like person. When you talk to her, she starts drawing boxes with arrows and stuff like that, so she is very concrete in her idea of how a system will operate. . . . So we ended up with two or three people, just brainstorming stuff. And then going, hey, we can do this or we can do that! And then starting to map it out, and then showing it to people and getting their feedback. And then going through draft after draft after draft.

The faculty member who was interviewed recalled the visual map of what needed to be done, identifying the diagram created by the CIO and the small key-leader group as a flowchart:

> If you've seen the flowchart, it's [the CIO's]. That's how she thinks. She's a former engineer. So she's flowcharts and process and getting things so that we can visually see where things are; that was kind of the perfecting, the fine tuning.

107

Thus, three colleges in this study—College Beyond the Wall, Kings College, and Queens College—identified the creation of timelines, process diagrams, or flowcharts as a helpful starting point for addressing the ACCJC recommendations.

(3) Increased or Improved Communication

Another action that colleges took was to improve or increase communication, to make sure that the whole campus community was informed not just about accreditation issues but also about what was occurring in regards to planning, budgeting, institutional evaluation, program review, student learning outcomes, and everything else that affected the whole institution. These topics are all interconnected and are covered by most of the recommendations that colleges receive regarding institutional planning and budgeting, institutional evaluation and planning, institutional effectiveness and evaluation, and governance. Efforts to increase or improve communication were used to inform personnel of progress made on the recommendations, to train personnel how to address recommendations, to coordinate various areas of a college that were working on discrete aspects of the recommendations, and to train personnel on the significance of accreditation. Other forms of communication that colleges strengthened included communication with other colleges that had been successful with removing an accreditation sanction or colleges that were in the midst of experiencing a sanction for similar recommendations.

The statements listed below are colleges' responses to the survey question "What actions or activities of your college community contributed to its success in having the sanction removed and accreditation reaffirmed?" Because the ALOs from the colleges

108

were responding to an online survey, many of the responses were not written as complete

sentences but simply as descriptive phrases of actions that ALOs recalled had occurred

on their campuses:

> Collaborated closely with the other college in our district. (College Beyond the Wall)

> The task force kept the campus regularly informed of its work. (College Beyond the Wall)

> Increased dialogue at participatory governance committees and the Academic Senate. (Lannisport College)

> Subcommittees were formed for each recommendation where subject matter experts could join in providing information, documentation, and evidence. (Blackwater College)

> Held campus, community and governing board forums and posted updates to the college website to keep everyone informed of progress. (Dorne College)

> Held campus wide summits inviting all members of the college community to participate in accreditation planning and activities. (Dorne College)

> Provided Governing Board training to all new and seated trustees. (Dorne College)

> As long as the needed activities were carried out and communicated by someone. (Riverrun College)

In their advice to other colleges, the survey participants recommended college-wide

communication as an important factor in a college's success at removing sanctions and

having accreditation reaffirmed. They advised that colleges do the following:

> Frequently report the progress of the response back to the campus to keep the information flowing. (College Beyond the Wall)

> Have continuous dialogue across the institution and have everyone involved in the process of removing the sanction. Everyone needs to understand the consequences of a sanction and the true meaning of each sanction. (Oldtown College)

109

Make sure all constituencies and the students know what is going on. (Lannisport College)

Getting everyone on the same page is vital. Trust is the key for this because change is not easy. Open and frequent dialogue and "taking the temperature" often is important as well. (Lannisport College)

Open and transparent communication is critical. Network and share information. (Dorne College)

Kings College

Participants at Kings College reported that the college's communication activities contributed to its successful resolution of its accreditation recommendations. In their descriptions of the specific actions that the college engaged in, the participants included descriptions of communicative events and behaviors. These communicative acts have been categorized according to several themes: informing, seeking or sharing information with other colleges, training, rallying, and giving feedback. Another theme that surfaced was how the small size and relatively flat organizational structure facilitated communication.

Informing: All six participants impressed upon the researcher how important communication was at the college to keep information flowing. Addressing the recommendations was complex, so it was very important for the whole college to stay informed on the college's progress. The following statements recorded during the interviews illustrated how Kings College stayed informed and how the participants placed importance on their staying informed.

The CIO reflected on how his efforts at communication impacted the college:

Communication is a big deal. It doesn't have to be fancy or formal. I've received a lot of feedback from people just over the last year that they understand the

accreditation process more now than they ever have. And when I think—it wasn't actually an intended consequence of what I did, and it's not like I was creating accreditation newsletters or anything like that, it's just that when I talked with people I told them that this is how it works, this is why it's important, and I kept them up to date.

Four of the six interviewees mentioned how instrumental the President was in ensuring information was communicated to everyone on campus. The President himself recognized that one of his most important functions was to keep the college informed.

> In August, like every August, we had a convocation, an institutional day meeting, and I talked about the challenges facing the college. Accreditation was one of them. We had been put on sanction. Prior to the meeting, I had put out an email saying that we had been put on sanction and developed an action plan. So a lot of that meeting was me talking about ways that we were going to respond to the recommendations and address them. . . . So I thought, "I need— I'm going to need to remind people what the process is." And I would do that almost once a semester.

The President would continually present the same information to reinforce everyone's familiarity with the plan. As quoted earlier in this chapter, the President stated that he would roll out the plan on a regular basis. The IT Specialist recalled that the President took responsibility for all communications and wanted to ensure that the college stayed informed of every activity as it moved forward:

> The president has been very good at making the process transparent . . . the real transparency has to do with things like making sure that the minutes of meetings are published in a timely way, the agendas are distributed in advance, the shared governance process is adhered to. There's good representation on those committees. There are frequent announcements that are really cogent and in detail, summaries of what is taking place without glossing things too much, without too much of a rhetorical spin, but very straightforward and with a request for suggestions and questions and those types of things. (IT Specialist, personal communication, June 20, 2012)

The Executive Assistant to the CSSO recalled the effectiveness of the President's efforts to inform the college:

And [the President] is good at that [keeping everybody informed]. He kept us informed in community meetings. . . . I think [he] helped a lot with that. His was the communication. He holds community meetings, I don't know how often, a couple of times a semester, where he announces them out, and gives us our agenda: "Here's what we're going to talk about this time," and so accreditation— which I'm sure was on— so I remember going to many— then that's what he covered: where we are, where our status is. . . . [He] would call a meeting a couple of times a semester, usually right around the lunch hour, and he called it his Community Meeting. And he would have a meeting to discuss some of the issues we are facing campus wide. . . . He also kept us up on a lot of activities. And he does this with kudos to people doing nice things on campus— to not— to budget, to whatever's going on. But he also— once in a while we get what he calls his e-mail, and it's kind of an update— just update for this month. And those are about once a month.

She continued, emphasizing how it is the responsibility of everyone to pay attention to

the President's messages and to stay informed.

[The President] was very good at trying to make sure that we understood what was going on, especially us classified. We tend to not be in the loop as strong until we really pay attention to who's out there to get the information to us. I used to think we didn't get information. Well, it was my own fault. I wasn't reading everything. So once I started stepping back and looking, it was there. It's just getting the communication out and making sure everybody knows where it is, how it's coming to you, and maybe you ought to pay attention to it once in a while, come to a meeting and see what goes on.

Additionally, she recognized that she also had a responsibility to share information: "I am

one of the detail people on that committee so I would be sure that what was going on in

the committee is communicated back to our workgroup. Again, communication, I think,

is our biggest asset."

The faculty participant at Kings College commented on how increased

communication from the Research Office kept the campus informed:

What has moved us even beyond the recommendation is the fact that our institutional researcher now participates in our community meetings by presenting us with data. . . . He will actually come in the fall and say, "Okay here are the

112

results." Before, we never saw the results, so people would start to question, "What am I really doing? Where's it going?" Before, it kind of sat on a shelf. Now it's like, "Remember when we did that survey last spring? Well, here are the results. This is what it means. Blah blah blah." . . . I am not a data person, but that's part of our training, as you know. And I appreciate it so much, and now, you can call him and have your data in half an hour. So we got that [recommendation] addressed.

The DIR confirmed the faculty member's recollection. He described his commitment to keeping the college informed:

I give them their information from the year, their statistics for their program, and I say, "Well, it's that time of year again. It's time to do our planning. Remember some of you have to do a CPR, a comprehensive program review; some of you have to do it. And all of you have to do an annual program review." And I try to send that information out to the entire institution. . . . I don't know if this is just me or if this is something that really works everywhere, but I am really a fan of putting everything out on the table and being very open about the problems that are facing the college.

These excerpts from the interviews point out how the college, especially the President, used meetings, email, and one-to-one contacts with personnel to keep everyone updated and informed. The process for addressing the recommendations and the progress on those processes were communicated regularly to the campus. The participants at Kings College noted that their efforts at keeping the campus informed positively influenced their accreditation work. Communication of data and information became one of their ongoing solutions to solve their problems with accreditation and to stay off sanction once their accreditation was reaffirmed.

Seeking or sharing information with other colleges: Another form of communication that was mentioned in the interviews was communication with other colleges. Such networking was used to find out how other colleges addressed similar

113

accreditation recommendations. People at Kings College turned to colleagues at other

colleges for advice and ideas. The faculty participant discussed accreditation with faculty

from other colleges. She recalled this story:

> I just had this conversation with the people from [another college]. I was talking
> to a faculty member who was on that vetting committee, and we talked a lot about
> their— most of our conversation was actually about their accreditation.

Additionally, the CIO stated that he had discussed accreditation with people from other

colleges, expressing his need for more ideas on how to address recommendations:

> When I talk to other people from other schools, it sounds like we're doing okay.
> But we should be doing better. And I would like some advice from the other
> schools actually. I don't know. In terms of how to get planning processes
> together. As far as addressing recommendations.

> Training. Kings College used meetings and other forms of communication to train

personnel on the significance and relevance of accreditation. They trained personnel

regarding processes that would help the college get off sanction and keep it off sanction.

The CIO explained how important it was for the college to be trained on the meaning of

accreditation:

> Here most people on the campus understand accreditation roughly, but most
> people don't understand it very well. That's for sure. And so you have to tell
> them. You can't expect every person on campus to go to the ACCJC website and
> read all the help documents about how the Commission works. They are just not
> going to do it, and so you have to educate them in terms of the importance of it
> and the details that are involved. And once you get that communication down,
> and once most people feel like they understand the process, I think the remaining
> steps are actually, you know, not easy but clear.

He also mentioned how leaders train others how to perform accreditation-related tasks.

He said,

> The division chairs do a lot of the communication of deadlines to the faculty
> related to the planning process, not all of it necessarily; but helping people figure

out what it is they need to submit and keeping people on track to get their program reviews submitted is part of what generally falls under the division chair. And so as our planning process took shape, I had to learn what it meant and had to communicate that to the faculty.

He described how first he had to be trained before he could train others. The faculty participant reflected that the training was important to her: "I am not a data person, but that, getting training on what the data mean, is part of our training."

Rallying the troops: Participants at Kings College reported that the leadership used acts of communication to create commitment to accreditation and to encourage personnel to participate. At meetings and through one-to-one communication, staff and faculty were invited to participate in the work to address the ACCJC recommendations. The faculty participant noted that both the President and CIO encouraged people to get involved: "Our president and our CIO worked really hard to constantly communicate progress on the recommendations and bring people in." The DIR saw a correlation between the President's inviting people to participate and his commitment to open and transparent communication:

> And of course you've got the community—like the institutional day. This [accreditation] would be a huge topic. So he [the President] would have to rally up the troops. So it's important to be open and to be honest and to even start coming up with some solutions, because the commission knows what's wrong, they have told you that they know what's wrong, and they have shown you in very good detail what's wrong. (DIR, personal communication, June 20, 2012)

The President described one of the messages he gave to the college community to encourage participation:

> The message I gave at the campus meeting in August was, "We're all going to be engaged in this, one way or another. And you will find out, depending on who

115

talks to you, but please understand I'm behind it, I'm asking you, even though it's somebody else contacting you, it's ultimately coming from me."

Giving feedback: The communication at Kings College was not a one-way event.

It was not just the President or other leaders handing down information or orders to

subordinates. The communication was two-way. The interview participants recalled that

leaders and presenters solicited feedback. They desired input from others and created

opportunities for dialogue. The IT Specialist recalled how the President's messages

included requests for feedback:

> There are frequent announcements that are really cogent and in detail, summaries of what is taking place without glossing things too much, without too much of a rhetorical spin, but very straightforward and with a request for suggestions and questions and those types of things.

The Executive Assistant to the CSSO described the kinds of questions the President

would ask:

> After the community meeting, he [the President] does allow for people to write a comment to him of, "Did you get everything? Do you have any comments of what we talked about, that you might not have thought of while we were in the meeting for follow-up? Or did you not understand?" He did give that venue for people too— on a sheet of paper, or e-mail him if you didn't quite gather what was going on.

The faculty participant remembered the President's response to the feedback: "He [the

president] took criticism and suggestions very openly."

The President recalled a specific topic for which he and the DIR wanted feedback:

> We had another meeting in September. A campus meeting: "Let's talk about data." We rolled out a draft set of data reports and said, "Are these kinds of data reports useful, in your opinion?" (President, personal communication, June 20, 2012)

Thus the interviews painted a picture of two-way communication from administrators to personnel and back again.

The participants at Kings College attributed the effectiveness of their communication to the college's small size and flat organizational structure. Kings College has only three tiers within its organizational structure: the President and the Board of Trustees on top, the deans and directors in the middle, and the staff and faculty filling out the bottom tier of the organizational chart. The participants believed that because of the flat structure, people were closer to the President; and because of the college's small size, messages reached nearly every human resource. The CIO described the college this way:

> We can communicate really effectively. Because it's flat, there are fewer steps in the communication chain obviously, and so you have the potential to get that information across in a less filtered way and maybe more quickly as well. . . . everyone's closer to the President here than they are at bigger schools. . . . The information changes hands fewer times before it gets to the people that need to be working on things.

Likewise, the Executive Assistant to the CSSO stated with pride, "We are a small campus, so we are very attuned to— everybody attuned to what's going on." Still, the President confessed that things aren't perfect, but he believed that the college's small size facilitates effective communication: "This college has its strains and stresses like every college, but the smallness helps communication happen in timely ways."

The participants also pointed out that occasionally some forms of communication or lack of communication can hinder their progress. The CIO mentioned that the reporting of results of the planning process could be improved:

117

The key to making it work and the place where we need to go still, is we need to find a better way to communicate the results of the planning process back to the people who submitted their forms. People have felt like they submit something and they don't hear anything for eight months, and then the tentative budget appears, and what was the process? And people could spend a little more time talking to their reps on Strategic Planning to ask them the details. But we could do a better job of communicating the results to the campus as well, as we're moving through the process, updating people with where we are.

The faculty participant reminded the investigator that rumors are a negative form of communication, but it may be possible to use those informal channels of communication in a positive way:

Rumors are just a natural phenomenon [of any organization]. People talk, talk, talk. But it's important to, again, inject fact into those. And you don't want people to not talk. But there has to be some accuracy, of course. . . . It's just a phenomenon; it's just an organizational reality.

To avoid damage that can be caused by rumors, as she stated, somehow accurate information needs to be spread.

To summarize, the President explained another way in which effective, continual communication is one of the most important activities a college can engage in:

Sometimes between the shared governance structure and the Board, or the power— the real legislative power of the district, which is the Board, and the president— if they're not talking in very practical ways, sometimes the important stuff falls through the cracks. And that's where I think sudden moves happen. They come out of a failure of communication between core elements of the governance of the institution.

When open, frank, and frequent communication does not occur, important problems may be overlooked and tasks left incomplete. The "sudden moves" that the President mentioned are sudden actions that occur outside shared governance processes. If an administrator engages in such sudden moves, he or she may strain the relationship with constituent groups who expect to participate in decision-making.

118

Queens College

Participants at Queens College did not claim outright that the college's communication activities contributed to its successful resolution of its accreditation recommendations. However, data from the participants' narratives revealed that communication was an important factor in the college's work. Regarding the activity of communication, two themes emerged from the interviews at Queens College. (1) Ideas for addressing the accreditation recommendations were born in a very small leadership group of less than ten persons and then shared outward to the larger constituent groups. (2) Queens College has a strong culture of collaboration; in fact, the college has a tradition of training all its personnel in effective communication and collaboration techniques.

Small group to large group: Regarding the first theme of how ideas were born in a small group and then transmitted outward to the constituent groups, it was noted that less emphasis was placed on the official "shared governance" groups at Queens College than at Kings College. Instead of shared governance groups doing the lion's share of the work to address the accreditation recommendations, more attention was paid to participation of and work done by the constituent groups. For definition's sake, a constituent group is composed of members from the same personnel classification, such as all faculty, all classified, or all managers. A shared governance group at Queens College was generally composed of an equal number of representatives from each constituent group.

The CIO had the most to say about the role that effective communication played in the college's removal of its sanctions. She provided the greatest number of

119

descriptions of who was talking to whom and how ideas were generated through the

dialogues and communicated throughout the institution.

> One of the four recommendations had to do with the college needing a new
> strategic plan. So that was where we began. So starting completely from scratch,
> I pulled together myself, the vice president of student services, and the director of
> finance, then the presidents of the Senates; so we have the academic Senate,
> classified Senate— I can't remember now if we had the management Senate or
> not—probably—and then the researcher—a representative from research. . . . We
> basically huddled in the room . . . and basically crafted Queens' first official
> strategic plan—which was then four goals and about 31—four major goals and
> then each goal had strategies underneath them, a total of about 31 strategies. So
> that was then vetted through all of the senates. It was the first time I think that a
> plan had been done in that fashion, where it had been crafted with all the
> stakeholders at the table, it was vetted through all of the senates, vetted through
> the college's planning [committee], which was called the Strategic Council, the
> primary shared governance planning committee—and was adopted.

Even though that original small group comprised representatives from each constituency,

it was not an officially recognized governance committee within the college structure.

More importantly, the CIO noted that the group had to be made comfortable such that

they could communicate their ideas openly, honestly, and confidently. She stated,

> So setting up an environment where everyone can speak freely, brainstorm, it was
> truly one of— I just thoroughly enjoyed it—not at the time, but in retro, now
> looking back. Oh my gosh, to get to create a whole new system with no bounds on
> you particularly, and what works, what doesn't work, what do you want to do, yes,
> no, why not? Why not this instead of that? Having that fantastic— It's really
> academic discourse. And probing why the college did what it used to do and
> probing that history, and why did you do it that way, and understanding the
> culture and also acknowledging the culture of the college that exists as you are
> doing that.

Providing the right setting where the group could communicate ideas freely was one

element of that brainstorming session. Another element was her keeping the group small.

The Dean of Institutional Research (DIR) echoed the idea that it was better to have a

small group work out the details of the plan and then take the plan out to the larger

constituent groups for input and feedback. He stated:

> The reason we used the small room first, and I almost always advocate that, is
> because you have to think of the Strategic Council like you think of your Board, .
> . . They don't create; they guard. They are the guardians of safety. Right? So
> you don't have them creating stuff. You hand them stuff that they can swallow. . .
> . So we ended up with two or three people, just brainstorming stuff. And then
> going, hey, we can do this or we can do that! And then starting to map it out, and
> then showing it to people and getting their feedback. And then going through
> draft after draft after draft.

Although he stated "we used the small room first," it's clear that he was referring to the

size of the group, not the size of the room. The investigator also noticed that he tended to

exaggerate some of the details in his narrative. His "two or three people" emphasized his

sense that it was a really small group that engaged in the initial brainstorming, but the

CIO's recollection that six or seven people participated in that small group was more

accurate.

Culture of collaboration: The communication activities at Queens College were

enhanced or supported by the college's culture of collaboration. The CIO was very clear

on this point:

> The word you'll hear for Queens College is collaborative. Collaborative,
> collaborative, collaborative. . . . Everyone is collaborative, looking for those
> points of mutual interest. So people are willing— they understand that concept,
> and they are willing then to engage.

The DIR also referenced the collaborative culture at the college, linking this culture to

interest-based communication training that everyone is required to attend:

> So the culture of the whole thing is the communication agreement that we have. . .
> . Part of our training we have a thing we call the QC4 process, which is basically

121

Queens College 4. But basically it's interest-based bargaining. So we have taught a lot of our faculty and staff the difference between positions and interests.

Every person at Queens is required to complete this QC4 training in collaboration and consensus decision-making. Three of the participants recalled the name of the training as QC4, but they could not remember what the C's stand for. The faculty participant was pretty sure that two of the C's stood for Collaborative Culture. She provided the most detailed explanation of the expected communication practices at Queens College:

> There's this real sense of interconnectedness that Queens prides itself on. There are fewer of us around who have been around, have been in the olden days stuff. But I do think that we still, even though we have gotten larger and don't do as much of the social stuff that used to happen and stuff like that, of knowing everyone. Our collaborative training that we do—it's called QC4—Queens College Collaborative Culture—that would be C3; there must be another C in there somewhere. We keep doing different iterations. It is something that all employees undergo; in fact, it's in the contract. For the first three years, you have to go to QC3 or QC4 for training. They take you out—they take everyone who's doing it, so maybe 40 folks, to [location], which is up in the mountains, for three full days of interaction, talking about interest-based bargaining, what we call a skip process, which is the interest-based process but how we do it. So if there's an issue, you bring it forward. You do brainstorming; you can't shoot down other people's ideas; you have to be true to what your interests are; but you have to be willing to play ball. And we do. For our entire campus, including our Senate, we don't vote; we do thumbs. So it's all— it's thumbs up if you support the decision and it's thumbs down if you can't, and it's sideways if you can live with it. If there is even one thumb down, then the entire discussion stops at any level, whether it's a Counseling Department meeting or whether it's Strategic Council, which is the big council. If there's even one thumb down, you have to stop the process and go back to the person and say, "How are your interests not being met?" And they have to be true to— you know, if they just go straight out and say, "I just hate the idea, and I'm never going to change my mind," well, at that point they are just stepping out of the process. And then you can't move forward because they have said there's nothing— but if they say, "Well, I want three more days" or "I want this to look— I really don't like this word," and we can all buy into— can we make this one person happy? And it's our entire— everything is like that. (Faculty, personal communication, June 21, 2012)

The faculty participant provided this rich description of the manner in which leaders and

workers at Queens College discuss topics and arrive at decisions on actions to take.

Historically, the QC4 training was developed from interest-based bargaining and

was begun at the college years earlier under the guidance of a former president. He had

instituted interest-based bargaining during one particular year of contract negotiations

and then applied the process to all aspects of college decision making. The CIO pointed

to interest-based communication as the philosophical foundation of the decision-making

practices at Queens:

> Interest-based training—where we take people off-site for three days. It's really
> fantastic. It builds the— systemically builds relationships. That is the foundation
> upon which all of this is implemented. It is that foundation of relationships and
> trust and knowledge of the college as a whole. Because people need to
> understand how the college works, why certain things are important, why they're
> not, what the different roles of the different constituents are, what it means to
> come at a decision from an interest-based perspective, so they can then participate
> at PARAC or Strategic Council or whatever Senate they're on or union—
> whatever. So we provide the training so that the college community members
> have the tools and the expectation for engagement that they are going to need to
> be effective members of the community. (CIO, personal communication, June 23,
> 2012)

Consequently, as the CIO has expressed, Queens College is grounded in an "expectation

for engagement" by all members of each constituent group. To achieve effective

engagement, the college insists that all employees are trained in effective communication,

the result being a college that is "collaborative, collaborative, collaborative."

Lastly, the CIO summarized the importance of frequent, open, honest

communication during all the activity a college undertakes when addressing accreditation

recommendations: "Just touching base with every single group on campus,

123

communication can't be— you can't over communicate, keeping everybody abreast as to what was happening, as the changes were so quick because of being on Warning."

(4) Involving members of the institution

Several of the colleges in this study emphasized that it was important to involve many members from across the campus community and from every constituent group. One of the tasks of the leadership at the colleges was to recruit members from the constituent groups to serve on committees or to work on projects related to addressing accreditation recommendations. If college leaders did not conduct the actual recruitments, they nevertheless were concerned that committees and task forces had broad representation from the campus community and the constituent groups. Of the eight colleges that responded to the survey, five mentioned the importance of broad participation from all constituent groups:

> We created an Accreditation Response Team (ART) that included all constituent groups with Administrator and Faculty Co-Chairs. (Blackwater College)

> Constituency Leaders were instrumental in rallying their groups to offer assistance with the accreditation efforts. . . . Dedication of administrators, faculty, staff, and students who worked tirelessly towards the mutual interest of reaffirmation. Strong sense of community and loyalty from all constituent groups. (Dorne College)

> President, VP's, Constituency Group Leaders, ALO and SLO Coordinators. This [was the] key group of leaders. . . . We eliminated the Accreditation Committee and shifted this responsibility to the College Council. This, from my point of view, was the single more important change that got forward momentum from all the constituency groups. (Dragonstone College)

> Increased dialogue at participatory governance committees and the Academic Senate. (Lannisport College)

Lannisport College identified its participatory governance[2] structure as one of its strengths.

In their advice to other colleges who receive accreditation sanctions from the ACCJC, three of these colleges included broad participation from constituent groups as an important aspect of successfully addressing ACCJC recommendations:

> Get everyone involved right away. (Blackwater College)

> Include as many people as possible in the process; make sure all constituencies and the students know what is going on (through governance or otherwise). This will allay fear as well as get across the seriousness of the issue. . . . Getting everyone on the same page is vital. Trust is the key for this because change is not easy. Open and frequent dialogue and "taking the temperature" often is important as well. (Lannisport College)

> Have continuous dialogue across the institution, and have everyone involved in the process of removing the sanction. Everyone needs to understand the consequences of a sanction. (Oldtown College)

Kings College

At Kings College, five of the six interview participants pointed to the college's shared governance structures and committees as instrumental in the college's success at

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[2] "Participatory governance" is a term that colleges use to describe governance committees and decision-making bodies, such as a College Council, that comprise members from multiple constituent groups on campus: administrators, faculty, classified staff, managers, and often students. The investigator hears such governance groups referred to as participatory governance when he attends meetings and convocations hosted or sponsored by the ACCJC. The phrase is interpreted from language found in the Standards of Accreditation (ACCJC, 2013), Standard 4 on Leadership and Governance.

Similarly, the phrase "shared governance" describes the same governance phenomenon in California community colleges. The investigator commonly hears the phrase "shared governance" when he attends meetings and convocations involving the Academic Senate of his local college and the statewide Academic Senate of the California Community Colleges (ASCCC). This phrase is interpreted from language that was established in California State Assembly Bill 1725 (1988), which states in section 70902 that local governing boards of California community colleges must "Establish procedures not inconsistent with minimum standards established by the board of governors to ensure faculty, staff, and students the opportunity to express their opinions at the campus level and to ensure that these opinions are given every reasonable consideration, and the right to participate effectively in district and college governance, and the right of academic senates to assume primary responsibility for making recommendations in the areas of curriculum and academic standards" (p. 21) .

removing the accreditation sanction. The only person who did not specifically use the term "shared governance" was the Director of Institutional Research (DIR), the newest member of the administration. The college's concept of shared governance guides the formation of committees. The decision-making bodies on campus are composed of members of the different constituent groups: classified personnel, faculty, managers/administrators, and students. The standing committees at the college had been formed according to this model, and new committees that were formed to address the accreditation recommendations also followed this model.

Considering that accreditation is an issue that affects the whole college, the interview participants felt that it was important to get as many folks involved as possible, especially because of the small size of the college. The President recognized the importance of following the college's shared governance model to address the accreditation recommendations rather than relying solely on his executive cabinet (himself as CEO with the CIO and CSSO) to address the recommendations. He stated, "Shared governance trumped the administrative structure because the shared governance discussions are so important to addressing any accreditation recommendation." The Director of Institutional Research (DIR) also pointed out the importance of following the Kings College shared governance models and encouraging broad participation from the campus community. He stated, "This isn't just a management exercise. This is a college-wide exercise."

To illustrate the effectiveness of the shared governance approach, the faculty member recalled the composition of the Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment

126

Cycle (SLOAC) Committee, which was tasked to work on the recommendation concerning student learning outcomes.

> That committee is pretty special because there are only two faculty members on that committee. Then we have the CIO, and then we have the Chief Student Services Officer; so we have two administrators—high administrators on that committee, which is huge—and then we have four classified staff, or something like that, who are in the student services field. So we sit around this table, and it has been really quite impressive to see how the instruction and student services sides have come together quite well.

She continued her description commenting on the effectiveness of the shared governance structure on that committee. Due to the committee's structure, ideas and tasks were created in committee and then shared out to multiple constituent groups and offices on campus.

> Everybody who sat at this table was a leader in their area, and could go back and really emphasize that this is what we're doing, this is what we need, and helped us really move forward on that recommendation in a big way.

Participants from Kings College reflected on what makes their version of shared governance effective. The Executive Assistant to the CSSO noted that these committee structures bring multiple perspectives to the table: "Trying to get that representation is important because we all see things from a different area." The CIO identified a drawback with shared governance in general, but accepts it as an effective way to create plans and make decisions that affect the institution:

> The problem with shared governance is that it slows things down, but at least you make ideally the right decision so you don't have to revisit something, and so I'm all for making the right decision once rather than the wrong decision five times.

Beyond the shared governance models, which emphasize broad representation on committees, the college leadership also encouraged everyone to get involved in the tasks

127

of addressing the accreditation recommendations even if individuals were not sitting on the specific committees that were developing the plans and making the decisions. After receiving the official notification from the ACCJC in July, the President encouraged broad participation of the whole college from the beginning: "The message I gave at the campus meeting in August was, 'We're all going to be engaged in this, one way or another'." The Director of Information Technology identified the college's small size as an influence in motivating many people to participate:

> Because we're such a small college, . . . you can't hide or be unknown. Everyone is involved and has to be and wears multiple hats. . . . The institution has to pull together. They have to realize that we are all in this together.

The Executive Assistant to the CSSO was somewhat more descriptive, reaffirming the urgency of getting as many people involved as possible:

> We all need to work together to get it done right. It can't be just the instruction side of the house. It can't be just the student services side of the house. It takes all of us to work together. . . . We tend to work together. Smallness again. We're that small. We've got to learn to work together, or it's just not going to work. No, you can't run and hide here. We've got a few who try and sometimes succeed, but overall we include them. We include everybody, try to encourage them to get involved.

This idea of "hiding" implies that the participants were aware that some members of the campus community would not want to be involved. However, the participants emphasized how everyone on campus was encouraged to participate.

Queens College

Queens College also encouraged members from across the college to become active in addressing the ACCJC recommendations, but in a different manner. The two primary shared governance committees comprising representative members from the

128

different constituent groups were the Strategic Council, which work on final versions of the institutional planning documents, and the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PARAC), which created drafts of the planning documents as well as found ways to integrate program review, institutional evaluation, and budgeting (frequently referred to as resource allocation) with institutional planning. Other than these, the primary body that was instrumental in overseeing the activities related to addressing the recommendations was the leadership team identified by the CIO only as "key folks." The formation of this group was driven by the CIO's notion of an effective team that could move quickly to solve problems:

> What do you get when you build a horse by committee? You get a donkey. You can't have too many people doing—in the design phase of any project. You need key folks. You need key folks who represent broad sections of the college . . . individuals who have had enough experience in their positions to look beyond their own constituents.

So she gathered together the vice presidents, the Director of Institutional Research, and the presidents of each Senate: faculty, classified, and managers. This small group of key people was involved in designing the college's responses to the recommendations. Then they each took the ideas back to the members of their constituent groups for further discussion, revision, and enhancement. As the CIO stated, "their responsibility was to take the information and the ideas—they were vetted back to their group, to their constituents, and then to bring it back to the table."

That was the role of the design team, but the CIO also described how beyond that design team, other campus leaders, such as committee chairs and department heads, were

also expected to participate heavily in the college's responses to the accreditation recommendations:

> [A college needs] folks who are really willing to take on leadership roles. That's how I see it because otherwise it's not going to happen. I need—the ALO needs leaders all across campus to do their jobs with their constituents in providing that leadership.

The CIO described how one of the primary responsibilities of these campus leaders was to communicate to their groups what needed to be accomplished and how it should be accomplished:

> If we had had a single person on that team who was not effective in communicating with their constituency group, I am not sure we would be— that we would have been able to get off warning. For example, if the classified representative could not communicate to the classified reps and their constituent members, what we were doing and why, and why it was necessary that they support the strategic plan and ed master plan, the new e-PAR program, program review, and explaining to them what their role is in the particular project, we would not have been successful. So it's like it hinges upon all these individuals. It's like links in a chain.

Thus, participatory governance worked this way at Queens College: a small band of leaders designed and planned and then took the ideas out to their respective constituent groups. Members of the groups thus had opportunity to provide feedback. The leaders would take the feedback, meet, redesign and enhance, the whole process leading to plans that the whole college supported and implemented.

Queens College, like the other colleges that participated in this study, also encouraged everyone at the college to participate in the various solutions to improve those areas of the college's operations that were identified in the ACCJC recommendations. The CIO mentioned training the campus community so that everyone

could participate in something related to addressing the ACCJC recommendations: "So we provide the training so that the college community members have the tools and the expectation for engagement that they are going to need to be effective members of the community." The faculty participant in the study stated, "You do have to get everybody on board" and remarked that both faculty and classified personnel received training on the data used in program reviews:

> . . . especially since we were asking everyone to go through it [program review]. So we really wanted those different perspectives. And that everyone was willing to learn, and learn kind of a whole new language, because non-instructional folks don't have to worry about productivity or retention, success, all of these kinds of numbers that even faculty don't even always get.

Consequently, everyone was trained, so everyone was expected to participate. Regarding the recommendation on program review, the Associate Dean recalled,

> We've got to get every program done so that by the fall when we have to do our next report, we can say everybody's been through it. And we did it for everyone: all the academic programs, we did it for the operations side . . . People worked extraordinarily hard. And it was not an entirely successful process in terms of the forms, which weren't really great, and they really didn't fit some of the operations folks who struggle with the metrics and things. But everyone did it; everybody put the work in, and we got through it.

To sum up the theme of encouraging broad participation in addressing the accreditation recommendations, these successful colleges made efforts to involve as many people as possible.

(5) Creating documents as evidence

Another activity that some colleges identified as important was documenting the activities and gathering evidence. Of the colleges that responded to the survey, three of the eight mentioned the importance of documentation. At Blackwater College, one of the

131

tasks assigned to each committee that worked on one of the recommendations was to ensure that documentation and evidence was collected. Blackwater attributed its "commitment to documentation" as a significant aspect of its successful removal of the accreditation sanction. Dorne College reported assigning a specific person to compile documentation and evidence in support of information that the college presented in its follow-up reports to the ACCJC. Lannisport College recorded that in its reports to the ACCJC, "there was a great deal of documentation for each assertion. A trail of ongoing documentation, not just the change itself, must be clearly demonstrated." The respondent from Lannisport also advised that colleges that receive a sanction should "document everything."

Likewise, Kings College and Queens College created trails of documentation and evidence in support of claims they made in their follow up reports to the ACCJC. Yet in the descriptions provided by the interviewees, it was clear that the primary purpose of the evidence and data gathering was to help the colleges themselves address the ACCJC recommendations and not just provide evidence to the ACCJC that the colleges had indeed addressed the recommendations satisfactorily.

Kings College

When the Warning sanction was announced, the college immediately began producing documents that would later serve as evidence of its work addressing the ACCJC recommendations; however, the intention of the documents was to serve the college's activities, not to prove anything to the ACCJC. First, the President of Kings College began immediately to map out strategies:

I did this whole Word document: "Accreditation Work Plan." It had action steps under each recommendation—the things we need to do, target date for completing, the person responsible for it, has it been done, and check it off.

The Work Plan became the checklist, as noted by the Executive Assistant to the CSSO:

I even had notes of what we were doing, what our plan was, who was handling it, what's our goal for completing it. And we did keep track. And I pulled one up, and there: done, done, done, done, done.

To address the recommendation regarding integrated budgeting and planning, the President created a flowchart of the decision-making process through the shared governance committees, with levels of approval from grassroots all the way up to the Board of Trustees for issues or expenditures that need Board approval. The President also created a flowchart of the planning, budget, and evaluation cycle, integrating short-term planning with long-range planning. These documents were created to serve the college and to train the college how to participate in the planning, budgeting, evaluating, and decision-making processes. Then these documents also became evidence to the ACCJC that the college had addressed the recommendation to improve its planning and budgeting processes.

To address the recommendation regarding research planning systems, the college developed data reports that could be used for program review and for other purposes of evaluation to help drive decision-making processes. The President recalled:

We rolled out a draft set of data reports and said, "Are these kinds of data reports useful, in your opinion?" . . . . And so we had the data group which critiqued and said, OK, these are the things we're going to use in our program review, etc. That all went into that follow-up report. That thoroughness is why the visiting team said, "I think you've addressed this. You're obviously using data in your institutional processes."

133

This comment by the President reflects the two-fold use of the data reports, as information to be used in program review, in institutional evaluation, and in planning and budgeting, but also as evidence that the ACCJC recommendation had been addressed. The faculty participant recalled how faculty leaders modeled data use: "They saw our leadership and how hard we worked; we were the ones getting the assessment data in right away, and we would call each one of those faculty members once a month saying to get your material in." She also recalled how the program review reporting documents reflected the need to integrate budget with planning and evaluation processes: "Now there is a section in the program review report where you talk about your budgetary needs."

Both the Director of Institutional Research (DIR) and the Information Technology Specialist (IT Specialist) emphasized the importance of providing sufficient documentation of the college's work on the recommendations. The DIR said,

> The accrediting committee [meaning the visiting team] looked pretty hard at what we had done recently in the last two years. . . . It was really good to be able to go and show them, okay, this is the e-mail where I solicited feedback from people. This is where I told them all about the planning process. This is where— this is the binder that has all the different annual program reviews that the Strategic Planning Committee looks at. You know so you need that— I feel that you need that evidence, to be able to show them.

The IT Specialist observed that the evidence collection and the publishing of the evidence helped not only the ACCJC visiting team but also the college constituents themselves:

> . . . to make sure that we kept good records, collected the records we had, of things like group meetings and especially the shared governance committee meetings. There is a lot of collection of data. And I think going through some of that process helped a lot of people sort of understand better what we are doing, which is part of what the process is supposed to do. . . . There was a lot of energy by staff in preparing the document and organizing the efforts. And I think one of the things that we did well was collecting the evidence, making it clear what

recommendations the evidence was for, and making that easily accessible by the visiting team—and after they left, on our website. I think we sent them CDs with copies of it [evidence] which was outlined with links to the various sections by recommendation.

The experience of Kings College was that the evidence collection helped both the college and the visiting team from the ACCJC. The President summarized the dual nature of the evidence collection and publication of the evidence when he observed,

> [The follow-up visiting team] gave us a recommendation on communicating, to the campus community and out to the larger community—on the progress we've made, like, "You don't toot your horn enough. And you need to do that." And I thought, OK, that's good. It's as though we've been working so hard internally, we forgot to document progress to ourselves and to the world.

Queens College

The participants at Queens College spoke about reports and data but did not refer to these documents specifically as evidence that the ACCJC would want to see. They alluded to documents, data, and reports only as instrumental in helping the college address the accreditation recommendations. The CIO recalled specifically that the college purchased data management software for the purpose of tying departmental budget requests to institutional planning and evaluation processes. Department chairs would complete the data entry, including budget requests, and the system would produce reports that would be reviewed by the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PARAC). She stated,

> We purchased a software program called TracDat. Okay, it was a Hail Mary, but it worked. We purchased this online system where the idea was that you would go in, in the spring if you are a department chair and you would list . . . a 1- to 3-year short-term horizon, what your objectives are, what resources you need to accomplish those objectives, and link what you're asking for to the strategic plan. And so we did that . . . and then each spring thereafter, continued improvements

were made. And that's what's in place now, is an annual spring e-PAR cycle where you have to link your requests to the strategic plan. . . . PARAC then each spring—that was the committee charged with getting all the reports out of the new e-PAR system—PARAC would review those, all staffing requests, equipment requests, facilities requests, prioritize those, and submit that list to Strategic Council. So that worked relatively well. Still does.

The DIR described another version of this report: "We derived out the back door [of TracDat] an Access report and we can dump it into Excel, so we can list all 64 position requests, and then we populate column after column of data." He also described how the Office of Institutional Research can pull other reports to help faculty and departments with their program reviews, evaluation, and planning:

It [TracDat] has enabled this department to put out a whole bunch of documents you can look at that simplistically sum up the numbers related to your department. So I've got one page—we call it a department stat report—that has all that stuff for you. We generate it and hand it to you, and you use that to talk about yourself, and it's automatically attached to your requests.

The faculty participant described these data reports from the faculty perspective: "We get our little report that tells us retention and success, but breaking everything else down and looking at your department as a whole." The Associate Dean described these data reports from a departmental perspective:

They [the Office of Institutional Research] produced— they went through massive amounts of data and produced things that we never had before. . . . We've never had anything like this before. It's very helpful because we use these things for our program review.

All in all, to address the ACCJC recommendations and to improve its institutional planning, evaluation, and budget processes, the college used new data management tools and devised new data reporting documents to assist with its planning and decision-making processes. These data reports and documents also served as evidence that the

136

college had addressed the recommendations. However, these documents were created primarily to help the college improve. As the Research Analyst who participated in the interviews remarked, "The engagement in planning that we have done is real. It's not pretend," and the documentation signified the reality of that engagement across the campus.

Summary Findings for Activities and Actions

Survey respondents and interview participants attributed their colleges' success to several activities and actions undertaken by these colleges. The list of effective strategies includes the following:

1. Rely on committees to oversee or to do the work, whether they are regular standing committees of the college; formally established, temporary committees; informally created ad hoc work groups or task forces.

2. Create strategies and timelines for completing the work, including identifying who will do what; and begin work immediately;

3. Communicate effectively across the institution throughout the process and beyond; using every means of communication possible to inform, train, encourage, convince, persuade, and calm anxiety; and cultivating frankness, openness, and transparency; and ensure that the college understands exactly what the ACCJC recommendations are asking it to do;

4. Involve members from every constituency and department;

5. Create documents as evidence that work was completed or is in progress.

Table 5: The participating colleges and the activities and actions they believed contributed to their successful removal of a sanction[3].

What Actions Contributed to Success?	Rely on committees	Create strategies and timelines	Communicate effectively	Involve multiple constituencies	Create documents as evidence
Colleges that responded to the survey questionnaire					
Blackwater College	X		X	X	X
College Beyond the Wall	X	X	X		X
Dorne College	X		X	X	X
Dragonstone College	X			X	
Lannisport College	X		X	X	X
Oldtown College			X	X	
Riverrun College	X		X		
Winterfell College	X				
Colleges in the multiple case study					
Kings College	X	X	X	X	X
Queens College	X	X	X	X	X

Table 5 illustrates which colleges included descriptions of the above strategies in their responses and identified these strategies as having been instrumental in having their accreditation sanction removed.

(2) People and Personalities

In both the survey and interviews, the colleges were asked to reflect on the key players who helped to ensure that the college successfully addressed its recommendations. In reflecting on the key players, they were also asked to identify these individuals' personality traits that helped see the college through a successful process. The questions that they responded to were phrased this way: "Which college personnel

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[3] The data reported in Table 5 creates an *appearance* that the case study colleges engaged in more activities than the other colleges. The investigator recognizes that such assumptions should not be made. The investigator was able to collect more data at the case study colleges because he was able to spend 30 to 60 minutes with each interviewee, he was able to ask follow-up questions, and at both colleges several persons were interviewed, thus providing more data from their multiple perspectives and the broader variety of experiences.

Table 6: Survey Results – Key players in the work to have the sanction removed

(Eight colleges surveyed) Key Player	Number of Colleges that identified this key player
President	6
Faculty leaders/Senate President	6
Vice President of Academic Affairs/Instruction (CIO)	5
Vice President of Student Affairs (CSSO) or other VP	4
Classified leaders/Senate President	4
Accreditation Liaison Officer (ALO)	4
Director of Institutional Research (DIR)	3
Student Learning Outcomes Coordinator	2
Managers/Deans	1
Program Review Coordinator	1
Staff Development Coordinator	1
Board of Trustees	1
English faculty	1
Consultant	1

played key roles in your college's work to remove the sanction? What skills and personal traits of these college personnel contributed to the college's success in having the sanction removed?"

Survey Findings

Respondents from each college listed several individuals who provided the leadership to help the college remove its sanction. Respondents did not identify these key players by name but instead identified them by their official role or position at the college. Table 6 presents a breakdown of the key players identified in the survey. Of the eight colleges that responded to the survey, six responded that the President of the college was a major player. Six colleges responded that the Academic Senate President or other faculty leaders played key roles. Five of the colleges specifically identified the Vice

President of Academic Affairs (also known as the Vice President of Instruction) as a key player while four colleges identified the other Vice Presidents as key players, one of these pointing out that the Vice President of Student Affairs was a major player. Four colleges identified classified staff as participating in the leadership of these projects, and four colleges identified the Accreditation Liaison Officer. Three colleges listed the Director of Institutional Research as a major player. One college specifically pointed out English faculty as being extremely important. One college identified its Board of Trustees as key players. One college listed one of its deans as important, and one included the staff development coordinator. Two colleges identified Student Learning Outcomes Coordinators as key players while one college identified its Program Review Coordinator. And one of the colleges listed a consultant as a major player. Table 7 summarizes the key players as identified by each college, including both those who responded to the survey and those who participated in the multiple case study.

The colleges that responded to the survey identified the following personal traits and skills as important to the success of their efforts to remove the sanctions:

- good communicator/facilitate dialogue
- understands accreditation
- understands college operations
- vision
- organizer/planning skills
- research skills
- writing skills
- lack of ego
- can sell ideas/rally people together
- leadership
- expertise
- problem solver

- knows where to go to get help
- supportive/collaborative/collegial
- not resistant to change
- respected and respectful
- trust, openness, transparency

Table 7: Key players identified by college

Key Player (as identified by all 10 participating colleges)	Winterfell College	Coll Beyond the Wall	Oldtown College	Lannisport College	Blackwater College	Dragonstone College	Dorne College	Riverrun College	Kings College	Queens College	TOTAL
President	X			X	X	X	X	X	X		7
Faculty leaders/Senate President	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	8
Vice President of Academic Affairs/Instruction	X		X	X	X	X			X	X	7
Vice President of Student Affairs or other Vice President		X	X	X		X			X		5
Accreditation Liaison Officer[4]				X		X	X	X	X	X	5
Director of Institutional Research	X					X		X	X	X	5
Classified leaders/Senate President		X				X	X		X		4
Student Learning Outcomes Coordinator[5]						X	X				2
Managers/deans					X				X		2
Program Review Coordinator							X				1
Staff Development Coordinator		X									1
Board of Trustees				X							1
English faculty	X										1
Consultant							X				1

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[4] The Accreditation Liaison Officer (also known as ALO) is usually not a designated classification in the personnel classification study, nor is it a discrete position within the management or administrative structure. Rather, ALO is a role or list of duties assigned to an individual who holds another recognized position in the institution, such as CIO, CSSO, Director of Institutional Research, or faculty.

[5] The Student Learning Outcomes Coordinator (also known as SLO Coordinator) is commonly a member of the faculty with extra duties assigned related to coordinating the college's system of identifying and assessing SLOs in courses, programs, and services to students. This faculty leader may have all or a portion of his/her instructional load reassigned.

It seems redundant that *leadership* should be called out as a specific trait, for many of the other qualities that are listed could be considered aspects of good leadership. The respondent from Dorne College complimented the President for having a "transparent style of leadership," but what does it mean to be "transparent"? The assumption is that "transparent leadership" is characterized by frequent and open communication; not withholding information, including bad news; and communicating with integrity and honesty. But without further details from the respondent, these are just the researcher's assumptions.

Overall, the colleges did not attach any specific traits to any particular persons or positions within the college structure. Table 8 lists the traits that each college identified as important qualities of their leaders, qualities that contributed positively to their efforts to address the ACCJC recommendations. Respondents from six of the colleges presented generalized lists of traits held by their leaders without linking a specific trait to a particular person. The two traits most frequently mentioned were effective communication skills and an understanding of accreditation. These two traits may be considered the major themes while all the other traits may be considered minor themes in this section of the chapter. However, no trait stands alone in any one person's character; it should be remembered that each player's ethos is a combination of multiple traits, and it is the combination of traits that matters. As a result, the discussion that follows presents portraits of key players as the participants described them—as persons with many traits and multiple talents that were beneficial to the college's work to remove the sanction.

Table 8: Helpful Traits of Leaders Identified by College

Key Player Attributes/Traits	Winterfell College	Coll Beyond the Wall	Oldtown College	Lannisport College	Blackwater College	Dragonstone College	Dorne College	Riverrun College	Kings College	Queens College
communication skills: facilitate dialogue		X	X	X		X	X		X	X
communication skills: can sell ideas/rally people together						X	X	X	X	X
understands accreditation		X				X	X	X	X	X
understands college operations		X					X		X	X
visionary	X						X		X	X
organizer/planning skills			X				X		X	X
research skills/data analysis skills	X						X		X	X
writing skills	X						X		X	
lack of ego		X		X					X	X
leadership	X								X	X
expertise					X		X		X	X
problem solver				X					X	X
knows where to go to get help							X			
supportive/collaborative/collegial							X	X	X	X
not resistant to change								X		X
respected and respectful							X		X	X
trust, openness, transparency				X			X		X	

Among the survey respondents, only Dorne and Riverrun Colleges associated specific traits to specific persons. The respondent from Dorne described the ALO as having prior experience with accreditation and possessing "the ability to communicate easily with constituent groups, moving successfully amongst members of the Governing Board, Superintendent/President, faculty, classified, and students." He/she also described the Superintendent/President as "support[ing] the ALO, and provid[ing] experience and vision" and "garner[ing] the respect and trust of all constituency groups with her transparent style of leadership." The respondent from Dorne described the other key

leaders as "organized." The respondent from Riverrun identified the DIR specifically as being "the only person on campus familiar with the accreditation standards and what needed to be done to get off of warning." He/she described the President as supportive and the Faculty Senate President as open, "setting an example of not resisting the changes, as was the practice of the FS President before him."

Unlike most of the data from the survey results, data from the case study interviews connected specific personal traits and strengths to the specific key persons on campus. This was due in part to the investigator's opportunity to ask follow-up questions such as "Describe her personality traits," or "Tell me a little more about him; what's he like?" whenever one of the interviewees identified an individual who was instrumental in the activities or actions that the college engaged in to address the ACCJC recommendations.

Kings College

The interview participants at Kings College identified the President, the Dean of Instruction, the Dean of Student Affairs, the Director of Institutional Research, the Director of Information Technology, and several members of the faculty as the major players. The person referred to most frequently as instrumental in the college's successful removal of the sanction was the President.

The President

Regarding the President of the Kings College, the Dean of Instruction (CIO) described him as someone having strong planning skills. The President was able to organize and map out the process for addressing the accreditation recommendations. He

144

took the lead in drafting the original plans and in communicating those plans to the whole

campus. The CIO described him as steady: "He's a very steady and thoughtful person,

not very excitable; and he's very 'even' pretty much in all senses of the word, which as

far as I'm concerned is a very nice thing to have in a president." The CIO also described

the President as open to other people's ideas: "He's very careful to solicit feedback, and

the planning process reflects that both in the way that it was developed and also in the

way that it works. It's a very open process." The CIO noted that the President's

thoughtfulness and openness have been criticized by other people on campus because at

times these traits may have slowed down a decision-making process. However, the CIO

countered this opinion: "There are people on campus who might tell you that he takes a

long time to make decisions, and that may have happened a couple of times; but when

things need to be moved on quickly, he gets them done." The faculty participant saw

similar traits of evenness and openness in the president:

> He was very amenable. He was— he took criticism and suggestions very openly.
> It didn't mean he accepted them, but he was a very patient person. He's also a
> very non-emotional person; so even with his hard decisions, budget-wise, he is
> able to get through with a level of kindness as well as stoicism, if you will. It's
> very "that's how it is." But his patience makes it a little bit softer and gentler.

The president was also described as being familiar with the California community

college system and with accreditation. The CIO recognized that the President's

background and experience with these systems were integral aspects of the President's

ethos and gave him a "system-wide perspective":

> He's been at big schools and small schools. He's now President and [has been] a
> CIO; he was originally a faculty member and a dean. So he's played a lot of
> different roles at a lot of different schools, and he just understands the system

145

very well. . . . our relationship with the accreditor and their role, [he] understands all that very well. And just having that knowledge on campus was really helpful, so he had the right temperament and the right background to help us through.

The President's familiarity with community college systems and operations and with accreditation contributed to his leading the college through a successful accreditation experience. The Executive Assistant to the CSSO described this quality as "leadership":

He was also a leader, I think a good leader from the top. . . . You have to have somebody who constantly stays on top of the whole picture. Might even guide. . . . he gives real good guidance of where his vision is and where we're going with this. "Here's where I see us moving forward. Now I want you to help me get it done." But that's leadership, and I think that's another key. And he was good at that.

The concept of "leader from the top" and "somebody who constantly stays on top of the whole picture" is similar to the faculty participant's description of the President as "systematic" and also matches the CIO's perception of the President as someone who has a "system-wide perspective." In his interview, the President reflected this systematic, leader-from-the-top point of view when he stated, "I was looking at the whole institution."

The interview participants also described the President as diligent and determined. "He's a doer and he works very hard and spends hours," stated the Executive Assistant to the CSSO. Similarly, the faculty participant described him this way: "He was incredibly patient. He was—. He persevered. He was very persistent in the planning conversations." The CIO captured this aspect of the President's character clearly when he stated,

If anyone on campus gets credit for it, it should be [the President], plain and simple; he's the one who kept us moving on it and didn't let us sort of revert back

146

into our old patterns. . . . a president who focused on it, stuck with it, made sure that things were getting done.

Another trait exhibited by the President was his skill at putting the right people on the right committees. The faculty participant mentioned how he would "bring people in, so, dividing up work," but the Executive Assistant to the CSSO described specifically how the President would take care to invite the right people to work on the committees and various tasks:

> He actually probably did some handpicking as to what built his committee . . . [The President] is a really good— when he needs a workgroup, he will handpick them; and I think he probably had a lot to do with developing these [committees] according to what he saw needed to be done.

The President recognized this task as an important part of his role as president. In his interview, he stated, "When I was calling on people to do things in response to the recommendations, the response I was getting was, 'Oh, this is serious. The president personally is asking me to help on this.'" The response was partly out of people's respect for the office of the president and partly out of their respect for him as President. To ensure that he was asking the right people, he would solicit input from others on campus. He stated, "As I was fairly new at that point, I would have to ask people, 'Well, who's going to be best to address this issue?'" As he became more familiar with the college's personnel, he learned which people had the best skill sets and knowledge to work well on the various committees and task forces.

All the participants at Kings College described the President as a good communicator, skilled at keeping the campus updated and informed of every step in the college's progress as it proceeded to address the ACCJC recommendations and make

147

improvements. The CIO summarized this quality, saying that the President "spent a lot

of time at every campus-wide meeting talking about [the planning and governance

processes]." The faculty participant reported similar memories:

> Our president and our CIO worked really hard to constantly communicate
> progress on the recommendations . . . He would formulate ideas, and he would
> bring those not just to the committees—planning, budgeting, the cabinet level—
> but he also conducts at least once a semester community meetings with the whole
> campus community and so those are mandatory. . . . and then he tells everybody
> what is going on in the planning cycle.

The Executive Assistant to the CSSO provided even more detail:

> [The President]'s good at that [keeping everybody attuned]. He kept us informed
> in community meetings . . . He also, [the President] kept us up on a lot of
> activities. And he does this with kudos to people doing nice things on campus . . .
> also once in a while we get a— what he calls his e-mail— and it's kind of an
> update— just update for this month. . . . hopefully everybody reads the e-mail
> from [the President], because he sends it to everybody, and it's his basic update. .
> . . So [the President] communicates well.

The issue of transparency in the communication was mentioned by the Director of

Institutional Research (DIR) and the Information Technology Specialist (IT Specialist).

The DIR stated the President "would have to rally up the troops. So it's important to be

open and to be honest." The IT Specialist provided the most detailed descriptions of the

President's communication activities and skills:

> The President has been very good at making the process transparent . . . the real
> transparency has to do with things like making sure that the minutes of meetings
> are published in a timely way, the agendas are distributed in advance, the shared
> governance process is adhered to, that there's good representation on those
> committees. There are frequent announcements that are really cogent and in
> detail, summaries of what is taking place without glossing things too much,
> without too much of a rhetorical spin, but very straightforward and with a request
> for suggestions and questions and those types of things.

Thus, the President made concerted efforts to keep everyone informed of the college's work to address the recommendations. His talent for communicating helped establish a culture of trust and cooperation across the campus, which ultimately helped the college to accomplish its goals, address the recommendations, and have the sanction removed.

The Deans (CIO and CSSO)

In the interviews, the Dean of Instruction (CIO) and Dean of Student Services (CSSO) were identified as important players in the processes. Both were involved in the work group assigned to redesign the planning processes and to shore up the participatory governance processes for decision-making. The CIO, who was new to the position, recognized that he needed to learn quickly about accreditation and the expectations of the ACCJC and to communicate those expectations clearly to the faculty and to others on campus. He also needed to learn the planning process and communicate that as well. These details from his interview emphasize that the leaders in these endeavors need to have knowledge of accreditation and good communication skills. The Executive Assistant to the CSSO described both deans—the former CIO, who was involved in the first year of addressing the ACCJC recommendations, and the CSSO—as "good thinkers"; they were good at problem solving, brainstorming, and creative thinking. However, she described the CSSO and the former CIO as more visionary than practical:

> They [the deans] would sometimes run and then I would rein them back in. I mean, I did that even in my job. I am more detailed, so we've got details here. Yeah, let's think of all the things you think need to be done, but I am going to tell you how that really works in the real world.

149

The current CIO, who was a member of the faculty when the college began addressing

the ACCJC recommendations recalled how the former CIO was able to motivate faculty

to work on the recommendation related to student learning outcomes:

> He's a very enthusiastic guy. When he gets an idea in his head about how to
> approach something, he communicates it very effectively to people. Of those four
> recommendations, he was most directly involved with the SLO course outline
> work, obviously. . . . he would come to us, to the faculty, and give us a game
> plan for getting through the revisions that we had to do. He was the one who
> identified [name] as the faculty SLO helper, go-to person for a year. He knew
> what we needed to do, communicated it, allocated a resource in terms of [her]
> time to help us get it done.

According to this description, the former CIO exhibited traits of being an effective and

motivational communicator and a thoughtful administrator, providing encouragement and

support for faculty.   He used his communication skills to encourage, to rally, and to

persuade. Similarly, the IT Specialist described the former CIO as upbeat and positive:

"The former Dean had good strength in terms of being very optimistic, forward-looking,

and sort of a visionary in terms of what we could be, and that sort of thing. Very

optimistic, supportive of individuals." However, he described the new CIO as bringing a

different set of skills to the table:

> The subsequent Dean is very diligent and organized in things, conceptualizing
> things, structuring data and understanding data. And so he brought a lot of clarity
> to some of the things that we had already started and sort of worked through. And
> I think that helped a lot.

The faculty member who was interviewed appreciated the new CIO's knack for following

through immediately on ideas that surfaced in meetings. He understood his role in the

decision-making processes and completed his tasks. She described him as follows: "The

CIO-- . . . he reads all of them [program reviews] and gets back to faculty on them and

150

then is able to go into budget meetings and really understand the budget needs of programs." She also praised the CSSO for her knowledge and understanding of student learning outcomes and assessment, describing the CSSO's contributions to the Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Cycle Committee: "The Chief Student Services Officer sat down at the first meeting—our new student services officer—and immediately had ways to measure [student learning outcomes]."

The participants in the study identified several traits of the deans as important to the college's work to address the ACCJC recommendations and to have its Warning sanction removed. Among those traits were encouraging communication, supportive administration, understanding of data, vision and creativity, and follow-through.

The Director of Institutional Research

The Director of Institutional Research (DIR) was the newest addition to the staff and started his position when the college was in its second year of work on the accreditation sanctions. He was aware that his experiences at other colleges and his relationships with researchers at other institutions was helpful. He knew other persons to whom he could turn for ideas of projects or processes that have worked at other colleges. He also had expertise in strategic planning. And he was the data guru. The President specifically identified the DIR as having "a good head for planning systems," for being "a good abstract thinker," and for being "a data wonk type person." Everybody needs a data wonk, according to the President. The faculty member who was interviewed appreciated the DIR's communication skills and his participation at meetings. She also appreciated his expertise at presenting data and making it understandable. The DIR

himself described his other attributes as helping the college achieve its objectives in addressing the ACCJC recommendations. He recognized that his patience and openness helped to move the college forward:

> Allowing people to bring their gripes about a process and making it better really does help because then they go from being a detractor saying, "Oh, this is bad; I don't really want to work on this." That changes their perspective because you have listened to them; you have implemented a change in the process to make it work better for them, and then they can tell their friends: "Oh yeah, you know, I used to really hate doing that, but now that I feel like I have a voice, I am much more willing to do it. And I think it works." . . . I'm describing more the way that I handled it.

So he handled faculty complaints and others' complaints by listening, valuing their perspectives, and then finding solutions to the perceived difficulties. He was open and honest and valued those same qualities in other people. He stated, "I am really a fan of putting everything out on the table and being very open about the problems that are facing the college."

Classified Personnel

Several of the interviewees discussed how valuable the executive assistants to the deans and to the President were. They praised the executive assistants for their history with and knowledge of the college. The IT Specialist pointed out how that history and that knowledge was helpful because they could bring to the table stories of how past projects were either successful or unsuccessful. They brought

> a sense of perspective on the process where sometimes they would say, yes, we tried this before and it didn't work. Or, we've been working on this for a long time; this is not a new issue. So we still haven't solved it, so we need to do something else different.

He also noted that they were hard workers:

152

Executive staff support— they work very hard, very hard. They were absolutely critical. And both of them [the assistants to the CSSO and the CIO] had been here a long time, so they have the institutional knowledge. Far, far from just being secretaries in terms of just shuffling papers or anything like that. They have a lot of institutional knowledge themselves.

He also stated that the executive assistants to the President and the deans were important because they knew where everything was and they knew how to find information.

The CIO noted that he relied on his assistant's organizational skills, stating, "the gatekeeper of all this is really [name], who is my assistant. She's the one who tracks the progress of the course outline revisions and then communicates that—"[6] . The faculty member who was interviewed specifically praised the Executive Assistant to the CSSO for her knowledge of the students and of the many issues that affect the lives and the success of students. She also described this Executive Assistant as someone who gets things done:

She's amazing. She has her finger on— she is an administrative assistant and she has her finger on the pulse of everything that's going on with students on this campus, with the student services side of the house as well as the instruction. And she has been here so long; and you can also put things in front of her and they get done. Because she does that—and we all do that; we wear so many hats. We wear so many hats that we— because of that, we are so invested in this school, and we want it to be good. So she's a great example of that. She is truly a jewel.

Then she broadened her description to include all the classified staff, faculty, and administrators at the college, stating, "We have a lot of people like that. Because they care. It's a culture of care. An ethic of care."

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[6] The CIO did not finish this statement but implied that she communicated information to the necessary parties, which include himself and faculty.

The Executive Assistant to the CSSO recognized several strengths in herself and how they contributed to the success of the college's addressing of the ACCJC recommendations. She recognized that she had a good knowledge and history of the college. "I'm kind of in the loop, she said; "I've been here 33 years. So sometimes it's just history. 'She knows a little more; put her on a committee,'" she said, imitating how she imagines others speak of her. She also described herself as "a detail person": she was good with details, good at following processes, staying on track, speaking up when things got off track, and speaking up when actions did not fit the plans or the intent of the plans. When working on committees, she would point out the realistic feasibility of specific plans or projects, and was confident in her assessments of what would work and what would not work based on her extensive knowledge of the college and its resources. In this respect, she said she was not afraid to disagree with the administrators, yet she did so in a collegial manner.

In sum, the valued traits of classified staff included their longevity with the college, their knowledge of its history and operations, their familiarity with personnel, their dedication to working hard and seeing a project through to completion, their practical wisdom in assessing which solutions will work and which ones will probably not work, their knowing where everything is located, and above all their care for students and for the success of the institution.

Faculty

Specific faculty members were important in the college's success at addressing the accreditation recommendations. The interviewees separately confirmed that those

instructors who had expertise with student learning outcomes and assessment were the most valuable, especially for working on the college's response to the recommendations on student learning outcomes and program review. The President expressed that when he was forming the different task forces to tackle the recommendations, he looked specifically for those faculty members who were "devoted to the college," who had expertise with assessing student learning outcomes, and who had good relationships with and were well respected by other people across the campus. He said,

> When it got around to tweaking the comprehensive program review format, who are the good people among the faculty who are going to command respect? If they have a hand in this, their colleagues are likely going to accept it. And we won't have to deal with six months of complaints; we've anticipated potential problems.

The President was keenly aware that if he was able to recruit the well-respected faculty onto the work group dealing with the student learning outcomes recommendation and the program review recommendation, then he would be able to get buy-in from the rest of the faculty, including the part-time or associate faculty. If he did not have these well-respected faculty leading the charge, then the college would not have been able to move forward addressing these recommendations and instead could have become bogged down in faculty resistance—a consequence of not assigning the right person to the right committee. The CIO also commented on the difference between receptive faculty and resistant faculty: "Some full-time faculty were receptive to the idea of SLOs and assessment, and some were as opposed to it as you can imagine. And so in the cases where people were opposed to it, things move more slowly." This comment speaks to the same issue addressed by the President, that resistant faculty can bog down the process of

155

addressing the ACCJC recommendations and that such resistance can be detrimental to the college's ability to complete its work within the two-year time limit, whereas receptive faculty help move the college along toward successful resolution.

The faculty member who was interviewed appreciated that there were a few "really, really hard-working full-time faculty" who participated in these projects. She described one in particular who persevered even when facing open resistance from peers.

> You know how that resistance, that faculty resistance of assessment—my God! And we had it here with just a few full-time faculty. There was just this resistance. "I'm not going to do it. It's not in my contract"—whatever the hell they were arguing. But we have a couple of faculty, one in particular who just was— she just stayed on it. For years she stayed on it [fighting faculty resistance to assessment]. That was [name]. And when I came on, she was able— I had that culture of assessment and worked in an assessment office at Northern Arizona University, and so I had that culture. I just assumed everybody did. So when I came in, for her it was a sigh of relief: "Thank God there was somebody else on this campus who truly gets it." And so she and I became the torchbearers of assessment. And both of us created a very, very collegial relationship with our colleagues, with other faculty. And they saw our leadership and how hard we worked. We were the ones getting the assessment data in right away, and we would call each one of those faculty members once a month saying to "get your material in."

In herself, she recognized that her expertise in learning outcomes and assessment also contributed to the college's success. She also recognized in herself the importance of her collegiality, her ability to be an ambassador to bring the message to other faculty members, to train and explain and encourage. "I want collegiality," she said, "and I want us to be kind to each other."

The CIO praised one particular faculty member for her expertise in one of the recommendation areas (student learning outcomes).

156

[She] was the one; she's one of the faculty who is more receptive to the whole SLO thing, so she worked with faculty to help them, to give feedback and guidance on getting SLOs in place on their courses. . . . [She] is really easy to work with and really invested in SLOs, and it was nice for people to have someone to go to, to bounce ideas off.

The IT Specialist appreciated the English instructors for their writing and editing skills when it came time to draft the reports to send to the Accrediting Commission.

There was a faculty member in the English department who assisted a great deal in the writing of the document that helped— organized the writing and helped clean up some of the language and that sort of thing. There were a couple of other key faculty members who are very active in the processes of the college anyway, and just in general who also stepped up to the plate during this time.

However, he lamented that more faculty weren't involved:

I don't think that there was an even participation by all faculty—the way it usually goes. There was a handful of people that was really involved, and most of the people were somewhat involved, and some people who aren't ever; the usual faces showed up when it comes to the faculty.

The IT Specialist was also a member of the part-time faculty. As a leader among faculty and a leader in the college's efforts to remove the accreditation sanction, he recognized in himself the importance of encouraging other faculty members to get involved and to do the work:

I've been the union president of the Associate Faculty Union, and I have tried to encourage the associate faculty to take an attitude of "How can we use this to help us in terms of our job and what we do?" rather than take an adversarial type of position in relation to administration.

He has tried to help the part-time faculty see the value in making the changes recommended by the ACCJC. It can be inferred from these statements that he too is devoted to the college and committed to its success similarly to the other faculty leaders, the classified personnel, and the administrators.

157

Overall, no matter who the people were, the important qualities at Kings College were good communication skills, devotion to the college, a creativity and fearlessness to move ahead, perseverance when encountering resistance, patience and kindness, knowledge and expertise, history with the college, a knack for data, collegiality and a commitment to collaboration, and a desire to get the job done. Table 9 summarizes

Table 9: Personal attributes of the key players at Kings College

	CEO	CIO 1	CIO 2	CSSO	DIR	Fac.	Class.
communication skills: clarity, facilitate dialogue	X		X		X	X	
communication skills: persuasion, rally people together		X				X	
skilled planning and organizing	X		X		X		X
problem-solving skills	X	X	X	X			X
history with the college		X		X			X
expertise and experience	X			X	X	X	X
discerning/assigns the right person	X						
authority	X						
a closer			X				X
hard worker/ willingness to work	X		X			X	X
willingness to learn			X				X
respected and respectful	X				X	X	
steady and thoughtful	X		X				
bravery						X	
understands accreditation	X		X			X	
understands college operations	X		X	X		X	X
visionary		X	X				
commitment to the college						X	X
research skills/data analysis skills				X	X	X	
supportive/collaborative/ collegial	X	X	X			X	X
trust, openness, transparency	X		X		X		
writing skills						X	
caring							X

which personnel the interviewees thought were instrumental and the associated personal attributes of these individuals. These personal traits within the leaders and members of the college contributed to the college's successful removal of its Warning sanction.

Queens College Findings

At Queens College, the Vice President of Instruction, the Dean of Institutional Research, and a handful of faculty leaders were identified as the major players. The President of the college, the Vice President of Student Services, a few leaders from among the classified staff, and the deans also played important roles; but the latter individuals were mentioned less frequently than the former.

Vice President of Instruction (CIO)

The person who was identified the most frequently as instrumental and influential in all of the projects and processes that the college engaged in to remove the accreditation sanctions was the Vice President of Instruction, or Chief Instructional Officer (CIO). Some of the traits she brought to the processes included her logical approaches to problem solving, her ability to express ideas graphically, her ability to assign the right person to a task, her persuasive communication skills, and her boldness. The Dean of Institutional Research (DIR) described her as mathematical and logical and as a person who "likes to build":

> We're always joking about building structures that look like ven diagrams, thinking in that concrete way that gets a process built. . . . One of the delights of working for [the CIO] is, [she] is a gee-whiz!-what-will-it-look-like person. When you talk to her, she starts drawing boxes with arrows and stuff like that, so she is very concrete in her idea of how a system will operate. So that really cut to the chase.

159

The faculty member who was interviewed attributed the CIO's skill at planning and communicating in a concrete manner to her background in engineering.

> If you've seen the flowchart, it's [the CIO]'s. That's how she thinks. She's a former engineer. So her flowcharts and process and getting things so we can visually see where things are, that was kind of the perfecting, the fine tuning.

Both the DIR and the faculty participant praised the CIO's ability to diagram processes and to sketch out plans in ways that everybody could understand. The DIR commented that the CIO was good at taking a theory or a vision and making it concrete in practical terms.

The Research Analyst who was interviewed stated that the CIO was skillful at knowing people and their talents; she was good at assigning the right person to the right task to make sure the task was done well. For example, to address the ACCJC recommendation on student learning outcomes and updating curriculum, she assigned a member of the faculty to be the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO) Coordinator. The Research Analyst recalled, "It was [the CIO] who came, and we finally had an SLO Coordinator, [name], who got us where we actually did accomplish some things, though it wasn't easy." Yet she was not a micro-manager; she was a good delegator. The Research Analyst described her thus:

> [She] was terrific, very evenhanded with people, very fair-minded. She, in my mind, she did a lot of good things here in— it seems like a short time. . . . She wasn't a meddler. She trusted people to take care of things.

The CIO herself recognized that she was good at discerning people's skills and strengths and assigning them to appropriate projects. She stated,

But having the folks, the right people at the table, making sure that the environment was such that they could really speak freely, making sure everybody knows and understands their responsibility is to take the information and the ideas— they were vetted back to their group, to their constituents, and then bringing it back to the table—.

To ensure the success of projects, she formed committees of those people that were trusted across the college because they would be responsible for sharing information between the project committees and their constituent groups and departments.

The CIO was also bold and determined. The Associate Dean recalled an incident in which the CIO exhibited boldness and determination: "There's a famous, at least around here, story— and I can't recall; what did she ask?— [the CIO] stood up to Barbara Beno[7] at a conference and got shot down hard. She just asked a question and got shot down." On campus, she demonstrated her boldness and determination in her solution to the ACCJC recommendation on program review. Her solution required faculty to work an extra month off contract. The CIO recalled how she came to the decision to require all units and departments to complete a program review rather than have a portion of units and departments complete reviews staggered over three or four years:

I laid it out to the department chairs: "This is what I think we need to do. I think we need to do program review, a new program review template for every single instructional, student services, and administrative program." And they all looked at me and said, "Okay."

At this point in the interview, the CIO's non-verbal facial expression implied that the chairs' affirmative response surprised her. She anticipated resistance but did not

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[7] Dr. Barbara A. Beno is the President of the ACCJC. As the Chief Executive Officer of the ACCJC, she administrates all commission operations and processes but is not a member of the 19-member Commission. She ensures that the office of the ACCJC provides all appropriate and necessary support for the Commission and for member institutions.

encounter any pushback. So the next step was to present the plan to the faculty. The

Associate Dean recalled this episode as a defining moment of the CIO's leadership skills:

> There was one really key moment for me that I remember when she showed really brave leadership. She looked at the sanctions and what we were being asked to do, the recommendations, and she came to the conclusion—I know she talked to a lot of people about this—she came to the conclusion that— One of the things we were really getting nailed on back then [in the sanction] was program review. We weren't doing it; it's true. We weren't. So she went through a couple of plans: "You know, we could do this many this year and this many next year." And finally, she came to the conclusion that we just had to do them all.

The Associate Dean remembered the CIO speaking at a meeting of the faculty to

announce that they would need to work an extra month:

> That one meeting was pretty pivotal, because that's where [the CIO] stepped out and she did a brave thing because she still could have gotten— She was still pretty new; people didn't know her very well; she could have gotten shot down. It might not have worked. She was very convincing that this was what we needed to do. . . . She was brave there, and I do think that was a moment where either she— She really just stepped out, sink or swim. And I'm sure that was not easy and took a lot of thought and was probably a little bit scary for her to do, but she did. . . . That was really one of her best moments I ever saw, where she was able to do that and get everyone to buy in to a huge amount of work. So I think taking the time to realize what needed to be done—she did not do a knee-jerk response; she was very thoughtful about it—and then coming out and just laying it out for us all very plainly: "This is what we need to do, and I need you guys to buy in." . . . People want to know that it's going to be okay. And I think having this, even though it was sort of an overwhelming plan, having a plan—like, "Okay, here's what we are going to do"—was very helpful.

This anecdote illustrates that the CIO was not only bold and determined, but also

thoughtful, methodical, and persuasive. The faculty member who was interviewed

recalled another detail from this meeting with the faculty, one that revealed the CIO's

humility as well: "It was [the CIO]'s vision and then her strategy or smarts of how to

approach going to the Senate, going to Strategic Council and saying, 'I know it's kind of

162

a crazy idea, but I think this might actually work.'" Her self-deprecating reference to her

"crazy idea" demonstrated her humility in what could have turned out to be a very

contentious solution to the program review recommendation.

Moreover, the CIO was respectful of faculty and classified staff, not wanting to

require them to work extra time without compensation. Consequently, the CIO was

resourceful as well as persuasive, convincing the President that the college needed to

provide stipends for the faculty who would do the extra month's work. The faculty

member stated,

> Ultimately it would have been the Vice President of Instruction [the CIO] coming to agreement with the President that that money had to be found because it [the program review project] had to happen. . . . The district being willing to resource was, of course, what brought the faculty on board.

The combination of both the CIO's logical planning and her asking the President for

resources in support of the faculty made her argument to the faculty persuasive.

The final qualities that the interviewees mentioned regarding the CIO included

her expertise, her authority, and her kindness. First, regarding her expertise, she herself

recognized that her past experience at other institutions had helped to prepare her for the

task at hand of getting Queens College out from under its accreditation sanction. In

regards to the ACCJC recommendation on integrated budgeting and planning, she stated,

> Of the folks at the table, the only one with any experience in planning would be myself. . . . I had experience on what a strategic plan would look like, how you would do your annual objectives, identify metrics, and all that kind of thing.

And her description of how planning and budgeting should be integrated demonstrated

her understanding of effective planning and budgeting processes. The college had been

163

sanctioned partly for not having an updated strategic master plan. She described how she had wanted to move the college toward identifying only three institutional goals to work towards in its strategic plan. In the interview, she proposed three hypothetical goals and then described how they would inform the planning and budgeting processes at the college:

> Whatever those three things [three goals] are, in every decision in Strategic Council those are always kept foremost in the college's mind. To me that is the Holy Grail—where you are taking your outcomes assessments, you're taking your top three primary strategic objectives for the college, using your outcomes assessments, your decision-making structure, and your top strategic priorities to define which decisions take priority—if that makes sense. That's what I was working towards— or we were working towards, I should say.

As mentioned above, she articulated this vision in diagrams and flow charts such that everyone at the college could understand the processes.

In addition to having the expertise in planning, her background and her position as CIO gave her authority. The DIR reflected on this authority of hers, stating, ". . . having enough authority. I work directly for the VPI [CIO]. She was the muscle behind me. That helped with the planning part." The DIR was invested in seeing the college succeed at addressing the recommendations and removing the sanction. He did his part to provide all the necessary data to all the groups who were working on the various recommendations. However, he did not have the authority to set deadlines or expectations of what the groups should do with the data. He relied on the CIO who created the plans and set the deadlines. He said, "Her ass [sic] was on the line, and the advantage of that for me was that she had the authority to tell people to do stuff and they

164

had to do it." But the CIO tempered this authority with kindness. The DIR stated, "You have to play nice. She did too; that was her nature."

Vice President of Student Services (CSSO)

The Vice President of Student Services [CSSO] was another important participant in the college's efforts to remove the sanction. The CIO recognized that the CSSO's history and years of service with the college were extremely valuable, noting that the CSSO was "the most senior administrator at the college— so bringing that history to the table was critical because you can't go forward without looking back." The DIR concurred in his interview that the CSSO's long history with the college was instrumental.

> [The CSSO] was important too because she had the most political power at the second level. She had been here the longest, has a lot of history, and she's assertive. And so getting her to push in her world made that work too. So it was really the two VPs joining together and their allies, and then bringing along the Senate people, and making sure that the unions weren't going to get triggered.

This description showed how under the leadership of the Vice Presidents, all divisions and units participated in the accreditation projects and institutional changes. He noted that both Vice Presidents were skillful at rallying others to do the work, yet they were also conscious of the effects the various projects had on workload and working conditions; they were sensitive to union concerns. The Research Analyst who was interviewed noted that in addition to her having historical knowledge of the institution, the CSSO was very productive. He described her this way: "She has been here a long time, she's very productive, a very capable administrator. She's— she knows that a big part of her job is to provide resources, so she's always working on that, very good at it."

165

He noted that she was familiar with all of the resources available, and she had the authority to distribute the resources (personnel, time, and technology), making sure that staff had what they needed to complete their tasks.

Dean of Institutional Research (DIR)

The interviewees repeatedly named the Dean of Institutional Research [DIR] as another individual who was pivotal in the college's success. Like the CSSO, the DIR had a long history with the college and therefore much useful institutional knowledge. The CIO stated, "Other key characteristics to this is the history piece. The person— at least one person who understands the history and the culture of the college. In that group, [Name] had been there for 30 years." She also described him as sensitive to people; he helped them work through their personal frustrations brought on by the changes and by the extra work required to implement the changes:

> He has a very unique skill set in that he is a longtime counselor. He started as a counselor and ended up as a researcher. . . . So when he moved into research, he brought to the role— not only is he an excellent researcher, really attuned to what the college should be paying attention to— so he's got the quantitative skills, but he has the qualitative skills that he can sit with a distraught administrator or faculty member and because of his counseling background can help them work through their angst in the element of change that we all struggle with so much. He can go out into the college, and because of his 30-year history and respect that the college has for him and his knowledge, his intimate knowledge of every aspect of the college, and his counseling ability, he can sit there with you and say, "Okay, remember back in 85, remember when you did this— this is really the same thing, and this is what you want to do." And he could really interact with people on a, again, that relationship base. And what he is really good at [is] identifying where potential— he could proactively sense where issues were going to arise and go out and do one-on-ones with folks.

The CIO thus noted that the DIR had excellent interpersonal skills as well as skills with data analysis. He was an effective communicator and an intuitive leader, able to predict

166

where problems might arise and then to use his interpersonal skills to assuage fears, stave off resistance, and assist with potential obstacles. The DIR saw these skills in himself and recognized how they helped the college through these troubling times:

> You need someone who can do the sales and marketing part. And luckily we have a couple people like that, and I am one of them. . . . I had a lot of dialogue across the curriculum . . . So a lot of goodwill was built up. So then when it was time to participate in plans, I was very comfortable negotiating that with faculty members that I had relationships with. So you do need someone who's kind of extroverted, political and has okay relationships.

His reference to "sales and marketing" imply that his ability to communicate and to explain matters such that people understand contributed to his persuasive skills and his ability to get "buy-in" from people, which implied that he was able to promote cooperation.

The Associate Dean appreciated that the DIR was on task; he made sure everyone had the data they needed to complete their tasks. He was good at distributing the data in readable, accessible formats so that anyone could understand them. He also made the data reports uniform across disciplines and divisions for ease of comparison. She stated that he was "very, very good at just making sure that we had all of the information that we needed. . . . and in a way that is accessible to people who are not number folks." The Research Analyst who was interviewed repeated several of the fore-mentioned qualities when talking about the DIR—long history with the college, good with people, good with data, good communicator: "[The DIR] is terrific. He's got a 30 year background at this institution, and especially with matriculation he is highly regarded by people—very, very good with people—the communication side." And he added that the DIR was able to

167

connect the old planning and evaluation processes to the new processes that were being

developed, and he could clearly communicate the similarities to staff and faculty to ease

them into the changes. His skill at communication included providing all available data

to departments and units so that they would have everything they needed for program

review. The Research Analyst commented, "One of the things [the DIR] worked on was

just beefing up the program review process so that every step along the way was more

transparent." Regarding the ability to stay on task and to get the job done, the DIR

described himself as a "closer." He said,

> To get off Warning, you need closers. I'm a closer. I want to finish the sale. I
> want to sign the contract. I want to write the paragraph in simple terms, get the
> thumbs up, and get out the door. That's my nature.

> To sum up the DIR's contributions, he was an effective communicator, a

knowledgeable data person, and a "closer" who enjoyed seeing a task through to

completion.

Faculty

The interviewees described the faculty leaders in the projects as people who were

positive influences on other faculty. The key players had knowledge of accreditation and

were familiar with student learning outcomes and assessment.

> We had several key faculty leaders who were supportive: [Name 1] was one of
> them, she and [Name 2], who were probably, if you name the top five most
> powerful, influential faculty members, they supported the strategy. And they
> were the ones who made it happen. [Name 1] said, "I agree." She's on the
> statewide accreditation thing right now for the Senate, the statewide Senate— so
> she had a fairly in-depth knowledge of the accreditation process.

The CIO described the key faculty as barometers of the rest of the faculty's feelings

regarding the changes. She appreciated their insight into their colleagues' perceptions so

that she could address objections before the objections turned into resistance. She also

noted that the key faculty members were connected to instructors at other colleges.

These relationships were helpful when the committees were researching strategies that

worked at other schools.

The CIO described these faculty members as courageous; they were willing to

take on challenging tasks and to re-create a program review system. Describing the

faculty's characteristics and their contributions to the accreditation projects, she

repeatedly used the words *brave* and *courageous*:

> We have folks who, I will say, are courageous, who are willing to step up and
> take on some of these really difficult challenges. When you look at what [Name
> 1] and [Name 2] did, co-chairs of that program review committee, bringing
> together that group of people willing to completely re-craft program review for
> 130 programs, that takes some courage because you are going to get beaten up by
> some folks. [Name 3] being the SLO coordinator got—oh my!—she had some
> pretty hard times convincing faculty that they really needed to do this. [Name 4]
> is the Senate president, and folks who are really willing to take on leadership
> roles.

She continued, stating:

> [Name 4] was Senate president his third year, as a probationary faculty member. .
> . . So he didn't bring the history but he brought courageousness—whatever you
> want to call it—bravery to the table and was a very good communicator. So he
> could go back to the Senate and say, this is what we are thinking.

She used the words *brave* and *courageous* in relation to faculty leaders' willingness to

lead a project knowing full well that they would meet resistance from peers. The CIO

defined this characteristic further as she recalled asking the faculty leaders for their help:

169

I need talented people who are leaders in their own right to bring together any particular motion. Exactly. I need you to be effective, to be a leader, to have that courageous integrity, that knowledge of the institution, and then to bring your perspective forward because it takes every single person to make any large project happen.

The DIR referred to these faculty leaders as the "muscle people": "Who were the muscle people who were involved in the process? At the get-off-warning point? It was the VPI, it was me, it was Senate members—[Name 5], the union president, was useful." So these leaders of the faculty were respected by their peers, for the most part, were trusted, and were listened to.

The willingness of the faculty to participate in the accreditation projects was also mentioned by several of the interview participants. The faculty participant reflected on the month-long program review project and pointed out how remarkable it was "that everybody is willing to do that. We're talking about faculty who would typically be having their June off." The DIR referred to this willingness to work as "goodwill": "The goodwill of the Senate is strong enough. It's had some wins; it's feeling its oats. There is membership and activity there." The Associate Dean described all the faculty involved as willing to do the extra work. She noted that if the faculty hadn't been willing, no work would have been accomplished: "If Senate doesn't buy in, it can be a challenge to get stuff done. And they did. They were willing." They were willing to lead, to spread the message, and to train others. They used effective communication skills and maintained positive relationships with their peers, creating an atmosphere of trust and respect. The faculty member who was interviewed agreed, noting that besides the key players, many

faculty members were involved with the projects and were "willing to step up" and "willing to learn."

Classified Personnel

The major players among the classified personnel were described as exhibiting the same sorts of qualities that the faculty leaders exhibited. They were recognized as effective communicators, able to explain to their colleagues the purpose and the importance of the changes that the college needed to make. The Associate Dean commented specifically on the helpfulness of the clerical staff in the Research Office who were extremely knowledgeable and hard-working. She stated that they were very helpful, working with the faculty on the program review project. They were "very responsive," she said,

> working through various drafts of things. And we would have— we would come up with a form, and they would go ahead and put it together for us, and then it wouldn't be quite right, so they would put it together again for us.

The Research Analyst described some of the work that the research staff did to help other personnel on campus with the software program that the college used for program review and planning. According to his description, the office staff was helpful and responsive to the needs of the faculty and other personnel as they ran into problems:

> There's some cumbersomeness and awkwardness to using [the database software]. It's not real transparent, and we are hearing a lot of comments that way. So what we are having to do is we have to get back to what we did at the beginning with that, and that's conduct hands-on workshops for people.

The faculty member who was interviewed also recognized the staff of the Research Office as being very responsive and hard-working, committed to helping the staff and

faculty with the data. She recalled, "I think a lot of it is falling to our research office because they have the ability to pull a lot of the data stuff."

The faculty participant noted the following quality in other classified staff: that key personnel were willing to learn more about accreditation, strategic planning, and institutional evaluations. In conducting program reviews and in expanding program reviews to cover non-instructional areas as well as academic departments, participation of classified personnel was critical. But they had never done program review before, so they had to be trained. The faculty participant recalled that classified staff were open and interested in the training:

> We really wanted those different perspectives. And everyone was willing to learn, and learn kind of a whole new language, because non-instructional folks don't have to worry about productivity or retention, success, all of these kinds of numbers that even faculty don't always get.

In conclusion, the characteristics of the classified staff that contributed to the college's removal of its sanction included their willingness to learn new data and processes, and their responsiveness to the needs of other departments. Those of the Research Office who assumed the role of trainers were also excellent communicators, able to help others understand the data and how to analyze them.

President

Although the President of Queens College was not described as a major player in the work done to address the recommendations on integrated budgeting and planning, program review, and student learning outcomes, he was involved in the recommendations regarding the college mission and the evaluation of the Board of Trustees. Although the

172

President was minimally involved in the creation of the budgeting and planning processes, which were overseen by the Planning and Resource Allocation Committee (PARAC), the DIR noted that the President's support for the committee's work was important when it came time for Board approval of the committee's product:

> You also had to be cognizant of your Board because they are going to have to thumbs up the damn thing [sic]. And so we have— we had a Board that was scary back then. . . . So that was a matter of some delicacy. And that's your President; your President does that. And he kind of said, "I'll take care of them." His job was to take care of them.

The DIR recalled that the President's role with the Board helped to provide stability during these challenging times:

> The new President provided stability: "I know what I am doing; I will take care of the Board." And he talked at the platitude level. He was a history professor who liked— you know, he was Socratic. That's not a closer, but he did provide cover. He was an authority in "cover."

Thus, while the CIO led the college directly in addressing the ACCJC recommendations, the President kept the Board informed of the progress.

There was some distance between the President and most of the actual work done to address the sanction. As the DIR described, "The President runs the meetings, but from 50,000 feet"; and the Associate Dean stated, "He was not particularly visible." Nevertheless, the President did trust the administrative cabinet and other college leaders to get the job done. The CIO reported how the President delegated to her the responsibility to oversee the accreditation projects: "The president just looked at me and said basically, 'Make it so. Fix it.'" The faculty member who was interviewed remembered that the President was supportive of everyone's efforts. This was especially

173

evident in his approving the stipends for the program review work that the faculty did over the summer. She stated, "The last thing that he wanted was to end his watch and not get off Warning." And even though he was not directly involved in many of the college's efforts to address the recommendations, he was a good communicator, able to encourage people to move forward and to break the status quo that led to the sanctions.

Summary

All in all, the instrumental personal traits of the people of Queens College included effective communication skills, including the ability to persuade people to work on difficult or challenging projects; willingness to learn; willingness to work, respect for individuals, historical knowledge of the college, and bravery. A handful of the leaders were identified as being skillful at creating plans and organizing. These traits as they are associated with specific individuals at Queens College are summarized in Table 10.

Summary Findings for People and Personalities

Although positions were not as important as the characteristics of the persons filling the positions, every college had at least one high-level administrator who oversaw the college's efforts to address the ACCJC recommendations. These administrators had excellent communication skills and garnered the trust of the employees at the institution. The people who made the biggest difference were creative, hard-working, and committed to the institution. They were focused on success, cared about the students and the institution, and were willing to work. They also cared about and respected their coworkers. However, no individual did it all; it was the combination of skills, ideas,

174

Table 10: Personal attributes of the key players at Queens College

	CEO	CIO	CSSO	DIR	Deans	Fac.	Class.
communication skills: clarity, facilitate dialogue	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
communication skills: persuasion, rally people together		X	X	X		X	X
skilled planning and organizing		X	X	X			
problem-solving skills		X	X				
history with the college			X	X		X	X
expertise and experience		X	X	X	X	X	
discerning/assigns the right person		X					
authority	X	X	X		X		
a closer				X			
hard worker/willingness to work		X	X		X	X	X
willingness to learn						X	X
respected and respectful	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
bravery		X				X	
understands accreditation		X	X	X			
understands college operations	X	X	X	X			X
vision	X	X					
research skills/data analysis skills				X			X
lack of ego		X		X		X	X
supportive/collaborative/collegial	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
not resistant to change		X	X	X		X	X

values, trust, respect, and caring of many individuals all working together that ultimately led to each college's success.

(3) Sources of Assistance

Addressing accreditation recommendations is a complex and involved task. Some colleges experience difficulty responding to a sanction. This section of Chapter 4 discusses how the survey respondents' and case study participants' responses answered the research question, "What kinds of assistance might a college need in order to have the

sanction removed?" However, the responses seem more to answer an implied question: "To whom might a college turn for help?" The colleges that participated in this study shared their perspectives. The prevailing viewpoint was that a college should find its help from within as much as it can. It can look to other successful colleges for models of processes, but it will want to draw upon its own resources in order to remove the sanction successfully. The colleges that participated in this study shared their experiences about where they turned for assistance in addressing the recommendations. In this section the common themes are discussed and organized all together by theme regardless of the source of the data, whether the information was collected from the survey results or from the case study interviews. The major themes that arose were turning to internal resources for help and turning to external resources for help. The most commonly used and most frequently advised source of assistance was a college's own internal resources.

Internal Assistance

Most of the colleges that participated in this study described how they relied on the expertise and know-how of their own faculty, staff, and administrators to work through their sanctions. The survey respondent from College Beyond the Wall described how they relied on the expertise of their CIO, "who had significant accreditation experience at another institution." The respondent from Dorne College described how instrumental the ALO was during the whole process: "coordinating all accreditation related activities, compiling documentation, providing support to campus community, and preparing all communication and reports to the Accrediting Commission."

176

Beyond relying on the expertise and skills of one or two individuals, most of the colleges recognized that their help came from their teams of constituent groups; they described how there were many people at their colleges who worked together to address the accreditation recommendations. The respondent from Dorne College stated that the college relied on its "dedicated faculty, staff and administrators who live in the community they serve." Dorne College also relied on the leaders of its constituency groups; the respondent from Dorne described them as "instrumental in rallying their groups to offer assistance with the accreditation efforts." The respondent from Oldtown College mentioned "employing strengths of internal constituents." The respondent from Dragonstone College boasted, "All of our processes and plans were developed and written by our own staff."

Likewise, the participants at Kings College and Queens College described how they relied on the expertise of their own people to address the recommendations and to develop solutions. At Kings, the CIO pointed out how one particular faculty member was the go-to person for the recommendation regarding student learning outcomes: "She worked with faculty to help them, to give feedback and guidance on getting SLO's in place on their courses." The Executive Assistant to the CSSO described how the campus relied on the President for his guidance. The President pointed out how he called upon many persons to share their expertise in the process: "I was calling on people, to do things in response to the recommendations." However, he had to rely on input from others on campus to assign the right person to the various tasks; he stated, "As I was fairly new at that point, I would have to ask people, 'Well, who's going to be best to

177

address this issue?'" The IT Specialist at Kings College also recalled how removing the sanction was a result of everyone pitching in to help: "Everyone is involved and has to be and wears multiple hats."

At Queens College the interview participants expressed similar perspectives about the importance of the college relying on its own personnel. The Associate Dean recalled how the primary person that the college turned to for guidance and leadership was the CIO: "Most of it, again to my recollection, fell to [name], who was the vice president of instruction." And the CIO recalled how she turned to the faculty and other members of the campus community, relying on their help and expert knowledge: "I went to the Senate for the SLOs and with the Exec Team's support, provided reassigned time for an SLO coordinator. And really the responsibility fell to them." She pointed out how one faculty member in particular, this SLO coordinator, was instrumental in the college's student learning outcomes project: "She started from scratch, and she was the one to originally get us off Warning." But she wasn't alone. The CIO recalled, "We had several of the key faculty leaders . . . and they were the ones who made it happen."

External Assistance

In addition to relying on expertise within their own walls and hallways, some of the colleges turned to outside help for guidance. Two of the colleges, both colleges within multi-college districts, turned to their sister colleges for assistance and support. The survey respondent from College Beyond the Wall stated, "We collaborated closely with the other college in our district. Having strong, existing relationships with key personnel at the other college was key to building trust and coordinating the colleges'

178

responses." Lannisport College, another college within a multi-college district, reported a similar experience. Although it relied primarily on its own people to work through the recommendations and to get the job done, it too worked with the sister college in its district. The survey respondent from Lannisport stated, "The two colleges and the district came together in an oversight committee and worked frequently and together even though each college submitted its own Follow-Up Report."

Three of the colleges in this study recommend turning to other colleges for advice. The survey respondent from Dorne College, a college in a single-college district, thought it a good idea to "network and share information—use resources and best practices from other institutions that have achieved reaffirmation." The investigator heard similar views from interview participants at Kings College and Queens College. The faculty member from Kings College remembered that she sought ideas from peers at other colleges that had also been sanctioned. She stated,

> I just had this conversation with the people from [name of college]. I was talking to a faculty member who was on the vetting committee, and we talked a lot about their—most of our conversation was actually about their accreditation problem and one of the things she mentioned to me was . . . .

The Executive Assistant to the CSSO also mentioned looking at other colleges for models of success:

> We just look and see what other schools are doing that's working? So we might have to just follow their model . . . maybe you have to research a little bit what is working and what you can apply back to you.

The DIR at Kings College provided a description of the benefit of borrowing ideas from successful colleges:

179

> You look at what other colleges have done, and it's just the natural way of doing things. You get what you have to do. You see what other people have done to get off [sanction], and then you emulate those things. You build on their brilliance as opposed to trying to reinvent the wheel each time.

The CIO at Queens College described her experience of being inspired by the experience of another college. She had attended the ACCA conference and heard a presentation from the CEO of another California community college that had struggled with sanctions for some of the same issues with which Queens College was struggling:

> I went to ACCA in February. I'm sitting there—we've got this program review thing I don't know what to do with. . . . went to the ACCA presentation by Fran White, with the researcher. They got off warning by doing program review for every single program in the college the previous year. And then it's just like the light bulb: "That's what we have to do."

Thus, colleges on sanction look to other colleges for ideas and models for successfully addressing accreditation sanctions. They do so in several ways: individuals contact their counterparts at the successful colleges; they conduct focused research into other college's processes; or they here speakers from successful colleges presenting at meetings and conferences of professional associations.

Another avenue for obtaining help is for a college to hire a consultant to help establish plans and processes for addressing the accreditation recommendations. However, the colleges in this study had mixed opinions regarding the use of consultants. Two colleges, Dorne and Riverrun, recommended using consultants. The survey respondent from Dorne College reported a successful experience with a consultant. Although above it was reported that the respondent from Dorne recommended relying on internal personnel for their expertise, including leaders and faculty, and although she also

180

recommended taking ideas from other colleges, she also described Dorne College's

positive experience with a consultant. Dorne College "retained the services of [name of

consultant company] who were instrumental in identifying the gaps in the college's work

and brought in key personnel to assist with trust issues between administration and

faculty." The survey respondent from Riverrun College advised colleges to use

consultants when the college lacks the needed expertise among its own human resources:

> I would advise that, if the college does not have the expertise on staff to address
> the issues, then they hire a consultant to guide them. Oftentimes, I have seen
> faculty in particular scoff at ideas of their colleagues when those same ideas,
> when presented by a consultant, are accepted without question. So, for the initial
> phases of getting a project off the ground, it doesn't hurt to bring in someone from
> outside the college community. After that, it's a matter of following through on
> what is implemented.

However, three colleges in this study—Dragonstone, Oldtown, and Queens—would

discourage a sanctioned college from hiring a consultant to help with its accreditation

problems. The survey respondent from Dragonstone College stated that Dragonstone

"eliminated the use of any consultants in developing plans and process. All of our

processes and plans were developed and written by our own staff." Similarly, the survey

respondent from Oldtown College described Oldtown's "recognizing and employing

strengths of internal constituents; not having to go out for consultants." The Associate

Dean from Queen's College expressed sentiments parallel to those of the respondent from

Oldtown College. Expressing some pride in the work that the people of Queen's College

had accomplished, she contrasted the Queens experience with that of another college that

had relied on a consultant:

They [another college] had a completely different approach where they brought in a consultant and did something; and that would be very antithetical to the way we do things here. We would—like nobody would have liked that here. We're going to do it ourselves. And I think we would not have liked the sense that somebody else had to tell us how to fix ourselves. That's just not how we see ourselves.

She provided a rationale for her view that hiring a consultant is not the way to go:

Whatever it is that you needed in order to do the job that you are being asked to do is missing from your campus, so you are pulling in somebody temporarily to fill that gap. But when that person leaves, that gap is still going to be there, which means you are probably not going to be able to sustain it. And it's just that this is not a one-time deal. It's ongoing, so whatever fixes have to be ongoing. Whatever processes. Because it's pretty clear, they [the ACCJC] are going to keep throwing more stuff at us. We'll get through student learning outcomes, and then there will be something else that comes along in the next cycle. We're going to have to be resilient.

In her opinion, hiring a consultant may create unsustainable processes.

Turning to consultants is one way to address a deficiency of expertise at a college, but it's not the only way that colleges in this study dealt with the shortcomings of their human resources. The president of Kings College described how Kings did not have the needed expertise in research and institutional assessment. Rather than contract with a temporary consultant, Kings College hired a researcher into a permanent position. The president told his story:

That following spring we initiated a hiring process for a researcher, and finally hired somebody late that spring. He's been on ever since, so for the follow-up report the following year, he had been hired. And he was already helping us permanentize our data processes. And he's had a big influence on the institution in this regard since then, because I had certain concepts, and other people did too. None the wiser. But you bring in someone who's a professional, and he said, "Well, that's fine, but here's a better way."

Colleges in this study also shared that they hired new people for reasons other than filling a gap in the college's human resources. Two colleges described how they

used hiring and firing as a way to replace personnel whose attitudes toward accreditation

and institutional change were negatively influencing the college's responses to the

accreditation sanction. The faculty member at Kings College recalled that when the

college first embarked on its response to the sanction, the CIO at the time did not convey

an attitude that would contribute to the college's success:

> During that time we actually recognized some real organizational problems.
> Specifically the leadership of our instruction office. And the—I don't need to be
> that judicious for you—but the lack of rigor and attention that the former CIO was
> giving to this process, to the accreditation process. His attitude was—I kid you
> not—"If it looks like we're doing something, that's all they care about." He said
> that many times publicly. "It's just a matter of how it looks." And that was really
> a difficult thing for many of us to hear. Our attitude was, "No, it's not about how
> it looks; it's about the outcomes; it's about the results; it's about getting there."
> So organizationally speaking, it was because of our president and his leadership
> that he ousted that person from the position . . . It was very difficult. Tensions are
> still very high over that. But replacing him with somebody who was a very action
> oriented leader.

Kings College was not the only college where the President had to take decisive action to

remove personnel whose attitudes and resulting work ethic were not conducive to helping

the college remove its sanction. The survey respondent from Riverrun College described

a similar situation; however, instead of influential personnel having a nonchalant attitude

about accreditation, Riverrun was dealing with vocal resistors to the changes that the

college needed to make:

> There were obstacles to success that came primarily from individuals, both faculty
> and administrators, who were opposed to making the necessary changes. It
> became apparent about two years prior to the accreditation self study that these
> individuals were wrong and that change was needed. This realization became
> more obvious as more and more colleges were put on warning. The major
> characteristic, however, that led to our success in having all sanctions removed
> was getting rid of those faculty and administrators (figuratively or literally) and

replacing them with more enlightened individuals familiar with accreditation mandates and community college functioning.

So in the case of Riverrun College, persons with more expertise and experience and with more appropriate attitudes toward accreditation were hired to replace the resisters.

The final external source of help that colleges turned to for assistance was the Accrediting Commission itself: ACCJC. The only two colleges that mentioned turning to ACCJC were participants in the multiple case study, and even then ACCJC was mentioned as a resource only briefly by individuals at each college. The DIR at Kings College recognized that the ACCJC provides some help documents on its website. These documents describe ACCJC policies and procedures; so if persons want to know more about the Accrediting Commission and about accreditation, they can find the information on the ACCJC website. However, the DIR acknowledged that it's unrealistic to expect that members of the constituent groups at a college would go to the website to research information:

> You can't expect every person on campus to go to the ACCJC website and read all the help documents about how the Commission works. You know, they are just not going to do it, and so you have to educate them I guess in terms of the importance of it and the details that are involved.

Even then, the DIR is referring only to the help that the ACCJC can provide regarding its own policies and procedures. It does not provide suggestions for colleges as they attempt to find solutions for the problems identified in accreditation recommendations. The Associate Dean at Queens College noted that the college experienced "frustration with the Accrediting Commission that literally seems to refuse to answer questions. They

184

don't seem to want to be helpful." Likewise, in her interview, the CIO at Queens College provided a description of the experience of trying to get help from the ACCJC:

> I also think that the Commission—and I've told them this—they could do a better job of communicating to the colleges their expectations. How many times have I asked Jack Pond, "Can you not give us some examples of how colleges have addressed the standards?" Right? I look right at that face, "Can you not give us some samples of these colleges who have gotten off Warning? What types of structures and approaches have they taken?" To give colleges that are at base zero some ideas of a direction in which to move. But the commission says to me, "Oh no, we can't do that. You have to develop it in house." And I say to you, community colleges who are so underfunded and stressed to the max these days, 112 of us, have to re-create the wheel every single time? How inefficient is that?"

Consequently, the ACCJC is a resource for definitions of accreditation and for explanations of how accreditation is determined, but it does not provide solutions for sanctions other than the recommendations that are written in the evaluation reports and in the action letters that it sends to colleges. The recommendations identify problems that need to be fixed, but other than referring to the language of the Accreditation Standards, they do not prescribe solutions. In other words, they identify the *what* but leave it to the colleges to figure out the *how*.

Summary Findings for Sources of Assistance

The participants in this study identified several sources that they turned to for assistance in addressing accreditation recommendations. Their preferred source for help was to tap the expertise among their own human resources. Secondly, they sought help and inspiration from peer colleges who had successfully navigated the sanction experience and had their accreditation reaffirmed. Thirdly, they turned to consultants for assistance. It was also expressed that colleges might turn to the ACCJC for assistance,

185

but participants who mentioned the ACCJC as a resource found that the ACCJC does not provide assistance on ways that a college might address recommendations.

(4) Hindrances to Success

The participants in this study all were successful at addressing the accreditation recommendations and having their sanctions removed. Nevertheless, the road to having their sanctions removed was not always smooth. This section reflects some of the bumps that they experienced along the way, yet they overcame these bumps and avoided their becoming obstacles to success. The colleges' experiences with these hindrances led them to sometimes phrase their responses as things to avoid should the participants ever be asked to give advice to other colleges that find themselves sanctioned by the ACCJC.

The list of possible hindrances identified by the participants are divided into the same categories as the other divisions of this study's results, yet the focus is now those organizational characteristics that hinder progress or success. Thus the list of obstacles is summarized into two broad categories: (1) actions or activities that may hinder and (2) people and personalities that may hinder

Actions or Activities that May Hinder

The investigator identified four common themes in the survey responses and in the interviews that indicated college actions or activities that could hinder a college's successful removal of an accreditation sanction:

- Delayed response or slow response; not taking the sanction or recommendations seriously
- Lack of communication

186

- Lack of collaboration and cooperation between constituent groups

- Responding only for the sake of compliance

These were identified in responses from both sets of colleges, those that participated in the survey and those that participated in the multiple case study.

Delayed or Slow Response

One of the hindrances that was expressed at six of the participating colleges was not taking the sanction seriously, not making the accreditation recommendations a top priority, or not starting immediately to develop and implement ideas that address the recommendations. The colleges that discussed delaying or not prioritizing a response to the sanction recognized that an immediate response was important. The respondent from College Beyond the Wall stated, "We moved quickly to address the Commission's concerns. . . . In addition to moving quickly, it is important to note that the response was deemed the immediate, top priority of the campuses." To illustrate, the respondent from College Beyond the Wall also stated, "Empower those individuals so that they quickly can develop procedures and goals." Although this respondent did not explicitly state that delaying a response was a hindrance, the fact that he emphasized that addressing the sanction was a top priority and that personnel were supported to quickly develop and implement plans implies that delay would be a hindrance. Similarly, the respondent from Dorne College advised that colleges should "Heed all warnings from the Commission immediately and implement recommendations for improvement"; and the respondent from Lannisport College stated, "First and foremost, get started immediately to address

187

the recommendations." The president of Kings College shared the same sense of

urgency, believing that any sort of delay could bring negative results:

> The basic advice is don't hesitate. Get very practical fast. The Commission has
> done a good job putting pressure on institutions for quick turnarounds. . . . Take
> those recommendations. Start developing action plans directly. Start doing the
> work. Don't wait for the Commission's action [letter] because you're going to
> have to do this work anyway. And even if there's no sanction, and you don't
> know of a sanction yet, the recommendations are there; they're going to have to
> be addressed. Your next visit, whenever that is, or your next follow up report,
> whatever that is, had better have addressed them. So you might as well get going
> on the work anyway. And yeah, the faster the better, because it takes time. These
> things just do—take time. Institutional processes are not fast. It's a fact of life.
> And things that can be knocked off quickly, get them knocked off quickly. Don't'
> wait around for people's permission or something. They'll give it. They know
> it's important.

Nevertheless, the President recognized that participatory governance processes, also

known as shared governance, can sometimes slow down the needed institutional changes.

Still the institution is expected to implement changes fairly rapidly, so what is a college

to do? The President of Kings College advised using a combination of informal think

tank processes to quickly generate ideas and then bring those ideas forward to the shared

governance group. He stated,

> Shared governance goes a long way toward solving problems, but it tends to be a
> little slow. And so when you have fast-moving issues— like you could have with
> an accreditation sanction or a budget crisis, let's also use our back channels and
> go ahead and make fairly concrete suggestions to the shared governance
> committee.

The CIO at Queens College had shared similar reflections on the Queens College

experience, recorded in more detail earlier in this chapter. Regardless, the colleges'

experience was that delays in implementing necessary changes can result in extended

sanctions.

Lack of Communication

Earlier in this chapter, it was identified that the successful colleges communicated frequently and openly with the people of their campuses. Conversely, colleges experienced difficulty when the communication broke down. The survey respondent from Dorne College expressed the idea concisely, saying, "Open and transparent communication is critical." The President of Kings College explained how problems with communication at a college are often symptomatic of a college that will receive a sanction:

> They [recommendations] come out of a failure of communication between core elements of the governance of the institution. That's where the campus culture— you can almost be guaranteed, the campus culture is not healthy, or somebody would be bringing these things to the attention of the power brokers in the institution. And if that's not happening— It's a tragedy if the board is not aware of things that need to be addressed. Or if there is a group in the institution that's resisting a change that needs to occur, and the Board has to flex its muscles and impose some regime, and then you got a problem anyway. Because it may need to be done, but you may have an impasse on a bargaining table, and it just— you don't have to go there if you have a healthy governance system.

And a healthy governance system includes healthy communication practices. The CIO at Kings College also recognized the importance of communicating information to constituents:

> We could do a better job of communicating the results to the campus as well, as we're moving through the process, updating people with where we are. I think culturally that would help. People don't mind working so long as they feel that something actually comes out of their work.

The CIO related communication to a healthy college culture, and here he had observed that the college's attention to open and frequent communication influenced productivity among personnel.

189

Other colleges shared advice on the topic of communication. The survey respondent from College Beyond the Wall advised, "Frequently report the progress of the response back to the campus to keep the information flowing (and to maintain a sense of urgency and importance)." The survey respondent from Oldtown College wrote, "Have continuous dialogue across the institution, and have everyone involved in the process of removing the sanction. Everyone needs to understand the consequences of a sanction and the true meaning of each sanction."

The lack of communication can lead to a lack of understanding about accreditation, what it is, what it means for the college, and how it is determined. Above, the respondent from Oldtown College captured this notion by emphasizing "Everyone needs to understand." The survey respondent from Lannisport College tied the college's understanding and knowledge of all things related to accreditation to the college's efforts to maintain open communication:

> Make sure there is a clear understanding of what the Commission's concerns are and see what has already been done to advance the these concerns. Document everything. Include as many people as possible in the process; make sure all constituencies and the students know what is going on (through governance or otherwise). This will allay fear as well as get across the seriousness of the issue. . . . Getting everyone on the same page is vital. Trust is the key for this because change is not easy. Open and frequent dialogue and "taking the temperature" often is important as well.

The insights of this respondent from Lannisport College relate communication and the resulting understanding to a positive, productive college culture where fear diminishes and trust grows. The CIO at Kings College described how the lack of communication leads to a lack of understanding and knowledge of the importance of accreditation, and

this lack of understanding can lead to the institution not accomplishing the things it needs

to do to remove the sanction:

> You can't go anywhere if the people on the campus don't have a clear idea of what it is that the recommendation is saying about the way that their campus is not working properly. People need to understand what they are supposed to work on, why the Commission thinks it's important that they work on it, what the timeline has to be to be able to make some kind of change for the follow-up report, and people need to understand the consequences.

He continued by describing how incomplete knowledge or misunderstanding that results

from lack of communication can lead to forms of push-back or resistance or apathy:

> It seems like if you are going to succeed, but people are confused about the recommendations, confused about the importance of the recommendations, and feel like the wrong people are playing a role in addressing the recommendations, people are going to lose interest. They are going to want to separate themselves from it. And they are going to just push it off. You know, "I want to be as far away from it as possible so that when it blows up, I'm not going to catch any of the shrapnel."

Similarly, the IT Specialist at Kings College remarked how resistance among personnel

often results from a lack of understanding:

> One of the biggest mistakes I think I have heard other colleges make is to take the attitude of, especially the faculty, of "Why should we dance to the tune of somebody who is not here, not us, and trying to tell us what to do and don't know what we do actually?" And to take that kind of resistant approach and do things like— for instance, I have seen senates pass resolutions that they were not going to do SLOs. Things like that. And that to me is just reflective of how disconnected the faculty are from understanding the realities of some of the administrative issues, and assessment, and accountability issues. And that these issues are not cooked up by their local administrators, and they certainly don't end in the offices of their local administrative offices. They are bigger scope issues; and bigger things, nasty things can happen if they don't play ball.

The IT Specialist at Kings College also pointed out the importance of communicating

with new people on campus to make sure they are properly trained and oriented to

accreditation and to all the work that the college is doing to address its recommendations:

191

When you go through some of these reporting kinds of processes, and evaluation and assessment kinds of processes, and you get new people in and they don't know the story, and they don't know why things happen the way they do, and those types of things; then that lack of perspective can end up being really frustrating when you try to put together a report and understand what's going on.

Participating colleges expressed how important communication is. Earlier in this chapter, it was recorded how they perceived that their institutional efforts at communication through the sanction period were instrumental in their addressing the accreditation recommendations. Communication was especially important as they worked through the more complex recommendations on their institutional planning and evaluation processes. In this section, the colleges expressed how a lack of communication can hamper their work to get out from under a sanction. In fact, as the IT Specialist at Kings College expressed above, a lack of communication may make the situation even worse: "bigger things, nastier things can happen."

Lack of Collaboration and Cooperation between Constituent Groups

Actions or activities that ignore constituent groups, especially faculty, or that do not invite all constituent groups to get involved also may act as a hindrance to a college's successful removal of a sanction. Activities that specifically exclude members of a particular constituent group would be the extreme variation of this theme. None of the colleges that participated in this study described such exclusive activities. Nevertheless, in their advice to other colleges, they warned against having a divided campus.

The IT Specialist from Kings College stated a clear understanding of how such factious divisions on a campus can be perceived by an accreditation visiting team:

When you get under pressure, if you have an adversarial relationship between different constituencies in your own institution, then you're just not going to be able to pull together and convince somebody from the outside that you've got it together.

This participant is the same who stated above, "The institution has to pull together. They have to realize that we are all in this together." The survey respondent from Dragonstone College shared how his college overcame its divisive silos and factions by instituting a new college-wide leadership model: "We had a complete and total shift in our culture with a change in administration. We began to practice Servant Leadership as our leadership model and quickly eliminated entrenched silos built around constituency groups."

The faculty participant at Queens College asserted that faculty participation is especially important; she recommends that the Senate[8] be involved:

You definitely have got to get your Senate, your academic Senate on board, and find some way for them to help lead it because, not that the Senate can make anybody do anything, but if it's vetted by the Senate, which is the representational body, you're much more likely to get other faculty to be behind it.

She perceived that faculty are influential, especially with other faculty, so should be involved immediately. The survey respondent from Riverrun College also noted how having faculty leaders model a positive response to the accreditation work helped to encourage other faculty to be involved:

The president of the Academic Senate played a role as well simply by setting an example of not resisting the changes, as was the practice of the AS president before him. This allowed the faculty to more fully participate in a collaborative, collegial way instead of an adversarial way, thus getting more buy-in and making

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[8] In many colleges, the Senate is generally a group of representative faculty leaders from the various departments.

the program review processes more practical as opposed to going through the motions simply to meet accreditation standards.

To ensure that constituent groups do not get locked up and blocked up in their silos, the CIO at Kings College recognized a link between open and frequent communication and broader participation among constituent members. If the communication is missing, separation of constituent groups or departmental division may ensue:

> People still get frustrated with decisions that come out of that group because it reinforces some of those clashes between the needs of different areas. Why did the group decide to give the position restoration to the librarian and not to the admissions and records technician? Those kinds of things. And we just seem to have a hard time getting past that, I guess. So it's an impediment in some ways, those cultural divisions.

He alludes to decisions being made without communicating to the rest of the campus the highlights of the discussions that led to the decisions. Such efforts to communicate are important as colleges decide courses of action to address the accreditation recommendations. As he says, the combination of constituent divisions and lack of communication become an impediment. However, the CIO expressed pleasure in an activity that helped close the gaps between divisions. As part of the college's response to its recommendation on Program Review, he read program evaluations of multiple departments:

> It was really helpful for me to understand a little bit more about what the hurdles were. I can't remember which areas I reviewed right now—admissions and records, counseling. Anyway, it's great to be able to see beyond your own direct sphere of influence and get a better understanding of what people are facing.

Again, the communication of information alleviated a sense of division or divisiveness in the college culture.

Similar to how the previous section on lack of communication presented an antithesis of the earlier descriptions of open and frequent communication as a successful practice that can lead to removing a sanction, so too does this section on factions and divisions within the college culture and how they can hinder successful removal of a sanction describe activities in opposition to the afore-mentioned successful practice of involving everybody. Basically, these first three hindrances—delayed response, lack of communication, and lack of cooperation or collaboration—are the opposite of the successful practices that the colleges described earlier in this chapter.

Responding Only for the Sake of Compliance

Participants in this study noted that it was important for their colleges to implement the changes not just out of a desire to please the Accrediting Commission but out of a desire to improve their institutions. Implementing changes simply for the sake of addressing accreditation recommendations may lead to a short-term win, but in the long run the college could find itself back on sanction.

For example, the IT Specialist at Kings College described an involved process of institutional evaluation. His description included a concern that others at the college did not trust that the evaluation process would lead to changes.

> There were some people who are very skeptical about that kind of thing. We have done some of those things in the past, and of course a lot of places do and it just sort of— The results are sitting somewhere on a shelf, that sort of thing. But I think in this case it was filtered back to committees, to shared governance committees, and resulted in things changing.

According to his memory, the college had conducted such institutional evaluations in the past but the results did not lead to change or improvement; the results just sat

195

"somewhere on a shelf." This experience illustrates how a lack of commitment to follow through on responses to accreditation can negatively impact attitudes of personnel, creating skepticism, a form of mistrust. The DIR from Queens College described a similar scenario of work that ends up just "sitting somewhere on a shelf":

> What I've seen is that plans will sit on the shelf, and will be forgotten, and self initiating every time—"Oh my God! We need something!"—wastes [time]. You can lose a year of momentum. There is an inertia factor. Better to have your inertia working for movement than not.

Whereas the IT Specialist from Kings College noted a concern for how the lack of commitment and follow-through can result in skepticism or other ill attitudes among personnel[9], the DIR from Queens College expressed concern that the institution would not follow through on the needed changes or improvements. He was concerned that such "inertia" would lead to spontaneous, emergency plans or improvements when the next accreditation visit looms, and such knee-jerk plans are often not thoughtful or well-planned or based on data analysis to determine real need—in this investigator's words: sloppy.

Other participants emphasized the importance of a college's commitment to improvement. The survey respondent from Riverrun College emphasized how the President of the college must lead the institution's commitment to improve. In the following statement from the survey, he expressed his concern for the college's not

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[9] The investigator recognized the skepticism described by the IT Specialist at Kings College because he has seen similar results on his own campus when the hard work of individuals or whole departments ends up just sitting on a shelf somewhere, and the report or document, whatever it is, is ignored or forgotten during institutional decision making. A resulting attitude among faculty and staff is "Why did I bother?" The experience of having hard work ignored or forgotten leads to reduced efforts of personnel when the next reporting period comes around.

196

following through on plans, yet his concerns are framed by his insistence that the primary

responsibility lies with the President:

> The college's president MUST [*sic*] be firmly resolved to do what needs to be done. Without presidential support and dedicated resources, any college is doomed to failure even if it has knowledgeable and capable employees simply because people, in general, do not want change. But the college MUST change because, by definition, they need to do something different. . . . It's a matter of following through on what is implemented. The college has to have a plan and stick to it. The tendency to drift back into old, bad habits is strong; and this must be prevented. Again, it takes a perceptive and strong president to be able to keep the college on track.

Similarly, the Associate Dean from Queens College recognized the importance of the

college engaging in long-term, sustainable institutional improvements: "This is not a one-

time deal. It's ongoing, so whatever fixes have to be ongoing, whatever processes,

because it's pretty clear: they are going to keep throwing more stuff at us." She was, of

course, referring to the fact that institutional quality is not a one-time deal; being an

accredited college is not a one-time deal; and the Accrediting Commission will continue

to oversee processes of college evaluation and peer review and will itself continue to

improve its own processes and standards of accreditation, accountability, and quality

assurance. The CIO from Queens College also expressed concern for follow-through and

institutional commitment to quality improvement, yet she shared her concerns from the

perspective of a college administrator who has deep understanding of the relevance and

value of accreditation and who is committed to long-term improvements:

> You need to look at the college as a complete system. It's not about getting off of warning; it's about institutionalizing processes that allow you to serve your students better. That's really your goal. . . . You really have to keep the longer-term vision in mind about what it is you are trying to achieve and to work towards that. It's not placing a Band-Aid on a broken arm.

197

The respondents above all recognized that institutional improvement requires institutional commitment. They recognized that if a college addresses the accreditation recommendations purely to remove the sanction, treating the recommendations only as hoops to jump through and not internalizing a *real* need to improve its policies, practices, processes, programs, or services, then the college is just paying lip service to accreditation; and it will most likely, as the respondent from Riverrun College had stated, "drift back into old, bad habits." If a college should drift back into old bad habits and if the next visiting team calls out the same deficiencies and makes similar recommendations that led to the last sanction, then the college can expect a more serious sanction in its next accreditation review.

People and Personalities that May Hinder

The previous section described the types of actions or inaction that can hinder a college's attempt to have an accreditation sanction removed. The section that follows describes people and personalities that hinder success. Although individual persons may be identified in the descriptions provided by the participants, the hindrances do not result from the person's position but rather from the person's personality or attitude toward accreditation, toward the institution, or toward other personnel on campus. This section presents the participants' perceptions of personal traits and attitudes that can hamper institutional improvement. The most commonly identified problem character traits were identified as

- Resistance or resentment

- Anger or denial regarding the sanction; or defensiveness

198

- Incivility

- Apathetic or lackadaisical leadership

In this section the common themes are discussed all together regardless of the source of the data, whether the information was collected from the survey results or the case study interviews. Data from the case study colleges are not analyzed separately from the survey data.

Resistance or Resentment

One obstacle that was described by several of the colleges, though not all, was resistant attitudes that led to resistant activity or inaction. The survey respondent from Riverrun College provided this description of troubles that were observed on his campus:

> There were obstacles to success that came primarily from individuals, both faculty and administrators, who were opposed to making the necessary changes. It became apparent about two years prior to the accreditation self study that these individuals were wrong and that change was needed. This realization became more obvious as more and more colleges were put on warning.

The IT Specialist at Kings College described how it was primarily faculty who provided the greatest resistance. This resistance was partly born out of resentment over receiving the sanction. He explained how the faculty took the sanction personally as a reflection of inferior quality of their instruction which did not match their own perceptions of their teaching:

> The reasons [for sanctions] are often not because of the quality of instruction. . . . there has been a lot of faculty resentment about the process because of this issue of the perception of faculty, but this [the sanction] doesn't really have to do with instruction.

When it was published that the college had received its sanction, the faculty assumed that the public perceived the faculty and the educational quality of the college as inferior. The resentment resulting from the assumed negative perceptions of the public led to resistance among faculty. The IT Specialist described his observations of what had happened at other colleges:

> One of the biggest mistakes I think I have heard other colleges make is to take . . . that kind of resistant kind of approach and do things like— For instance, I have seen senates pass resolutions that they were not going to do SLO's.

The faculty participant from Kings College recalled how some members of the faculty at Kings exhibited this very resistance, except that at Kings College it was the union leadership and not the Senate leadership that gave the resistance:

> Probably one of our biggest obstacles—and I am a union person—our union president was just a killer for us, constantly the naysayer, constantly not just questioning the process and the tasks at hand, but not doing them. Not doing them! And I told him, I said, "You're making the union look really bad." The union is supposed to excel, to be the celebration of professionalism and exceptionalism, not to protect crappy work, not to protect substandard work. We need to be the model. That's what the union is supposed to extol. That's what it has always done historically; you protect hard workers. You don't protect people who aren't turning anything in.

At Queens College, the Research Analyst observed a similar stubborn resistance. He described that "certain individuals have put their foot down and have said, 'We will not do this. This is interference in education and we will not do it.' That's still an official position, and it doesn't help us move along."

How does a college deal with such resistance? The survey respondent from Riverrun College stated how college leaders, especially faculty leaders, can model more appropriate and beneficial responses to the situation. He wrote,

200

The president of the Academic Senate played a role as well simply by setting an example of not resisting the changes, as was the practice of the AS president before him. This allowed the faculty to more fully participate in a collaborative, collegial way instead of an adversarial way, thus getting more buy-in.

However, he also described severe actions that were taken at his college to address problems that were described above regarding resistant personnel:

The major characteristic, however, that led to our success in having all sanctions removed was getting rid of those faculty and administrators (figuratively or literally) and replacing them with more enlightened individuals familiar with accreditation mandates and community college functioning.

Terminating the employment of resistant personnel or reassigning them to other positions is a very drastic step to take, and yet Riverrun College saw success after these changes were made. But respondents from Kings College and Queens College offered other advice.

Similar to the Riverrun respondent's advice that the Academic Senate leadership should model a positive response to the changes that need to be made, the faculty participant from Kings College noted that such modeling needed to come from the union leadership as well. She said, "Getting the union on board is another big piece—a big component of getting a college off sanction. You've got to make sure your union leadership is on the same page." The DIR at Queens College provided a description of a positive attitude that could be cultivated among the leadership at a college:

Don't fight it [the sanction]. Take it to heart. Use it as an internal political tool, because it is. They [the ACCJC] handed you a gift, right? They have focused the minds of lots of people, and don't— What's that old maxim? Don't waste a crisis. . . . When you have an opportunity to galvanize the whole staff together in a common enterprise that also, by the way, seems to help students, you can play to their [staff and faculty] egos, but you can use this "bad guy" over here [the

201

ACCJC] to bring the troops together. It's an absolute change agent's Christmas present.

Although an "us-versus-them" perspective can often be harmful, he is suggesting that the whole college rally within the "us-versus-them" perspective, creating the whole college as "us" and the ACCJC as "them," but not to fight against the ACCJC, but to use the sanction as impetus for needed changes—a "We'll show them" attitude. As the Associate Dean recalled, "I think our pride sort of kicked in at that point, our institutional pride. Like, 'Fine! We'll show you.' And we did. People worked extraordinarily hard." So the advice that Queens College participants gave was to turn resistant energy into energy for actions leading to institutional improvements.

Anger or Denial; Defensiveness

Similar to resistance and resentment are feelings of anger and defensiveness. However, resistance is simply a refusal to change or to move, whether or not you agree that change is needed. Defensiveness is a somewhat different posture that asserts that no change is needed, the college is fine as it is, and that the evaluation by the ACCJC visiting team is incorrect. The Executive Assistant to the CSSO had some advice to offer to those who take a defensive stance:

> First step back and look at what they are asking from you. . . . Look at what they said about you and don't get defensive immediately. . . . step back and look back in, and then start reevaluating because the first reaction was, "Oh my gosh! I know we are better than that"; but usually you step back and find out we're really not any better than that. And you really need to start thinking.

202

The Associate Dean from Queens College described how the defensive posture may be accompanied by anger. She accepts that people will be angry and offers advice for how to deal with the anger and defensiveness and then move beyond:

> Go ahead and be mad for a while. Vent and be angry. Then collect yourselves and say, "Okay, what do we need to do?" Try not to look at it—even though it's hard—as something that you just have to get through. Try and find— probably there is something true in there. Even though maybe you don't deserve to be on sanction for it, there's probably truth to the criticisms at some level. If you can figure out what those are and be open to that, then it can help the process.

No matter how people feel, both the Associate Dean from Queens College and the Executive Assistant from Kings College advise that everyone at the college needs to take a serious look at the sanction, at the recommendations, and at themselves. They need to put themselves in the shoes of the visiting team that evaluated the college, see what the team saw, and then make the recommended changes in order to meet accreditation standards.

Another topic that surfaced in the interviews is that administrators or other leaders need to be aware that inconsistency or indecision in their actions can lead to anger. The CIO from Queens College described a situation of faculty doing much work and then having to redo most of that work because of a change in the direction coming from the top. She described the situation as follows:

> The one thing that is really going to—excuse my French—piss people off, and we did it with student learning outcomes, is you say, "Here's an issue. I need your help." They all say, "Okay, we are on board." And, "Go that way! Go north!" And they all tromp north [saluting]: "Yes, sir." Tromp, tromp, tromp, tromp north. And then a year and a half later we say, "Wait! Stop! Stop! We really want you to go east!" Which we did that, and people—they just get confused. Then with all the apologies—I don't know if you heard otherwise—so now we're

going east, but that original momentum, you need to make sure that it is in the direction that you want to go, and then go.

Such inconsistencies in planning and direction from leaders can make faculty and staff angry. And such inconsistencies or fickle direction can lead to faculty and staff being less enthusiastic to follow on the next project. As the CIO hinted, the college loses that "original momentum."

The Associate Dean from Queens College had more advice concerning the anger that people might feel. She said, "That's just the emotional life of a college. And I would say that's important—the emotional life of the college is very important." Administrators and other leaders need to be in tune with the emotional life of their college and of the people who work there. They need to help people work through those feelings because people will act or behave according to how they feel. Leaders need to allow personnel to vent feelings and perhaps even help the college community to work through its feelings, but leaders also need to encourage personnel to view the college's sanction objectively and accept it.

Incivility

Only one of the interview participants mentioned this theme, and yet the investigator felt that it was important enough to mention. When personnel behave in an uncivil manner or harbor ill feelings toward others on their campuses, then it creates barriers to productive work. The faculty participant at Kings College recalled speaking to a colleague from another college where they too were working to remove a sanction, but the peer from the other college described how difficult it was for the college to move

204

forward because there was so much infighting among personnel. The faculty participant

from Kings College recalled, "She mentioned something like—she said that there's an

incredible culture of incivility amongst the faculty. It is a killer! . . . If that's your biggest

problem, you cannot move forward." So her advice to such colleges was as follows: "I

would say that you have to build a culture of civility, number one. You have to build a

culture of recognizing that the hard work has to be done." And according to her, the

work can get done only when people are willing to work together.

Although he did not mention incivility specifically as a problem, the DIR from

Queens College noted that the success of the college depends on people's commitment to

work together as a team. Although he did not call this problem *incivility*, he

acknowledged that the different constituent groups or individuals might not get along and

as a result might not want to work together, or worse, might not want to work. He

emphasized this when he advised, "So you have to play nice." This allusion to children's

behavior implied the importance of everyone behaving as adults, respecting each other,

getting along professionally, and working together for the common good of the

institution.

Apathetic or Lackadaisical Leadership

The final character trait, or defect as the case may be, which can hinder a colleges

work to remove the sanction is an apathetic or lackadaisical attitude in the leaders of the

college. The interview participants at both colleges recalled how weak leadership could

have led to continued sanction, and had it not been for a change in the administrative

leadership or a change in the leader's attitude or another administrator stepping in and

taking charge, both Kings and Queens Colleges may have stayed on sanction longer.

The faculty participant from Kings College recalled how the previous CIO, who

occupied the position when the work to remove the sanction began, exhibited a somewhat

apathetic attitude toward the accreditation process, the sanction, and the Accrediting

Commission's recommendations for improvement:

> During that time we actually recognized some real organizational problems.
> Specifically the leadership of our Instruction Office. I don't need to be that
> judicious for you—but the lack of rigor and attention that the former CIO was
> giving to this process. . . . His attitude was—I kid you not—"If it looks like we're
> doing something, that's all they care about." He said that many times publicly.
> It's just a matter of how it looks. And that was really a difficult thing for many of
> us to hear. Our attitude was, "No, it's not about how it looks; it's about the
> outcomes; it's about the results; it's about getting there." So organizationally
> speaking, it was because of our president and his leadership that he ousted that
> person [CIO] from the position . . . replacing it with somebody who was a very
> action-oriented leader.

She mentioned above how the apathetic attitude of the CIO was a morale buster: "A

difficult thing for many of us to hear." Nevertheless, in spite of his nonchalance, the

faculty and others treated the accreditation recommendations and the sanction seriously.

And to ensure that the necessary work would get done, the President of the college

removed the CIO and replaced him with someone whose leadership style and attitude

would be more apropos for leading the faculty through the tasks that needed to be

accomplished. The new CIO participated in the case study interviews. He stated simply

and generically, without pointing a finger of blame at any particular person, how the

leaders of a college must stay on top of every task that needs to be accomplished. A

leader who does not take the time to study the problems, learn about accreditation, and

stay abreast of every task that needs to be completed to address the recommendations can negatively impact the college's ability to remove the sanction. He stated, "The problems come when one of the administrators doesn't quite understand one of the recommendations or loses track of something that we need to be working on; then you can drop the ball pretty easily." In stark contrast to the lackadaisical attitude of the former CIO at Kings College, the CIO at Queens College described the kind of leadership that will help a college achieve successful resolution of its sanction:

> You need to look at the college as a complete system. It's not about getting off of warning; it's about institutionalizing processes that allow you to serve your students better. That's really your goal. . . . You really have to keep the longer-term vision in mind about what it is you are trying to achieve and to work towards that.

She would have disagreed completely with the former Kings College CIO's perspective that addressing the recommendations is "just a matter of how it looks." Moreover, she recognized that addressing the recommendations, even if the college were serious about fixing its deficiencies, is not effective if the only purpose of all the activity is simply to remove the sanction. On the contrary, she identified that the best attitude for leaders to have is to welcome the spirit in which the recommendations were written by the evaluating team—to inspire the college to become a better quality institution—and to utilize the recommendations for long-term, sustainable practices.

Lastly, participants in the survey and in the case study interviews emphasized directly or indirectly how important it was for the President of the college to remain engaged in the college's efforts. If the President was lackadaisical and if he or she did not take the process seriously, then that apathy could set a tone of apathy for the whole

207

college. The respondent from Riverrun College noted, "The president played an extremely important role as well because, without his support, the rest of the campus would not have played along." He also added this advice: "I would advise that the college's president MUST [*sic*] be firmly resolved to do what needs to be done. Without presidential support and dedicated resources, any college is doomed to failure, even if it has knowledgeable and capable employees."

In contrast to the description above by the respondent from Riverrun College, the CIO from Queens College remembered the moment when her President notified her of the sanction. According to her account of the event, she felt he was taking the sanction too lightly:

> He said, "Here's our results. We are on Warning." And my jaw hit the floor because I had come from [another college], which has a pristine record of accreditation. The concept of being on Warning was completely foreign. And I remember the President looking at me, and I'm like, "Oh, that's awful!" And he looked at me and said, "Oh, it's not that bad." And I said—you can put this in your dissertation—"[Name]! That's a sanction!" And he just looked at me with this blank look on his face, and I flipped open the ACCJC book, go down the five levels of reaffirmation, and then there's the sanctions: Warning, Probation, and Show Cause. And he's like, "Oh!"

She had to convince him that a sanction is bad news and that a sanction is serious.

Summary Findings of Hindrances

The list of hindrances that were revealed through the survey and through the multiple case study interviews is not exhaustive. Still, survey respondents and interview participants identified problem areas that slowed or had the potential to stop their colleges' progress. For many of the hindrances, the respondents and participants offered

advice for overcoming them. The advice was similar to the successful practices that they had identified in the earlier sections of this chapter.

The actions or activities that they identified as hindrances included the following: (1) A college might delay response to the accreditation sanction or might respond slowly. The participants advised that to overcome this obstacle, the people of the college need to accept the sanction and recommendations and move quickly to address the recommendations. (2) A college's lack of communication will hamper its success. To amend this problem, the leaders of the college need to communicate more frequently and openly, providing much training to personnel regarding accreditation, providing frequent updates on the college's progress, and remaining open and transparent regarding the rationales behind decisions that must be made for the sake of institutional improvement. (3) The participants identified that a lack of cooperation among constituent groups or individuals will also hinder success. Again, increased communication and training can alleviate such divisions. Another solution to this problem is to rely on authentic models of participatory governance and to build committees and task forces with those models in mind, recognizing the value of every member's contributions. (4) A hindrance to college success is its paying lip service to the accreditation process and addressing the recommendations solely for the purpose of compliance with the ACCJC and not with a mind to making lasting institutional improvements. The participants advised that to overcome this shortcoming, colleges should both accept the recommendations and trust the process of accreditation, and they should seize the situation as an opportunity to improve programs and services for the sake of students.

The persons and personalities that can hinder the college's success were identified as follows, and the respondents and participants also shared ideas on how to deal with these challenges: (1) Some people at a college may be resistant to change or resistant to the ACCJC and the accreditation process. A solution proposed by the study participants was more communication and training. Also, leaders should model an effective response to the accreditation recommendations and sanctions. (2) Some people at the college will express anger or become defensive. In response to this, respondents advised leaders to acknowledge people's feelings and help them move beyond those feelings to acceptance of the college's situation and acceptance of the importance of addressing the recommendations. This can be accomplished through leaders' increased communication and openness, as well as sensitivity. Leaders can also tap into and reinforce the personnel's desire to excel; however, leaders also need to be systematic and consistent so as not to anger or frustrate individuals or constituent groups. (3) Incivility was identified as a "killer." However, no solutions were offered to ameliorate this problem except for the remonstration "Play nice." (4) Apathy or a lackadaisical attitude toward the sanction was another problematic emotional response. The solutions apparent in the participants' responses reflected the need for more education and training for these apathetic individuals regarding the seriousness of the sanction and the usefulness of the accreditation process for helping the institution be the best college it can be. And for all these challenging personality issues, respondents also mentioned the most severe solution: the termination of the offending persons and the hiring of persons who will exhibit more commitment to the institution and its mission.

Summary Conclusion

Chapter 4 presented the findings from the survey and the multiple case study. The participants from the colleges provided their perceptions of the factors that led to their colleges' success in removing the sanctions. These factors were divided into the following topics: activities or actions that the college undertook, the people involved in the activities and their personal characteristics, sources of assistance to help the college through the process, and hindrances that could create obstacles to the college's successful removal of the sanction. Their responses were highly descriptive and informative. In Chapter 5, the researcher will analyze and discuss the implications of these findings, noting the interconnectedness between the organizational attributes that the participants attributed to their success and the problem areas and the solutions to those problems. Chapter 5 will also connect their responses to the literature and make recommendations for further study.

Chapter 5: Analysis and Discussion

Chapter 4 presented the findings from the survey questionnaire and the multiple case study. The data represented the participants' recollections and perceptions of their colleges' experiences to address the recommendations of the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) and to have their sanction removed and their accreditation reaffirmed. Chapter 5 analyzes those findings and discusses their implications for further research and for practical application.

Summary of the Purpose and Method of This Study

This qualitative study was conducted to gain an understanding of some of the characteristics of organizational behavior that contribute to community colleges' ability to remove accreditation sanctions. To this end, the study focused on these research questions:

1. What actions or activities of a college community contribute to its success in having the sanction removed?

2. Which college personnel (should) play key roles in the college's work to remove the sanction?

3. What skills and personal traits of college personnel contribute to the college's success in having the sanction removed?

4. What kinds of assistance might a college need in order to have the sanction removed?

5. What organizational characteristics hinder a college's attempts to have a sanction removed?

212

To uncover answers to the above research questions, the investigator used multiple methods. He first conducted a survey of colleges that had had an accreditation sanction imposed but had been successful in removing it. He then conducted a multiple case study of two colleges that also had been successful at removing their accreditation sanctions. He visited these two colleges in person and interviewed persons who had been involved in their respective colleges' efforts to remove the sanctions. The questions used in the survey and in the case study interviews were open ended questions designed to elicit narrative responses from the survey respondents and interview participants. It was believed that the narrative responses from participants would reflect the experiences of the colleges as a whole and would shed light on the organizational behaviors and characteristics that led to the colleges' successful removal of the accreditation sanction.

All colleges selected for this study had had their sanctions removed within the three years prior to the conducting of the survey or interviews, between 2010 and 2012. The surveys were sent electronically to Accreditation Liaison Officers at the participating colleges. At the case-study colleges where the interviews occurred, seven participants were interviewed at the first college, identified as Kings College, and six participants were interviewed at the second college, identified as Queens College.

Summary of Key Findings

The purpose of this study was to learn which characteristics of organizational behavior help community colleges remove their accreditation sanctions. Regarding the actions that colleges take, the people who do the work at the colleges, the assistance they

213

might need to be successful, and also any organizational characteristics that may hinder the colleges' ability to remove the sanction, the key findings are as follows:

First, regarding actions and activities, it was found that most of the work is done by committees of persons from multiple constituent groups. Very few tasks are completed by a single individual all by himself or herself. A related action is that the leaders must assign the right persons to each committee and task. Secondly, the successful colleges create strategies to tackle each of the accreditation recommendations, including diagrams and mappings of the various pieces of the college's responses to the recommendations, and they create timelines for completion of each project. Thirdly, the successful colleges increase the frequency of college communications and improve the clarity and transparency of their communications, whether through email, newsletters, meetings or convocations. They use these communication activities to rally people and encourage, to persuade, to train, and to inform, keeping the whole institution aware of the progress it is making on the recommendations. A fourth type of action undertaken by the successful colleges was to ensure broad participation in all the actions or activities. Successful colleges invited individuals from all constituent groups and departments to participate on committees and to work on projects that address the accreditation recommendations. The four actions identified above were the actions or activities that received the most attention or were described in the most detail in the responses from the participating colleges, especially from the responses in the interviews conducted as part of the multiple case studies. The fifth type of action that was described to a lesser extent

was that of creating and maintaining evidentiary documents of all the work that the colleges had done in addressing the recommendations.

Regarding the key players who were instrumental in seeing the college through the process of removing the sanction, the most frequently mentioned individuals were Presidents, Chief Instructional Officers (CIOs), and faculty leaders. Other key players that were attributed included Directors of Institutional Research (DIRs), other vice presidents such as Chief Student Services Officers (CSSOs), various managers and deans, other faculty, and classified staff leaders. The primary traits of these leaders, as described by the participants, included the following: Effective college leaders are good communicators and maintain continuous communication with the campus regarding the importance of accreditation, the urgency of addressing the recommendations, and the progress that the college is making on the recommendations. Effective college leaders are skillful at mapping out the tasks that need to be completed, including timelines for completion. Effective leaders are skilled at discerning who would be the best person or persons to assign to a task or to a committee.

The next sections of this chapter will discuss in more detail these organizational characteristics one characteristic at a time.

People for Success: First 'Who'

In Chapter 2 of this study, two models of successful organizations were discussed: good-to-great organizations, as described by Collins (2001), and learning organizations, as described by Senge (1990/2006). Collins (2001) emphasized that a key ingredient is to get "the right people on the bus, the right people in the right seats, and the wrong people

off the bus" (p. 41). Senge (1990/2006) described these people as having "personal

mastery" (p.7); these are individuals who get results, "results that matter most deeply to

them" and are "committed to their own lifelong learning" (p.7). Among the narrative

data collected, the survey respondents and interview participants described colleges'

efforts to get the right people on the bus. There were many details about the formation of

committees and attention paid to who was invited to participate on those committees.

The CIO of Queens College knew whom among the faculty she could turn to for support

and assistance; she knew whom she could rely on to get the work done and to spread the

message in a way that encouraged other faculty to participate. The President of Kings

College was described as hand-picking people to participate in the work groups. He was

also described as getting the wrong person off the bus, as presented by the participants

who recalled how the former CIO was removed from his position and replaced with a

person whose attitude was more conducive to getting all the work done for all the right

reasons. Among the survey respondents, one other college described getting the wrong

persons off the bus: the respondent from Riverrun College described "getting rid of those

faculty and administrators (figuratively or literally) and replacing them with more

enlightened individuals familiar with accreditation mandates and community college

functioning."

Who exactly are the right people to have on the bus? According to the respondent

from Riverrun College, those persons would have a particular knowledge base: "familiar

with accreditation mandates and community college functioning." However, he also

mentioned that they should be "enlightened." The investigator wondered if this sense of

enlightenment is similar to Senge's concept of personal mastery (Senge 1990/2006), although it appears in this case that the mastery is an applied mastery to issues of accreditation. It was clear in the case study interviews that participants at Kings College and Queens College believed that the "right people"—whether administrators, faculty, unit managers, or classified personnel—are knowledgeable of the accreditation process and policies and value accreditation as an important aspect of continuous quality improvement. They share that knowledge and their acceptance of the accreditation recommendations with the rest of the institution. They do not deny that the recommendations have merit. They do not complain that the Accrediting Commission is unfair, unjust, or too picky. They do not blame external factors for the weaknesses that the ACCJC has identified in the institution.

In addition to the afore-mentioned knowledge base and enlightenment, Chapter 4 of this study presented a number of desirable traits of the key players as described by the survey respondents and interview participants. The "right people" tend to be good communicators, good planners, and hard workers. They are respected and respectful of others; they are trusted and trusting; they are not resistant to change; they know where to go to get help.

There was one group of "right people" that many of the participants called out as significant players who influenced the colleges' successful removal of sanctions: those they considered to be leaders. The leaders most frequently were the president or a vice president of the college but also included faculty and classified staff who assumed leadership roles in accreditation projects. Additionally, members of every constituent

217

group except students participated in projects and processes that addressed the accreditation recommendations. For success, it appears that the colleges need leaders who are good judges of character. These leaders recognize the talents and character traits of individuals within the organization and assign them to tasks and responsibilities appropriate for their knowledge, skills, and personalities. Of course, those leaders who are not in administrative positions cannot assign others; however, they use the same discerning skills when they invite others to participate on a committee or task force. In other words, they place the right people in the right positions (Collins, 2001, p. 41). This ability is similar to what Roueche, Baker, and Rose (1989) describe as a transformational leader: "These leaders cultivate planning teams with the understanding and knowledge that such a process will systematically design and develop pathways to reach institutional objectives as well as providing ownership in the shared vision of the future" (p. 124).

The leaders are effective communicators; they exhibit openness and transparency, and they communicate frequently with the college community. This coincides with what Eddy (2010) said about the importance of a leader's ability to communicate effectively: "A college president—must often take the role of chief communicator—must listen to campus feedback and clearly articulate the college's vision and strategies to fulfill it" (p. 96). As communicators, college leaders must be able to frame the issues clearly to help the members of the institution make sense of the challenges and changes facing the college (Eddy, 2010). Leaders of successful institutions also have the ability to map out exactly what needs to be accomplished, or they know who the right persons are who can map out the tasks or projects that need to be accomplished. Leaders of successful

218

institutions recognize the urgency of the situation and motivate the college community to act quickly and effectively to remove the sanctions. They are driven by their care and concern for the college and not by their own egos and concern for personal recognition, nor by an appetite for power and control. They exhibit humility like the Level 5 leaders of a good-to-great organization as described by Collins (2001):

> Level 5 leaders channel their ego needs away from themselves and into the larger goal of building a great company. It's not that Level 5 leaders have no ego or self interest. Indeed, they are incredibly ambitious—but their ambition is first and foremost for the institution, not themselves. (p. 21)

Similarly, Cohen and March (1986) asserted that humility is a necessary attribute of leaders in the "organized anarchy" (p. 21), which describes a college simply because the locus of power is spread throughout the constituents; it does not reside solely in the office of the president nor with any one person; the organization is too complex.

Having the right people on the team is one attribute that the successful colleges paid attention to. The investigator noticed this as participants described their leaders and co-workers, what they admired about them and what they saw as personal characteristics that contributed to the college's successful removal of the sanction. Then there are the specific actions that the colleges engaged in to achieve their success. The next section looks at those actions.

Actions for Success: Then 'What'

In Chapter 2 of this study, the investigator noted that when the members of an organization are the right people with the right attitudes, sharing the same vision for the organization, a vision that aligns with their personal visions for themselves, then the

219

organization is geared for success. It is ready for action, ready to forge ahead. In his concept of a learning organization, Senge (1990/2006) posits this readiness for action as an outgrowth of the organization's sense of and commitment to team learning. In a learning organization, members continually learn how to improve themselves and improve the organization. In order to take care of their sanctions, each of these colleges accepted their sanction and recommendations as an opportunity to improve and to grow. As the Dean of Institutional Research at Queens College exclaimed, "They [the ACCJC] handed you a gift, right? . . . It's an absolute change agent's Christmas present." Consequently, even though the people of these colleges could foresee that the work to remove the sanction was going to be challenging, their vision of themselves and of their institution prompted them to jump into action.

The colleges' actions were in response to external forces, mainly to sanctions imposed by the ACCJC. These external forces caused colleges to adapt their plans and procedures (Cameron, 1989/2000) to align with the ACCJC's expectations of quality and accountability. However, the ACCJC is not a completely external entity because each college is a member institution, and when the Commission periodically reviews and revises the eligibility requirements and standards of accreditation, the agency provides ample opportunity for all member institutions to provide input and feedback. In essence then, colleges are forced to adapt their plans and procedures to the regional vision and expectations of quality that they themselves have participated in creating and that they have accepted through their agreeing to be member institutions in the organization.

220

One of the actions that most of the colleges reported engaging in was the forming of committees or teams of people to tackle the accreditation recommendations. In the successful colleges, the actions taken to address the recommendations were performed by committees and teams of people rather than by individuals acting alone. This phenomenon reflects what Roueche, Baker, and Rose (1989) discussed when they said, "Effective college leaders and their leadership *teams* [emphasis added] not only know their roles, but also understand and appreciate the importance of enabling other people to contribute to and participate in the design and creation of the college's 'big picture'" (p. 126). Thus, although forming committees, teams, and task forces may appear to be an obvious response to accreditation recommendations, the investigator noted that such a practice aligns with effective strategies recognized by Roueche, Baker, and Rose (1989), Senge (1990/2006), and Collins (2001). Working on accreditation is a "big picture" task that affects the whole institution, so it makes sense to enable many people to participate in the college's design or redesign. The investigator learned not to take committee work for granted.

Another action that successful colleges emphasized was that an institution should respond immediately and cannot delay addressing the accreditation recommendations. They advised that a college begin addressing the recommendations as soon as it receives the preliminary evaluation report from the visiting team and not wait for the official decision of the ACCJC, which is not released for several months. As soon as the President is informed by the chair of the visiting team what the recommendations are, he

or she should move quickly to put together the plans and the teams to begin addressing those recommendations.

The third action that appeared frequently in the colleges' responses both in the survey responses and in the interview responses was increased communication. Together with the college's formation of committees and its beginning immediately as soon as the recommendations are known, these acts of communication appeared to contribute in many positive ways to the colleges' removal of the sanctions. The successful institutions used meetings, assemblies, memos, e-mails, and other forms of communication, both formal and informal, to inform, to train, to learn, to understand, to plan, to evaluate, and to report. Communication in successful colleges involved both disseminating information and receiving feedback. The colleges described their communication efforts as open, honest, transparent, and in most cases frequent.

Resources for Success: Where to Go for Help

The investigator found it interesting that most of the colleges held a negative view of hiring consultants to help the college find solutions to the deficiencies identified in the recommendations. However, this view makes sense. To sustain changes and improvements, a college must rely on its own resources: human, technology, financial, and facilities resources. Consultants go away when their contracts expire. A college must rely on the talents and expertise of its own people, and if there is a gap in the talents and expertise, then a college must commit to hiring personnel who will fill the knowledge gaps or skills gaps.

Hindrances to Success: What Not to Do

Even though the main thrust of this study was to look at what worked well in these successful colleges, the colleges also expressed familiarity with activities, behaviors, and characteristics that can hinder a college's successful removal of a sanction. In the narratives captured in the interviews, participants contrasted their successful strategies and practices with less successful strategies and practices that they knew to avoid. Some of the participants also reported hearing about less successful strategies from peers at other colleges. Both the survey respondents and the interview participants noted hindrances to success in their responses to the question, "What advice would you give to other colleges that find themselves with an accreditation sanction?" The hindrances discussed below—delayed response, resistance to change, and other hindrances—reminded the investigator of challenges that face many organizations, challenges that were discussed in the literature, especially the challenge of resistance to change.

Delayed Response

The first piece of advice was "Don't wait!" Several colleges impressed upon the investigator the urgency of addressing the accreditation recommendations quickly and advised that colleges not wait but get to work immediately as soon as they are notified of the recommendations contained in the evaluation team's report. This advice led the investigator to conclude that waiting and not responding quickly can undermine a college's success. This is a logical assumption because the ACCJC imposes a timeline for completing the recommended institutional improvements. If a college waits to get

223

started, perhaps the President imagining that the ACCJC will remove or revise one of the evaluation team's recommendations, then the college will have less time to complete the improvement. If a college receives its comprehensive evaluation visit in March, the evaluation team's report is usually delivered to the President by April. The ACCJC does not issue its official action letter and report, including the recommendations for improvement, until early July. In most colleges, the faculty is gone for the summer, which means that for full campus involvement, the college would need to wait until August to begin discussing action plans to address the recommendations. The loss of more than four months from April to August can be detrimental. In April, a college has the full faculty and staff available to begin work to address the recommendations even if the recommendations have not yet been received in their final, official form as sent from the ACCJC office. For sanctions imposed at the June meeting of the ACCJC, the college is expected to produce and submit a Follow Up Report the following March. From April in one year to March in the next, the college has eleven months to make the recommended improvements. If the president or other leaders wait, the college has only seven months to make the improvements. There have even been extreme cases in which the ACCJC has asked for a Follow Up Report in October of the same year when the visit took place. If that turns out to be the case, then the college has only two months (August to September) to fix the deficiency and report the changes to the Commission. Because colleges are extremely complex organizations (Cohen & March, 1986), the extra four months gained by taking a head start in April can help a college complete its improvements sooner and thus have its sanction removed sooner. If a college does not

224

demonstrate that it has fixed the deficiency, it will have its sanction extended, or worse—it could find itself with a more severe sanction.

Resistance

Another hindrance that surfaced in the narrative data from the participants was resistance to the ACCJC. The survey respondent from Riverrun College noted that once resistant administrators and faculty leaders were replaced, the college could move forward. One of the common recommendations for many colleges concerns the colleges' efforts toward establishing and assessing student learning outcomes (ACCJC, 2009a) and making educational improvements based on these assessment results and tracking student learning (see Figure 1, Kings College Recommendation #6, and Figure 2, Queens College Recommendation #3). Such recommendations have led to faculty resistance such as reported by Queens College: the Research Analyst reported that some faculty members had "put their foot down" and said, "We will not do this; this is interference in education and we will not do it." The Information Technology Specialist at Kings College, who is also a member of the associate faculty, had a similar observation:

> One of the biggest mistakes I think I have heard other colleges make is to take the attitude of, especially the faculty, of "Why should we dance to the tune of somebody who is not here, not us, and trying to tell us what to do and don't know what we do actually?" And to take that kind of resistant approach and do things like—for instance, I have seen senates pass resolutions that they were not going to do student learning outcomes.

Such overt resistance to accreditation recommendations make institutional improvements difficult.

Resistance to ACCJC, however, is probably just a mask for resistance to changes in the field of education, especially from a faculty point of view. Greenwood and Hinings (1996/2000) noted that individuals or groups within an organization, sometimes the whole organization, will resist change because they are so grounded in their present image of the organization. Senge (1990/2006) called these images of the organization and how people think it should operate as "mental models." If mental models hinder an organization's progress or success, then they should be discarded. Greenwood and Hinings (1996/2000) use a similar phrase: "archetypal template": "the greater the extent to which organizations are tightly coupled to a prevailing archetypal template within a highly structured field, the greater the degree of instability in the face of external shocks" (p. 317). Many people on many college campuses view accreditation recommendations as intrusive, and they are taken aback by the recommendations as if they were struck by an "external shock." Thus resistance is understandable and to an extent rational. However, if an organization does not adapt to external forces, that is, "to changes in the external environment" (Cameron, 1989/2000), such as increased external expectations for accountability in higher education, then the organization will not survive. Senge (1990/2000) exhorts leaders to capitalize on "creative tension," which he defined as the tension between "seeing clearly where we want to be, 'our vision,' and telling the truth about where we are, 'our current reality'" (p. 289).

As a hindrance, resistance is probably more insidious than delayed response. Resistance can undermine many efforts at institutional improvements. However, the colleges who participated in this study had advice for dealing with resistance. Namely, a

226

college can strengthen its training on the relevance, significance, and importance of accreditation as it relates to accountability in higher education. The training is a perfect place where leaders can capitalize on the creative tension (Senge, 1990/2000) between the current reality ("our college has been sanctioned") and the vision ("we are a quality institution and therefore should be accredited"). Of course, the training needs to include telling the truth about the current reality, which may mean discovering that the college is not as high quality as its constituents think. In order to get to the truth, the real truths, of the current reality, the people in the organization need to go deep and take a good, long, self-reflective look at themselves, at the organization, and how they contribute to the organization (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004). The CIO from Queens College captured this process of taking a good, long look when she described the reflective discussions the college had in addressing one of its recommendations:

> Setting up an environment where everyone can speak freely, brainstorm—it was truly—I just thoroughly enjoyed it—not at the time, but in retro. Now looking back, to get to create a whole new system with no bounds on you particularly! And what works? What doesn't work? What do you want to do? Yes. No. Why? Why not? Why not this instead of that? Having that fantastic—it's really academic discourse, and probing why the college did what it used to do and probing that history—why did you do it that way? And understanding the culture and also acknowledging the culture of the college that exists as you are doing that—because there is a reason they did everything the way they did.

What she described parallels the sort of going-deep learning discussed by Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, and Flowers (2004, pp. 86-92), in which members of an organization reflect honestly on their current situation but also discover pathways for organizational change. Thus an accreditation sanction can truly be a gift to an institution, as stated by

227

the Dean of Institutional Research at Queens College, because it creates opportunities for learning in the learning organization.

Other Hindrances

This study focused on the characteristics of organizational behavior that contributed to colleges' success and removing accreditation sanctions. As such it did not look at colleges that were unsuccessful, and the investigator did not ask direct questions about obstacles or hindrances to success since the participating colleges were successful at removing their sanctions. Still, some of the participants described or briefly mentioned hindrances to success in their responses, especially in their responses to the question about advice for other colleges. However, other hindrances could be inferred as the absence of those characteristics of organizational behavior that the participants believed contributed to their colleges' success. For example, several colleges emphasized the importance of college-wide communication regarding the activities and progress toward addressing the accreditation recommendations. One can assume that the absence of communication could be a hindrance to a college's success. If the leadership is not regularly communicating to the rest of the college the progress that is being made on the recommendations, it's possible that most persons at the college would simply continue with their normal business-as-usual; and it could be that the business-as-usual led to the sanction. Another characteristic of organizational behavior was the inclusion of many people from the different constituent groups and from different departments on the task forces and committees that addressed the recommendations. From this it may be assumed that the absence of such broad participation could hinder the college's success.

228

If only administrators or only faculty are working on the recommendations, it's possible that the work will not be completed in a timely fashion, or it's possible that the work will not take into consideration its impact on the institution as a whole. Besides, as an Accreditation Liaison Officer for his own college and as a participant on several evaluating teams for the ACCJC, the investigator knows that evaluating teams, indeed the Commission itself, look for broad participation across the college constituencies.

Among hindrances related to the participants' responses about organizational culture, it seems reasonable to assume that if a college lacks the values and beliefs espoused by the successful colleges, such a college may have difficulty successfully removing an accreditation sanction. For example, if there is a lack of trust between faculty and administrators or between the governing board and the faculty or between any of the constituent groups, it seems reasonable to assume that individuals on committees may have difficulty working together. A culture of distrust or mistrust might also create pockets of resistance; a group that is enthusiastic or is working positively toward organizational change may run into resistance from another group if this second group does not trust the first group's motivations or plans for change. The faculty member from Kings College noted this effect when she discussed how incivility on a college campus can pose a serious problem. Another obvious cultural hindrance would be a college's lack of trust in the ACCJC. Several of the colleges noted that a personal quality in the people who contributed to the college's successful removal of the sanction was that they were willing to work hard to fix the deficiencies identified in the recommendations. It is reasonable to assume that if people at a college are not willing to work on the

accreditation recommendations, the college will have a difficult time removing the sanction.

Organizational Culture and Its Impact on Successful Removal of Sanctions

One of the characteristics that this study did not originally set out to explore is the impact of organizational culture on an institution's effectiveness in addressing the accreditation recommendations and having its sanction removed. The culture of an organization is apparent in the values that the institution holds most dear. Pettigrew (1979) defined organizational culture "as the amalgam of beliefs, ideology, language, ritual, and myth" (as cited in Masland, 1985/2000, p. 145). Similarly, Kuh and Whitt (1988/2000) defined organizational culture as

> a social or normative glue that holds organizations together and serves four general purposes: (1) it conveys a sense of identity; (2) it facilitates commitment to an entity, such as a college or peer group, other than self; (3) it enhances the stability of a group's social system; and (4) it is a sense-making device that guides and shapes behavior. (p. 161)

Peterson and Spencer (1990/2000) also defined organizational culture as "shared values, assumptions, beliefs, or ideologies" (p. 173). Culture influences people's behaviors because culture carries expectations that some behaviors are preferred and accepted and others are frowned upon (Kuh and Whitt, 1988/2000). Each discipline has its own culture—math, science, humanities, social sciences—but for purposes of accreditation, the overarching college culture should dominate, yet the subcultures of disciplines (Kuh and Whitt, 1988/2000) may influence persons' behaviors in response to mandated institutional change. Thus organizational culture can be influential on an institution's

230

success at addressing accreditation recommendations because culture influences behavior.

Even though organizational culture was not one of the original topics of the investigation, the investigator took the liberty of asking the participating colleges what aspects of their organizational culture contributed to their successful removal of the accreditation sanction. The investigator did not explain organizational culture in the survey or during the interviews; he just allowed the respondents and participants to apply the term in whatever way they wanted to their experiences at their colleges. Generally, the investigator found that within the organizational culture of these successful colleges were attitudes of integrity, trust, caring, educational quality, excellence, and commitment. Trust was an important value that influenced how individuals and groups cooperated with each other. On some campuses, the constituents counted on and looked to their leaders for guidance and for setting the institution on a path toward success. The people of the college trusted the leadership team, which often comprised individuals other than administrators, and were eager to assist with the plans that were developed by the leadership team. When the people of the college trusted the leadership, they believed that the leaders operated with integrity and in the best interest of students and the institution. Conversely, in institutions where leaders trusted the employees, including faculty, then they were eager to involve the whole college in the institutional improvement projects; they delegated authority to others and collaborated well. This attitude of trust was apparent in the responses of the participants from Kings College and Queens College and

231

in the descriptions of the work they accomplished and of the relationships among constituents and individuals.

Another aspect of college culture that appeared important for the success was collegial and cooperative relationships between departments and individuals. Everyone at the college must recognize that the college depends on the whole team to reach its goals, all constituent groups working together toward common goals; and the people of the college must appreciate everyone's contributions to the team. The colleges that had this atmosphere of "team," of "tight community" or "family," may have had an easier time of addressing accreditation recommendations.

These successful colleges also placed a value on accreditation. They believed that accreditation is important and that it is beneficial. They valued the process of self-assessment and peer review and trusted that the process would lead to their improving institutional quality.

Another aspect of college culture that appeared to be beneficial to removing accreditation sanctions was institutional pride. What is institutional pride? The investigator defines institutional pride as a positive attitude existing in the group that is committed to the organization's mission and success. This institutional pride influenced the desire of individuals at the successful colleges to participate in something great (the organization) rather than to achieve personal greatness (Collins, 2001). Institutional pride led them to work for the benefit of the organization and to prevent the organization from failing. When this pride was coupled with a belief that accreditation is beneficial, the college appeared to have the right attitude for success. The belief that accreditation is

232

beneficial opened them to processes of self evaluation and reflection; institutional pride motivated them to work for the success of the institution. However, if institutional pride verges on arrogance, then the college culture may lead the institution to believe that the sanctions are unwarranted and unfair. The college may move to address the recommendations, but only for the purpose of appeasing the ACCJC, thereby paying lip service to the process and not owning it—not recognizing that the peer review process of accreditation has authentically identified areas where the college could improve. A college that has institutional pride but does not trust the accreditation process may not be successful at addressing the accreditation recommendations and may find itself continuing on sanctions. Or worse—a college that suffers from institutional arrogance may find itself resistant to the ACCJC's recommendations for improvement.

Another way to look at institutional pride is to encourage the organization to see itself as a Janusian institution. According to Cameron (1998/2000), "Janusian thinking is named after the Roman god Janus, who was pictured as having at least two faces looking in different directions at the same time. Janusian thinking occurs when two contradictory thoughts are held to be true simultaneously" (p. 281). In the case of accreditation sanctions, the two contradictory thoughts that need to be considered true simultaneously are, first, that the college does not deserve the sanction and, second, that the college does indeed deserve the sanction. Cameron (1998/2000) asserted that maintaining Janusian thinking assists organizations in being flexible and adaptable, and as colleges make institutional changes in response to the accreditation recommendations, they need to remain flexible and adaptable. The recollections from the participants at both Kings

College and Queens College expressed these dual sentiments: they recalled feeling that they did not deserve the sanctions but also trusted the accreditation process to point out to them areas of needed improvements. Perhaps in order to be successful at removing accreditation sanctions, a college must maintain a healthy yet precarious balance between institutional pride and institutional humility.

Applications for Practice

Based on the survey data and the interview data, this study found several pieces of advice for colleges that find themselves on accreditation sanctions. Although the question "What advice would you give to other colleges that find themselves on sanction?" did not specifically ask participants to think of their responses in terms of activities that the college should engage in, people who should lead the way or be involved in committees, structures that should be created or changed in the institution, or a culture that should be encouraged, the advice that the respondents gave did fit these categories as noted below.

Respondents recommended the following advice regarding actions that colleges should engage in:

- Of primary importance, a college should not wait to begin addressing the recommendations; those who are leading should maintain a sense of urgency. Everyone at the college should make addressing the accreditation recommendations a number one priority for the whole college.

- Everyone must communicate openly; leaders should provide frequent updates and explanations to the whole college, and they should encourage feedback.

The President or his or her designee should share the accreditation results/report with the whole college.

- The President and other leaders of a college should seek clarity from the ACCJC or from the Commission's representatives, i.e. the visiting evaluation team, if they do not understand the recommendations.

- If the members of a college are unsure how to address the recommendations, they should find models of success at other colleges. They should not think that they are alone. They can hire a consultant. They can attend or send people to the Student Success Conference or other professional development opportunities related to institutional evaluation. But they should be wary of out-of-state models.

- Those who work on projects that address the recommendations should follow through; they should complete what they start. To do this, the leaders, committees, or task forces should break large projects into smaller achievable tasks.

- All personnel should be trained on what accreditation is all about. They should be reminded that the purpose of addressing the recommendations is to improve the quality of education and services for students; the college should not address the recommendations simply to appease the ACCJC.

Regarding the people who should be involved in addressing accreditation issues and recommendations, the survey respondents and interview participants shared the following advice:

235

- Everyone on campus should be involved—persons from every constituent group—because sanctions affect the whole college.

- It is important to appoint the right people to work on the committees and to lead committees, paying attention to qualities such as history with the college, knowledge of the college, effective communication skills, ability to get the job done, and ability to get along with others.

- A college should hire a consultant if necessary knowledge or skills are lacking among the college's human resources.

- Leadership at the top (the President or other senior administrators) must stay engaged and knowledgeable.

The participants shared a little advice regarding organizational structures that could help remove sanctions. First, it's important for the college to understand, create, and implement an integrated planning system—a cycle of planning, implementation, and evaluation. Of course, the need for creating such a planning system usually arises when the ACCJC gives an explicit recommendation to improve planning. However, the participants advised that the college should keep the institutional plans simple: the people who create the plan should not create too many goals and they should keep the goals clear. Second, some of the participants recommended that a college should create structures that will move the college forward, including committees or processes. It can be inferred from this last piece of advice that a college should also eliminate structures that hold the college back.

Regarding advice that can be applied to organizational culture, the participants contributed the following:

- Colleges should accept the recommendations; they should not fight the Commission. In other words, colleges should create a climate that values and respects the opinions of external evaluators.

- Colleges should cultivate an attitude that addressing the recommendations is not a one-time task; the solutions to the recommendations should probably become ongoing processes with regular evaluations.

- Colleges should not drift back into old bad habits.

- Colleges should cultivate and maintain a culture of trust. They should build a culture of civility and "play nice." Similarly, leaders and others should be able to work positively with resistant people.

- Colleges should stay flexible because not every solution or innovation will work.

These pieces of advice fit definitions of organizational culture because they describe values and attitudes that everyone in the institution would be expected to hold. These values influence people's behaviors (Kuh & Whitt, 1988/2000; Peterson & Spencer, 1990/2000).

Implications for Further Study

Because this study looked only at those colleges that were successful at removing their sanctions, more work could be done to look at those colleges that have difficulty removing their sanctions. Out of the 112 community colleges in the California

Community College System, 11 colleges, or 10% of the colleges, had been stuck with their sanctions for longer than two years when this investigation was begun in 2012. In fact, four or five of California's colleges had seemed to wallow on Warning for a year or two, then slip to Probation or Show Cause, and then stay on Probation or Warning for a year or two after the Show Cause order was lifted. Whereas this study looked at what worked well and what went right at the successful colleges, another study could look at what goes wrong at those struggling colleges. What characteristics of their organizational behavior create barriers to their successful addressing of the accreditation recommendations, the removal of their sanction, and the reaffirmation of their accreditation?

Another possibility for further research would be to focus on a single aspect of organizational behavior, such as organizational culture. As stated earlier in this chapter, the idea to look at organizational culture as an influence on a college's success occurred as an afterthought once the investigation got underway and once the investigator started recording the details of the case study participants' narratives. Their stories included descriptions of who "we" are as a college. They would speak of their colleges as a collective of like-minded souls interested in a common mission—to provide high quality education and services to students, and to see their students succeed in their educational and life goals. This narrative thread was present in the stories of each participant regardless of their positions as administrators, faculty, or staff. Consequently, one could certainly study how organizational culture affects or intersects with a college's approaches to addressing an accreditation sanction.

238

Other aspects of organizational behavior that surfaced in this study that may deserve a closer look include the leadership styles of the most significant leader through the process, such as the President at Kings College or the CIO at Queens College. Another aspect of organizational behavior worth looking at is communication strategies and channels of information at a college and how those impact a college's ability to remove a sanction. And of course, a more experienced researcher may be able to conduct a rigorously controlled quantitative study to determine with more exactitude the extent to which different organizational characteristics or behaviors have the greater impact on a college's ability to meet the demands for improvement when an accreditation sanction is imposed.

Another area of study that this project did not discuss is a comparison of ACCJC with the other regional accrediting agencies in the United States. After all, an overwhelming number of colleges have been sanctioned by the ACCJC but low numbers of sanctioned colleges in the other regions. Such a study could look at differences in the organizational cultures, in the structures, or in the processes of the different regional accrediting agencies. What is it about the ACCJC that seems so much more stringent than the other agencies? Or could it be that California community colleges really do struggle more than community colleges in other states and regions and that they truly deserve every sanction that they have received?

Reflection on the Research Method

The investigator is pleased with the results of this qualitative analysis. The phenomenological approach gave credence to both the participants' experiences and their

239

reflections on those experiences. Truly, the only data available about their experiences came from the participants' own knowledge and perceptions of their experiences throughout all the activity of the organization while the college was on sanction. Their perceptions led to interpretations and understanding, which created more knowledge of the topics: of accreditation and sanctions, of processes of institutional improvement, of participation as an individual in a dynamic organization, of self in relation to others and in relation to the organization, etc. Piecing together the phenomena[10] of all the participants' memories of events led to a fairly robust understanding of the processes and challenges these colleges faced as they worked on their accreditation sanctions. The reports to the ACCJC and the other documents that the investigator looked at did not tell the story. The documents provided evidence that activities had taken place, that work had been done, and that standards had been met, but the *real* experiences had to be discovered in the participants' recollections. The reports and documents did not account for the nonchalant attitudes of the first CIO at Kings College and the President at Queens College, yet those facts, which were found only in the memories of the participants, became the catalysts for actions taken by other individuals at those colleges. Moreover, the participants' judgments that the attitudes of those administrators were problematic is one part of their conscious responses to the situation. In phenomenology, the reality and knowledge of the experience is contained in the conscious, with all the subject's memories, perceptions, judgments, interpretations, evaluations, and feelings. Basically, if

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[10] According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, phenomena are "appearances of things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience" (Smith, 2013).

the subject thinks it's real, they will behave as if it's real. As a result, the specific, personal details such as those shed much light on the situations and events at the colleges and painted a rather complete picture of how the colleges addressed their challenges. And as several voices recounted similar details, the stories triangulated such that it was more probable that the participants provided fairly accurate accounts of the colleges' responses to the sanctions.

Final Summary

The purpose of this study was to find out what qualities of organizational behavior are present in the colleges that are successful at having their accreditation sanctions removed and their accreditation reaffirmed. Through the rich narrative data collected from the multiple case study and through the descriptive data gathered from the survey questionnaire, many characteristics of successful organizations were discovered. It is hoped that other colleges will find this information useful should they find themselves issued a Warning, placed on Probation, or ordered to Show Cause by the ACCJC.

Appendix A

California Community Colleges that Have Been Sanctioned

The table below chronicles the actions taken by the Accrediting Commission of Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) from January 2004 through June 2011. The ACCJC meets semiannually to review all documents on the colleges that have been evaluated by visiting teams of peer evaluators or that were required to submit a self-study, a midterm report, a focused midterm report, or a focused progress report within the six-month period prior to the meeting of the ACCJC.

The various actions of the ACCJC are coded as follows:

IA	= initial accreditation
R	= accreditation reaffirmed/sanction removed
W	= warning
P	= probation
SC	= show cause
T	= terminate
3	= total number of semesters on sanction
5	= sanctions for longer than 2 years

college	January 05	June 05	January 06	June 06	January 07	June 07	January 08	June 08	January 09	June 09	January 10	June 10	January 11	June 11	January 12	June 12	January 13	June 13	semesters on sanction
Allan Hancock C																			0
American River C																			0
Antelope Valley C																			0
Bakersfield C																			0
Barstow CC																W	W	W	3
Berkeley City C	W	W	R									P	P	W	W	W	W	R	**8**
Butte C																			0
Cabrillo C																			0
Cañada C							W	W	R										2
Cerritos C								W	W	R									2
Cerro Coso CC					W	W	R												2
Chabot C																			0
Chaffey C																			0

college	Jan 05	Jun 05	Jan 06	Jun 06	Jan 07	Jun 07	Jan 08	Jun 08	Jan 09	Jun 09	Jan 10	Jun 10	Jan 11	Jun 11	Jan 12	Jun 12	Jan 13	Jun 13	semesters on sanction
Citrus C																			0
City C of San Francisco																SC	SC	T	3
Coastline CC																		W	1
C of Alameda	W	W	R							W	W	P	P	W	W	W	W	R	**10**
C of Marin	W	W	W	W	W	W	P	R							W	W	R		**9**
C of San Mateo							W	W	R										2
C of the Canyons																			0
C of the Desert																			0
C of the Redwoods			W	W	W	P	P	W	R	W	R				SC	SC	P	P	**11**
C of the Sequoias				W	W	R										SC	SC		4
C of the Siskiyous												W	W	W	W	R			4
Columbia C															W	W	W	W	4
Compton C	SC	T			Closure														4
Contra Costa C																			0
Copper Mountain								W	W	W	W	R							4
Consumnes River																			0
Crafton Hills C									P	P	P	P	R						4
Cuesta C							W	R	W	W	P	P	P	P	SC	SC	W	W	**11**
Cuyamaca C																			0
Cypress C															W	W	R		2
DeAnza C																			0
Diablo Valley C								W	SC	SC	P	P	R						**5**
East Los Angeles										W	W	R							2
El Camino C										W	W	R					W	W	4
Evergreen Valley	W	W	R											W	W	W	W	R	6
Feather River C				W	W	R				W	W	W	R						5
Folsom Lake C																			0
Foothill C																			0
Fresno City C				W	W	W	R								W	W	R		5
Fullerton C															W	W	R		2
Gavilan C																			0
Glendale CC												W	W	R					2
Golden West C																		W	1

college	January 05	June 05	January 06	June 06	January 07	June 07	January 08	June 08	January 09	June 09	January 10	June 10	January 11	June 11	January 12	June 12	January 13	June 13	semesters on sanction
Grossmont C																			0
Hartnell C						P	W	R										P	3
Imperial Valley C							W	W	W	W	W	R							**5**
Irvine Valley C													W	W	R			W	3
Lake Tahoe CC																			0
Laney C	W	W	R									P	P	W	W	W	W	R	**8**
Las Positas C																			0
Lassen C				W	P	P	P	P	W	W	R								**7**
Long Beach City C								W	W	R									2
Los Angeles City C									P	P	R								2
Los Angeles Harbor C																P	P	R	2
Los Angeles Mission C																		W	1
Los Angeles Pierce C																			0
Los Angeles Southwest C								P	P	R						P	P	W	5
Los Angeles Trade Tech C										P	P	W	W	R					4
Los Angeles Valley C																		W	1
Los Medanos C																			0
Mendocino C																			0
Merced C	W	R												W	W	W	W	R	5
Merritt C	W	W	R							W	W	P	P	W	W	W	W	R	**10**
Mira Costa C						W	W	W	R					P	P	R			5
Mission C								W	W	W	W	R							4
Modesto JC						P	P	R							P	P	P	P	6
Monterey Peninsula C																			0
Moorpark C																P	P	R	2
Moreno Valley C	███	███	███	███	███	███	███	███	███	███	IA								0
Mt. San Antonio C																			0
Mt. San Jacinto C																			0
Napa Valley C																			0
Norco C	███	███	███	███	███	███	███	███	███	███	IA								0
Ohlone C								W	W	R									2

college	January 05	June 05	January 06	June 06	January 07	June 07	January 08	June 08	January 09	June 09	January 10	June 10	January 11	June 11	January 12	June 12	January 13	June 13	semesters on sanction
Orange Coast C								W	W	R								W	3
Oxnard C													W	W	P	P	R		4
Palo Verde C								W	W	W	R				P	P	R		5
Palomar C											W	W	W	W	R				4
Pasadena City C											W	W	W	R					3
Porterville C				W	W	W	R												3
Reedley C															W	W	R		2
Rio Hondo C									W	W	R								2
Riverside City C											W	W	R						2
Sacramento City																			0
Saddleback C													W	W	R				2
San Bernardino Valley C																			0
San Diego City C																			0
San Diego Mesa C																			0
San Diego Miramar C													W	W	W	W	R		4
San Joaquin Delta								W	P	R				W	W	R			4
San Jose City C	W	W	R										P	P	P	P	R		6
Santa Ana C									W	W	R								2
Santa Barbara City C																			0
Santa Monica C																			0
Sants Rosa JC																			0
Santiago Canyon									W	W	R								2
Shasta C								W	W	W	R				P	P	R		5
Sierra C								W	W	W	W	R							4
Skyline C																			0
Solano CC								W	W	SC	P	P	P	R	W	W	W	W	**10**
Southwestern C											P	P	P	R					3
Taft C											W	W	W	W	R				4
Ventura C													W	W	P	P	R		4
Victor Valley C					W	W	W	R						P	P	P	P	P	**8**
West Hills C Coalinga		W	W	R															2
West Hills C Lemoore																			0

college	January 05	June 05	January 06	June 06	January 07	June 07	January 08	June 08	January 09	June 09	January 10	June 10	January 11	June 11	January 12	June 12	January 13	June 13	semesters on sanction
West Los Angeles																W	W	R	2
West Valley C																			0
Woodland CC	███	███	███	███	███	███	███	IA									W	W	2
Yuba C																	P	P	2

colleges that have been sanctioned since January 05 **73**

percent since January 05 **65%**

colleges on sanction longer than 2 years **12**

percent **11%**

Source: ACCJC News, January 2005-July 2013

Appendix B

Survey-Questionnaire
The survey-questionnaire which follows was created using Survey Monkey. The link to the survey was emailed to Accreditation Liaison Officers at colleges that fit the research criteria. The text below is a copy of the text of the survey-questionnaire as it appeared on Survey Monkey. Each question was presented on a separate webpage, and questions 1 through 6 each included a text box where respondents could type responses of unlimited length.

Project title: An Exploration of Organizational Behavior that Affects California Community Colleges' Ability to Remove Sanctions and Have Accreditation Reaffirmed

Researcher: Steven Reynolds, Accreditation Liaison Officer, College of the Siskiyous, and doctoral candidate at The University of Texas, Austin

Introduction and Instructions: Accreditation is a continuous process of quality review. After an institution has achieved its initial accreditation, it is expected to conduct periodic reviews for the purpose of reaffirmation of accreditation. If a college has an unsuccessful review and is found deficient in meeting eligibility requirements or standards of accreditation, then a sanction is imposed. In order to have the sanction removed, the college must respond by making institutional improvements. Since 2006, 62 of the 112 public community colleges in California, or 55 percent, have been sanctioned. Currently, 27 of the 112 colleges are on some form of sanction. Yet little research exists that looks at what happens to colleges on which sanctions have been imposed.

This study focuses on California public community colleges that have been sanctioned, that successfully had the sanctions removed, and that had accreditation reaffirmed. Within the past three years, your College has successfully had its sanction removed and its accreditation reaffirmed. It is hoped that your responses to this questionnaire will generate useful information regarding the strengths that colleges can develop, magnify, or amplify should they find themselves sanctioned by the ACCJC.

On the next few pages, you will be asked to respond to six questions. Please reflect on the experiences of your College as it addressed the ACCJC's recommendations and wrote its follow-up reports. The topics of the questions follow these themes:
- Activities
- Key People
- College Structure
- College Culture

- Other Strengths

Confidentiality statement: Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary. Because accreditation sanctions are a sensitive issue and may create a negative institutional image to the public, confidentiality will be maintained with respect to the identities of all colleges and individual participants. No individual persons nor institutions will be identified by name in this study. Your identity and the identity of your college will be protected at every stage of this research project. All data from this questionnaire will be compiled and analyzed with no personal or college identifiers attached. Personal data will be shared with no one, but will be maintained only for the purposes of tracking to avoid duplication or loss of data.

1. ACTIVITIES: What actions or activities of your college community contribute to its success in having the sanction removed and accreditation reaffirmed?

2. PEOPLE: Which college personnel played key roles in your college's work to remove the sanction? What skills and personal traits of these college personnel contribute to the college's success in having the sanction removed?

3. COLLEGE STRUCTURE: What characteristics of your college's organizational structure facilitated its success in having the sanction removed?

4. COLLEGE CULTURE: What characteristics of your college's organizational culture facilitated its success in having the sanction removed?

5. OTHER STRENGTHS: What other strengths at your college (not identified in the above questions) were instrumental in removing the sanction and having accreditation reaffirmed?

6. ADVICE: If another college were to be sanctioned by the ACCJC, what advice would you give to that college that would help them expedite the removal of the sanction and have their accreditation reaffirmed?

7. Thank you for participating in this survey. The results of this study may open doors for the development of a framework for understanding how colleges respond to sanctions when they are imposed. The ensuing discussion may inform sanctioned colleges that they should strengthen specific characteristics and enhance particular organizational behaviors in order to expedite reaffirmation.

    If you would like to review an abstract of the study when it is completed, please complete the information below. (To protect your privacy and maintain confidentiality, this information will not be associated with your responses above.)

    Name:
    Institution:
    Email:

Appendix C

CONSENT FORM

IRB APPROVED ON: MAY 02, 2012   *EXPIRES ON: MAY 01, 2013*

Title: An Exploration of Organizational Behavior that Affects California Community Colleges' Ability to Remove Sanctions and Have Accreditation Reaffirmed

IRB PROTOCOL #2012-03-0081

Conducted By: Steven J. Reynolds
of The University of Texas at Austin
Department of Higher Education Administration
Office: Community College Leadership Program
Telephone: 530-938-5554 (office), 530-859-2757 (cell)
Email: reynolds@siskiyous.edu

The purpose of this study is to uncover characteristics and activities of organizational behavior that help California's public community colleges remove their accreditation sanctions and have their accreditation reaffirmed. From this investigation, it is hoped that patterns and trends will emerge that reveal organizational behavior that contributes to successful institutional improvements and removal of sanctions.

I agree to allow [name of college] to participate in this study, thus allowing the primary investigator:
- To review and analyze all documents pertaining to the accreditation of your college.
- To conduct in-person interviews with selected college personnel.

Risks of being in the study are no greater than everyday life. However, opinions expressed openly and candidly could have negative impact on workplace relationships. Therefore, all reasonable efforts will be made to protect participants' identities and the confidential nature of their responses.

Benefits: There are no potential benefits to be gained by individuals for participating in this study.

Compensation: There will be no compensation or costs associated with participation.

Confidentiality and Privacy Protections:
- <u>Privacy</u> can be defined in terms of having control over the extent, timing, and circumstances of sharing oneself with others. Participants will maintain complete control over the information they share regarding their knowledge and experiences. Participants should not share any information that they deem inappropriate for the purposes of this

study.
- Confidentiality pertains to the treatment of information or data that an individual has disclosed in a relationship of trust with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others in ways that are inconsistent with the understanding of the original disclosure. Because accreditation sanctions are a sensitive issue and may create a negative institutional image to the public, confidentiality will be maintained with respect to the identities of the college and individual participants. No individual persons nor institutions will be identified by name in this study.
- The data resulting from participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In such cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you or your college with it, or with your participation in any study.

The records of this study will be stored securely and kept confidential. Authorized persons from The University of Texas at Austin and members of the Institutional Review Board have the legal right to review the research records and will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. All publications will exclude any information that will make it possible to identify you as a subject. Throughout the study, the primary investigator will notify me of new information that may become available and that might affect my decision to remain in the study.

Contacts and Questions:
If I have any questions about the study, I will direct them to the primary investigator:
Steven J. Reynolds
Office: (530) 938-5554
Cell: (530) 859-2757
Email: reynolds@siskiyous.edu

I understand that if I would like to obtain information about the research study, have questions, concerns, complaints or wish to discuss problems about a research study with someone unaffiliated with the study, I will contact the The University of Texas IRB Office at (512) 471-8871. Anonymity will be protected to the extent possible. As an alternative method of contact, an email may be sent to orsc@uts.cc.utexas.edu or a letter sent to IRB Administrator, P.O. Box 7426, Mail Code A 3200, Austin, TX 78713.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and have sufficient information to make a decision about

participating in this study. I consent to allow _____
                                                                                    name of college
to participate in the study.

Signature:_____ Date: _____

Print or type name:_____ Title: _____

251

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261

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