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East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

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by

Charles Keith Young

December 2010

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Dr. Catherine Glascock, Chair

Dr. Donald Good

Dr. Terrence Tollefson

Dr. Karen Tarnoff

ABSTRACT

Vital Collaboratives, Alliances, and Partnerships: A Search for Key Elements of an Effective

Public-Private Partnership

by

Charles Keith Young

Owing to the significant structural changes that have occurred in the global marketplace over the

past 2 decades, a corresponding increase of public-private partnerships have been established

among the business sector, local governments, and public community colleges. This qualitative

project sought to identify and substantiate key elements that may be common to the formation,

implementation, and maintenance stages of public-private partnerships. Who or what minimum

conditions are necessary to the successful navigation of each stage? What obstacles typically

arise during each stage, and how are they managed or circumvented? What sorts of benefits are

generated through these partnerships and what measures may be applied to determine whether a

partnership is meeting its mission objectives or not?

To investigate these elements, the researcher interviewed 18 key stakeholders directly involved

with 1 or more partnerships between 1 or more divisions of a community college located in

Tennessee (CCTN) and their respective for-profit private sector concerns. Data collected were

entered into the NVivo8 program for qualitative coding, analysis, and interpretation. Data

analysis suggested that visionary and innovative leadership was critical to the formation and

implementation of partnerships; key themes of "people," "training," "business," and "need"

influenced the life cycle of the partnership; persons identified as "champions" formed the

"critical mass" necessary to create and sustain partnerships; and both public and private sectors

implemented informal and formal assessments, but differences existed in how and what they measured to determine the efficacy of each partnership. By substantiating, uncovering, or affirming common elements relevant to the establishment and maintenance of public-private partnerships as described in existing literature and this study, partnership stakeholders may find additional perspectives that may assist and guide the creation, implementation, and assessment of effective, mutually-beneficial public-private partnerships.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my wife Mary, my children Katie, Andrew, and Ellen, and my parents John Charles and Reda Carol Young, whose love I cherish, whose respect I strive to earn, and whose patient encouragement motivated me to see this project to completion.

Thank you for being my "champions".

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Like public-private partnerships, a project of this magnitude had no chance of success without the "critical mass" of key individuals whose contributions, both large and small, were of utmost necessity. Although the present space is insufficient to enumerate them all, the record below is intended to recognize the most immediate contributors to this project.

First, my committee:

Dr. Catherine Glascock, my chair, whose calm leadership and insightful questioning helped me make this a much better project.

Dr. Don Good, for his editing acumen and his willingness to engage with me at this late stage;

Dr. Karen Tarnoff, for her laser beam focus upon excellence and accuracy;

Dr. Terrence Tollefson, for his inspired leadership and advocacy for the community college;

Dr. J. Chris Lefler, who inspired me to begin this journey and supported me throughout this project, even though he warned me not to do a qualitative study. (Sorry, boss)

Finally, my deep appreciation goes to all the interviewees who cordially provided assistance through numerous organizations and institutions and who gave freely of their time in support of this project. Their warm assistance and priceless candor far informed this study far beyond my expectations. I wish all of you the greatest success in all your partnerships.

Please accept my heartfelt gratitude for all you have done to make this a worthwhile and enlightening study.

C. Keith Young

December 2010

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Context Setting and History of the Issue

> Everybody has accepted by now that 'change is unavoidable'. But that still implies that change is like 'death and taxes': it should be postponed as long as possible and no change would be vastly preferable. But in a period of upheaval, such as the one we are living in, change is the norm. – Peter Drucker, *Management Challenges for the 21st Century*, p. 62

In the 1940s a popular light novel introduced a craftsman whose beloved home country was shattered by World War I. To survive he and his family managed to immigrate to the United States, arriving with little more than the clothes on their backs. To his dismay the craftsman finds his once-revered skills at sword-making and hand-crafted riding crops utterly unappreciated in his new country. The remainder of the novel details a series of innocent, but comical cultural missteps, "Forrest Gump" style, at each attempt to find work, adapt to his new home, and provide for his family (Papashvily & Papashvily, 1945).

Although the above storyline formed the basis of much humorous writing in response to the vast numbers of immigrants flooding into the United States and the cross-cultural conflicts that ensued during the first half of the last century, it is no laughing matter to many workers who have found their skills and knowledge becoming as obsolete with each succeeding year as the sword-maker did in his day (ASTD Public Policy Council, 2006; Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006). Not since the great Industrial Revolution and ever-increasing mechanization of manual labor have so many manufacturers, small businesses, employers, and employees struggled to adapt to the rapid changes in technology. This unrelenting upheaval in the workforce threatens to make America's dominance in research and innovation as irrelevant and unsustainable as the independent family farm of today (Achieve, Inc., 2007; Fitzpatrick, 2007; Jehl, 2007).

Numerous reports over the past 15 years have pointed to an array of global and societal trends that have contributed to an erosion of America's standing as a nation of innovators and thinkers (Carnevale & Desrochers, 2004; Uhalde, Strohl & Simkins, 2006). The "Boomer" generation born between the years of 1946-1964 is reaching retirement age in unprecedented numbers. Concurrently, fewer qualified workers have risen through the ranks to replace these influential Americans (Gates testimony before Senate panel, 2007; The Conference Board, 2008). Since the mid-1980s America's higher education system has produced fewer graduates annually as a percentage of its overall population in technical fields such as math, engineering, and science, while many other industrialized nations have graduated more students with these skills (Gates testimony before Senate panel, 2007; Educational Testing Service, 2006; United States Department of Labor, 2007). Consequently, fewer domestic graduates possessed current teaching credentials in technical fields, forcing many secondary school systems to place lesser-qualified instructors before smaller classes of students. This circumstance has exacerbated a broadening lag in technical skills across the nation, further intensified within locales dominated by minority populations (Callan & Cherry, 2006; U. S. Chamber of Commerce, 2007). Consequently, some studies have suggested the nation could experience a shortage of 10 to 14 million qualified workers by 2010 (ASTD Public Policy Council, 2006; Business-Higher Education Forum, 1997).

Furthermore, advances in industrial manufacturing processes have continued to eliminate low-skill, labor-intensive jobs; the jobs that remain demand increasing familiarity and expertise in complex, technical skills to pay a living wage (Atkinson & Wial, 2008; Business Roundtable, 2005). Due to the broad technological shift in the workplace that has occurred over the past 15 years, a high school diploma no longer provides adequate entry credentials for most of the jobs

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being created (Business-Higher Education Forum, 2003; Jacobs & Voorhees, 2006). Facing a shortage of technically trained labor, domestic companies have been forced to rely on imported, skilled workers--a labor pool very difficult to secure due to the scarce supply of visas as a consequence of the 9-11 attacks (ASTD Public Policy Council, 2006; United States Department of Labor, 2007). As a result, more than 80% of leading manufacturers reported a significant shortage of adequately trained workers (Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006; National Association of Manufacturers, 2005). Economists have suggested these pressures will increase in the foreseeable future as the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) economies continue expanding, some at double-digit rates (Business Roundtable, 2005; Carnevale and Desrochers, 2004; Lai, 2007; Lederer, 2007; Uhalde et al., 2006).

How is the American society to cope effectively with these challenges and prosper in the "brave new knowledge economy"? Numerous studies have suggested that America must now compete more vigorously and strategically than ever for its share of the global market (Dawson, 2005; National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007; National Governor's Association, 2007; Uhalde et al., 2006). The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturing, the Business-Higher Education Forum, the American Council on Education, and many other groups have released reports over the past decade that consistently pointed to the necessity of increased business/higher education collaborations to improve the baseline skills of the American workforce (Business-Higher Education Forum, 2001; Business-Higher Education Forum, 2002). Unfortunately, due to the historically differing missions of public and private institutions, these alliances have been strained via numerous misunderstandings and divergent expectations (Business-Higher Education Forum, 2001; Kisner, Mazza, & Liggett, 1997; Smith, 2003). This inherent mismatch has made for uneasy relationships over the last 2 decades between

private industry and public institutions of higher education, relationships that have been lauded and criticized by members of both types of organizations (Bailey, 2000; Business-Higher Education Forum, 1997; Fitzpatrick, 2007; Johnson, 1996; Krimsky, Campbell, & Blumenthal, 1999). Despite these difficulties, business leaders, policy makers, and educators from around the United States have indicated that public-private partnerships may play a valuable role in securing the nation's place in the global marketplace (National Council for Public-Private Partnerships, 2003; National Science and Technology Council, 1999; Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2005).

<div align="center">Statement of the Problem</div>

This study investigated and identified key factors that have been common to the experience of a community college in Tennessee and private-sector enterprise when entering into and maintaining public-private partnerships (Aydin, 2006; Jacobs & Voorhees, 2006). Critical to this study was the participation of a public community college that had an adequate range and quantity of partnerships with which to compare to data reported in currently available literature. The researcher studied a mature community college institution that had a relatively extensive history of participation in a number of public-private partnerships.

The researcher received permission to conduct this study under the request to preserve anonymity. Therefore, descriptions of the community college and its personnel have been generalized. The community college in Tennessee (CCTN) was initially organized as a technical institute, offering technical Associate of Science and Associate of Education degrees and certificates. Less than 13 years later, the Tennessee General Assembly enacted a bill that broadened the school's mission to offer courses suitable for transfer to 4-year universities and to improve access to higher-education programming and services to citizens residing in its multi-

county service area and a limited number of bordering counties in neighboring states. According to a recent catalog and handbook published by the institution of record, the college developed and maintained its partnerships through a continuing education center. The college, through this center, promoted its capacity to provide educational programming tailored to the needs of local business, industry, and governmental agencies. This close cooperation with the private sector for the past 2 decades suggested the continuing education center of CCTN was an appropriate choice for the study for how it initiated, implemented, and maintained various public-private partnerships.

Scope of the Study

This study used a qualitative approach, performing a case study analysis drawn from qualified human participants. Eligible interviewees were required to have direct participation in, and to be capable of speaking in detail of the activities most relevant to the formation and operation of one or more public-private partnerships. A convenience sample of three partnerships -- one that had been in existence for a minimum of 10 years, one that had recently been launched, and one that, for any number of reasons, was no longer operational – was used in an effort to uncover key elements common to successful public-private partnerships between a Tennessee community college and its private sector counterparts. Identification of these partnerships was at the direction and assistance of key CCTN administrators most closely involved with such partnerships including, but not limited to, personnel employed with the continuing education center and its respective private-sector partners. Particular attention was directed to the conversations led by key stakeholders that resulted in securing public and private sector support sufficient to fund specifically defined training and certification programs. Most germane to the research questions were the persons and their respective efforts required to create

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and sustain multi-agency partnerships for the purpose of meeting a mutually identified workforce need.

<div align="center">Research Questions</div>

The following four questions provided direction for the study as the researcher investigated those factors that occurred most frequently during the three stages of a public-private partnership:

1. Who or what initiated the conversation regarding the establishment of the public-private training programs begun in CCTN's service area?

2. Which factors were most frequently present that influenced the progress, positive or negative, of the conversation during each stage?

3. Who were the minimum necessary partners (the critical mass) who supported and sustained each partnership through each stage?

4. Which measures were employed to determine the efficacy of the partnership from implementation to its current status?

<div align="center">Significance of the Study</div>

Although much has been written in support of university-industrial research partnerships, there exists a relative paucity of literature formally investigating the role of community colleges in local economic development partnerships (Spangler, 2002). One reason may be the relatively small number of community colleges that had any sort of formal partnership agreement in force with a private sector partner at the beginning of the 1990s (Kisker & Carducci, 2003). When that number ballooned to more than 90% of community colleges becoming involved in public-private partnerships by mid-decade, much of the literature remained largely anecdotal, lacking consistent measures whereby one might objectively ascertain how a partnership was created, and whether it

was beneficial or effective in attaining its stated goals (Kisker & Carducci, 2003; Roueche, Tabor, & Roueche, 1995; Spangler, 2002). Furthermore, the proprietary and occasionally informal nature of partnerships between the community college and private business sectors has created formidable obstacles against specifying principles that are readily applicable to similar higher education institutions (Spangler, 2002).

As a result of the above circumstances, my intent in this study was to procure data that may better inform higher education administrators seeking to more efficiently and effectively leverage shrinking resources and to fulfill their institutional obligations to their respective constituencies. By drawing on the experiences and practices described by this study, administrators may be better empowered to create and maintain more responsive and responsible, mutually beneficial partnerships with the private sector. Local government officials may better understand how public-private partnerships might be applied to attract and retain skilled labor in their communities. A better informed citizenry may better engage with politicians, educators, and business owners to influence and support formal and informal partnership efforts. Business owners may better leverage collaborative efforts with higher education institutions to increase an available, skilled labor pool, retain and develop productive talent, and improve operational efficiencies for greater profitability, sustainability, and competitiveness.

<div align="center">Definition of Terms</div>

Institutional Effectiveness describes the methods and types of measures an institution uses to determine how well its personnel, departments, and the institution is supporting or conforming to its stated mission, vision, and strategic goals.

Member Check describes a practice in qualitative research to improve reliability of interview data by permitting an interviewee to review his/her interview transcript to correct errors, make emendations, or to insert further elaboration of data prior to its formal analysis by the investigator(s).

Public-Private Partnership, for the purpose of this investigation, describes a voluntary, mutually beneficial formal relationship between a publicly-funded institution (e.g., public community college) and a privately owned, for-profit business concern that may or may not have exercised previous formal or informal contractual agreements between the two entities, also known as University-Industry Alliances, Collaboratives, Cooperatives, or Academic-Industrial Relations.

<div align="center">Delimitation and Limitations</div>

This study was focused upon the practices and policies of a publicly funded community college organized in Tennessee. As such, the policies and practices discussed were limited to a single 2-year, public educational institution bounded by the policies and authority of its governing board, the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR). Practices and opinions discussed were not necessarily applicable to private higher-education institutions, institutions that award baccalaureate degrees or higher, or small business concerns employing fewer than 50 individuals. CCTN is located in a growing metropolitan area of Tennessee, an area that has been recognized multiple times nationally for providing a superior quality of life for its citizens and has been the subject of other economic development studies (Chessin & Rubin, 2002; Executive Summary: Locational audit…., 2002).

The predominant portion of the interview pool was limited to CCTN and private-sector administrators, instructors, trainers, private-sector employees, former and current students who

received training in one or more of the targeted programs. Per Babbie (2004), interview practices

followed a "snowball" approach whereby initial interviews were conducted with readily

available and willing, qualified participants. An essential component of each interview was the

request for recommendations from the interviewee for other qualified candidates to be contacted

by the researcher for subsequent interviews. Data gathering continued until redundancy of

information became apparent. In addition, available meeting minutes, news reports, CCTN

school policies, and state and local legislation relevant to the partnerships studied were sought to

corroborate and inform the research findings. Likewise, relevant committee meetings related to

the operation and maintenance of each partnership were attempted to be observed. Attendance of

active classes or training sessions and local economic development board meetings were

requested when suitable discussions were on the agenda. To ensure the reliability and accuracy

of the data collection and analysis process, multiple peer reviews, member checks, and

independent audits were conducted during the course of the investigation.

<p align="center">Overview of the Study</p>

This case study is organized and presented in five chapters.

- Chapter 1 introduces the problem and provided background information on public-private partnerships between higher education institutions and private-sector businesses. Significant terms used throughout the study are defined and an overview of the case study is given.

- Chapter 2 presents a review of the related literature and develops the basis to support this research project.

- Chapter 3 provides an explanation of the methods and procedures of investigation used during research.

- Chapter 4 presents the results of the research and an analysis of the case study.

- Chapter 5 offers a summary of relevant findings, conclusions of the case study, and makes recommendations for future research to improve practice.

<div align="center">Chapter Summary</div>

Chapter 1 introduces a discussion of relatively recent global and societal trends that have challenged the relevance of American worker's skill sets and the viability of its manufacturing sector. These trends have introduced rapid and comprehensive changes that have incentivized private sector organizations and public higher education institutions to form cooperative partnerships at an unprecedented rate. However, the differing missions and structure of the two organizations have also made creating and maintaining these types of collaboratives very difficult and tenuous. This study has been designed to elicit data that may provide guidance to community college administrators and their respective private sector counterparts to better create or maintain similar partnerships. A qualitative approach using a community college in Tennessee and its private sector partners was chosen to inform this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Essentially, if Americans want to live well, Americans must produce well….The key to America's economic future is to better educate students and train existing workers to compete successfully in tomorrow's world of work. (Zeiss, 1997, p.1)

Despite their relatively brief history, community colleges have become major players in local workforce development activities (Ingram, 1999). They have exerted influence through their unique missions, convenient geographic positioning, relatively low barriers to entry, and significant support services through various collaborative initiatives (Ayers, 2002; Cohen & Brawer 2003; Jacobs & Voorhees, 2006; Spangler, 2002). The researcher sought to investigate various public-private ventures that have developed over the last decade between CCTN and local private business concerns to determine if the primary characteristics detailed by Spangler (2002) and others as perceived by college administrators, private corporation executives, faculty, students, and employees appeared as common elements of public-private ventures.

This chapter investigates literature relevant to the formation and operation of public-private partnerships involving higher education institutions and private sector, for-profit organizations. Research indicated several factors, both foreign and domestic, that influenced higher education and private business policies and practices to create the types of community college public-private partnerships in operation today. A brief history of public-private partnerships involving higher education institutions is presented, followed by a discussion of the major influences that have compelled two divergent types of organizations (public higher education and private-sector commercial enterprises) to enter into cooperative agreements. The final portion of this chapter discusses common elements that have been identified as relevant to public-private partnerships. A discussion of these elements forms the basis for this project.

General Context Literature

The types of partnerships created between universities and private commerce during the years of colonial America greatly influenced the unique partnerships that currently exist between the public community college and the private sector (Lee, 1998). Although the earliest schools in the colonies were privately controlled and sectarian in nature, early academies supported by notables such as Benjamin Franklin, undergirded by John Locke's theories and Comenius' writings, paved the way for vocational, practical training of citizens (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2003). Early writers underscored the notion that the surest route to advancement and achievement in American society would always be attained through higher education studies (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2003). Universities were expected to conduct research with a practical application of the data solidly in view (Lee, 1998).

Anderson (2001) estimated that at least one third to more than one half of all technological advances came as a direct result of higher education institutions responding to industry's needs during the early- to mid-17th century. The land grant acts in the mid-1800s provided impetus for a loose framework of public-private ventures, fueling the establishment of numerous colleges and universities (Anderson, 2001; Cohen & Brawer, 2003). The Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 instituted funding for research and training in "agriculture and the mechanic arts" (National Science and Technology Council, 1999; Witt, Wattenbarger, Gollatscheck, & Suppiger, 1994). After the Civil War to the turn of the century, additional federal and state legislation provided various "carrot and stick" incentives to establish institutions to equip workers for the "new economy" of the Industrial Age, as American society transitioned rapidly from an agrarian society to one based on the mechanization of labor (Anderson, 2001).

The concept of the "junior college" emerged as a viable alternative for those who could not meet rigid university entrance requirements (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Witt et al., 1994). As waves of immigrants and bankrupt farmers swelled city populations, the need for expanded educational opportunity and the social mobility it promised intensified beyond the capacity of baccalaureate institutions to accept more students, many of whom were underprepared for rigorous, higher-level studies (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2003). However, academic leaders such as William Rainey Harper, the first president of the University of Chicago, and David Starr Jordan, the president of Stanford, promoted junior colleges only as extensions of the current secondary school movement or to provide collegiate-level instruction equivalent to the first 2 years of the university's general education programming; another 40 years passed before the vocational mission of contemporary community colleges found broad acceptance in communities and their school boards (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

By the 1920s a philosophical distinction began to develop between the public and private sectors (Hood & Rubin, 2004; Orr, 2001). In contrast to their earlier mission of combining the discovery of knowledge with immediate and practical application in colonial America, more and more university researchers apparently began to focus their mission as creator or discoverer of knowledge through rigorous research, while becoming insulated from the "distraction" of finding profitable uses for the knowledge thus discovered (Bosley, 1995; Branscomb, 1999; Lee, 1998). With the exception of pharmaceutical companies, very little cooperation existed between the corporate world and research institutions over the next 4 decades (Anderson, 2001). Over time, a perception of a "great divide" became established: the research institution's primary mission was to prepare students to research and publish new knowledge; private business's primary mission

was to discover marketable value contained within this new knowledge and convert it into profitable enterprises (Business-Higher Education Forum, 2001; Fassin, 2000).

As the world economy gradually recovered from the catastrophe of World War II, two events dramatically altered the American academic and business landscape. First, the GI Bill of Rights (also known as Servicemen's Readjustment Act), signed into law in 1944, made it possible for thousands of young men and women to afford going to college in preparation for the then nascent technological boom in electronics and mainframe computing fostered by modern warfare (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2003; Witt et al., 1994). Second, the Truman Commission on Higher Education of 1947 set the stage for intense involvement of the federal government in the creation and funding of community colleges, spurred on by the appearance of Sputnik a decade later at the peak of the Cold War era (Business Roundtable, 2005; Cohen & Brawer, 2003). State and federal legislation that followed funded the construction of hundreds of community college campus buildings and provided grants and low-interest loans to encourage more citizens to continue training beyond secondary education (Lee, 1998; Wang, 2004). While the nation set about building classrooms and sending more people to postsecondary schooling, the net effect of this intense federal involvement altered the national academic landscape in favor of publicly supported colleges and universities (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Consequently, 2-year private colleges, unable to compete with low-cost, federally-funded alternatives of public education, sharply narrowed their curriculum, converted to baccalaureate-degree institutions, or shut down entirely (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Witt et al., 1994).

As global competition intensified during the late 1970s, members of the America's business sector began to pressure government to come up with ways to bring more ideas out of the "ivory tower" of research institutions and into the hands of marketers and business scientists

(Branscomb, 1999; Coburn, 1989; Fassin, 2000). Numerous voices from the business world complained about the indifferent isolationism of the research university and the apparent lack of adequate preparation of students for the "real world" of work (Institute for a Competitive Workforce, 2008; National Association of Manufacturers, 2005; Shore, 2005). The passage of the 1980 Bayh-Dole Act and the 1980 Stevenson-Wydler Act paved the way for research universities to profit from research through enhanced patent protection and, at the same time, created means whereby private businesses could more efficiently engage with public institutions in the transfer of technological knowledge and innovation (Bosley, 1995; Lee, 1998; Wang, 2004).

The 1990s saw an unprecedented expansion of collaborative enterprises and associations between the public and private sectors as each entity sought to fulfill its respective mission (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Smith, 2003). For example, in the decade prior to the legislation mentioned above, research institutions produced approximately 250 patents total per annum; by 1998, that number had ballooned to over 4,800 per year (Anderson, 2001). In 1976 fewer than 20 institutions reported having technical communication programs; by the mid-1980s that number had jumped to more than 100 (Bosley, 1995). By 1990 more than 1,000 cooperatives existed at 200 universities, with more than $4 billion invested (Cyert & Goodman, 1997). This tremendous investment resulted in a flow of licensing income to universities of more than $17 billion in 1994 alone (Lee, 1998).

Thus far this discussion has focused primarily on the relationships between public universities and the private sector because that is where the majority of literature has focused; formal studies of the community college partnership as a distinct category in the literature are lacking (Spangler, 2002). Perhaps this is due to the relative recency of the community college's

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existence in American society (Spangler, 2002). According to Kisker and Carducci (2003),

formally established collaboratives between community college institutions and private

businesses or industry made up a small percentage of instructional programming at the outset of

the 1990s. However, by the middle of that decade almost 90% of America's community colleges

had established or were actively engaged in the process of entering such partnerships. Observers

of this sharp rise in activity and engagement have presented several key arguments for and

against public-private partnerships.

<u>Arguments For and Against Public-Private Partnerships</u>

Due to more focused federal appropriations and increased globalization of market

competition, a significant number of public and private institutions have been strongly

influenced, despite their misgivings, to attempt a public-private partnership (Anderson, 2001;

Shore, 2005). Cyert and Goodman (1997) pointed to four key rationales under which public-

private alliances developed. First, alliances were perceived as key to accelerated pathways to

better patents, products, and licenses. Second, the dual convergence of increased global

competition and shrinking federal and state funding compelled the two parties to work together

to develop better processes and a better, more productive workforce. Third, with each new

partnership attempt, new ways of deriving additional benefits were sought and often realized.

Finally, existing federal programs and policies supported and rewarded efforts to form

partnerships. Bosley (1995) also suggested that successful cooperative efforts demonstrated

significant potential to generate innovative learning methods and styles that better prepared

students for the workplace.

According to *Working Together, Creating Knowledge* (Business-Higher Education

Forum, 2001) cross-pollination of industrial methods and higher education research practices

may result in more effective hiring and training policies and practices in both types of institutions. Instead of plodding along in a passive, unsupervised, tuition reimbursement program, business and industry began to engage with higher education institutions to develop customized curricula in concert with the corporation's strategic priorities so that training dollars might yield employees skilled in those areas essential to the business or industry (Fischer, 2008; Meister, 1998). For example, the Thomas Edison Program, created in 1984 in Ohio, established a $250 million partnership technology program in support of public university and private business technology research and information transfer. Founded by a state appropriation in excess of $32 million, the program operated three entities: one was a grant foundation to provide startup funding for new businesses; another was a formalized business incubator foundation; and the third component was a cooperative of nine technology training centers located strategically throughout the state (Coburn, 1989). Meister (1998) reported customized education programs for mid- and upper-level management executives that earned higher-education institutions more than $3 billion annual income. Those direct training programs, organized in close association with targeted industries, allowed educational institutions to develop curriculum and support services that brought better trained employees into the workforce. These enhanced employees' skill sets made them more valuable to companies competing in the global marketplace.

However, the flurry of cooperative programs initiated by public and private institutions in a relatively condensed time span spawned numerous problems. Structurally, the mission of the research university had become that of creator and publisher of knowledge and the training of insightful researchers irrespective of market value and time-to-market constraints (Krimsky et al., 1999). Businesses, however, were focused on the creation of wealth by tight controls upon proprietary knowledge and first-to-market advantage (Anderson, 2001). Consequently,

according to Cyert and Goodman (1997) such partnerships failed to provide measurable benefits to either party due to the vast differences in their respective organizational cultures, products, and services and negative economic cycles.

With respect to the legislation passed in the early 1990s, some legislators argued that providing public funding to institutions of higher education and granting them the right to license their discoveries to private business and manufacturing concerns was equated to an unethical form of an indirect corporate welfare program (Anderson, 2001). Proponents of the bills countered that the unavoidable reduction of federal funding to higher education could be more than offset by such licensing agreements, and incentivizing progressive solutions towards improving the global competitiveness of American businesses (Anderson, 2001; Lee, 1998). Branscomb (1999) referred to this argument as a "third way": to recognize the need of researchers to freely investigate phenomena and provide an acceptable degree of accountability to legislators and their constituents who demand measurable returns on taxpayers' dollars invested.

Another contributor to private-public friction was the patent process itself (Ghere, 2001). Current patent law required that an inventor publish his or her idea to a degree sufficient so that it could be proven that the idea is truly innovative. This made little impact on a research university whose priority was on publishing findings, but for a business, such publishing surrendered a critical competitive advantage in the marketplace. Particularly in the high-stakes pharmaceuticals market, many millions of dollars and multiple years invested in research, field testing, and certification of a single medication can be lost if too much information is leaked to the public prematurely (Anderson, 2001). According to Anderson, "only one in ten patentable discoveries will make enough money to cover the costs of filing for the patent, and only one in

one thousand will make substantial returns" (n.p.). With the ratio so biased against profitability except in a small portion of endeavors, contracts must be crafted to make the risk-reward formula worth the attempt for both parties. Does the faculty member who developed the idea or the industry that underwrote the equipment have an indisputable claim? Does the institution that arranged the contract, provided office space, and subsidized the paycheck for the research faculty member have a superior claim or a proportional one? Recent developments in human resource policies and procedures have addressed many of these concerns, but pitfalls abound if expectations are not clearly documented at the outset ("Who owns patent rights…", 2001).

Within university divisions human resource conflicts developed regarding conflict of interest issues (Lee, 1998). Many research faculty and administrators resisted any increase in the involvement of industry, citing undue influence on selecting which projects received funding, administrative support, or both (Blumenstyk, 2004; Cyert & Goodman, 1997). With respect to issues of tenure and publication, some faculty expressed frustration between industry's demands for secrecy and the faculty member's obligation to publish research results in order to achieve tenure (Anderson, 2001). The University of California at Berkley's recently concluded partnership with Novartis on genetically altered crops created a public relations fallout against the University when popular opinion swung strongly against the use of such crops as a food source (Blumenstyk, 2004). In addition, when a person left an industry to either teach or perform research in a higher education setting for any appreciable length of time, "safety net" policies might not exist to permit that individual to go back into his or her original field of work at the end of his or her teaching post (Bosley, 1995). Although corporations and higher education institutions have continued to pursue partnerships of all types, the above caveats raise numerous

questions that must be answered at the outset to avoid unnecessary conflicts, misplaced expectations, and potentially expensive and embarrassing legal actions.

<div style="text-align:center">Globalization's Influence upon American Public and Private Sectors</div>

Aided by a fortunate mix of progressive policies, the United States economy benefited from the mass-production model and immigration-fueled innovation during the first several decades of the 20th century (Gates testimony before Senate panel, 2007; Marshall, 2000; National Center on Education and the Economy, 1990). In the last half of the 20th century, however, American society experienced exponential advances in telecommunication technology and saw the rise of globalization due to an unprecedented degree of interwoven, multi-national economies (Globalization, 2009; National Center on Education and the Economy, 2006; Rothenberg, 2003). Globalization's current influence upon American society may also be viewed as a world-wide convergence of rapid advances in communication technology, international distribution of manufacturing processes, and increased competition from foreign economies, exacerbated by the impending mass retirement of the Baby Boom generation birthed after the Second World War (Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006; Kinzie et al., 2004; National Association of Manufacturers, 2005; National Governor's Association, 2007; Russell, 2007). Combined, these forces eroded America's mass-production, large-scale, labor-intensive economy, shifting jobs to lower-overhead foreign shores or eliminating other jobs through advances in robotics and improved, lean-manufacturing processes (ASTD Public Policy Council, 2006; Marshall, 2000; National Academy of Sciences, 2004; National Center on Education and the Economy, 1990; National Governor's Association, 2007). These sweeping changes in American society impacted both the public and private sectors in numerous ways.

Kirsch, Braun, Yamamoto, and Sum (2007) summarized a series of reports that discussed the ailments and possible cures for the American educational system. Although the United States led all other foreign countries in the amount of money it spent on its K-12 students, numerous studies suggested the return on investment was marginal at best (Kirsch et al., 2007). Of 29 countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) comparison study, United States youth scored near the median in reading but fell to the lowest third or quartile group in math and science (Kirsch et al., 2007; National Association of Manufacturers, 2005). Unfortunately, America's youth led in one indicator among OECD countries: American students had the widest gap between the highest and lowest scoring students, an inequity that, if permitted to continue unchecked, may negatively impact American culture in the near future (Kirsch et al., 2007).

The controversy about whether America's schools were properly educating its youth has been a long-standing one (Pulliam & Van Patten, 2003). *A Nation at Risk* (1983) correlated American's slumping economic standing with increasing doubts regarding the efficacy of the American public education system, particularly, though not exclusively, in grades K-12 (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Pulliam & Van Patten, 2003). Per the study's authors, *A Nation at Risk* (1983) presented statistical evidence suggested a strong correlation between a multi-year trend of falling achievement test scores among American high school students in comparison with the increasing scores of their international counterparts (National Commission ...,1983). Beyond elementary and secondary education, the report highlighted a sharp increase of remedial education courses in higher education and in private businesses that comprised ever larger portions of college enrollments and corporate budget expenditures (National Commission ..., 1983). Furthermore, technological advances in

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computing across a broad swath of professions created significant shifts in the types of skills and knowledge base expected from an average worker; the report's data pointed out that the current American educational system simply was not requiring enough of its students or teachers. Recommendations focused upon better teachers, better systems, better textbooks and educational technology, higher expectations for student achievement, an expectation of lifelong learning, and increased levels of funding and accountability for the results. Pulliam and Van Patten (2003) listed nearly 30 reports that were published in the months after the publication of *A Nation at Risk* either arguing for or against the data sources, claims, and recommendations.

   America's Perfect Storm (Kirsch et al., 2007) described how globalization's impact upon American society influenced public-private partnerships among American businesses and higher education institutions (ASTD Public Policy Council, 2006; Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 2005; Johnson, 1996; Zeiss, 2000). The report, which is summarized below, presented a three-pronged convergence of primary forces: the outmoded skill sets of the working-age population, a rapidly changing job market, and a tidal shift in the demographic structure of American society.

Outmoded Skill Sets

   A number of recent studies have described a "skills gap" between skill sets graduates fresh from high school possess and those that contemporary business and industry workplaces need in order to effectively compete in today's globalized market (Achieve, Inc., 2008; Institute for a Competitive Workforce, 2008; National Association of Manufacturers, 2005). According to the ASTD Public Policy Council (2006) this skills gap is attributable to four key trends: the changing nature of workplace requirements, the inability of the educational system to keep up with the rate of change in workplace requirements, a significant decrease in the number of

workers to replace retirees, and the private sector's insufficient support and ineffective allocation of professional development programming. *America's Perfect Storm* (Kirsch et al., 2007) also noted that the adult population from whom most of the workforce was drawn was having difficulty maintaining relevance in the continually rising level of communication and mathematical skills required to remain productive on the job and employable when searching for a job. Referencing numerous large-scale studies, the authors stated "although few of these adults could be considered illiterate in the historical meaning of the term, only a small percentage were judged to have the skills needed to fully participate in an increasingly complex society" (p. 12). When the general population of eligible workers was broken down along racial lines, the picture grew even starker. The authors pointed to the findings of the Adult Literacy and Life Skills survey (ALLS) that indicated that "Black, Hispanic and Asian adults are significantly more likely to perform in the lowest level on the prose scale when compared with White adults" (p. 13). The authors asserted the lack of proficiency in general communication skills could result in a growing imbalance: adults who scored on the highest prose score level were shown to bring home earnings more than two and a half times that of adults who scored on the lowest level [in 1992]. The presence of this gap in opportunity and earnings was expected to increase over time (Kirsch et al., 2007). The ASTD Public Policy Council (2006) reported that employers cited significant difficulty in locating workers with sufficient fundamental literacy skills in math, reading, and, writing; technical skills appropriate to the industrial setting; capability to work in a team-oriented setting and leadership skills; and "soft skills" such as emotional awareness, personal integrity, and understanding of others' emotional states (p. 6). Much of the blame, per the authors, was due to an inefficient and increasingly ineffective system of education (ASTD Public Policy Council, 2006).

At its peak the United States graduated fully one-third of the world's supply of college graduates; however, countries such as India and China exploited the advantage of rapidly increasing populations that were many times larger than the United States by investing heavily in engineering and computer science higher-education programs (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007). By comparison America's proportion of graduates holding advanced degrees declined to less than 15% of the general population (Gates testimony before Senate panel, 2007; Malcolm, Chubin, & Jessee, 2007; National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007). Despite heavy investments of capital and increased accountability through *No Child Left Behind* statutes, the American public remained dubious about how well school systems were serving our youth, especially in the areas of math and science, fields of study closely related to the rapid changes in the modern workplace (Education Testing Service, 2006; Gates testimony before Senate panel, 2007; Vanderkam, 2009). Contending that the current American education system was "built for a different era" when the most basic education was sufficient to land a job and earn a living, the authors agreed that pouring more dollars into the current system was not expected to generate the types of workers the new economy required. They also urged changes in the education system both in terms of content taught and preparation methods in order to effectively compete in a globalized marketplace (Institute for a Competitive Workforce, 2008; National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007). Noting that 90% of America's new jobs were expected to require a year or more of higher education training, the authors also called for the establishment of a system of education that not only produced graduates but also produced graduates capable of productive work upon graduation (Institute for a Competitive Workforce, 2008; The Conference Board, 2008). The *Tough Choices or Tough Times* (2007) report directed its focus upon the types of job skills required for future workers now that corporations, large and

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small, were compelled to rapidly change the way they do business in the global marketplace (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007). To the same degree that electronic communications technology has altered the way that businesses must compete against everyone else across the globe, business leaders stated that education must also change what and how it taught students. Describing the worker of the future, the authors asserted:

> …[s]trong skills in English, mathematics, technology and science, as well as literature, history and the arts will be essential for many; beyond this, candidates will have to be comfortable with ideas and abstractions, good at both analysis and synthesis, creative and innovative, self-disciplined and well organized, able to learn very quickly and work well as a member of a team and have the flexibility to adapt quickly to frequent changes in the labor market as the shifts in the economy become ever faster and more dramatic. (p. 8)

Furthermore, the speed of change in the workplace is such that job skill sets once learned are likely to become irrelevant and outmoded in as little as 2 to 5 years (ASTD Public Policy Council, 2006). Such forces have created a high demand for employees capable of dealing with constant retraining and retooling their skill sets (ASTD Public Policy Council, 2006). Per Zeiss (1997), "Today's workers need to be proficient learners, knowledgeable, skilled, and communicative as never before" (p. 3).

Work and Workforce Training

In the late 1960s more than half the gross domestic product (GDP) of the United States came through the manufacture of physical goods and services (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008). By the 1990s information-based products and services made up nearly two thirds of the GDP (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008). In the period between 1995 and 2005 the American economy shed more than three million manufacturing jobs, while adding more than 17 million service-sector jobs (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008). *America's Perfect Storm: Three Forces changing our Nation's Future* (2008) states that at its peak in 1950 industry

contributed nearly one third of all employment in the United States; by 2003 that percentage had dropped to less than 11% (Kirsch et al., 2008). One writer went so far as to suggest that blue-collar jobs would cease to exist by the year 2025 (Rifkin, as cited in Zeiss, 1997).

Work, according to the writers of *Tough Choices: Tough Times* had been dramatically influenced by digital computing and the ubiquitous world-wide web (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007). For the first half of the 20th century material procurement, marketing, engineering, and packaging were with rare exceptions contained under one roof or in various divisions located within our national borders (National Center on Education and the Economy, 1990; National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007). Efficiency experts used time-and-motion studies to reduce the assembly of a product into discrete steps, each step performed by a specialist, and each specialist supervised by multiple levels of management personnel (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007). Aided by advances in telecommunications technologies, the new business model featured the deconstruction of the traditional, vertical, command-and-control form of the organizational governance into one where corporations could realize larger profits through "bidding out" engineering, marketing, shipping and production of various components to specialists with the appropriate expertise and a good Internet connection located somewhere beyond American borders. As advances in technology increased, organizations became "flatter," with fewer levels of supervision and line workers assuming decision-making roles formerly reserved for supervisors (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008). Computerization of the workplace has continually replaced jobs comprised of repetitive tasks while at the same time empowering workers engaged in innovative, nonroutine tasks requiring higher-order, abstract reasoning and decision making

skills (National Center on Education and the Economy, 2007; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008).

Even upper level management must upgrade to new leadership skill sets (Caldwell, 2003). Instead of making all the decisions and handing them down the line as in days past, new-generation leaders must learn and exercise collaborative skill sets, training lower level workers to assume more responsibility, and delegating decision making authority across lower levels throughout their division. At the same time they must engage greater numbers of workers in the planning and execution of workloads and production goals in order to develop nimble responses to rapid shifts in their respective markets.

Compounding the reduction in business sector's supply of skilled labor was the broad-ranging shift in the demographics of American society (Kirsch et al., 2007). Overall, the United States' population is predicted to grow more slowly over the next 20 years than in earlier periods. At the same time members of the post-World War II "Baby Boom" generation – representing nearly 40% of workers in the American workforce – will reach retirement age (ASTD Public Policy Council, 2006). Combined with the expected drop in population growth rates, the number of employees in the 35-44 age range that represents those who should be entering upper level managerial positions is expected to drop by 10% (ASTD Public Policy Council, 2006). While the American population is expected to grow, approximately half of that growth is predicted to come from nonnative ethnic groups (Kirsch et al., 2007). If present trends continue, by 2042 more than half of the United States' population will consist of nonnative minority groups (Callen & Cherry, 2006; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2008). Although diversity has its advantages, the net effect of this rapid influx suggests a plateau effect, essentially flattening out educational attainment (Kirsch et al., 2007). Recent studies indicated

nonnative immigrants have been significantly less likely to earn a high-school diploma (ASTD Public Policy Council, 2006; The Conference Board, 2008; Kirsch et al., 2007). If as many as 85% of jobs in the workplace are expected to require successful completion of studies beyond secondary education, as some researchers have suggested, this combination of lowered educational attainment levels and higher standards for entry into the workforce has threatened to create a sharply divided society of "haves" and "have-nots" (Kirsch et al., 2007). Consequently, American corporations will likely experience significant difficulty replacing their most highly skilled workers as they retire unless significant changes are made in the education system to improve educational attainment in nonwhite immigrant populations, (Callen & Cherry, 2006; Kirsch et al., 2007). The factors cited thus far (the skills gap, lagging educational attainment, and fewer individuals entering into the workforce) suggest a potentially significant drop in future productivity and personal incomes. These and similar predictions draw a stark, undesirable future for the overall American economy (Dawson, 2005).

<div align="center">Types of Partnerships</div>

A review of the literature revealed a diverse choice of titles describing the various cooperative relationships that have developed over the last 2 decades: they may be called alliances, public-private partnerships, university-industry collaborations, academy-industry relations, collaborative partnerships, or corporate universities. Each of these relationships represents the various ways the high expectations of society have influenced higher education and private business (Anderson, 2001; Cyert & Goodman, 1997; Ghere, 2001; Meister, 1998). Bosley (1995) discussed eight types of collaboratives:

- the traditional lecture classroom ,
- student-faculty internships and exchange programs,

- support for professional conferences and community organizations,

- industry-specific career fairs,

- product and data research and development,

- jointly produced technical publications and textbooks,

- liaison (internal and external relations) initiatives, and

- foundation grants and equipment donations.

During a study of 16 higher education institutions and information technology partners, Norris (1990) observed and described four relationships: philanthropic, marketing, marketing and joint-venture combinations, and joint ventures. Spangler (2002) investigated multiple California community college partnerships that spanned from the typical one-college and one-business job training cooperative range to a multi-partner collaborative involving eight educational institutions, 27 cities, and numerous public and private institutions. Orr (2001) cited contract-based and informal collaboratives between community colleges and elementary schools, private businesses, government agencies, peer institutions and more.

<u>Challenges with Research about Partnerships and the Community College</u>

According to Spangler (2002) a continuing scarcity of state and federal funding created incentives for the community college to seek out and form partnerships with various constituencies. Much of the available literature has been largely anecdotal and lacks consistent measures whereby one might objectively ascertain whether a partnership was beneficial, let alone advisable (Spangler, 2002; Roueche et al., 1995). Much has been written in support of university-industrial research partnerships; yet, formal investigative literature detailing the role of community colleges in local economic development partnerships is lacking (Spangler, 2002). This was surprising because nearly 20 states have designated community colleges as the primary

institutions of choice for workforce development (Ingram, 1999; Jenkins & Boswell, 2002).

Furthermore, the proprietary and occasionally informal nature of partnerships between public

community colleges and private sectors has provided formidable obstacles against specifying

principles consistently applicable in other higher education contexts (Spangler, 2002). In

addition, each community college's mission is invariably tied to its immediate community;

therefore, partnerships formed tend to be individualized as well (Bragg, 2002; Cohen & Brawer,

2003; Zeiss, 1997). According to Zeiss (1997),:

> …[t]hese workforce education and training partnerships … can include jointly evaluating
> specific training needs and screening and pre-testing employees; sharing facilities,
> equipment, and faculty; locating support services at common locations; and forming
> consortia of smaller businesses that need the same training. (p. 92)

Although numerous programs existed that provided benefits to both parties for an indeterminate

length of time, others may have operated for a relatively brief period. In one instance, an

automotive company contracted with a single class of business simulation students at a local

university for one semester (Green & Williamson, 2000). The students analyzed, developed, and

presented potential solutions to a real-life business problem. Even though the private company

eventually chose not to accept the class's recommendations, the study yielded beneficial

information to the company and inserted real-time job experience into the college curriculum for

the benefit of the students. In 1995 Columbia State Community College alone engaged in dozens

of partnerships to provide training to more than 4,000 employees from nearly 60 local businesses

and industries (Kisker & Carducci, 2003).

Numerous advantages have been noted supporting the advancement of the community

college in America (Carnevale & Desrochers, 1997; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Zeiss, 1997). By

design community colleges are commissioned to establish and maintain close ties to the

population within the limited geographical areas that they serve, typically offering programs that

are specifically oriented to the perceived training and educational needs of the immediate community (Bragg, 2002; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Wang, 2004; Zeiss, 1997). Compelled by a more localized economic development mission, community colleges tend to provide a more learner-centered curriculum; they also can be (and frequently are) a learner-*driven* curriculum (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Ingram, 1999; Wang, 2004). An open-enrollment policy and relatively low tuition cost have made higher education and training more affordable and accessible to a larger percentage of the local populace. As to proximity, after the building boom of the 1960s, a community college may be found within 25 miles of nearly 95% of the general population (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Zeiss, 1997). The close association mandated by the community college's mission makes it likely for administrators to pursue a web of partnerships to develop in concert with a region's history and culture (Bandler, 2002; Bragg, 2002; Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Jacobs, 2000). Historically, like land-grant institutions, community colleges have worked closely with local business and industry to develop job-specific training and skills assessments (Kelley, 2004; Spangler, 2002). Community colleges have also provided practical incentives for their students to become and remain lifelong learners (Bandler, 2002; Spangler, 2002; Wang, 2004).

Each community college may follow as many as four general categories of departmental missions that develop in accordance with local, national, and global demands of the workplace (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Kelley, 2004). Community colleges provide a rapid, customized, student-friendly, and business-friendly response to the tumultuous changes prevalent in today's economic market (Zeiss, 1997). Zeiss found consistent high quality but low-cost effectiveness in most business training programs between public community colleges and their respective private sector partners. Ashburn (2006) detailed five distinct community college programs that arose specifically in response to perceived needs of narrowly-defined population groups living within

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their respective local communities. In addition, these community colleges, located in diverse geographic regions of the United States, moved rapidly in each case to create programming tailored to address societal and/or workforce needs (Ashburn, 2006).

Per Zeiss (1997), "partnerships and collaborations with business and government have become critical for those colleges who wish to remain customer-driven and community-based" (p. xiv). Consequently, public-private partnerships have been fashioned in increasing numbers, offering customized training and flexible scheduling, to assist communities fashioning the skill sets of the American workforce (Bragg, 2002; Center for Regional Economic Competitiveness, 2007; Cohen, 2002; Jacobs & Voorhees, 2006). With the increased pace of change, accountability, and flexibility required by today's global marketplace, the community college may be particularly suited to play a major role in forming successful and effective partnerships with business and industry (Ingram, 1999; Kelley, 2004). Per Garza and Eller (1998), "…community college will be much more than a place where people go to take college courses. It will be an indispensable part of the community's overall efforts to build a better future for all of its citizens" (p. 31).

Elements of Community College Public-Private Partnerships

What characteristics are most commonly found in "successful" public-private partnerships? According to Cyert and Goodman (1997) previous studies examined effectiveness models based on the quantity of benefits to the private firm but not to the public education institution. Most effectiveness criteria have been based upon improvements to product innovations, new publications, and the quantity of technological advances transferred from the institution to the private concern (Cyert & Goodman, 1997). Considering the variety and individuality of each collaborative program that has been created over the past several decades,

there must be some level of criteria that most frequently appear in mutually beneficial partnerships. A more balanced approach, where both institutions benefit from the partnership, suggests a better, more efficient model (Norris, 1990).

According to Spangler (2002) successful partnerships demonstrated measurable benefits to the higher education institution in terms of enrollment growth, increased graduation and placement rates, and facilitated foundation or endowment growth. From the private sector standpoint, successful partnerships provided measurable benefits in terms of better hires, lowered employee turnover rates, and increased productivity in the departments where the public institution provided training or assessment or assisted in the development of marketable ideas and innovations (Spangler, 2002). Cyert and Goodman (1997) indicated that beneficial partnerships focused upon issues that drew upon the expertise of several departments or divisions and that elicited a strong, positive response from both parties, mandating a team-oriented approach. The collaborative was entered into voluntarily by both parties (Orr, 2001). The domains and responsibilities of both parties were well defined from the outset and monitored regularly throughout the life of the partnership (Kisker & Carducci, 2003; Orr, 2001). The active presence of an engaged leadership drawn from upper levels of management of both parties significantly influenced the success of a collaborative effort (Kisker & Carducci, 2003). Frequently community colleges engaged multiple public, private, and charitable agencies in a combined effort to meet the perceived needs of local employees and employers alike (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Kisker & Carducci, 2003). Zeiss (1997) also stressed the need for an aggressive marketing and promotion program by the community college to inform and recruit local businesses regarding the college's resources and relevant expertise.

In the first volume of *The 21ˢᵗ Century Community College: A Strategic Guide to Maximizing Labor Responsiveness*, partnerships of more than 30 colleges were reviewed to begin the foundation of a more formal study of public-private partnerships and their contribution to economic development ("Unleashing the power…" MacAllum & Yoder, 2004). Although admittedly not a rigorous research document, the analysis provided additional perspectives and elements for consideration ("Unleashing the power…" MacAllum & Yoder, 2004). Per the authors, "an important lesson emerging from our study is that colleges in dramatically diverse environments, with very different enrollments and budgets, launched highly innovative and highly useful programs" (p. 17).

The second volume of the study identified seven characteristics that contributed to the effectiveness of each managed by a "market-responsive" institution ("Promising practices…" MacAllum & Yoder, 2004). First, each institution used strong, comprehensive, leadership that was "anticipatory, innovative, and proactive" (p. 8). Second, each institution developed an organizational structure that placed workforce development on par with traditional academic programming, fostered the free flow of communication, and permitted rapid detection and development of new opportunities. Third, each institution developed and maintained an organizational culture that valued and rewarded the "personal traits of entrepreneurship, innovation, flexibility, and risk-taking" (p. 26). Fourth, adequate funding of workforce development programming and personnel were critical components of each institution's success. Multiple, innovative partnerships and funding sources inside and outside their respective service areas were aggressively nurtured. Fifth, as important as financial support is for a program's sustenance, each institution developed an information rich strategic planning process that measured the progress and efficacy of all facets of the partnership. Data were continually drawn

from employees, employers, current and former students, and members of advisory committees, then correlated with local, state, and national data. Sixth, each institution made relationship-building, from both a personal perspective and a broad-based marketing perspective, a relentless effort. Each member of the institution was encouraged and equipped to "emphasize not only the college's work, but its flexibility and commitment to bringing to the table what the partners need" (p. 56). Seventh, each institution sought to cultivate and engage in regionally relevant, strategic partnerships anchored in the previous six characteristics to benefit community stakeholders in an immediate- and long-term sense. The factors detailed in this and preceding paragraphs formed the foundation of this project's research survey to procure data for analysis and provide a forum whereby other, possibly distinctive, factors of significance could be identified.

<u>Chapter Summary</u>

Not since the national frenzy over the launch of Sputnik in 1957 has the public eye been cast more intently on the public higher education system in the United States (Business Roundtable, 2005; Kinzie et al., 2004; Malcom, Chubin, & Jessee, 2004). Increased global competition and a rapidly aging workforce have companies scrambling to find and develop employees capable of dealing with an ever-accelerating pace of change in the marketplace of globalized commerce (Business Roundtable, 2004; Clagett, 2006; Malcom et al., 2004; National Academy of Sciences, 2004; National Center on Education and the Economy, 1990). At the same time, higher education institutions have experienced elevated levels of stress due to annual reductions in state and federal funding while demand for educational programming and services have continually increased (Bailey, 2000; Bosley, 1995; Clagett, 2006; Fassin, 2000; McClenney, 2004; Shore, 2005). Research literature has suggested this duality of market

pressures (increased demand for services and diminishing financial support) has provided a keen impetus for private business and higher education institutions to forge unprecedented alliances in an effort to compete and thrive in the world-wide marketplace (Bailey, 2000; Kisker & Carducci, 2003; Zeiss, 1997).

The community college, a distinctly American institution, has developed structural advantages that may permit the development of effective, mutually beneficial partnerships. Available literature has suggested that the components of mutual benefit, cost-effectiveness, involvement of multiple partners, incorporation of senior leadership via steering committees and workforce development boards, aggressive marketing and promotion, regular assessment and review, and a formalized contractual agreement may be key elements of a partnership between a community college and a private sector organization. Literature also suggested other unanticipated factors may emerge from the study due to the idiosyncratic nature of public-private ventures.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

This section details the methods and theories used to identify, explore, and describe the most common elements germane to the creation and implementation of various public-private partnerships administered by the community education center of CCTN. The researcher explored the perceived efficacy of the programs at their current stage of development through interviewing stakeholders most closely affected by the programs. This chapter presents the processes designed to produce the study approach, data collection and analysis, representative population, and the validity/reliability of the findings.

<u>Qualitative or Quantitative Perspective Used</u>

According to Marshall and Rossman (2006), "studies focusing on society or culture in a group, a program, or an organization typically espouse some form of *case study* [*emphasis theirs*]… [that] …entails immersion in the setting and rests on both the researcher's and the participants' worldviews" (p. 55). Babbie (2004) pointed out that "case studies can form the basis for the development of more general, nomothetic theories" (p. 293) whereby a limited number of key factors that may significantly influence an event or set of conditions may be identified, described, and explored via further research. This approach was consistent with the "constructivist" method of research (Creswell, 2003). Creswell described the constructivist researcher as one who sought to "make sense of (or interpret) the meanings others have about the world" (p. 9). Crotty (as cited in Creswell, 2003) elaborated on the constructivist approach, noting that qualitative researchers developed understanding through the collection of data drawn from direct interaction with participants in their environment. As such, interviewing tended to be the most appropriate primary research tool for most qualitative researchers (Babbie, 2004; Creswell, 2003).

This study pursued an in-depth analysis of textual data gathered from extensive interviews, document analysis, and direct observation (where feasible) to identify factors most likely to emerge during the establishment and maintenance of a minimum of three local economic development partnership programs. Participants' perspectives and unique interpretation of events and human interactions within the context of one or more partnerships served as the predominant resource to inform and direct the progress of the investigation. A thick, rich description of human interactions shaped the following questions to guide and explore the formative and operative stages of the partnerships between the community college and its private sector counterparts.

Research Questions

1. Who or what initiated the conversation regarding the establishment of the public-private training programs begun in CCTN's service area?

2. Which factors were most frequently present that influenced the progress, positive or negative, of the conversation during each stage?

3. Who were the minimum necessary partners (the critical mass) who supported and sustained each partnership through each stage?

4. Which measures were employed to determine the efficacy of the partnership from implementation to its current status?

Researcher's Role

Per Babbie (2004) a qualitative researcher may employ a wide range of differing roles in the data collection process. Marshall and Rossman (as cited in Babbie, 2004) described the range of roles available in terms of "'participantness' – that is, the degree of actual participation in daily life" (p. 285). On one end of the range the researcher may become fully involved as a direct participant in the environment or culture under study. At the other extreme the researcher may

choose to observe the environment or culture under study with as little engagement as possible (Marshall & Rossman, as cited in Babbie, 2004).

For this project I practiced two levels of engagement. The primary investigative tool employed was the direct interview, using a series of structured, open-ended questions. Although I was not a full participant in any of the partnerships, I gathered information from those directly involved in one or more stages of any or all of the partnerships. Per Creswell (2003) this data collection approach can provide valuable information where full participation is not feasible or practical. The researcher might act as an observer through the review of artifacts such as relevant meeting minutes, publicly available documents, or pertinent audio-visual materials (Babbie, 2004; Creswell, 2003).

<u>Sample</u>

For qualitative researchers the best route to a rich understanding of social phenomena is to "immerse" oneself in the history and setting through collecting and analyzing data gathered from stakeholders most closely associated with the event or context (Babbie, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Per Glaser and Strauss as cited in Flick (2006) the approach of this study followed the guidelines of the "gradual sampling" or "snowball" method whereby the data collection process progressively defined and described the next case, group, or interviewee to investigate. Per Flick (2006), "sampling proceeds according to the relevance of cases instead of their representativeness" (p. 128).

Currently available literature suggests public-private partnerships tend to be complex structures; therefore, the researcher anticipated the stakeholder list to be relatively extensive. The prospective interviewee pool included, but was not limited to, the current director of the community education center, chief administrators at the CCTN main campus, local officials,

state legislators, current students and graduates of the program, and human resources personnel that hired or advanced those graduates. Each interviewee, except for the initial contact, had to be recommended by a previous interviewee as a relevant resource. Prior to the commencement of the interview, the interviewee read and signed the Informed Consent Disclosure form and responded in the affirmative to the below questions:

1. Has the participant directly participated in the formation or maintenance of a public-private partnership managed by the continuing education division of CCTN?

2. Has the participant served either as an administrator, instructor, student, or employee of one of more of the private sector business partners?

<u>Participant Selection</u>

The researcher secured written permission from the vice president of institutional research from the community college prior to contacting potential interviewees for this study. Per predetermined criteria all qualified interviewees must have had direct experience with one or more of the partnerships being studied, and they must have been recommended previously by one or more interviewees as someone with extensive experience with one or more public-private partnerships. The researcher contacted the initial participant as directed by knowledgeable contacts within CCTN's continuing eduction department. At the conclusion of the initial interview the researcher requested recommendations for other knowledgeable and qualified potential interviewees for the researcher to contact and seek approval for subsequent interviews.

Following this pattern the researcher contacted each interviewee by telephone, regular mail, and electronic mail to describe the scope and intent of the study and to request permission to conduct a face-to-face interview. Once permission was secured, the researcher met with each interviewee at a time and setting familiar and convenient to the interviewee, usually a personal

office or corporate conference room setting connected to the worksite where the partnership

operated. In all instances, prior to recording the interview, each interviewee had opportunity to

read, agree to, and sign an Informed Consent Disclosure form that explained the scope and

purpose of the interview (see Appendix A).

If a potential interviewee declined the interview request, the researcher asked for

recommendations for qualified alternates. In one instance, for example, the potential interviewee

who declined was the plant manager; however, the manager responded affirmatively to the

request for alternates by delegating the responsibility to others within the facility who met the

above criteria. Due to the plant manager's influence and support, the researcher was able to

arrange a four-person group interview representing a cross-section of responsibilities and roles

related to the partnership. In consequence, the interview with four parties instead of one person

provided a much broader perspective. Each interview concluded with a request for additional

qualified interviewees for the researcher to contact. Interviews continued until significant

portions of data collected or recommendations of additional potential interviewees began to

reach redundancy.

Participant Information

At the conclusion of each interview, the researcher offered to send a complete transcript

of each interview for the participant to review and edit for accuracy and to redact proprietary or

sensitive information. All but three participants elected to review their transcripts before the final

draft was entered into the database for analysis. In response to requests for anonymity, the

researcher provided a pseudonym for each participant with no connection to each person's given

name or race and grouped potentially identifying data into general ranges prior to entering each

transcript into the NVivo8 database for coding and analysis.

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Of the more than 30 potential interviewees recommended in accordance with the above criteria, 18 qualified participants were interviewed for this study. Eleven males and seven females represented administrative roles in the community college and private sector partners, plus private sector employees, a consortium of small business owners and financiers, and one nonprofit, business-support organization. Three participants were of African-American descent; one was Asian-American; all others were Caucasian.

Community college participants' years of service at the time of this study ranged from 5 to 25 years; the private-sector participant's years of service ranged from 4 to more than 40 years. All of the private-sector participant's range of experience with public-private partnerships was limited to fewer than five partnerships. By contrast, only two of the community college participants' range of experience numbered fewer than five partnerships, while the majority cited involvement in several *hundred* partnerships over the course of their careers. Two participants' ages fell into the 31-40 range, while the remainder was split evenly in the 41-50 and 51+ years of age range categories.

CCTN employed eight participants at the time of this study; the for-profit private-sector organizations employed seven other participants. One individual worked for a nonprofit organization that represented the private sector, one was self-employed, and another worked for a public, nonprofit organization. Although none of the three was employed directly by either the private or public community college sector, each had direct involvement in the formation, implementation, or maintenance of recently established partnerships with CCTN. Of the community college employees, three had spent a significant portion of their working careers (10 years or more) in the private sector before assuming their roles at CCTN. By contrast, one member served several years full-time at the community college, but the close involvement

required by the public-private partnership resulted in full-time employment with the private sector partner as the partnership peaked. At the time of this study 14 members remained employed within the same sector, public or private, for the entirety of their careers.

Data Collection Methods

Qualitative data must be collected from sources most directly associated with the phenomenon to be studied (Creswell, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Following the interviewing approach suggested by Kvale (as cited in Babbie, 2004), the researcher approached the investigative process as a "miner" or a "traveler". Following these metaphors, a "miner" is a researcher who through experience and extensive research already had a fairly good sense of where the best information was located. A researcher thus prepared could enter into the data collection process with a predetermined list of questions and a fairly well-defined theory to test. The traveler's approach, by contrast, described a researcher who was prepared to dig but asked questions and collected data from a wide range of the available populace in a manner that directed the researcher to begin digging at the most likely location of the best information (Babbie, 2004). As the results of each interview were analyzed, the researcher adapted the interview survey and other data collection techniques in an effort to elicit better information or follow previously unanticipated themes in subsequent interviews.

This research project, as initially envisioned, was based predominantly upon a series of direct interviews with participants who were identified as those who were (or are) directly involved with one or more public-private partnerships. The questionnaires consisted of a series of open-ended questions constructed to permit interviewees as much freedom to share as complete a perspective as they might be willing. In addition, built into the conclusion of each interview, the interviewer presented one or more questions to permit the interviewee to name one

or more persons he or she perceived as a direct participant in or had been significantly influenced, positively or negatively, by the establishment or operation of a qualifying partnership (see Appendices B and C). The researcher endeavored to contact identified individuals to determine the legitimacy of the recommendation and, if the recommended party met established criteria, to attempt to schedule a subsequent interview. The full list of interviewees were derived from an emergent, "snowball" approach, characteristic of the "Grounded Theory Method" championed by Glaser and Strauss (Babbie, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Flick, 2006).

The researcher contacted administrative members of the community education center via telephone and electronic mail and described the aims and scope of the research project in order to determine which industrial partnerships could provide adequate data to sufficiently inform the questions posited by the research project. The researcher also identified the appropriate authorities from both CCTN and the private sector partner(s) and secured the appropriate permissions and clearances necessary to expeditiously conduct the research project.

Furthermore, each interview was designed to be sufficiently unstructured to permit the discovery of unanticipated data as the researcher analyzed each subsequent interviewee's "mental map" (Babbie, 2004; Creswell, 2003). The researcher designed questions drawn from the literature review to procure specific types of data (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). To aid the analysis of the interview data collected, the researcher categorized the interview data under the following stages in one or more partnerships: The first stage (incipient) focused upon the initial ideas and conversations that coalesced into actions that served as the basis for the second stage. The second stage (implementation) encompassed those activities and conversations engendered by the initial conversation up to and including the actual launch of the partnership. The third stage (operational) encompassed the activities and conversations that occurred following the

launch of the partnership to the current date or, in at least one case, the expiration of the partnership.

The researcher was aware, however, that data collected via the interview process might be considered incomplete because the face- to-face interview process has had significant inherent limitations (Babbie, 2004; Creswell, 2003). Per Creswell (2003) face-to-face interviews tend to be conducted outside of the context of the event being studied. Removed from the context, research data derived solely from interviewees' subjective memories may constitute a limited or inaccurate set of experiences. In addition, the very presence of an outside, unfamiliar observer (the researcher) may have had an unintended effect upon the data reported (Babbie, 2004; Flick, 2006).

The researcher attempted to corroborate or further inform understanding of the data collected by requesting access to additional resources appropriate to qualitative research. Appropriate sources included relevant document reviews, direct observations, and review of audiovisual materials (Babbie, 2004; Creswell, 2003). Unfortunately, the interviewees and/or their respective organizations requested anonymity or denied access to all but publicly available sources. The researcher's requests to use potentially more informative and relevant documentation were denied. To counter this lack of access, the researcher interviewed as many willing participants whose experiences drew from as many relevant roles and expertise as were available.

<div align="center">Data Analysis Methods</div>

Per Marshall and Rossman (2006) qualitative data analysis is a multi-phase process that extends from initial data collection to the actual writing of the report. All through the data collection activity, the researcher engaged in a continuous process of data evaluation and

personal reflection in the form of memos or audio recordings. The thoughts recorded in these resources considered alongside the recurrent themes and ideas thus identified or discarded along the way formed the foundation for further evaluation and review of subsequent data (Babbie, 2004). When the researcher neared the conclusion of the analysis through extensive interpretations of the themes and considered a wide array of alternative perspectives, the researcher then posited the most likely perspectives, supported by rational, logically defensible treatment of the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Patton, as quoted in Marshall and Rossman (2006), stated "qualitative analysis transforms data into findings… [T]he final destination remains unique for each inquirer, known only when – and if – arrived at" (p. 157).

Babbie (2004) reported this recursive process as a continual synthesizing and distillation of the vast volumes of data into discrete, meaningful themes made significant by their recurrence in one of several ways. Prominent frequency of occurrence identified certain themes. Data analysis also produced additional themes less frequent in number but greater in magnitude of influence, positively or negatively, upon the life cycle of each partnership. Chronological patterns of data that consistently suggested a recognizable structure, process, causation, or outcome also emerged from the analysis.

Babbie (2004) asserted the analytical capabilities of a commercially available qualitative computer program has the capacity to perform better coding and evaluation than that created by hand, a word processor, or a spreadsheet program. Therefore, the researcher employed a commercially available computer program (NVivo8) specifically designed for qualitative research to assist in the data analysis, coding, and theme recognition. The program enabled the researcher to perform multiple queries, cross-referencing, categorization, and reorganization of textual data efficiently and accurately.

Validity and Reliability of the Findings

Whether qualitative or quantitative approaches are used, all researchers are obligated to produce studies that are thoughtfully conducted, carefully well constructed, and ethically sound (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). To increase the validity and reliability of qualitative research findings, the primary approach is that of "triangulation" whereby multiple sources are consulted and brought to bear on an observed phenomenon or recurring theme (Babbie, 2004; Creswell, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The researcher followed Creswell's (2003) injunction to interview multiple stakeholders representing widely differing personal and professional categories. The researcher, therefore, was better enabled to create an information-rich account of each participant's experience. Furthermore, the researcher employed the technique of "member-checking" to ensure that the data collected accurately represented the views of the interviewees. This method granted each interviewee an opportunity to review his or her interview transcript to correct errors, make emendations, or to insert further elaborations prior to its formal analysis by the investigator (Creswell, 2003).

The researcher's committee reviewed and directed the progress of the project via the technique of "peer debriefing" (Creswell, 2003). In addition, the researcher attempted to make every reasonable effort to remain transparent about the intent of this study, its construction and theoretical approach, and influential life experiences. This transparency is recognized as a valid technique to counter or diminish the impact of personal bias that may intrude upon the data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2003; Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 described the theoretical approach and research methods used during the course of this project. The sections that followed the research questions defined the sample, additional resources to be consulted, and the qualitative processes to be applied throughout the

study. The 18 interviewees represented more than 370 years combined work and life experience drawn from several American states and two foreign countries. The interviews resulted in more than 11 hours of audio-recordings, 250 pages of edited transcripts, and more than 111,400 words for analysis to inform this project. From this rich pool of knowledge and experience, the researcher noted the emergence of several themes and summarized key data under each pertinent research question in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

General Introduction

The intent of the researcher was to identify factors that commonly emerged during the lifecycle of public-private partnerships established between a community college and its private sector counterparts located within the borders of Tennessee. To provide a framework for comparison in this study, the researcher framed the interview questionnaire to investigate three types of public-private partnerships: one that had been in operation less than 5 years, one that had been in operation for a period of 10 years or more, and one that, for whatever reason, had ceased to function. In addition, the researcher sought to elicit available data common to the ideation, implementation, and maintenance stages of each partnership for further analysis. A comparison of the experiences reported by the interviewees during the data analysis provided additional perspectives upon the elements that commonly appeared at each stage. The analysis of data gathered from direct participants in one or more of these categories and/or stages of public-private partnerships revealed patterns that are reported in the remainder of this chapter.

Four overarching questions guided this study:

1. Who or what initiated the conversation regarding the establishment of the public-private training programs begun in CCTN's service area?

2. Which factors were most frequently present that influenced the progress, positive or negative, of the conversation during each stage?

3. Who were the minimum necessary partners (the critical mass) who supported and sustained each partnership through each stage?

4. Which measures were employed to determine the efficacy of the partnership from implementation to its current status?

<center>Research Question #1</center>

Who or what initiated the conversation regarding the establishment of the public-private training

programs begun in CCTN's service area?

<u>It Starts at the Top</u>

One of the first surprises that emerged from this study for the researcher was the narrow

band of persons and positions, exclusively from upper level leadership, reported as the main

drivers for the establishment of a partnership. Across all three partnership categories, only those

persons in administrative roles were mentioned as the initiators. According to Candace, an upper

level administrator at CCTN,

> You know, one thing I'll say, our president, and this is why I think we have been successful … remember, he started this, he wanted this. I never went to him on any project where he did not give his full support, even if it meant dollars, you know,… it came from the top down and that's where I think a lot of these things fell.

Describing her initial experience engaging with private sector organizations, Candace

recounted the president's primary focus.

> He wanted us to start an office where we would go out and visit … and our first challenge was to go out and visit all the businesses in [town], and let them know that we were willing to work with them on a case-by-case basis, develop whatever courses they needed and at a time that was convenient to them. …He wanted to develop partnerships with business and industry and the college, and the reason he chose us was we already had those relationships with business and industry because we had been working with them in placing our graduates. But the only thing he said to us was, 'I don't want… to walk into a company in [town] and they not know about CCTN and what we can do.'

Cheryl, a co-worker of Candace, described the president's emphasis upon reaching out to

local business and industry in these terms:

> We were called by the president and… we had to do what we did call "Call Reports," and he was serious enough about this that… our group that was assembled to begin this process, we had to meet with him every Monday morning and give him where we had been the week before and the prospects in the upcoming week… it really kept us on track, and we opened a whole new world of business and industry training that we hadn't experienced here before…"

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The president of CCTN corroborated this emphasis upon engagement with local business and industry as a personal priority. His previous experience in the private sector apparently prepared him to understand and value the potential benefit of public-private partnerships.

> What I brought to the college and to the community is the role of a college as a principal trainer.... And I've personally been engaged in--that's the primary interface that I have, individually is – making those partnerships spread, building partnerships, making things happen… My job before I became a college president a lot of years ago was the Director of Human Resources and Training for a large corporation. That role schooled me in corporate training and manufacturing…

Referring to a recently established partnership, the president emphasized the primacy of building relationships across a broad spectrum of stakeholders prior to entering into a public-private partnership. Referring to a longstanding partnership with National Corporation (NT):

> It would be difficult to get that kind of partnership without having the NTs behind you. You wouldn't know what to say or how to engage them. You have to have that opportunity; you have to build the relationship with local chambers and manufacturing association people, and so forth...to be able to get the audience, to get the opportunity to make the sale.

The president's career in "corporate training and manufacturing" apparently shaped his vision for the institution's role and activities in the community. His perspective of the community college's efforts towards private sector employers and employees alike was based upon history and experience.

> I look at the community colleges as a movement that started in 1907, in Illinois, and, went through a major change in the 50s and 60s when community colleges began to offer certificates or degrees that were career-oriented, or occupationally focused degrees. And then began to build the more community specific relationships. And then finally in the 90s, across the country, cutting-edge community colleges were starting to do the training that I'm speaking of, playing that role. And that's, I think, something that I've been able to do for the college is get them to see that the employers of the community are actually citizens of the community. They're like 18 year olds, and so, we have a responsibility to them just as much as we have to educating young people, and middle-aged people, and older people, for that matter.

Thomas spent a full career in the private sector as a training manager for a large manufacturing facility. While discussing his involvement in one of the long-standing

partnerships, he corroborated the community college president's probusiness perspective this way:

> I remember attending a meeting with … the president of CCTN, Cheryl, and Candace. We had a meeting in [the president's] office, and we explained what we wanted to do. He immediately saw the value of partnering with someone like NT, and I remember him turning to Cheryl and Candace and he said "You give these people everything they need to make this happen. I want to see it happen." I believe [the president's] vision for what community colleges should be providing to businesses is the reason this program got off the ground."

A Perception of Need

Once relationships had been developed, it still remained for the private sector to perceive a need sufficient to respond to CCTN's offer to train workers. When they did, it typically came about as an on-campus visit from private sector leadership. According to Candace, "We got a call one day from NT, Cheryl and I did, and…they wanted to go to lunch with us. When they came to lunch with us, they had… manuals, just stacks of manuals. And it was …two or three of the HR staff that came and met with us…and they said can you help us?"

Cheryl recalled the event in a similar fashion:

> We had the idea of how to go out and just…chat with business and industry and build some conversation, but the NT idea came because they knew… they had heard that we had branded ourselves "your training partner." They said, "Make good on that."… they came to us then and said "here's these notebooks. Come back with us when you've got some curriculum information…"

Thomas, an NT training manager at the time, stated that the primary person who arranged this initial contact was the plant manager.

> He said, "We're in the business to manufacture products; CCTN's in the business to teach. We oughta get out of the teaching business and concentrate on manufacturing and let CCTN, who are the experts, help us with our training programs." So, that is why we made our first contact with CCTN and how that was what led to the first contract that we signed.

Charity, a long-time employee of a local nonprofit organization, mentioned that her involvement with a number of partnerships with CCTN began with her exposure to CCTN's reputation. She stated, "It just kinda evolved…I was going out to visit …everybody that was doing training in the community… just to meet and see what they specifically did in our community…CCTN just kinda emerged as the leader, and were really good at providing specialized training…" Although CCTN had built a positive reputation in the business community, her organization might not have taken advantage of the college's services without a senior staff member initiating the contact. Charity stated,

> In the past, well, [we] didn't have a great partnership with CCTN, and I don't think it was any problem. I think it was just that nobody on our staff had reached out to each other...and the person that was doing the existing industry program kinda started the partnership, and, and just making contact with them [CCTN] and seeing how we could work together, and really bring people together to discuss what was happening in our community…

Daniel was a chief administrator at another nonprofit organization that represented a wide range of professional trades in the area. His perception of CCTN's capacity to develop a beneficial collaborative was quite positive.

> We embraced CCTN and the reason we embraced them, initially, was because they were business friendly. They were open to new ideals… we saw that they embraced our ideals. We knew… that their leadership was very receptive to thinking out of the box. So we went to them and we talked about a collaboration….

> If there was a need there that a business had, you go talk to [the president] or William or any of those guys out there. They were receptive, saying we'll do everything we can to help you. If we can teach these students and they can get a good paying job, we'll put it in, in the making…

> The initiative came from William at CCTN. He was the dean. He had to keep it going; it was, you know, part of his thesis, part of his reason for being at the university, so he took it as a personal challenge to say, "hey, we gotta make this work".

William, the dean Daniel referred to in the above excerpts, was challenged by the college president to respond to the organization's overtures to initiate a partnership. William stated,

I was in Academic Affairs at the time, uh, my boss was the Academic VP and he kinda rolled me in and said "This thing's getting a bit bigger than we thought it would. …We're going to hire a consultant … to come down here and do an analysis." … he came down and did a big report, and they turned to me and gave me the findings and said "Now, make it happen."

Conrad, William's supervisor, corroborated the above discussion and linked the initiative to a proposal he made to the president of CCTN. He recalled,

I went to [the president], and I said "…we need something that targets the ….industry." I said, "We don't have anything. We really don't have any programs or services or anything that really make this happen." So he… he said, "Well, Conrad, let's pull something together!" What we did was we brought in a consultant… He spent three days here, interviewed a lot of people in … the industry, came back here, and interviewed a lot of people here, wrote us a nice, big, long report! …Once we determined this is the direction we wanted to go, "Okay, William, we're going to bring you in. Now, you make it happen! Here are our ideas! You make it happen!"

"Making it happen" appeared frequently during the ideation and development stages of partnerships. However, as Candace stated, "I think what made it successful was we had the key people at the top who believed in what we were doing and then, kicking and screaming, everybody else came on board eventually." In other words, had people at the highest levels not exercised authority to make the partnership concept move forward, the partnerships would not have had the impact in the community that they did. Apparently, to varying degrees, persons not at the upper leadership level were less enthusiastic about some of the partnership efforts.

Research Question #2

Which factors were most frequently present that influenced the progress, positive or negative, of the conversation during each stage?

A word frequency analysis of the interview data revealed "people" emerged most frequently in the discussions surrounding the formative stages of partnerships. This is unsurprising, because the concept of a public-private partnership is not just a mechanized cooperative between a community college and its private sector counterpart; it is a very human

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collaborative effort of, by, and for people in both organizations. Other terms of significant

frequency to be discussed in this section were "training," "business," and "need".

People

Of the interviewees, Thomas referred to the "people" component most often. Over his

working career in the private sector, he had been a long-time employee who was laid off, went

back to school for retraining, and eventually returned to the private sector in human resource

development and workforce training. For a large portion of the remainder of his career, he

worked extensively in a long-standing partnership between his employer and CCTN. One of the

key influences that led to the initiation of the partnership was the company's need to remain

viable and profitable. Per Thomas, "We were trying to stay competitive. You look around and

you didn't have the people that you could go to the street and hire, so we thought the best

alternative was to offer the people already at work an opportunity to better themselves and have a

career path." His philosophy concerning the relationship of people and business was best

revealed in this statement:

> In business, your people are your best asset. A lot of companies, I'm just dumbfounded, that a lot of companies, they don't want to invest in their people. I mean, that that's the best asset they've got! That's how they make their money. If you don't have good people, and they are not willing to step up and do whatever it takes, then you are not going to be successful.

Thomas's sentiments were echoed by Constance, a human resources manager at a

different site where a training partnership with CCTN had existed for some time. Her "personal

philosophy," simply stated was, "value your people. Partner with people to help you be

successful and try to keep your business in business." She spoke frequently about the necessity

of employee training just to keep pace with the marketplace. "We see how fast technology is

changing, so you have to be adaptable to that change… you have to stay updated yourself, and

that's how we do it, through our people. And those partnerships allow us to do that."

Similar to the president's career, Kevin came to CCTN after several years working in the private sector. He was initially hired as a consultant to the college and later was hired full-time to manage the startup of a recent partnership with a large manufacturer. He confessed that his experience with the public-private partnership was both challenging and instructive and confirmed the necessity of developing a structure that would "bridge" the cultural divide.

> What it showed me was two-fold: number one, why business and education don't work well together. Okay, 'cause they see the world differently. Educators look at themselves as providing a service, building a product if you will. That's why it is a business--called a graduate. Business people look at themselves as buying that product, in the form of wages, but not getting what they're paying for. But, so, the challenge was, you've got these two very distinct entities. Good news is, I think we have found a model or built a model that will work. It's tough, tougher than anything I've ever done because of the personalities, natures, the differences, but it's a model that I think can be exportable and expandable to other relationships throughout the country that will get both groups to understand the value that the other brings to the equation and why they can't do it alone.

Regarding the "personalities" and "natures" that come with an organization of people, Kevin presented an illustration of the kinds of stresses that shape the progression of a new partnership venture.

> You've got this education piece which is an indirect communication process, okay, it's collegial. It's group hugs. It's love each other. It's very slow moving… now you got this piece over here which is business, put on top of that … manufacturing which is very secretive and very high pressure… I've been in meetings where they'll say, you know what Kevin? You're stupid…So, you've got all these cultural aspects that have been very challenging and … it takes a period of time to understand those cultural differences and a period of real intense focus and effort to build trust. 'Cause once I trust you, you can say a whole lot more bad stuff to me than you could before 'cause I know where you're coming from. But when you start out with people that have never met each other, that come from very different areas of the world, very different perspectives of life, you've just got this going on all the time. And so we had to work through all that.

Despite the significant challenges that may be encountered during the life cycle of a public-private partnership, Thomas spoke of the tremendous impact upon people's lives that may result. Referring to a long-standing partnership that has since ceased operations, Thomas

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described the individual benefits that occurred when the partnership at its height functioned well.

> He [a graduate] made the statement that he was the first person in his family to ever attend college and how proud his dad was of him when he saw his certificates 'cause they got certificates from CCTN. They didn't get their full degree, but they received two certificates…But then, he told the story on TV about… that he was the first one in his family to ever attend college; it made me see … what a real benefit this program was to our employees. Because, a lot of times, people end up working in manufacturing, and it's not that they are not smart, it's just maybe they didn't have the resources in their family to go to college, they come from broken homes or whatever, but this [partnership] gave them an opportunity to go to school… everyone that went to school and attended this program and got their certificates, got in higher paying jobs and are making anywhere from 23-30 dollars an hour now, and that's hundreds and hundreds of employees whose life was changed because of this program.

Daniel also recalled how the partnership in which his organization was engaged positively influenced a young person's life:

> I'll never forget it…We had a young lady that…came from a …single parent family…she couldn't have been four feet, six inches tall. Her mother had even told her she would never amount to anything, ever.…so [she] got involved in our academy, worked hard, did a wonderful, masterful job… I'll never forget it. I drove up to the school one day and I drive an SUV…its gotta step on the side of the truck. And she jumped up there and she said, "you're not gonna believe it, you're not gonna believe it!"…I didn't know what; I thought she made a B on a test. She said, "I've been accepted to architectural school in California!" So here's a young lady that her mother thought would never amount to one thing…and she's going to college.

Training

Mentioned almost as frequently as "people" was "training". Even though the people of an organization were its greatest asset, per Thomas, "The lack of formal training is common across all of manufacturing." The president of CCTN, due to his previous experience in the private sector, understood this gap and created initiatives within the college to begin meeting this need. Per Cheryl,

> From the onset, you had to have a culture change on the campus because our president…had the vision that we should be people's training partner. We wouldn't be where we are today in training and have that reputation [in the community], but we also had to change the culture on the campus that we're not just teaching students who are coming into your classroom, we are taking the classroom out to business and industry.

Cheryl spoke at length about the changes within the college that had to take place for the

heightened emphasis upon reaching out to the business community. One such change, insisted

upon by the president, included how and when instruction would be delivered.

> It was our president leading the charge and getting in front of the [continuing education center] saying, "I've given these people this charge. When they come to you and say that they need a supervisory development training up in [local town], Tennessee at five o'clock in the evening, that what's we need to do."

When the management of NT, a large manufacturing concern, approached CCTN, Cheryl

recalled they were ready to take the project on.

> the NT idea came because they knew… they had heard that we had branded ourselves "your training partner." They said "make good on that."… So we had to take what we knew about building courses to theirs. So they came up with the idea of "here, this is what we want you to do" based on our wanting to serve the community as a training partner, and so, once we got those… that piece, then we were ready to go back to them and say "is this what you need to have your employees trained on?" They said "yes"…

However, that "yes" was only the beginning of numerous challenges to getting the

training program approved, put in place, and delivered. According to David,

> anytime that you are dealing with a training program in a large manufacturing concern, you have a number of different areas you have get approval from,…from frontline management up through the corporate offices including HR and Legal…so, those are the barriers, and those are the present… restraints when you're dealing with large corporations.

Candace described the complex environment in which they dealt with multiple elements

required by NT's management while satisfying TBR policies and requirements that governed the

formation and operation of the NT partnership. For example, the company projected about 50

workers would apply initially; more than 100 showed up for the information session. Multiple

work shifts had to be accommodated. The company required that the training be delivered "half-

classroom, half-online," introducing the need to resolve technological barriers to be solved while

maintaining secrecy and confidentiality of proprietary company processes. Calculating how

much to charge for training services became complicated by the company's requirement that all the coursework must be offered as transferable credits. Contracts became complicated by the presence of the phrase "following the laws of Tennessee," because the company's headquarters were located out of state and their contracts required *their* state laws would apply. Once courses were created, they had to be approved for credit by the TBR and accrediting association, typically a year-long process. For the college this time frame was a basic reality; for a fast-moving corporation such a long time frame for approval was unthinkable.

As the problems were solved and the program moved forward, multiple benefits of an effective training program became evident. One was the predictability of career advancement for the employee and long-term benefits for the company through reduced turnover and increased employee loyalty. Per David, "the other benefit, I believe, to this, besides the federal credentialing and the fact that it builds employee loyalty is that when you have this kind of comprehensive training document for your employees, it probably helps with ISO certifications, too…" By the time the employees completed the 4-year apprenticeship training, many went on to complete their associate's degree at the community college. Per Candace,

> I never dreamed that anybody would go on for an associate's degree. Oh, my gosh, we got to that point, and then … they were saying, 'I've only got a few hours, let me get my associate's degree'. They saw what it was doing on the job. They were loving it; they felt good. It's the most amazing thing I have ever been involved in, to see that first day when we were almost run out of the room [to] where they started walking across the stage. It was just fabulous.

The company realized significantly improved efficiencies and return-on-investment benefits throughout the organization. Per Thomas,

> With highly skilled people that knew how to do research and pick up a book and understand how to configure or repair a piece of equipment, NT was able to operate with a lot less…craftsmen and…operators than what they had in the past. So, the cost savings were: we had highly skilled people, it didn't take as many of them to do the work, they were capable of learning [instrumentation] .We didn't have as many employees and

although we paid them more per hour, we still came out ahead because we had highly skilled people!

For those who stayed, according to Robert, "once it was open, then you got great, qualified people, even the people that didn't get to move up right away. I mean, they had a lot of skills now. They were contributing to the organization whether they moved up right away or not."

Another benefit realized by graduates of the program came when the company began to downsize and layoffs accumulated. David pointed to the high degree of employability the trainees possessed: "no one out of that training program went unemployed." According to Thomas, "everyone that went to school and attended this program, and got their certificates, all got in higher paying jobs." This relatively high degree of employability created a conundrum for employers wanting to retain highly trained employees. When NT divested a portion of its business to Tallman Associates (TA), the corporate leadership decided to close the training program, reasoning that they "were just training employees for other businesses."

Finally, participation in this degree of training altered the college culture itself. According to Barry, a chief administrator at the community college, "And that's the other thing this kind of partnership leads to; it leads to the transformation of the college itself. We've learned a tremendous amount from all this training." Again, referring to the most recent success in establishing a new partnership, the president of CCTN stated,

> It would be difficult to get that kind of partnership without having the NTs behind you. You wouldn't know what to say or how to engage them. You have to have that opportunity; you have to build the relationship with local chambers and manufacturing association people, and so forth...to be able to get the audience, to get the opportunity to make the sale.

Business

Closely intertwined with "people," an analysis of the word "business" shed light on the

stark differences--culturally, structurally, and operationally--between the public and private

sectors. Kevin, who had spent a considerable portion of his career in the financial sector before

accepting a position at the community college, discussed the "business" of education.

> What brought me here was the, the belief, and I believe it now more than I did five years ago, that there is a difference between education and the business of education. And it is a business. And it's got to be run like a business. And most people in education I don't think get that … if you bring in a business discipline and accountability with its focus, that probably improves the relevancy of education in society at large, certainly the business community, and also helps educators understand that we have investors. They're called taxpayers, and we have to be good stewards of that investment like IBM and GM and everybody else does with shareholders.

> Operationally, he also compared the rapid pace of the private sector versus the

comparatively staid pace of the public sector.

> The other challenge was that the cultures of a community college and a… manufacturer couldn't be different, more different, okay? Some examples: they move very, very, *very* fast. We [CCTN] move very, very slowly. But we *think* we move fast. We take the summers off… They operate in a more chaotic environment.… One time shortly after I got here, a cabinet member said, "you gotta understand, Kevin, people go to work at community colleges or in education for job stability, okay? Yeah, they are very focused on the fact that tomorrow has to look like today which looked very much like yesterday."

> Kevin attributed the mismatch of expectations to a governing structure that limited the

actions and goals of the community college in the form of an inflexible bureaucracy.

> … and maybe I was able to offer a little value, having been in both worlds, is bridge that chasm. Because, if we put them together, it never would have worked because the educators would have been freaked out by the way that [manufacturing] does business and [manufacturing] would have been very concerned because of all the bureaucracy in education.

> Robert was a private sector employee at the time of this interview who had initially

begun his career at the community college. During his interview, he too mentioned the

considerably different rates of change that occur in the two sectors:

> …it's a "pull" system as far as academics are concerned … if the academics are not flexible enough to stay with business, business moves! And they ain't got time to play these silly bureaucratic games of government to get something--to make something

happen. They have a business to run and it's got to go!

Robert had been engaged in the partnership for more than a decade. However, over the

last 6 years, it had declined until it had essentially ceased operations at the time of the interview.

Looking back over his years of experience with the partnership, Robert noted the lack of

flexibility within the public sector as a significant challenge to growing and maintaining a

complex public-private partnership. "If the academics cannot be flexible enough, and the rules

don't allow them to adjust to meet the needs, the partnership's gonna fail...and this partnership

has died off partially because of business things..."

 Even though leadership was deeply engaged, not all departments had the same vision

and processes in place to flex as readily did the private sector. Conrad described the

circumstances where the public sector had its difficulties understanding the business practices of

the "other side," too.

> We designed it [the partnership] to meet [business's] needs, not necessarily our needs, okay? Which creates a lot of consternation for people like Admissions clerks and Records clerks and… folks that don't have the vision of what it takes to be able to create these partnerships… one of the things we had to do was we had to make sure that they understand that, you know, there is a way to make this work, and let's think about this, and get the people … in the Records office and the Admissions office and Financial Aid Office to think outside of their box as well…

Kevin underscored the disparity between the financial operations of each sector in the

case of services placed out on bid.

> … we have a process in education where you, depending on the level of need, have to go out for bids. And that's very precise, and then you take the low cost bidder. [The manufacturer] at the very beginning said, "We don't care what you do, do it, but we're not going with the low cost bidder if it doesn't make sense…. I don't care who the low-cost provider is. Get me five, ten, whatever providers, we'll review those together. You'll make your recommendation. [We] will or will not accept it." They want a lot more application and a lot less theory. And then you have to go to TBR and the business office and say, "Yeah, understand that there's a difference between what the low-cost bid is and what they want to do of about a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, but nobody cares." And then the business office, rightfully so, said, "Oh, my gosh, yes, but I can just see

"audit exception" written all over this…

Not so surprising, business decisions were mentioned as playing a major role in determining the beginning, formation, and execution of a public-private partnership. Over the life cycle of the long-standing NT partnership, a cycle of growth and decline followed the business fortunes of the industry. As global competition heated up in the late 1990s, Thomas described one of the more influential decisions that led the private sector management to engage in a significant partnership with the local community college.

> We got all the people trained that we needed to and then there were a few years we didn't do any training. The initial program just kinda got mothballed and then we got to looking at potential attrition. We had a lot of people, like 87 craftsmen, that were eligible for full retirement in the next five years, and we realized that we were really going to have to do something.

> …we had to do a financial analysis to see if it was beneficial for us to do this and... as we looked at keeping … instructors retained 365 days a year just to do curriculum development and deliver courses, it was a lot more economical for us to pay CCTN tuition and them provide us with instruction.

Darryl, a long-time employee of the company, mentioned the company's attempt to "do the right thing" for its employees. At the same time, he stated, "Now business decisions influenced that somewhat, but they were really trying to do the right thing." Robert mentioned that "that they were going to train people and allow people to move up. That was the initial assumption".

In addition, counter to previous tradition of selecting only the most senior employees for advancement, Thomas indicated, "The plant manager said, 'I want to open it up. I want anybody on this site that wants to go to school. I want them to be able to go to school and be able to move into these higher paying jobs." The effort to "do the right thing" by the employees and the company came from the perception that, "you just don't have that many really skilled people…in

the general public. You are just not going to go out on the street and find enough people to staff a plant…"

And then business said, "well, we need to change how we do business a little bit here," according to Robert. The change came in the relationship between the corporation and its employees. For decades nearly the entire employee training had been done in-house and on company time. Then, according to Robert, in an effort to control costs and remain competitive, "they made a decision… we're not going to take too much away from these folks, but we've got to change how we do things. And so they said, "well, you know, they gotta go do it on their own time. We can't afford to pay that cost. And I mean it's just business decisions…"

Business decisions figured in once again during the waning days of the partnership. Economic realities obviated the need to downsize and sell off part of its assets. The company that purchased a portion of the plant operations made a business decision to stop offering training. Per Thomas, the company's perception of the state of the local labor market brought about a business decision to bring the partnership to a close at that portion of the plant facility.

> Uh, here again, the economy had a lot to do with …curtailing training. The program was stopped by corporate TA. Candace and I tried to revive the program and enroll people. The plant manager was for it, but corporate said "no" that's not the way they wanted to operate. They believed they could go to the street and hire whatever they needed. There was no reason to spend the money to train employees to get a better job.

Need(s)

The final concept mentioned most frequently was "need" or "needs". Even though CCTN's efforts to market its training programs and services as "your training partner" created relationships that made partnerships possible, it still remained for the private sector partners to sense a need relevant to business goals before the initial overtures began. According to Robert, "What motivated us to change how we did business? It was the economic climate that they were

in at the time. And [when] the businesses make those decisions, then they create the need."

Daniel's organization represented dozens of trades. Their need was based on the

realization that contractors have a relatively short time to contribute to the economy.

> …you think about our industry. We're the second largest employer in the private sector. At the time that we started this [partnership], we needed 500,000 new employees a year according to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics and we're only getting 250. We knew that the average age of a contractor was 47 and a half years old, and we knew that they left us at 54. So, we got them for six and a half years. We knew that wasn't enough. …So we had to go out there and start embracing the younger ones, to expand that average life-cycle with us. It was just a thought, saying, wait a second: you mean the construction industry doesn't have the power to make this individual's average work life with us at 60? And the answer is no, we don't. We don't, but we do have it within our means to attract and develop younger people. So, if could expand that six and a half years to 10 and a half years, that's huge.

According to David, the impetus for engaging in a partnership with the community

college, "It was just, actually, because they recognized the need for construction workers for the

same reason many industries see a need for replacement people, and that is, that our workforce is

aging and we don't have people in the pipeline to replace these skilled tradespeople."

Not only were companies motivated to engage in partnerships to build up the workforce

skills, but they also needed to upgrade technology transfer methods as well. Thomas described

the need for the corporation to incorporate newer technologies in the delivery of instruction,

> We had 87 craftsmen that were eligible for full retirement in the next five years, and we realized that we were really going to have to do… some additional training. ... to complicate matters, a lot of technology changes needed to be incorporated into the curriculums. NT was phasing out all of the VAX computers by that time….we thought "well, we've got this basic curriculum. It's worked really well in the past. We've had good craftsmen. We've stayed competitive. We've made money" but we realized that we had to switch everything over from a VAX-based computer system to a Web-based. So what we did was go back to CCTN.

The private sector corporation Thomas worked for went "back to CCTN" as a

consequence of the original effort begun by the college through the president's direction and

support to become the region's "training partner". Per Candace, "He wanted us to start an office

where we would go out and visit ...all the businesses in [town], and let them know that we were

willing to work with them on a case-by-case basis, develop whatever courses they needed and at

a time that was convenient to them." Cheryl, a coworker of Candace at the time, corroborated the

president's priorities.

> I think it reflects a business priority, and I think it reflects a business philosophy of your institution changing at this point. Because … back when [the president] first came in the '90s, it was very obvious that we really needed to build partnerships and… and get our mission out in the community and our branding out and *be* that partnership.

> …what came out of it was…certificates in those areas I just mentioned. But, it was again, going and meeting with them over and over. Trying to figure out what…what is the niche… what's the need… what do you need for us to do?

> Numerous interviewees from the CCTN campus reiterated the effort to explore, discover

and offer (within its resources) solutions to the private sector's perceived needs. Conrad

described the process of working with a recently established partnership.

> we've been meeting with them every week, sometimes every couple weeks. Ironing out details. Hashing out, "What if we do this? What if we do this?" and just, you know, communicating back and forth, and trying to understand their needs, and understanding our needs, and come up with a solution that's gonna work for both of us….and again, I think that's any… it… it'd vary for each project, but up front, I think that we had to establish with them, that we were going to do everything we could to meet their needs.

> We did have to make… some adjustments in the way we did things, but those partnerships, you know, it was really critical that we try and meet what they wanted, and so bent over backwards to try and do everything we could because they're really the critical ones that we're designing the programs for and the services for. It's for them!

> Regarding the maintenance of a partnership, Conrad boiled it down to "building trust,"

especially when the effort of meeting a private sector partner's needs ran into various structural

and policy-induced limitations upon the training.

> saying "This is our current process but however, for you, we would make this change to be able to meet your need."… helping them understand that we are going to do everything we can to meet their specific needs in their employees and their employee training. However, when it came to a point where we had to push back a little …, then it was easier to come to them and say, "look, you know, we do really need to change this

piece of it because these are our processes that we can't change because Tennessee Board of Regents policy" or whatever it was that may be a problem at that particular time. And then, you know, developing the trust on the front end and then demonstrating to them that we can change, and when we *couldn't* change, it was much easier to be able to convince them that "okay, let's think about how we might be able to change it this way" to be able to meet their needs… to meet our needs.

And again, the effort required changes within the community college to find ways to navigate the obstacles when they appeared. Conrad stated, "Every one of the partnerships that I've been involved required us to do things differently so, number one, we had to be creative!"

> We had to think out of the box. We had to come up with solutions. We were gonna work for *them*… There were times when we just said, you know, "hey, look, this… we've got these barriers… there are just some things we cannot overcome; however, if you make this little change over here, then we can do this."

Cheryl summed up the effort of meeting the needs of private sector partners "at the end of the day, a community college is doing one of two or three things…you're giving them a certificate… but we also have credit certificates or we have the 2- year programs where they can get their … degree, and it's based on "what is it you want the workers to have?"

Positive or Negative Influences

In addition to the data presented above, other ideas of note were presented by the interviewees. A few negative influences were expressed. Charles, an employee of NT who was able to advance his career through the partnership, described the experience of others who have little or no training opportunities at the facility because of reduced course offerings.

> One thing I wanted to add, it may be applicable to this: when I was going to classes for the apprenticeship, it was – it's hard when you're doing it at any point on your own time, 'specially when you're working swing shifts. You work 12 to 8 and then you gotta stay and go to school for 6 hours, or whatever length. You got to come back to work the next [day or] that evening….it was nice when I was going because there was a large number of people from the site, employees, that were going to classes. So, they might have classes twice a day, two times a week…you had several different opportunities to make it to class…get the knowledge, take the test, etcetera. Now, with the reduced number of students, it's hard to get *one* class, so when you've only got that one opportunity, and you're working swing-shifts, it's really hard…

Sally and Bridgette, coworkers at the community college, simply stated, "People get in the way. And money …it's all about the relationship and trust, and if you don't have that, it goes away. "

David emphasized the necessity of sufficient funding and support from the community in order for a training program to continue.

> You know, in order to make these things successful, you have to be able to fund them, If you were dealing with, with small employers, you know, obviously, they don't have the resources that a NT or [large manufacturer] does, so…investment money, or community grant monies become more important [as]sources of outside funding to be able to fund the training for them.

Robert spoke of having the right people making the decisions, "…you really need to have somebody on the academic side that understands the system enough that they can manipulate it so you can get those opportunities…." William credited both the rise and decline in large-scale partnerships to "just timing.. .the dynamics that evolved out of this that we-- none of us could see."

For the community college, numerous positive benefits were noted. According to Kevin, referring to a recently created partnership with a large manufacturing concern named Ensign Designs (EN):

> there's no doubt in my mind that over the last 2 years … pretty much every article about training has CCTN paired with it. People have said, "you know maybe if they're good enough for [a large manufacturer], they're good enough for me." Corporate clients that we've being calling on for years that wouldn't return our calls, they're calling us, saying, "Could you help me with this, could you help me with that?" I can't give you an explanation other than EN for that. So, it has given us credibility in the market that we didn't have prior to it.

In conclusion, Kevin summed up his experience with public-private partnerships this way:

> Right now, business people don't think much of educators, educators don't understand business and you know, I think our educational regression in this country shows there's a major problem. Business can't sit on the sidelines anymore and say, "We're not getting

what we want" and just complain about it, and educators can't say, "Well, that's not our job."

Business and education do not talk to each other, do not respect each other, do not cooperate with each other. If we are going to remain a first-world country, education is the key to that and education won't work if business doesn't support it.

<div align="center">Research Question #3</div>

Who were the minimum necessary partners (the critical mass) who supported and sustained each partnership through each stage?

An analysis of the responses to the above question brought answers closely related to that reported under question 1. Essentially, influential leaders within both the public and private sectors were reported as necessary. All persons in positions on all levels who reported directly to the chief officers of each organization were named as necessary to the partnership formation and continuance. From the private sector, HR managers and plant staff were reported as critical partners. From the public sector, the college president and those serving in the leadership levels nearest to him in responsibility were named. Further than that, Kevin reported that "it's a full college mobilization to make this work. It's been very much a comprehensive college effort to do it."

Two general themes emerged from the analysis. Instead of specific roles or positions being named, whoever was a critical player in the formation and operation of a partnership was identified as one of two categories. First, per Candace, these critical players were those "that had to be the visionaries. You know, not the standard, and the, and there were people that I know we pulled off the team because … they were not visionary." Per Candace, those who were visionary were the types of persons who were not deterred by "we've never done it this way before". These persons persisted until they found a way to "make it work"..

The second category, repeated by several interviewees, was the concept of a "champion".

The champion, regardless of gender or title, possessed specific characteristics. Per Bridgette and

Sally, the "champion" had to be a person of influence with management and possess credibility

with "employees or participants" in the private sector. According to Conrad,

> that champion has to be totally sold on the project. That champion has to be somebody that has clout and the organization that can go to people and say "Look. We need to make this happen. Let's think about how we can do it." And, you know, that's what it takes. It really does. You've got to have somebody internally that can sell it to others and help them see the benefit of making this happen.

> Conrad also emphasized that it helped if there were two champions, one public-sector,

the other private-sector, in order to make the partnership move forward.

> It could be anybody within the organization…but you also need somebody on the company side that's a champion, too. Somebody that takes the idea and, uh, you know, you gotta have a champion on their side, and you gotta have a champion on the public side… and, uh, the two of them carry the… carry the torch so to speak, and there might be a couple on either side… but they have to carry the torch and really see it through.

> The necessity of having key players supporting and promoting the partnership was

emphasized frequently. Per William, they needed to posses the "capacity within the college to

get things done…leadership…contacts…ability to allocate resources…within a college, if you

don't have those key players, you've got a great idea, son, but we ain't got time." Stated

Bridgette and Sally,

> ...[t]he success requires a champion at every partnership. At multiple places. There's gotta be someone at [the college], someone at NT, someone at whoever. All the partners has to have someone that's willing to contribute or else.

> Sally: And drive it.

> Bridgette: Yeah. 'cause it terminated because there was no more champions in place.

<u>Research Question #4</u>

Which measures were employed to determine the efficacy of the partnership from

implementation to its current status?

Of the three partnerships studied, data analysis revealed more frequent mentions of informal assessments as compared to formal assessments. Private industries' preference for "a lot more application and a lot less theory," per Kevin, was substantiated by several private sector interviewees. The assessments frequently revolved around individual performance metrics and efficiencies. Per David,

> There was a benchmark in the requirement that the students not only passed the particular course, then they also had to successfully pass a skill demonstration which was administered by NT. Yeah, you got your A or your B [in class] but, in house, you had to perform the skill. It was in a controlled environment, one on one, timed, can you actually align the shafts, or whatever the skill it would have to be for the class.

> Thomas reiterated the absolute necessity of the trainees' competency and how their

performance ultimately assisted the company's productivity and profitability.

> The final assessment was could the people do the work once we put them out there in the shops and operating control rooms? It was very successful. We were able to operate [the] Maintenance [department] way below the number of mechanics that were previously required… With highly skilled people that knew how to do research and pick up a book and understand how to configure or repair a piece of equipment, they NT was were able to operate with a lot less… craftsmen and …operators than what they had in the past.

> Susanna referred to the "numbers of certificates" as a quantitative measure of the

partnership's success. By contrast, the federally-funded program David managed required

several formal assessments.

> With Registered Apprenticeship we do what we call compliance and quality reviews. And, and in compliance reviews, those are, those are EEO [Equal Employment Opportunity] reviews, so, we're actually looking at minority and female participation, and what sort of an affirmative action effort they make in order to attract ..you know, minorities and females into these occupations…

> ...[w]e look at the on-the-job training, for example, … there's an outline in there… that outlines the work processes they're supposed to receive on-the-job training in, so we look at whether they receive, actually receive OJT [on the job training] in all aspects. So, so we look at a lot of those things, and look at, you know, if the, you know, if the trade schedules kept current with industry practice. We'd look at, uh, whether they regularly evaluate the apprentice's on-the-job progress. We look at the, at the wage increases, you know are [they] following the outlines for actual OJT and educational attainment. You know, whether the …probationary periods are reasonable. Then in the related instruction,

we identify the delivery system, we look at whether it's being provided consistently as approved in the apprenticeship standards.

Constance stated that her measures of the partnership's effectiveness came from two overall measures: how quickly the craftsmen got an ailing piece of equipment back online and how attractive the workers were to outside employers. Thomas reiterated this perspective, stating, "Another reason that I know it's working really well…is that …other companies covet our people. They hire them away...that may be a downside [for the company]!"

From the community college public sector, formal assessments were generally from the traditional system of tests and assessments resulting in letter grades. Pass-fail rates and numbers of participants and graduates represented the typical data collected for institutional effectiveness measures. Per Sally, "if you don't have graduates, it's done." As a consequence, informal measures seemed to be the preferred mode from the community college side. Per Cheryl,

> …at a certain point, you give participants evaluation forms. That's the formal piece, but informally, if you were working closely enough with the people that have retained you to build their training programs, the communication was so important…, they would let us know if something was not right…

The president of CCTN described the assessment process as "ongoing".

> In some cases you have formal processes. We do with EN, for example, we do have a monthly meeting with the HR [human resources] vice president, plant manager, and the president. They meet with me and [the] vice president of economic development, and the head of our training operation. We look at the numbers, and we get their input on how things are going,…we have our assessment tools, but I'm more interested in *their* assessment. What do they think?...They've got to tell *you.*

In the long-standing partnership, Candace relates that constant communication formed the bulk of the informal assessment and the continued growth of the program was considered an adequate measure.

> I can't remember … any formal assessments. Informal yes, I mean we were meeting all the time and I think the success of the program, you know, with them continuing to ask us to do more and more and more and going to other sites, uh, the length of the program;

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formal no, informal yeah.. You know we were continually with them, I felt like I lived in that plant…. So, you know, I was there at least twice a week, on site, and then we had a manager. We actually… put a manager out there to do that, manage that project; they stayed there…We were on site, so if anything was wrong we knew that…

Similarly, Conrad stated,

I don't do a formal assessment… I do the assessment based upon: is it still working? Is it still functioning? How often are you holding your meetings and are people still showing an interest? Are they still coming? Do we still have students in the programs? That's the way I assess it, and right now, yes. We do! That's the way I assess it! But no, there's no formal assessment. … if we start seeing students not get jobs or students not coming into the program or students not transferring over to [the university] or, you know, partners are no longer involved then …

The cyclical nature of public-private partnerships was observed by Cheryl, who stated,

"… they[the manufacturers] were large in training at one time, and so sometimes people take it [the training] in house, but if you wait long enough the cycle will repeat itself …I think it reflects a business priority."

Chapter Summary

The data collected from the series of interviews that informed this chapter demonstrated the complex nature of public-private partnerships between for-profit ventures and a local community college. Data analysis revealed patterns that pointed to effective leadership as the initiator of each partnership. Key themes of "people," "training," "business," and "needs" emerged from the data collected. These themes influenced the life cycle of partnerships both positively and negatively. "Champions" from both the public and private sectors were identified as necessary participants to sustain and manage public-private partnerships. Finally, both the private and public sectors conducted measures and assessments to determine the effectiveness of each partnership, but how and what they measured were different.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Restatement of Statement of Problem

The purpose of this qualitative study was to identify or corroborate key elements common to the formation and operation of a public-private partnership between a community college in Tennessee and its private-sector counterparts. Confidential interviews were conducted with individuals and focus groups from public- and private-sector organizations. Interviews included individuals from key leadership positions, employees, trainers, and community leaders who had direct experience in the ideation, implementation, or maintenance stages of a partnership between the community college and one or more private sector partners.

The emphasis upon confidentiality and anonymity limited the content of the study to interview data collected. However, this condition also permitted participants to speak frankly during each interview regarding the perceived positives and negatives resulting from their participation in the partnership(s). The qualitative approach to the data collected permitted a rich, thick description of numerous elements common to the formation and operation of a public-private partnership that emerged from the data analysis.

Discussion and Analysis of Findings

Four questions guided the focus of the study. Interview data were transcribed and returned to the respective interviewees for their review and emendation. The edited transcripts and investigator's notes were entered into the NVivo8 program to search for common threads, categories, and themes. The results are summarized in the following pages.

Research Question #1

Who or what initiated the conversation regarding the establishment of the public-private training programs begun in CCTN's service area?

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<u>Who</u>

Essentially, each partnership began and continued through the efforts of one or more persons in a leadership role. The leader was a person of influence based on his or her credibility with other employees of the organization and who also had the capacity to allocate resources. In the cases mentioned for this study, the president of the community college was the initial mover, allocating personnel and financial resources in support of each partnership. The allocation of resources resulted in a sort of intensive marketing promotion, communicating to area businesses to perceive the college as "your training partner".

<u>What</u>

Nevertheless, partnerships were not initiated with the college until a private-sector organization determined that a legitimate need existed. Persons of influence within the private – sector organization then approached their counterparts of similar leadership levels at the community college to present the need and begin discussions to determine if a partnership sufficient to meet the parameters of the issue might be created. Several months of meetings and discussions occurred within and between the leadership and their assigns of each partner organization until the partnership moved from the idea stage to implementation. Chief influences that required this extended period of time were the starkly differing cultures and often-conflicting policies that governed the practices of each organization. These differences required "out-of-the-box thinking" and innovative solutions by multiple levels of each organization to forge a satisfactory agreement. Unsurprisingly, successful partnerships were best initiated and maintained if persons within each partnering organization were able to exercise sufficient leadership to "make it happen".

Which factors were most frequently present that influenced the progress, positive or negative, of the conversation during each stage?

A word frequency analysis of the interview data yielded four primary terms that factored significantly in the progress, or decline in the partnerships. In order, starting with the most frequent term first, the terms were "people," "training," "business," and "need(s)". Interestingly, the order and significance of the terms appeared to be suitable as a promotional slogan for a training organization. Of the four questions, this question yielded the greatest amount of data.

People

Data analysis of the interview transcripts presented both the public- and private-sector partners as people-centric organizations. However, their cultures, expectations, and practices were widely divergent and often at odds. Considerable investment of time and resources were leveraged to "bridge" that divide. Many of the interviewees who spoke from a management perspective recounted the considerable positive effects upon trainees' careers and personal self-worth as a direct result of successful completion of training offered through the partnership.

Training

Contrary to the traditional structure of inviting persons to attend college courses on the college campus, the community college president insisted upon offering customized training programming at a time and place convenient to the partnering organization. This divergence from the traditional campus-centric model created a "business-friendly" perception by the community and local businesses that resulted in overtures from large and small-scale manufacturers to explore and establish training partnerships with the community college. Both the organizations and their respective employees benefited from participation in a successful

partnership. From the private sector side, the organization benefited from improved efficiencies and productivity. When layoffs occurred, former employees were able to secure jobs in related industries due to the types of credentialed skills sets they possessed. For the public institution, a positive transformation of the culture was noted.

Business

As presented in the interviews, the "business" term referred either to the culture or the influence of "business decisions" upon the structure and operation of the partnerships. Much discussion was presented describing some of the frustration that occurred, particularly during the waning days of a partnership that concluded. Essentially, business decisions initiated the conversation that led to the partnership; business decisions formed its structure and operations; business decisions also factored heavily in its conclusion.

Need(s)

As was mentioned earlier in this study, partnerships were initiated only after the private sector partner perceived a need relevant to the goals of the business. The primary motivation factor was the "economic climate" that prevailed at the time. Two primary motivating factors were noted: lack of available skilled workers due to an aging workforce, and technological advances in industrial and communication processes. When the private sector partner responded to the community college's message of "your training partner," an extended period of negotiations and problem-solving was required by both sectors to "build trust" and set mutually-agreed-upon goals and expectations of the partnership. From the data collected, the community college appeared to be the institution that altered its policies and procedures most profoundly. The stated objectives were to assist the private sector and to make whatever changes were

possible within the prevailing policies that governed the college's activities. The college's stated goal was, "we were going to do everything we could to meet their needs."

Additional factors that influenced the partnerships positively or negatively were noted. They included the employees' stress resulting from working full-time and taking classes, too. Adequate funding and community support were also presented. The partnering organizations also received numerous benefits: Private sector employees had greater morale and career opportunity; the community college enjoyed enhanced credibility and prestige as a provider of solutions to business's needs.

<u>Research Question #3</u>

Who were the minimum necessary partners (the critical mass) who supported and sustained each partnership through each stage?

No specific position or role was indicated from an analysis of the interview data. Two general themes of characteristics of "necessary" partners emerged from the data. One category was "visionary," persons who were not dissuaded by "we've never done it this way before". The other category was "champion". This person, irrespective of title or rank, was a person who had "influence with management and possess credibility with 'employees or participants' in the private sector". Having two champions, one in the private sector and the other within the college, communicating and "selling" the partnership, allocating resources and building relationships was the preferred situation. Partnerships ceased operations without effective champions energizing the initiative.

<u>Research Question #4</u>

Which measures were employed to determine the efficacy of the partnership from implementation to its current status?

Interview data revealed that informal measures exceeded the use of formal measures in the partnerships studied. The private sector largely used performance-based criteria. In other words, can the employee perform the required skill at a proficient and productive level? When federally-funded programs were employed in the training, more formal measures were present. The community college generally applied traditional assessments, resulting in letter grades and pass or fail assessments. Most formal measures yielded data typical of institutional effectiveness reporting. Informal assessments resulted from regular, ongoing meetings between upper-level management drawn from both sectors. Consistent communication between decision-makers from both sectors was cited most frequently as a sufficient and reliable assessment of the performance of each partnership.

Conclusions

An in-depth analysis of relevant literature and interview data yielded several conclusions drawn from this study. The conclusions below were drawn from an analysis of the experiences of a community college and a sample of its private sector partners within the borders of Tennessee.

1. Mutually beneficial public-private partnerships between a community college in Tennessee and for-profit businesses are complex entities that require visionary leadership and influential individuals capable of "championing" the ideals and goals of the partnership.

2. Each partnership was unique in its ideation, implementation, and operation throughout its life cycle.

3. Mutually beneficial public-private partnerships possess great potential for increased efficiencies in both sectors by leveraging the unique strengths and capabilities of each partner.

4. Formidable obstacles exist against creating and implementing an effective public-private partnership due to structural, procedural, and political differences between the public and private sectors.

5. Continual challenges arose throughout the life cycle of each partnership that were solved by continuous negotiations conducted in an atmosphere of trust and integrity.

6. When innovative means and methods were created to successfully navigate the obstacles and challenges as they occurred, significant benefits were realized by the workers employed across most levels of each organization.

7. Even when a once-successful partnership concluded, its benefits to the employees and the surrounding community continued to reverberate throughout the local economy for an extended period of time.

8. Success breeds success. A history of mutually-beneficial partnerships attracts additional attempts to create and maintain present and future partnerships.

<u>Recommendations to Improve Practice</u>

A review of available literature and analysis of interview data collected informed the recommendations that follow. Significant new literature has been published over the past few years that may provide significant guidance to community college leadership and their private sector counterparts interested in engaging in public-private partnerships. In conjunction with the emergence of recent literature, the researcher recommends the following general guidelines for public and private organizations operating within the boundaries of Tennessee.

1. Community colleges intending to engage in public-private partnerships should allocate resources to attract, develop, and retain innovative and visionary leaders who are capable of "championing" the partnership concept.

2. Community colleges intending to engage in public-private partnerships should establish internal structures, modify policies, determine strengths, reward initiatives, and aggressively promote their capacity to act as "solution providers" to their targeted private-sector counterparts.

3. The TBR should create a formal mechanism that rewards, incentivizes, and/or recognizes community colleges and/or divisions within a community college that successfully operate beneficial public-private partnerships. Even though the TBR's 2000-2005 Strategic Plan promoted the cultivation and formation of public-private partnerships, no such formal reward mechanism was detected at the time of this study.

4. Both public and private partners must allocate resources and personnel sufficient to establish and maintain effective, consistent channels of communication as the hallmark of creating and implementing a public-private partnership. These communication structures should anticipate and solve challenges, establish realistic expectations, recognize limitations, determine financial responsibility, assess effectiveness continuously, and inform stakeholders of issues and successes of the partnership.

5. When negotiating the structure of a partnership, it is essential that the partners determine a mutually acceptable exit strategy should economic conditions warrant a reduction, cessation, or significant modification of the partnership. A strategy of this type will limit the occurrence of frustrated expectations and ill will that may be created for employees who may have partially advanced through a training program,

yet are unable to fulfill their commitment because a sufficient number of courses are no longer being offered.

6. Historically, the world of business and academia operate at vastly different rates of change. Modifications in structure and policy must be made by governing and accreditation agencies to permit the public community college to respond quickly and effectively to the perpetually changing culture of the private sector.

<u>Recommendations for Further Research</u>

The results of this study were derived from a review of available relevant literature and analysis of the transcripts of 18 interviews. Although both sectors were represented from a variety of perspectives, there were certain populations that were not available or willing to contribute information for this project. The researcher recommends that a similar study be conducted with a wider spectrum of interviewees who possess direct experience in the ideation, implementation, or operation of one or more public-private partnerships. Key legislators from all levels of state and local government who assisted and directed the formation of select partnerships with foreign subsidiaries should be included in the interview population.

Additionally, it may be instructive to survey all public-private partnerships currently in progress across the state of Tennessee and bordering states to determine the types of partnerships being created and managed, as well as calculating the fiscal and political resources necessary to maintain the efficacy of the partnerships. A survey of this type may be used to determine "best practices" and develop or inform a model for other institutions, both public and private, to follow.

Chapter Summary

This chapter summarizes the findings and conclusions drawn from the data analysis in Chapter 4. The researcher concluded with a list of recommendations to improve practice for further research.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Disclosure Form - Sample

This Informed Consent Disclosure Form will explain about being a participant in a research study. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer.

PURPOSE:

The purposes of this research study are as follows:

Although a considerable body of literature has developed surrounding four-year, research universities and private sector partnerships, the unique mission of the community college, its recent mandate as an integral partner in local economic development, and the proprietary nature of public-private partnerships has created a need to better understand the basic principles that are common to the development and maintenance of mutually-beneficial partnerships that might be instituted between the private sector and a local community college.

This case study explores the recent phenomenon of public-private partnerships that have developed between the business sector, local citizenry, and public community colleges as exemplified by the [community education center], a division of [CCTN]. By interviewing individuals such as yourself who have been directly involved in the creation and/or maintenance of a public-private partnership, this results of this study may be utilized to improve policies and practices that may direct the creation and maintenance of mutually beneficial, public-private partnerships by business owners, community college and private administrators, and legislators.

DURATION

Your participation is requested to allow for a minimum of one (1) one-hour interview. The interview may be shortened, or additional meetings may be requested by the PI, or at your discretion, be lengthened beyond the one-hour time period to permit as complete reporting as may be necessary to satisfy the aims of the interview. In addition, you are requested to review a transcript of your interview for the purposes of making corrections, emendations, or additions to the manuscript, and to ensure and affirm the accuracy of the transcript data.

The possible benefits of your participation are:

No direct benefit is expected to be gained by you as a participant of this study. However, your participation may improve and influence the findings of this study which, in turn, shall inform

and assist various stakeholders interested in the success of a public-private partnership between a community college and private business establishments.

FINANCIAL COSTS

There are no additional costs to you as a participant that may result from participation in the research study.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this research experiment is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate. You can quit at any time. If you quit or refuse to participate prior to the final publication of the research findings, all data accumulated by your participation will be deleted from the study records, and findings shall be recalculated or redacted from any current rough draft of the research study. You may quit by calling the PI, C. Keith Young, whose cell phone number is 423.742.5339. You will be told immediately if any of the results of the study should reasonably be expected to make you change your mind about staying in the study.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS

If you have any research-related questions or problems at any time, you may call Dr. Catherine Glascock at 423/439-4430 or Dr. Don Good at 423/439-4430, x7621. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423/439-6054 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject. If you have any questions or concerns about the research and want to talk to someone independent of the research team or you can't reach the study staff, you may call an IRB Coordinator at 423/439-6055 or 423/439/6002.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be stored in the home office of the PI, C. Keith Young, for at least 5 years after the publication date of this study. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a subject. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, personnel from the ETSU IRB and personnel particular to this have access to the study records. Your records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

By signing below, you confirm that:

- you have read or had this document read to you.
- you are 18 years of age or older.
- you will be given a signed copy of this informed consent document.

- you have been given the chance to ask questions and to discuss your participation with the investigator.
- you freely and voluntarily choose to be in this research project.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

_____

PRINTED NAME OF PARTICIPANT   DATE

_____

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR   DATE

_____

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS (if applicable)   DATE

APPENDIX B

Community College Interview Guide – Sample

INTRODUCTION:

 (Mr. Ms. Mrs.): _____:

"My name is C. Keith Young, a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership and Policy
Analysis program at East Tennessee State University. I am engaged in a qualitative research
study which seeks to identify key elements common to public-private partnerships between a
community college and local business concerns. In my research, I have identified [CCTN] as an
active participant in innovative community development practices in the region and you have
been identified as someone who has been, or is currently, associated with one or more public-
private partnerships managed by one or more divisions of [CCTN]. I appreciate you granting this
interview in an effort to better inform the findings of my research.

A similar interview will be (or have been) conducted with other persons associated with [CCTN]
for their perspective. Your responses in this interview will be kept in strictest confidence and
neither you nor the [CCTN] counterpart or counterparts shall be specifically identified in this
study unless I have received written permission to do so from both you and the appropriate
official. At the conclusion of this study, you will be eligible to receive a complete copy of the
research document in appreciation for your participation. Do I have your permission to make an
audio-recording of this interview? (If affirmative): By participating in this interview, you certify
that you have read and understand and agree to participate in accordance with the information
contained in the Informed Consent Disclosure form you signed prior to this recording. Is that
correct?" (If affirmative, then continue) "Thank You. Let's begin:"

====================================
1. To begin, could you give me a brief synopsis of your career at [CCTN]?

2. Which assignments/roles have you performed during your career at [CCTN] that you feel were
particularly satisfying and significant to you?

3. How many public-private partnerships have you been a direct participant in?

4. Were there other public-private partnerships prior to your coming to [CCTN] that you served
an active role in, either as an administrator, faculty member, or student?

    4a. (if yes) Please describe your experiences and activities in them?

5. Describe for me the scope of your activities regarding the _____
   partnership with _____.   (name of partnership
                         (private business concern)

6. What influences, persons, personal interests perhaps, would you credit with moving you to become involved in the partnership?

7. At what point in its history did you become involved with the partnership?

8. Am I correct in stating that, according to your response just now, you were involved in the (formation, implementation, and/or continued operation of the) partnership?

    8a. (if Incipient Stage involvement) How did you first get involved with the formation of the partnership?

        i. Were you aware of any obstacles or challenges which threatened to delay or derail the formation of the partnership?

        ii. (if yes)This is a three-part question: as best as you can recall, please describe some the more significant obstacles or challenges that occurred, what was done to address them, and by whom?

        iii. (if no) What do you think contributed to the relatively smooth formative phase of the partnership?

        iv. Who were people inside and outside of [CCTN] that, in your opinion, whose involvement was necessary before the partnership idea could proceed to implementation?

        v. How would you assess the formative stage of the partnership? Did you or others in the group encounter critical decision points that you thought were of a "make-or-break" nature?

        vi. (If yes) This is another three-part question: as best as you can recall, please describe some of the more critical points, how they were addressed, and by whom?

        vii. (if no) *continue to question 9, page 4*

    8b. (if Early Implementation stage) How did you first get involved with the implementation or start-up portion of the partnership?

        i. What did you know of the partnership's beginnings prior to becoming involved?

        ii. In your opinion, who was instrumental in the setting up and launch of the partnership?

iii. Were there any obstacles or challenges that threatened to delay or derail the implementation of the partnership?

iv. (if yes)This is a three-part question: as best as you can recall, please describe some of the more significant obstacles or challenges that occurred, what was done to address them, and by whom?

v. (if no) What do you think contributed to the relatively smooth launch of the partnership?

vi. In your opinion, who were the people inside and outside of [CCTN] whose involvement was necessary to the successful implementation of the partnership?

vii. What is your assessment of the partnership at this point in its history?

viii. Are you or your division using any formal or informal assessments to determine how well the partnership is achieving its aims?

ix. (if yes) Please describe these assessments and how they are informing you about the partnership's effectiveness.

x. Once the assessment results were in hand, what did you or the institution do with them?

xi. If possible, who do I see to gain access to a copy of these assessments and a representative sample of the results?

8c. (if Mature Operational stage) How did you first get involved with the partnership?

i. What did you know of the partnership's history prior to becoming involved?

ii. In your opinion, who was or is instrumental in the maintenance and continued operation of the partnership?

iii. Were there any obstacles or challenges that threatened to delay or derail the continuation of the partnership?

iv. if yes)This is a three-part question: as best as you can recall, please describe some of the more significant obstacles or challenges that occurred, what was done to address them, and by whom?

v. (if no) What do you think contributed to the relatively smooth operation of the partnership?

vi. In your opinion, who were or are the people inside and outside of [CCTN] whose involvement was or is necessary to the successful maintenance and operation of the partnership?

vii. What is your assessment of the partnership at this point in its history?

viii. Are you or your division using any formal or informal assessments to determine how well the partnership is achieving its aims?

ix. (if yes) Please describe these assessments and how they are informing you about the partnership's effectiveness.

x. Once the assessment results were in hand, what did you or the institution do with them?

xi. If possible, who do I see to gain access to a copy of these assessments and a representative sample of the results?

TRANSITION: We're almost done and I appreciate all that you've shared with me today.

9. What other factors not yet covered in today's interview do you think contributed positively or negatively to the formation, implementation or operation of the partnership?

10. Why do you think [CCTN] or at least the division in which you work(ed) entered into public-private partnerships?

10a. Have any of those motivating factors changed in any way over time?

(if yes) In what ways? Please describe.

11. What other comments would you like to make about the partnership and your involvement?

12. Finally, who else would you recommend I definitely attempt to contact for this interview, inside or outside [CCTN], who you think has significant knowledge, experience, or information through direct participation in this or other partnerships?

CONCLUSION:

Thank you for your valuable time. If you happen to think of other persons I should contact after our session concludes today, here is my card. Please call or email me with your recommendations. I'm interested in talking with any person or reviewing any documents related

to this partnership to inform this study further. Once I have the transcript of this interview typed up, would you want me to forward you a copy for your review and approval before I enter it into the research database?

(if yes) How would you prefer to receive the transcript? (e-mail attachment, hard copy snail-mail, CD, etc.)

Thank you very much!

APPENDIX C

Private Sector Partner Interview Guide – Sample

INTRODUCTION:

 (Mr. Ms. Mrs.): _____:
"My name is C. Keith Young, a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership and Policy
Analysis program at East Tennessee State University. I am engaged in a qualitative research
study which seeks to identify key elements common to public-private partnerships between a
community college and local business concerns. In my research, you have been identified as
someone who has been, or is currently, associated with one or more public-private partnerships
between your company and one or more divisions of [CCTN]. I appreciate you granting this
interview in an effort to better inform the findings of my research.

A similar interview will be (or have been) conducted with other persons associated with [CCTN]
for their perspective. Your responses in this interview will be kept in strictest confidence and
neither you nor the [CCTN] counterpart or counterparts shall be specifically identified in this
study unless I have received written permission to do so from both you and the appropriate
official. At the conclusion of this study, you will be eligible to receive a complete copy of the
research document in appreciation for your participation. Do I have your permission to make an
audio-recording of this interview? (If affirmative): By participating in this interview, you certify
that you have read and understand and agree to participate in accordance with the information
contained in the Informed Consent Disclosure form you signed prior to this recording. Is that
correct?" (If affirmative, then continue) "Thank You. Let's begin:"
                    ===================================

1. To begin, give me a brief synopsis of your career at *<private business concern>*.

2. Which assignments/roles have you performed during your career that you feel were
particularly satisfying and significant to you?

3. How many public-private partnerships have you been a direct participant in?

4. Were there other public-private partnerships prior to your coming to *<private business
concern>* that you served an active role in?

    4a. (if yes) Please describe your experiences and activities in them?

5. Describe for me the scope of your activities regarding the *<title of partnership>*
   partnership with [CCTN].

6. What influences, persons, personal interests perhaps, would you credit with moving you to become involved in the partnership?

7. At what point in its history did you become involved with the partnership?

8. Am I correct in stating that, according to your response just now, you were involved in the (formation, implementation, and/or continued operation of the) partnership?

8a. (if Incipient Stage involvement) How did you first get involved with the formation of the partnership?

> i. Were you aware of any obstacles or challenges which threatened to delay or derail the formation of the partnership?

> ii. (if yes)This is a three-part question: as best as you can recall, please describe some the more significant obstacles or challenges that occurred, what was done to address them, and by whom?

> iii. (if no) What do you think contributed to the relatively smooth formative phase of the partnership?

> iv. Who were people inside and outside of your organization that, in your opinion, whose involvement was necessary before the partnership idea could proceed to implementation?

> v. How would you assess the formative stage of the partnership? Did you or others in the group encounter critical decision points that you thought were of a "make-or-break" nature?

> vi. (if yes) This is another three-part question: as best as you can recall, please describe some of the more critical points, how they were addressed, and by whom?

> vii. (if no) *continue to question 9, page 4*

8b. (if Early Implementation stage) How did you first get involved with the implementation or start-up portion of the partnership?

> i. What did you know of the partnership's beginnings prior to becoming involved?

> ii. In your opinion, who was instrumental in the setting up and launch of the partnership?

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iii. Were there any obstacles or challenges that threatened to delay or derail the implementation of the partnership?

iv. (if yes)This is a three-part question: as best as you can recall, please describe some of the more significant obstacles or challenges that occurred, what was done to address them, and by whom?

v. (if no) What do you think contributed to the relatively smooth launch of the partnership?

vi. In your opinion, who were the people inside and outside of your organization whose involvement was necessary to the successful implementation of the partnership?

vii. What is your assessment of the partnership at this point in its history?

viii. Are you or your division using any formal or informal assessments to determine how well the partnership is achieving its aims?

ix. (if yes) Please describe these assessments and how they are informing you about the partnership's effectiveness.

x. Once the assessment results were in hand, what did you or the institution do with them?

xi. If possible, who do I see to gain access to a copy of these assessments and a representative sample of the results?

8c. (if Mature Operational stage) How did you first get involved with the partnership?

i. What did you know of the partnership's history prior to becoming involved?

ii. In your opinion, who was or is instrumental in the maintenance and continued operation of the partnership?

iii. Were there any obstacles or challenges that threatened to delay or derail the continuation of the partnership?

iv. (if yes)This is a three-part question: as best as you can recall, please describe some of the more significant obstacles or challenges that occurred, what was done to address them, and by whom?

v. (if no) What do you think contributed to the relatively smooth operation of the partnership?

vi. In your opinion, who were or are the people inside and outside of your organization whose involvement was or is necessary to the successful maintenance and operation of the partnership?

vii. What is your assessment of the partnership at this point in its history?

viii. Are you or your division using any formal or informal assessments to determine how well the partnership is achieving its aims?

ix. (if yes) Please describe these assessments and how they are informing you about the partnership's effectiveness.

x. Once the assessment results were in hand, what did you or the institution do with them?

xi. If possible, who do I see to gain access to a copy of these assessments and a representative sample of the results?

TRANSITION: We're almost done and I appreciate all that you've shared with me today.

9. What other factors not yet covered in today's interview do you think contributed positively or negatively to the formation, implementation or operation of the partnership?

10. Why do you think *<private business concern>* or at least the division in which you work(ed) entered into public-private partnerships?

10a. Have any of those motivating factors changed in any way over time?

(if yes) In what ways? Please describe.

11. What other comments would you like to make about the partnership and your involvement?

12. Finally, who else would you recommend I definitely attempt to contact for this interview, inside or outside your organization, who you think has significant knowledge, experience, or information through direct participation in this or other partnerships?

CONCLUSION:

Thank you for your valuable time. If you happen to think of other persons I should contact after our session concludes today, here is my card. Please call or email me with your recommendations. I'm interested in talking with any person or reviewing any documents related to this partnership to inform this study further. Once I have the transcript of this interview typed up, would you want me to forward you a copy for your review and approval before I enter it into the research database?

(if yes) How would you prefer to receive the transcript? (e-mail attachment, hard copy snail-mail, CD, etc.)

Thank you very much!

VITA

CHARLES KEITH YOUNG

Personal Data	Date of Birth: June 11, 1955
	Place of Birth: Kingsport, TN
	Marital Status: Married

Education:

Ed. D., Educational Leadership. East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN, 2010

M. Ed., Reading Skills and Story Arts, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN, 1993

B. S., Music Education, Tennessee Technological University Cookeville, TN; 1979

Lynn View High School, Kingsport, TN, 1973

Professional Experience:

Director, Northeast State at Elizabethton, Blountville, TN; 2000 – 2010

Assistant Professor of Reading, Northeast State Community College, Blountville, TN, 1998 - 2000.

Instructor of Reading, Northeast State Community College, Blountville, TN; 1994 – 1998.

Honors and Awards:

Awarded 5th place in the Townsend Press National Essay Contest for Developmental Education Instructors for the essay entitled "How I Energize the Developmental Studies Classroom.", June 1995.

Inducted member of Phi Kappa Phi, 1993.